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Criticism Within the Circus Sector: Redressing a Power Imbalance

By Katharine Kavanagh

Abstract

The field of circus performance does not have a critical culture built within its practice the way that other performance and visual art forms do. Performance analysis, beyond attainment of optimum physical technique, is neither embedded in the general training and professional routines of performers, nor in any established form of public review discourse. This essay provides evidence of some underlying issues that currently inhibit a culture of critical practice developing, drawing on Foucault's conception of power-knowledge. This paper presents the model of an 'Analysis Cube' as an adaptable tool that can be used to cultivate critical engagement within the circus sector, and to deepen the engagement and understanding of commentators from other realms of experience outside of circus. The creation of the tool has been grounded in an ongoing praxis, reflecting the principles of action research (McNiff). The evidence of this study draws on four editions of the Circus Voices critical development scheme that I led between 2016 and 2018 at performing arts festivals in the UK. Data obtained during the course of these residencies show how criticism has been perceived by circus practitioner participants, both conceptually and through direct response to reviews of circus productions. An analysis of this raw material reveals that a high proportion of participant responses position criticism as primarily an economic tool for creators; and participants recognise a distinct lack of circus specific knowledge displayed in mainstream criticism. A small selection of creative critical approaches responsive to the needs of circus practitioners are discussed in the end to outline potential ways forward in an emerging and distinct critical field.

Background

Among the many fields of artistic endeavour, circus performance has been subject to a notable lack of critical discourse throughout its history (Arrighi 65). Over the last three decades, an expansion of the circus form into more theatrical territory has led to increased recognition from theatre critics and arts writers from other backgrounds[1]. What is yet

1 Whilst the birth of New Circus is generally given as the late 1960s and 1970s, and

to emerge, however, is a strong field of critique that engages with the aesthetic and ideological perspectives of circus practitioners. As artist researcher Dana Dugan notes, 'much of the circus discourse resides in a context *about* circus, as an object of investigation (most of which is conducted by researchers outside of the circus community)' (18). In her monograph on audience research, Kirsty Sedgman calls for the cultural sector to pay 'critical attention to *whose values we are effectively prioritising*' (2018, 149, emphasis in original). She especially highlights a broad systemic issue of white western culture underpinning current models of cultural value, but the concern can also be applied in miniature when we find one artform—in this case, circus—being judged according to the value criteria of another. Within the UK performing arts industry, that dominant ideology is one that prioritises semiosis—the creation of meaning via an interpretable system of signs. Theatre is regularly evaluated based on its ability to communicate meaning and, while theatre's ability to draw emotion can also be prized, this is traditionally emotion that stems from cognition; from the artwork's ability to communicate meaning through interpretation. When emotion is drawn via other means than semiosis—such as kinaesthetic or social response for example—it becomes inarticulable within the hegemonic vocabulary in an example of Bernstein's restricted code, whereby the richness and complexity of an out-group's communicative modes are not articulable within a framework devised solely by in-group communicators (Ivinson). A new wave in audience research is developing methods by which the inarticulable of the audience experience can be accessed (for example, Reason; Sedgman 2017), however, work that reaches audiences on a level outside of thought is rarely offered a place at the arts industry table[2].

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the movement known often as Contemporary Circus has been attributed to a 1995 beginning (Trapp and Kluth, n.pag.), a seachange in recognition from the established arts industry can be seen as starting in the mid-1980s with the growing international prominence of Cirque Du Soleil from Canada, Circus Oz from Australia, and Archaos from France.

2 This is often realised in distinctions such as 'high' versus 'popular' art, or 'art' versus 'entertainment' (See Shrum; Savran e.g.).

Foucault's concept of 'power-knowledge' (1995, 27) refines the old maxim that knowledge equals power to present a mutually reinforcing process wherein the two elements are inextricably tied. Those who define the parameters of known categories have power over those who are constrained within them. The perceived lack of value that criticism currently seems to have within the circus industry (beyond pragmatic recognition of the economic function that reviews play in marketing and self-promotion), can be explained by a corresponding lack of pertinent critique expressing circus knowledge. My work seeks to address this power-knowledge imbalance by opening a space for insider circus perspectives to be voiced within the wider sphere of performing arts criticism.

A barely-existent history of critical discourse around the art of circus productions (as compared to theatre, music, and visual arts for example), has resulted in shallow and pervasive general perceptions of critical practice that reflect popular representation[3]. Just as the term 'circus' conjures to many a restricted code of red noses and big tops, the idea of 'criticism' calls up notions of 'fault-finding' (Williams 85), and is associated with negativity, arrogance and high-handed self-importance (Fisher). This is in stark contrast to the theoretical positioning of critique as a virtue (Foucault 2007, 43), or as constructive practice (Latour 246). To engage people with circus knowledge in the critical project, the notion of criticism has to be made accessible, and the confidence to contribute and redress the power imbalance must be nurtured.

