

This is an extract from Reg Bolton's 2004 PHD thesis
"Why Circus Works"

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WHY CIRCUS WORKS

How the values and structures of circus make it a significant developmental experience for young people.

Reginald Bolton, B.A. (hons.), Cert. Ed.

This thesis is presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,

Murdoch University, Perth, in 2004

I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains, as its main content, work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

.....
(Reginald Bolton)

Acknowledgements

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Twenty-two institutions and two hundred and nineteen individuals are acknowledged in appendix 1 for their interviews. I wish to thank them and many others who have spared time to help my enquiry.

Ho Wing Wah (Loretta) has been pursuing a course parallel with mine, and besides her kind translating of some Chinese texts, her friendship and encouragement have been inspirational.

Abstract

Why Circus Works

How the values and structures of circus make it a significant developmental experience for young people

Circus is increasingly being used as a developmental and remedial activity for children. However, it is in the paradoxical nature of circus that it operates in a way both mysterious and easily accessible. This thesis proposes that circus as education is more effective when both teacher and student have a better understanding of circus as an art form.

To explain this I first introduce six 'elements' of childhood, whose absence often seems to result in an incomplete personal maturity. I then conduct a wide exploration of both the real and the imagined circus, showing how these elements occur or are evoked there, and I establish a correspondence or 'homology' between the two entities - childhood and circus. The discoveries shed light on the aesthetic code of circus itself, leading to the conclusion that circus works as an artform because its essential composition recalls profound experiences of childhood.

I argue that contemporary Western childhood presents unexpected hazards, mostly involving passivity and over-protection. In other parts of the world, and in some Western populations, childhood has other problems, linked to deprivation, exploitation and physical danger. In either case, a child involved in circus activities has a chance to make good some deficits, by experiencing constructive physical risk, aspiration, trust, fun, self-individuation and hard work. My hope is that this dissertation will contribute some strength to the case for well-designed programmes of circus activities for young people, in both formal and informal settings.

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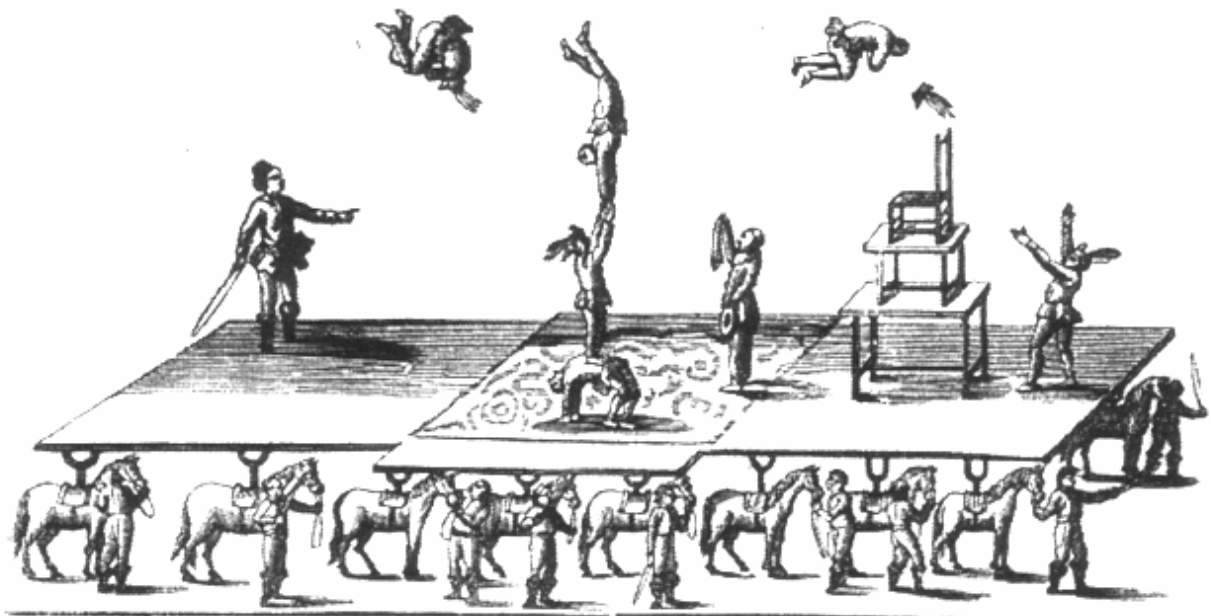
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Par Permission du ROI, & de Monseigneur le Lieutenant-Général de Police.