Two particular features can be observed impeding the development of nuanced critical articulacy in circus. One, often seen in those nominal critiques produced by outsider commentators, is a permeating romanticised vision of a historical circus, which clouds current realities (Trapp and Kluth; Lievens 2016). The other is a tendency to polarize, setting types of circus choice in binary opposition that, by default, create walls of 'good' versus 'bad' in what is, ultimately,

3 The critical perspective that exists amongst practising circus artists has overwhelmingly been towards achieving specific, personal training goals, rather than observing the artistic work of others.

an ambiguous matter of subjective appreciation (Frieze 2). 'What is circus?' has already become a tired question within circus studies discourse. Or, rather, the attempt to answer it with an all-encompassing definition has become tired, with growing recognition that the answer can only come in fragments: this is circus; and this; and this (Kann). Variety and diversity are cornerstones of circus, which is rhizomatic in nature. No single element can be considered in isolation, as there *is* no single element; yet, almost paradoxically, specificity is required to develop depth of knowledge in any element area. A critical mechanism is required that recognises the contemporaneous choices available in circus creation[4], yet sets them into a multi-dimensional context that allows users to acknowledge the specific parameters of their discussion; to say, 'This is a *part* of circus that I'm examining right now. It joins with other *parts*, in always different constellations'.

In this light, I propose a tentative step forward in the search for 'complex and diverse tools' that practitioner-scholar Bauke Lievens calls for (2015 n.p.), to enable critical and knowledgeable discussion of twenty-first century circus: a conceptual model that can be used to define temporary boundaries for a region of inspection without implying any fixed essentialist core. Jon Burtt and Katie Lavers recommend that circus education should complement its 'linear training sequences' and 'rigid progressions' of physical Behaviourist Training (149) with reflectively engaged modes. My suggestion is a model that can be used as a tool to invite discussion and stimulate thinking, as well as to clarify the parameters of immediate concern within an otherwise intangibly broad subject. It is my hope that application of the Analysis Cube model discussed below—combined with efforts by circus schools to educate in ways that overcome the perceptual barriers to critical engagement highlighted above—will build in the circus sector a culture of critique as practice. Practice that does not leap straight to judgement,

4 The term 'contemporary' has been deliberately avoided in this discussion, relating as it does to one pole of a particularly pervasive and troubling circus discourse binary, in relation to 'traditional' (Ursić 49). Moreover, Fabián Barba discusses the problematic use of 'contemporary' as a stylistic categorising label in dance, and suggests that the concept is a 'distinctively Western' one (n.p.).

bypassing other forms of engagement (Butler n.p.) but that, following Mendelsohn (n.p.), engages knowledge and subjective position as 'the crucial foundation of the judgement to come.'

#CircusVoices

The tool I propose has been cultivated as part of my ongoing action research in the field of circus criticism, and has been largely influenced by my experiences running the Circus Voices critical development programme. The Circus Voices programme was initiated in 2016 in response to the difficulties I encountered trying to search for production critique imbued with in-depth circus knowledge. The scheme arose from my experience publishing an online platform dedicated to circus reviews—The Circus Diaries[5]—which itself sprang from a personal frustration with how rarely circus productions are discussed in performing arts publications, in print or online. Moreover, when they are given space, the coverage is not often meaningful to those invested in the art-form as practitioners or experienced viewers.

Knowledge, and the knowing thereof, have been acknowledged as the 'primordial responsibility' of critique (Foucault 2007, 50); yet, the critical responses I was able to find usually failed to meet this responsibility[6]. Meanwhile, the printed reviews in King Pole—the magazine of the Circus Friends Association of Great Britain and, as such, a site of circus knowledge—failed to provide critique; their focus on factually listing show contents and offering only praise categorises these fan reports as 'interested' rather than 'disinterested' reviews within the genre studies field of linguistics. That is, they are members of a

5 http://thecircusdiaries.com

6 A notable exception in the English language is John Ellingsworth's online Sideshow Magazine, which was active between May 2009 and February 2015, and now exists as an archive at http://sideshow-circusmagazine.com. The situation is healthier for Francophones, whilst other European nations also give critical attention and dedicated resources to the circus arts that the UK and USA have hitherto been short of. In South America, the notion of circus is formulated differently, without the segregation of practice and production observed in the Global North (Sorzano). Therefore, circus critique emerging in this region is unlikely to fall into the traditions of product-focused arts criticism as have been established in Europe, but investigations of this area are beyond the capacity of my current research.

promotional genre rather than a critical one (Shaw). The Circus Diaries began as a personal attempt to draw elements of circus knowledge and critique together, providing publicly available information that would contribute a sense of relativity and context to the hyperbole laden and detail light alternatives (in themselves, few and far between).