EXERCICES
SURPRENANS
DES SIEURS
ASTLEY,
RUE ET FAUXBOURG DU TEMPLE,

Aujourd'hui MERCREDI 27 Décembre 1786.



[To face p. 44.]

3. Astley's handbill, Paris, 1786.
(Facsimile from *The Memoirs of J. Decastro, Comedian*, London, 1824, facing p. 44.
Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, shelfmark M. adds. 123 e.63.)

1 Introduction: A Wilderness

The values and structures of circus make it a significant developmental experience for young people.

This is a correlational study of two fields, one of which is largely neglected, while the other is exhaustively studied. The former, circus, is remarkable for being a worldwide and centuries-old phenomenon which, with a few exceptions, has escaped academic analysis. Although there is a significant body of historical and biographical material, there is very little associated aesthetic, critical, theoretical, sociological, scientific or psychological work. In such a vast wilderness of non-scholarship, relieved occasionally by small oases of research, I can attempt no more than a general map of the area, indicating some suggested paths for future explorers. However, I shall stop to dwell on some particular features of circus, landmarks on the map, which suggest an association with the other partner in the hypothesis.

Pursuing the wilderness metaphor, I should like to clarify my intent by explaining that I plan to guide the reader in and safely out again. Some of the paths have been trodden before, and I hope to acknowledge the pioneers who have preceded us. As an ecologically aware traveller, I hope to cause no damage; 'leaving nothing but footprints, taking nothing but pictures'. There is no intention to 'develop' this wilderness, opening it to tourism, mining or housing. Much of the value and appeal of circus is that it is relatively unexplored and unexplained. We shall stop frequently to look closely at phenomena, some possibly 'unknown to science'. I shall attempt some description and explanation, then move on. My hope is that the reader will not become frustrated when some of the stops prove to be relatively short, for we have a lot of ground to cover. Very often we shall find, as Burke and Wills in Central Australia sadly did not, a tree with the word 'Dig' carved on it. At the very least, a bit of spadework will expose a footnote or two, and in most instances a complicated root system, a spring or a mineral lode warranting further careful investigation, and probably inspiring another thesis.

The other partner in the correlational study is the challenge of childhood - a child's developmental needs. Here we find a forest of research in sharp contrast to the desert of circus scholarship. Indeed we find ourselves among endless library shelves filled with theories, theses, case studies, statistics and policies.

My choice has been to make a subjective selection from this enormous field. I shall begin by introducing just six 'elements' I consider integral to a child's growth, and briefly examine some of the theory and research associated with each one. My choice is based primarily on my own thirty years' experience of circus-in-education. As a trained primary school teacher, I am well aware of the expected growth stages of the child, and I can often sense if there is a gap or a lack in his/her development. Chapter two will introduce these specific deficiencies so that, as we then explore the tracks and tracts in the circus landscape, we shall bear these elements in mind, aware always of possible associations and comparisons.

Emerging with a greatly improved knowledge of what circus is, what its values and structures are, we shall again look closely at those six chosen elements in the development of children and young people. Testing the hypothesis that there is a fruitful correspondence between the two paradigms, we shall draw on examples from my own and others' experience. One by one, we shall examine each element, and see how the young person's developmental needs may be met by exposure to circus activities.