A single viewpoint such as my own, however, can only ever give a fragmentary, partially accurate representation of an event. There is no space for dissent, agreement, extension, or dialogue. I have been living and working around the fringes of circus society for the last ten years[7] but I am aware that my own prior education in theatre means my approach towards circus critique unavoidably carries traces of the hegemonic external perspective that needs unsettling. An important element of the Circus Voices programme, alongside encouraging circus practitioners to recognise and articulate their critical outlook, is my own unravelling of the values and viewpoints that characterise a distinctly circus approach to criticism. However, bodies of criticism from multiple (knowledgeable and critical) perspectives are required to give a broader sense of any production, and to fulfil my wider aims of contextualising and demythologising circus work. Enlisting other contributors to the project, though, is not as simple as putting out an invitation due to structurally inherited distance from the practice of critique within circus culture. On enquiry and observation, it transpires that restricted notions of what criticism means are not the only factor causing reticence towards critical engagement either. Fear plays a part. Beyond mere fear of the unknown, lurks fear of inadequacy—many circus practitioners have been led to believe that they are academically under par in relation to the conventional educational model, and criticism is seen as a product of

7 In 2008 and 2009, I toured as a volunteer with NoFit State Circus' tenting show Tabú. I lived on site, training in the various disciplines with the show performers, assisting with site maintenance and catering chores, performing front of house and merchandising duties, and joining in the mass effort of building up and pulling down the tent. Whilst I quickly realised that I don't have the obsessive qualities required to perform professionally as a circus artist, I do have those required to become a circus academic and advocate. I have continued to practice circus recreationally, where my drug of choice is tightwire.

particular academic requirements. Fear of personal repercussions is also expressed in what is a very small and inter-mobile industry.

An inspirational programme that made some successful steps towards combining circus knowledge with criticality in a different way was 'Unpack The Arts'. This EU-funded scheme introduced arts writers to circus discourse over twelve festival residencies in eight different European countries between 2012 and 2014, producing 120 articles on circus from as many participants[8]. Circus Voices, on a much more modest scale, inverts this process to engage circus professionals—and their existing knowledge—with approaches to critical practice. It aims, on the micro level, to develop individual participants' confidence in circus analysis and articulation and, on the macro level, to help build a broader culture of critical discourse in and around the circus arts. It amplifies an echo of the 'get-your-hands-dirty' model of Italian criticism, characterised by 'positioning the critic inside its field of enquiry' (Laera 100). To date, there have been twenty-two participants, plus myself, across four iterations of the project—three during Edinburgh Festival Fringe, and one during Circus City festival in Bristol[9]. Participants have been embedded within a festival context where a high volume of circus-based work was programmed, and activity has included group visits to shows, critical discussion, workshop activity, and the creation of critical responses for publication on The Circus Diaries platform. Although there has been reflexive priority shifting within the different editions, and variation in the shows seen, certain exercises have been repeated with each cohort. Examining the outcomes of two of these exercises using Corpus Linguistics methods sheds a more empirical light on current conceptions of criticism within the circus industry, revealing gaps in understanding and opportunities for development, while also

8 https://www.circuscentrum.be/en/2015/03/22/unpack-the-arts/

9 Although the Circus Voices project has been largely self-funded, I gratefully acknowledge the various support received from the Network of Independent Critics, Roundhouse London, Crying Out Loud, Circus City, Circus Futures and NoFit State Circus, as well as all the circus companies who have kindly provided tickets.

giving birth to new trajectories for a circus-centred critique to explore[10].

One of these exercises was designed to address the problem of limited preconceptions, opening space for discussion and thought to expand on the notion of what criticism means, is, and can be (see Figure 1). Large sheets of paper were annotated by participants of each residency, based around the triangulating questions of *what* forms criticism can take, *who* it can be useful for, and *why* it can exist (the purposes it can serve). Analysis of these annotations[11] reveals that the perceived value of criticism is heavily skewed towards the critiqued artists as beneficiaries in economic terms, rather than to the strengthening of the sector more broadly. Over half the items addressing who can benefit refer to the arts industry. Audiences are next but at less than half the frequency, followed by researchers. Within the comments acknowledging benefit to the arts, however, around 60% address only the particular needs of the critiqued artist, either directly, or via reference to marketers, PR, bookers or funders. This indicates a lack of acknowledgment around how a critical culture can benefit the development of the circus sector more widely. The limited perspective this suggests is further reflected in the tiny proportion of codes explicitly articulating purposes of criticism—only 4% of the total codes generated, comparable to 50% articulating potential readerships, 24% expressing potential forms, and 18% suggesting useful types of content. One more takeaway from this data is the insular perspective that emerges, with just over half the responses that verbalise benefits of criticism referring to benefits directly within the confines of the narrow circus sector.

10 Paul Baker et al. discuss how Corpus Linguistic methods reveal statistical patterns in texts that, when combined with a Critical Discourse Analysis approach (Fairclough), can be analysed along dimensions of structural power dynamics and textually encoded knowledge.

11 Dataset of 434 items, drawn from coding 238 separate comments.

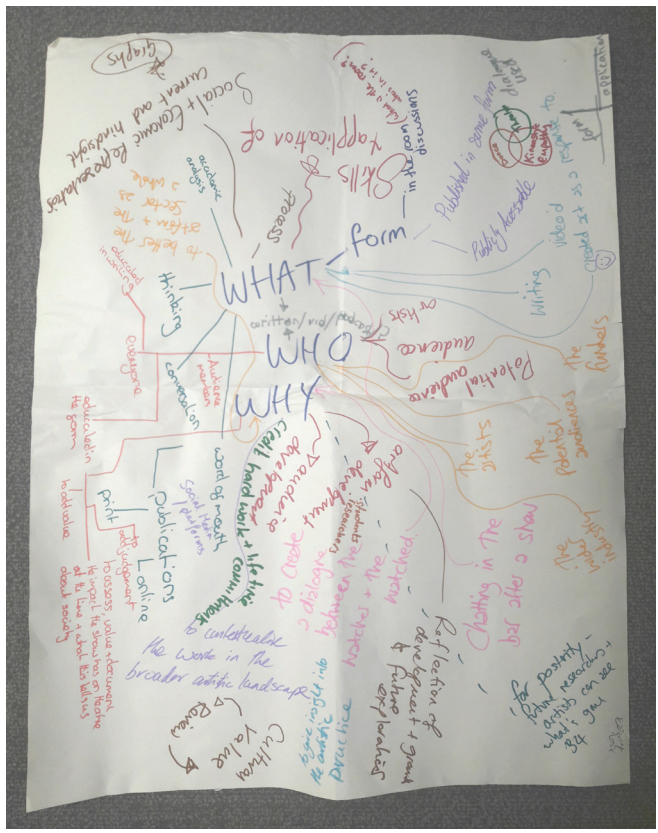

Figure 1: Example of raw Who What Why (WWW) data.

Another exercise was designed to engage participants with problems and successes of mainstream critical coverage of circus, from newspapers and online sources, through informal discourse analysis. This exercise ('Review The Reviews', RTR[12]), asked participants to read several reviews of one or two circus-based shows, keeping in mind the various purposes and readerships we had previously discussed. Annotations were made to mark elements of the reviews deemed useful or unhelpful, and anything else that struck the participants as noteworthy. Across the four editions of Circus Voices, comments were made on twenty-nine reviews taken from six different shows, both from print and online publications (some

12 Dataset of 575 items, drawn from coding 448 separate comments.

commercial, some independent blogs).

Finding enough reviews to make a comparative exercise was not an easy task for any of the Circus Voices editions and, despite my original intention to carry out the exercise based on shows all participants had seen as a group during each residency, this was not always possible—even in the hotbed of review culture that is Edinburgh Festival Fringe—so some comments came from a perspective of having seen the work in question, some from without. When even globally touring, commercially successful circus companies struggle to receive substantial critical coverage when they play in the UK, it would certainly seem that a change in the power-knowledge dynamic is required.

Comments in the RTR exercise were coded using a frame loosely derived from the *metafunctions* of systemic functional linguistics (Halliday)[13]. Within the context of this research, *experiential* comments refer to the denotational information content of the reviews, *textual* comments refer to the writerly qualities of the work—grammar, phrasing, coherence—and *interpersonal* comments refer to the personality, or 'voice' of the reviewer, including their stance of subjectivity or supposed objectivity. The results show especially high reference to the *experiential* content of the reviews, where further codes are based on the critical functions of *description, interpretation* and *judgement*[14], with the addition of *phenomenological* reporting of affect (see Figure 2). Over twice as many negative points were made about the reviews as positive. When participants mentioned *interpretation*, over a third of the comments directly disagreed with the reviewer's analysis, whilst another quarter described missing interpretations. Similarly, in mentions of reviewer *judgements*, less than 10% of comments were in agreement. These two facts pre-empt the tone of discussion around *description*. For nine positive comments about accuracy, there were 128 correspondingly

13 Within systemic functional linguistics (SFL) it is conventional to write network labels in small capitals and feature labels in italics. As my system is a bastardised version of SFL categorisation, I refrain from capitalising to avoid causing accidental confusion. Instead, I use italics to denote all categorical network labels, to distinguish them from normative use of the same words.
14 Following Edmund Feldman.

negative comments. These inaccuracies were ascribed to four major categories: *lack of attention* (factual errors in the recounting); *lack of respect* (including a notable number of complaints around uncredited or inconsistently credited performers); *inappropriate articulation* (empty terms and misleading representations); and, the most substantial complaint, *lack of knowledge*[15].