1.1 Epigraphs, Quotations, Citations and Translations

I quote others only the better to express myself.
Michel de Montaigne

Most of the forty-nine sections of this work are headed by an epigraph, and most contain quotations. I have made every effort to attribute correctly all quoted passages in bibliography 1, although some classical references, like Montaigne (above), stand alone. The epigraphs serve as overtures to each new section, sometimes to introduce a new thought, sometimes to provoke, sometimes to suggest concepts that the section cannot contain. Quotations within the text are usually accompanied by comment, but not always. If another writer's words appear in isolation, it is because I have chosen to quote a passage which I cannot improve, and which needs no explanation.

The citation system is in a modified MLA style, allowing the reader to source each reference in the separate bibliographies of books and articles, juvenile sources, films, songs and miscellaneous items. For works quoted within the text, original page numbers are cited. Elsewhere, authors and/or works are referred to if they are of interest or influence. Footnotes occur in places where I have things to say which would otherwise interrupt the flow of the text. They may contain examples, comparisons and references, or observations that I feel impelled to include.

I have taken the liberty to translate passages of several authors from French into English. Where this occurs, I will indicate 'trans. Bolton' at the first occurrence of each work. I apologise now if I have not done justice to the authors' intentions. If an interview is cited in the text, it is with me, and details will be found in bibliography three.

1.2 The Shape of the Thesis

'and what is the use of a book,' thought Alice, 'without pictures or
conversations?' Lewis Carroll

Much as I enjoy reading literature uninterrupted by bullet points, I have decided to divide these hundred thousand words into digestible sections within chapters. The argument of the thesis will be pursued throughout the work, but the lands to be surveyed and the roads to be travelled are so many, that I feel we may get lost in a continuity of seamless prose. Like Alice, I am conscious of the demands made on the reader, and while resisting the temptation to fill the work with pictures and

conversations, I have at least broken it up with sections, epigraphs and quotations chosen to be as ornamental as they are appropriate.

Throughout the dissertation I shall be looking for examples of homology between the two fields, circus and childhood. Occasionally I shall spend time looking through a representation or manifestation of circus and find few associations to report. However, in the interest of mapping the whole landscape, I have included even the less fruitful areas, for comparison.

1.3 Voice

I think that I think, therefore, I think that I am.
Ambrose Bierce, *The Devil's Dictionary*

For a writer to explain his voice is a bit like a painter exhibiting his brushes. However, throughout my thirty years in the field I have had to choose the appropriate voice from a range including performer, clown, teacher, researcher, administrator, broadcaster and writer for both adults and children. Given these circumstances I have had to think carefully about how to present this thesis. Clearly, the first person plays a part. It would be crass and clumsy to avoid it. The 'I' in these pages will necessarily vary from raconteur to analyst, from protagonist to sceptic, hoping never to become the evangelist.

Because so much of the support material in my argument has been collected first hand, I cannot avoid 'being there'. The credibility of the thesis does not depend on the length, depth and range of my experience in the field. Obviously the work must stand alone. If I occasionally cite my own experiences to illustrate a point, it is done as just another instance, to add to the totality of the argument in each case.

Regarding the thorny question of gender-specific pronouns, may I quote from the preface of one of my own books on circus?

I would like to point out that this is an equal opportunity book. However, I find it inelegant to write 'him/her' or 'she/he' in the text, when of course I fully believe that both girls and boys can and should do everything. So sometimes I write 'him' and sometimes 'her'. If I tend, occasionally, to paint moustaches on boys, and rosy cheeks on girls, it is in the spirit of evoking Circus as it has been. Everything else in this book is in the spirit of Circus as it can be.
(Bolton 1988 p.1)

1.4 Theory

I reckon thinking stuffs it.
Circus Oz clown

In moving towards an answer to the question 'How does Circus work?' I have considered various frameworks upon which to arrange assumptions, test hypotheses and reach a theory. None of the available literary/cultural theoretical frameworks seemed to satisfy the multi-disciplinary nature of my enquiry, although some results of my endeavours remain, and will be found in the section 'A Circus Of Theory', at the end of 3.3.

I am aware of circus studies being undertaken in the fields of Anthropology, Sociology, Education and Social Work, all of which have their own established and developing investigative methods.