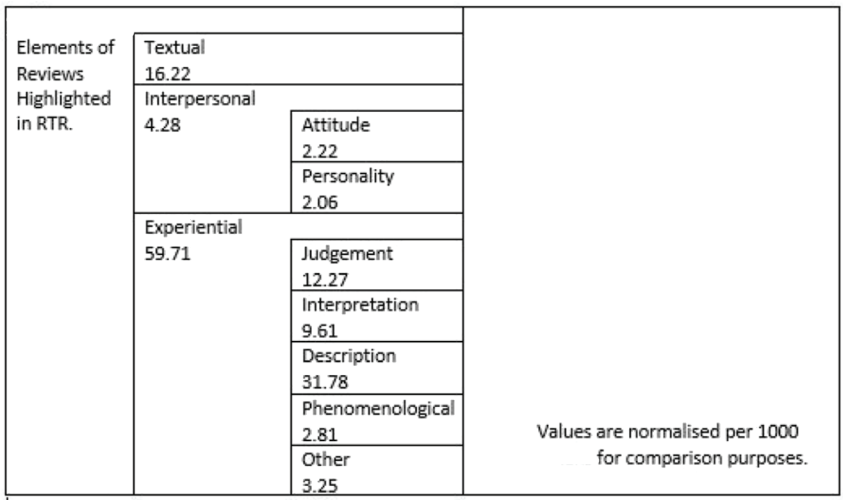

Figure 2: Comments in the 'Review The Reviews' exercise; shown here coded using a frame loosely derived from the metafunctions of systemic functional linguistics.

When *phenomenological* elements of the reviews are mentioned, nearly three quarters of the comments were explicitly in favour. This reflects a desire expressed through the *content suggestions* in WWW data for the reporting of *affect* (see Figure 3). Moreover, the main areas of importance under *content suggestions* are *evaluations* and *context*, mirroring inadequacies highlighted in the RTR exercise.

15 When analysed further, three particular problem area where knowledge was lacking were highlighted: industry knowledge, referring to people, companies, venues et cetera; genre context, referring to an understanding of the bigger picture of circus arts; and technical knowledge, referring to vocabularies of technique and equipment.

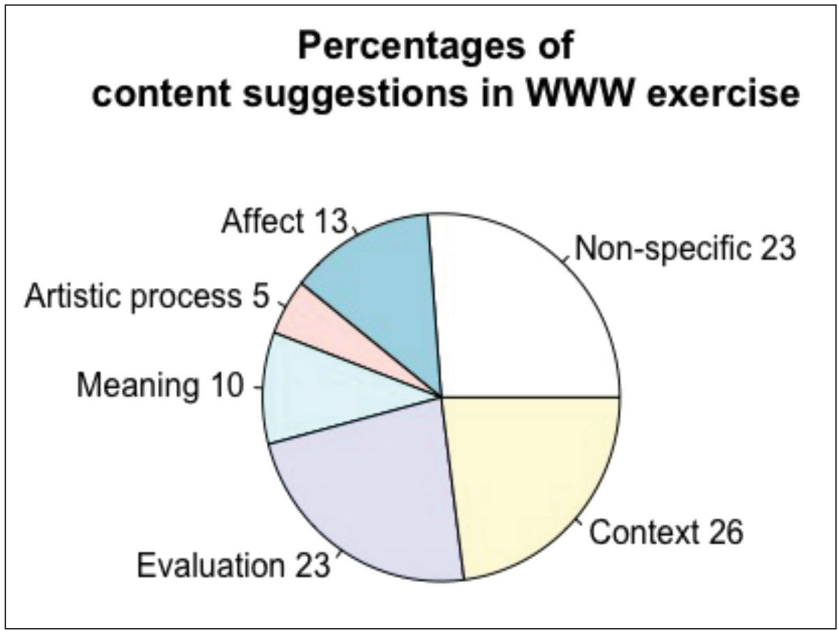

Figure 3: Pie chart of content suggestions in WWW exercise.

Finally, whilst *interpersonal* comments make up a very small number of items out of the whole RTR set (less than 5% of all considerations), the complete agreement across all instances is marked, praising a writer who acknowledges their subjective position, and showing a complete consensus against faux-objective writerly approaches. The important issues these analyses raise in relation to how criticism is perceived among circus practitioners can be simplified as a) a dominant sense that criticism's main function is as a marketing tool for artists, and b) a lack of circus knowledge among critics and irrelevance of content in public reviews (from which I surmise a disregard for criticism may well be based). Whilst this has been a small study, the quantitative findings empirically reinforce hitherto tacit suppositions of the problems that underlie attempts to develop a culture of critical discourse within the circus arts. These problems, though, are not the full story of the analysis. More encouraging are the creative solutions that have been proposed and developed by the 'Circus Voices' participants.

Moving Forwards

Without an entrenched relationship to particular critical norms—such as the 250-word newspaper column, or star ratings—the circus practitioners involved in this research were able to articulate an eclectic range of ways for critical discourse to emerge once they began to consider its potential role (see Figure 4). Of the few *purposes* that were explicitly mentioned, just under a fifth referred to *creating dialogue*, while just over a fifth acknowledged *artistic response* as a driver.

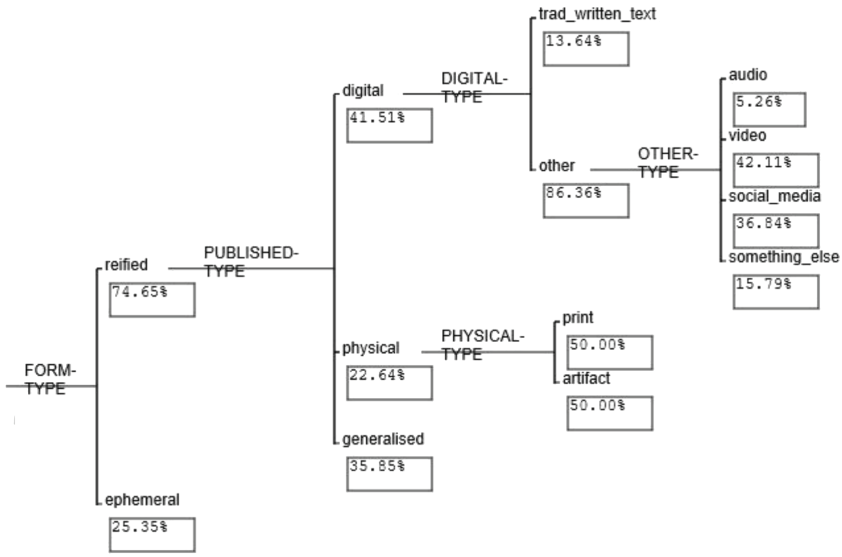

Figure 4: UAM CorpusTool visualization of WWW data expressing forms through which critique can be realised.

A reflection, perhaps, of the way digitally driven communication culture is diminishing the dominance of the written word as a transmitter of information, some of the forms of critical response that have come out of the 'Circus Voices' project have taken on a particularly visual identity. Rosie Kelly charts her response to work as it progresses, highlighting key moments, and theming her labels to generate a sense of the event's atmosphere (see Figure 5). Francesca Hyde has produced

concrete poetry that reflects the form of the work in question. *Wire-Do* (see Figure 6), is a solo tightwire and shibari performance with a very minimalist, zen-like aesthetic and *Gibbon* (see Figure 7), is a juggling show that's densely packed with formal, self-reflexive and lightly humourous patterning of bodies and objects, which these forms of artistic response capture and communicate. With each 'Circus Voices' group, we have also experimented with different forms of video response (Kavanagh n.d.). Many commentators have acknowledged the way mainstream performing arts criticism has been changing since the advent of the internet. Circus criticism should not try to fit itself into the box that theatre criticism is pushing out of. Introducing critical discourse into the circus sector, it is vital to remember this, and make the most of our unique opportunity to forge forward rather than trying to conform to a dominant mode that is arguably on its way out.

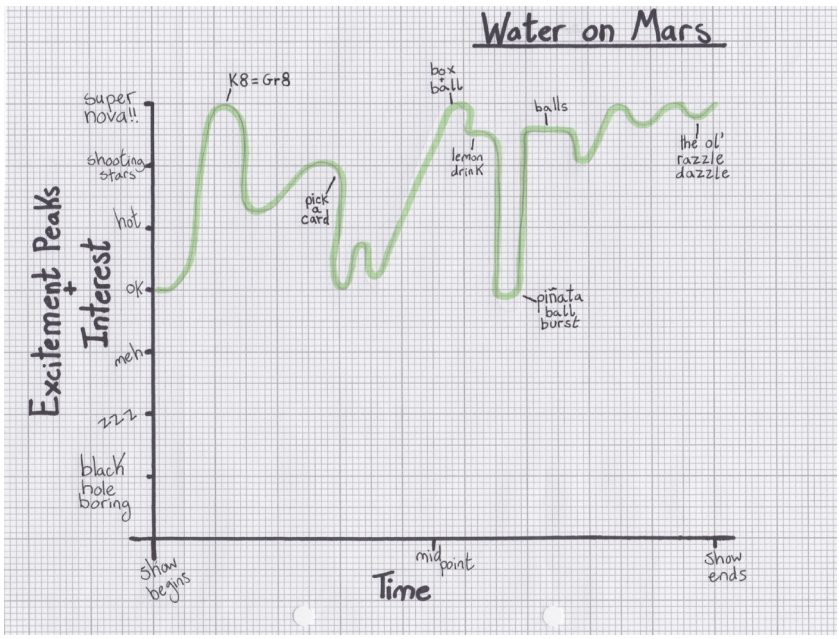

Figure 5: Rosie Kelly's response to 'Water on Mars', by Plastic Boom, August 2016.