Different readerships would expect different tools of enquiry - from the rigours of empirical science to the random creativity of post-modernism. Wondering if it is possible to satisfy all readers, I came to realize that many frameworks are self-referential. A scientific experiment generally pre-supposes the application of scientific principals. A feminist enquiry would have no credibility if it depended on a 'liberal humanist' framework, with its pantheon of dead white males, or psychoanalytical theory, with the alleged misogynist Freud lurking in the shadows. No, feminist enquiry demands feminist theory; post-colonialism uses post-colonialism and so on.

One of the twin themes of my research into 'Why Circus Works' relates to that significant moment when an outsider becomes an insider. It is tempting to use the image of a mirror, of stepping through a looking glass. Anton C. Zijderveld's 'Analysis of Traditional Folly' is entitled *Reality in a Looking Glass*. (Zijderveld, 1982, p. 11) He quotes Langland's *Piers Plowman* where the goddess Fortune bids him look through The Mirror of the World, and of course he quotes Lewis Carroll's *Alice*. I would add George MacDonald's *Lilith* where again the hero steps through the uncrossable barrier into a world of enchantment. Yet there is no looking glass to be seen in the circus ring (except the empty one in the classic clown gag).

When I feel the need of a visible analogy, with which to argue my points, instead of the mirror, I shall look at what is really there in the circus, and refer to the *ring*, and the *ring door*. Outside the ring sits the audience; those who pay, visit and then leave; those who talk about the circus as they saw it from the benches. Within the ring are the circus people, the performers, those with the knowledge. Behind the performers is the ring door (usually velvet curtains). This, like the ring perimeter, is a very significant border. I am always fascinated to watch that moment, at the end of an act, when the spangled performer, with her cloak and high heels, finally turns her back on us, and exits through that curtain. We catch glimpses of the next act, the ponies, or the juggler, oddly static, waiting. We observe that behind the curtain the light is dimmer, the space crowded, the mood is functional, the angels have become human again as they pass back through that ring door. In reverse, in a tableau so attractive to painters

such as Toulouse-Lautrec, Robert Riggs and Laura Knight, we see past the dark backs of the waiting artists to the glowing excitement of that other domain where the magic happens, the ring itself.

Realizing that theoretical systems can be self-referential, the strength and universality of the physical structure of circus now becomes very attractive as a framework for its own analysis. Many of the more serious books on circus history and theory seem to be trivialised by the catchy and pithy nature of their titles. Mark St Leon's excellent *The Circus in Australia* is actually entitled *Spangles and Sawdust* (1983). Toole-Scott's *Circus and Allied Arts: a World Bibliography (1958-1971)* actually cites four other books with that same title. Helen Stoddart's *Circus History and Representation* has as its main title, the pun *Rings of Desire* (2000). *A Seat at The Circus* (1980), *Under the Big Top* (Feiler, 1995), *Here Comes The Circus* (Verney, 1978), *Hold Yer Hosses!* (Sherwood, 1932) and *I Love You Honey, but the Season's Over* (Clausen, 1961) are all very respected books in the field, but like circus itself, these titles do not demand respect, and belie the integrity of what lies within. Hans Brick's autobiography has possibly the worst title of the lot. It is a book packed with the experience and wisdom of a very gifted animal trainer, and is inexplicably entitled *Jungle Be Gentle* (1960). The American edition is a great improvement - *The Nature of the Beast*.

These aberrations may be explained by the enthusiasm and blinkered vision of the publishers' marketing directors. However, a mystery which is only now becoming clear to me is why so many excellent books on circus have adopted the predictable and corny structure of a circus programme in order to cover the history, development, variations, controversies and future of Circus. Hippisley-Coxe, in his book *A Seat at the Circus* (1980), has the following chapters (my comments in brackets):

'Overture' (introduction), 'A Grand Parade' (history), 'Voltige' (including equestrian origins of circus), 'The Strong Man', 'Performing Animals', 'Liberty Horses', 'Daredevils', 'The Interval' (reminiscences of circuses he has known), 'The Big Cage', 'Aerial Acts', 'La Haute Ecole', 'Jugglers', 'Ground Acrobats', 'Clowns' Entrée', 'Finale' (thoughts on the dynamics of circus presentation, and on its future).