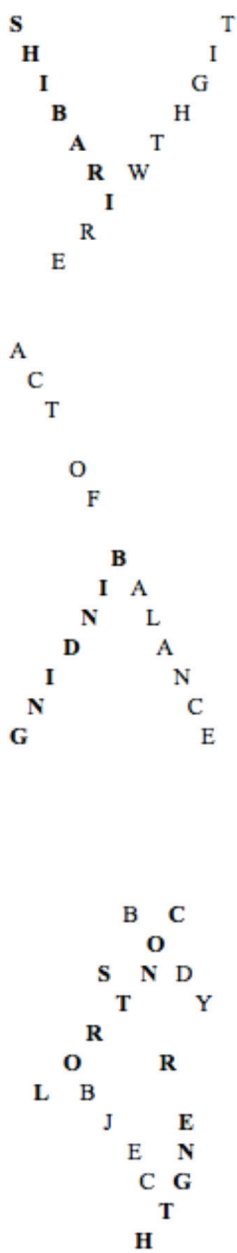

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Figure 6 (left): Francesca Hyde's response to 'WireDo', by Lumo Company, August 2018.

Figure 7 (right): Francesca Hyde's response to 'Gibbon', by Gandini Juggling, August 2018.

The Analysis Cube Model

The model I propose now as a tool for approaching critical discussion of circus comes in the visualisation of a cube. The circus analysis cube facilitates a process of critical engagement that can prompt discussion and stimulate thinking, opening space for previously unarticulated forms of knowledge to establish themselves in discourse. It has been used with circus students to develop awareness of their own tastes and drivers to inform their future creation work, and it can also be used to frame particular research questions for more academic study, allowing depth of insight to develop in specific areas. The cube visualisation is intersected on each of its three physical dimensions by axes representing dimensions of critical interest. These axes determine the parameters for discussion, and are selected according to the interests, tastes or other purpose of the critical analyst. Within a circus analysis cube, individual points can be plotted relating to particular objects of study, be they artists, institutions, or productions. This can be used as a starting point from which to further interrogate the relationship of the object to its three-dimensional position, or multiple objects can be plotted within the same axes to provide a basis for comparison. Importantly, the axes—or dimensions of interest—should be chosen in direct relevance to the individual critical task. Some examples are provided here, but these are by no means exhaustive or unalterable, and have come from the particular interests of circus practitioners who have participated in the development of this tool[16].

In one of the few of academic discussions of categories in twenty-first century circus practice, Bim Mason (204), identifies 'centres' and 'edges' of categorisation that can overlap and interchange, with qualities of fluidity increasing towards edge positions and with more

16 My thanks to all those who have contributed to the development so far: students of NCCA BA (Circus Arts), Circomedia MA (Directing Circus), and DOCH BA (Circus) and MA (Contemporary Circus Practices); attendees of the NoFit State Circus 2018 convention and 2019 Transitions Young Circus project; participants of the Roundhouse, Upswing and New Vic Theatre 50:50 directors programme; and Sebastian Kann for talking through early stage ideas with me. Thanks also, of course, go to all Circus Voices participants, past and future. Likewise to all Patreon supporters—you have helped make this research possible.

fixed qualities, temporarily solidified, in centres. The circus analysis cube is an extension of this notion. It encourage a move away from existing labels—inherited from circus-external powers reifying their own knowledge and thus reinforcing their power—towards finding new centres for examination and articulation that emerge from the lived practices of circus professionals and amateurs.

As an example, I shall briefly discuss one configuration of the model that I've found pertinent to the traditional reviewer role. Using the Cirkus Xanti/Ali Williams Productions show '*As A Tiger In The Jungle*' as a case study, I identify how the production sits in relation to my personal tastes (see Figure 8).[17] It should be emphasised that no area within the cube is inherently 'better' or 'worse' than any other and, in light of the discoveries discussed above, an acknowledgment of my subjective position in any critique should strengthen my argument to present the show in a fair manner. Neither are the dimensions quantifiable; they exist to give an idea of relational connections. The centre point is where all elements are balanced evenly.

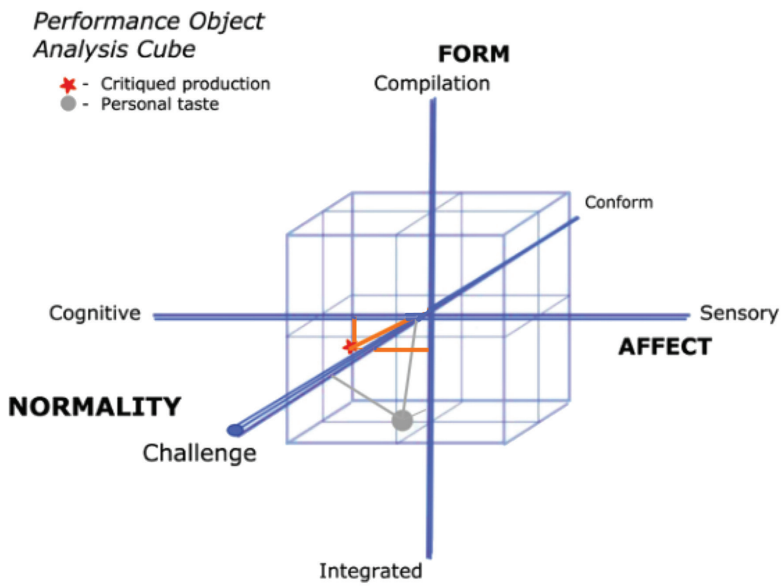

Figure 8: Example of Analysis Cube in use.

17 I worked on this show in Spring 2019 to provide audio description services, so am somewhat familiar with its internal mechanics.

The process of this positioning reveals that the production naturally falls into the region of work that most appeals to my own tastes (bottom-left-front). '*As A Tiger In The Jungle*' uses more narrative story-telling than I typically prefer, as the visualisation illustrates in its position tending more towards semiosis-led cognitive affect; the choreography of the routines is more separate from the overall meaning of the show than I would choose, tending more towards a compilation of separate elements than my personal preference for holistic integration (though still more integrated than compiled overall). This analysis allows me to check any snap judgements I might make about content being 'too spoonfed' or 'too disjointed', and to refer to these conditions in a more considered way. Furthermore, an interesting discussion around the dimension of 'Normality' is revealed through the difficulty I had trying to decide where to place my point along this axis. The production has been created in collaboration with Nepalese performers who were trafficked into Indian circuses as children, but who decided to continue making circus work on their own terms after being freed. While there is little about the semi-autobiographical show which challenges British ideas of what circus-theatre can be (besides, perhaps, its high-level execution and unusually deep and thought-provoking socio-political subject matter), in the context of Nepalese circus—and the experience of these particular performers—the entire approach is startlingly original and breaks from established patterns of conformity.

Examples of other potential dimensions for consideration in circus performance analysis are given in Figure 9. New lines can be created, even by 'folding' these suggested dimensions so that two ends of one axis combine to form one end of another. However, the cube can also be used to analyse the drivers that fuel creation or, in circus studies more broadly, the drivers that fuel circus engagement which may go beyond performance making and relate to personal health, social, or recreational pursuits. Whilst live performance is the public face of circus, it is itself only one fraction of the total field (see Figure 10).

Narrative	COMMUNICATION	Abstract
Scrappy	AESTHETIC	Slick
Choreography-based	EXPRESSION	Text-based
Resolved	ENDING	Suspended
Resonance	RESULT	Escapism
4th Wall	CONNECTION	Immersive participation
Evident	CONSTRUCTION	Hidden
Didactic	DELIVERY	Seductive
Provoke	ENGAGEMENT	Satisfy
Skills demonstration	INTENT	Concept communication
Innovation	APPROACH	Established
Habitual	CHOICES	Considered
Comfortable (for audiences/for artists)	SENSATION	Uncomfortable (for audiences/for artists)

Figure 9: Alternative suggestions for Analysis Cube axes.

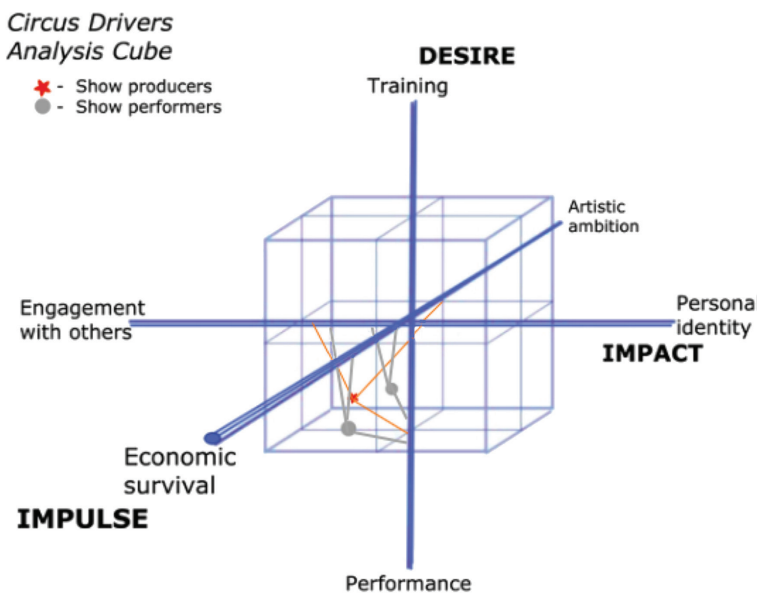

Figure 10: Example of Analysis Cube in use, *'As A Tiger In The Jungle'*.[18]

18 Although a full descriptive analysis here is beyond the scope of this paper, it is interesting to note the difference in financial motivations amongst the team—and the different strength of urge to engage with others—seemingly at play in this particular project.

In conclusion, I acknowledge that my suggestions will not be ultimate solutions, but are starting points to build from. This model is designed for use in educational environments—either formal or ad hoc—to bridge the cultural distance between circus and critical practices, to facilitate the development of a strong field of circus critique that articulates and engages with the perspectives of circus practitioners. When conversations generated by these cubes multiply and intersect, circus knowledge shifts through the process of its articulation. Or, put more accurately, the power-knowledge begins to shift. The ultimate goal is for the communicative codes available to circus artists to move away from restriction and into elaboration to redress the power imbalance in the current circus discourse.

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