This break-down of book sections to correspond to the acts in a circus programme is cute, it is memorable, and this is why I have resisted it. However, as I shall suggest in the section on circus as metaphor (3.2) and in circus of theory (3.3), my chosen subject has itself the potential to provide the theoretical framework not only for its own investigation, but also for other, seemingly unrelated studies. I rely on the imagination of the reader to see how circus theory could be used to analyse some of the following possible scenarios:

'Politician as Clown'

'Getting it Right: the intangible correctness of skate-boarding, hip-hop and juggling'

'Over the Ringmaster's Shoulder - an Analysis of Confidence in Management'

'The Circo-anthropology of a Classroom'

'The Goal-Umpire, the Traffic Cop and the Mime- the Anthro-semiotics of Gesture'

'Look at me, Mum! - Appropriate Showing Off in Childhood'

So, with the confidence of this discovery, I intend to allow myself what I initially tried to avoid: occasionally to use as a theoretical framework, the circus itself.

1.5 Literature Review

If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.
Isaac Newton, 1643 - 1727. (An early circus metaphor?)¹

In chapter three I shall review representations of circus seen through many lenses, including those worn by academic researchers and analysts (3.3). This body of writers would normally be expected to appear comprehensively cited in this literature review, so perhaps an explanation is needed. Here in this section, I am specifically looking at the literature on youth circus. So among my eight categories of theorists, the only ones to feature here are some educationalists, being the only ones with direct relevance to the practice of youth circus. The others, concerned with semiotics, aesthetics, anthropology and so on, will be reviewed later, as just another external representation of circus. This literature review, then, will not confine itself to academic literature.²

This thesis is proudly eclectic. It has to be, given the lack of scholarship in the field of circus in education. There have been many publications by circus companies, including *Ringling Brothers, Barnum and Bailey* in the USA, *Circus Royale* in Australia, and the U.K. *Circus Friends Association*, designed to be teacher-friendly, offering facts of circus life and jolly classroom projects, but ultimately designed to put little bums on seats.

There is also a body of books for children on 'How to do Your Own Circus' which I review in section 3.7. Their significance lies in the changing techniques and attitudes towards the young readers. Techniques gradually change from impractical dressing up and pretending, towards the rigour and discipline actually needed in circus life. The attitude to the reader changes perceptibly from the 1923 *How to Put on an Amateur Circus* which suggests it should be "a burlesque circus [...] entirely a home made affair" (Hacker and Eames, p. 9), to the 2000 publication *Le Cirque* which features mature advice from professional performers to young aspirants. (Laurendon and Laurendon, 2000).

A third source is occasional journals, leaflets, and newsletters published by youth circuses, circus schools and organizations. Some significant items are listed in the

¹ Hal Abelson's version - 'If I have not seen as far as others, it is because giants were standing on my shoulders' - fits the many youth circus practitioners whose busy lives have not given them enough time for reflection. This review highlights some who have taken the time.

² More writings will be reviewed in sections 3.3 and 3.4 as I trawl the depths of circus theory and criticism, looking for traces of our six syntenic elements.

bibliography but many others are lost among global ephemera apparently made redundant, as such material moves from print to the digital media. Around the world there are several important collections, such as the private archives of Dietmar and Gisela Winkler in Berlin, Hovey Burgess in New York, and Jean-Paul Jenack in Florida.

Other collections pile up, fragmented in filing cupboards of government departments, schools and youth clubs. Many youth circuses have survived three generations, e.g. *Elleboog* (Amsterdam) and *Sailor Circus*, Sarasota (Florida), coincidentally both established in 1949. *Elleboog's* archives are extensive, and tell a story of a steady increase in size and scope, a name change from 'Circus' to 'Theatre', and later to 'Circus Theatre', and Amsterdam's changing demographic distribution. Successive policy documents tell of a change in attitude towards the participating children, and, most recently, in 2002, *Elleboog* contracted me to review their entire operation, and subsequent discussion of my report has resulted in another policy change, the appointment of an artistic director, and an intention to redress the balance which had been increasingly tilted towards pedagogy, and neglecting the 'magic' of creativity and circus heritage.

Robert Sugarman's *Circus for Everyone: Circus Learning Around the World* (2001) eclipses my *New Circus* (1986) and itself shines more light on the spread of circus as a developmental curricular and extra-curricular activity for children. Sugarman's attitude to 'circus learning' is that of an explorer who has discovered a new land. The tone of his book is overwhelmingly positive. He declares that "writing this book has been such an adventure for the author, a retired academic whose area of specialization has, heretofore, been theater" (p. 12). In 1995 he met Alla Youdina, then Creative Director of new acts for *Ringling Brothers, Barnum and Bailey Circus*. He watched her creating a new act, and "intrigued by this process he had seen, the author set out to discover how circus performers came to be that" (p. 12).

Circus for Everyone provides a considerable networking and inspirational resource for those in the field, and a revelation to those who are not. Twenty-four professional circus schools are listed and dozens of circus clubs, camps, programmes and networks. Interviews with Rob Mermin of *Circus Smirkus*, Paul K Pugh of *Wenatchee Youth Circus* and many others, give insight into the way these trainers combine a feel for circus acts with often instinctive understanding of child development. Sugarman lists as many as he could find, in 2001, of professional training schools, community- and youth-circuses, circus camps and school curriculum and extra-curricula units. Apart from a considerable job of research and cataloguing, Sugarman also analyses what he sees as the benefits of youth circus. He sees circus as:

- ✍ a team sport that is not competitive
- ✍ structuring each step as a plateau for further achievement
- ✍ providing self-esteem for those struggling academically
- ✍ bringing outsiders in
- ✍ difficult, therefore teaching good work habits
- ✍ authentic in a world becoming ever more 'virtual'

His main observations have been in the USA, and my many visits there confirm the multiform development of youth circus there as elsewhere. AYCO, the American Youth Circus Organization, founded in 2001, and its very successful biennial festival, reveal a spectrum from high achieving professional training, often European or Asian inspired, to community youth groups happy just to 'get the kids off the streets'.

In *New Circus*, I wrote, "A common factor I have discovered in many children's circuses around the world is the presence of one charismatic figure who loves children and circus in equal measure" (p. 33). This is still true in many instances, whilst there are also numerous excellent youth circuses run by collectives or elected boards. However, this thesis will indicate that the balance of these two passions, of these two areas of understanding, is what is necessary for the best successes in this field.

An inspiration for the present author was the book I discovered in the late seventies, *The Children's Republic: The Country behind the Circus Muchachos* (Mobius, 1976). It is the story of Los Muchachos (the youngsters, the lads) whose circus was formed by Cesar Silva Mendez (Padre Silva) in Bemposta, Spain, with boys in a residential home. Circus became the creative focus of the 'Nation of Boys', and:

[t]his year [2001] the youngsters will celebrate the 36th anniversary of their debut in Plaza Cataluna in Barcelona. We have visited 85 countries over the five continents, gone to hundreds of cities, done thousands of presentations and two million people have enjoyed our shows. (Silva, quoted in Simpson, 2002, p. 35)

Padre Silva is still active and busy and was an honoured guest at the 2002 'International Round Table on Circus and Social Work' in La Seyne-sur-Mer, France. His credo/homily, printed in the 'Rencontres' programme reads:

Circus blood is in my veins. I could have been a clown or a trapezist. I am a Priest in order to send people a message of happiness, peace and love. I love children. And I have dedicated the best of my childhood dreams to them. Caring about children pushed me to create, in 1965, "La Nacion de los Muchachos".

That same year, shortly after becoming a priest, I joined the multicoloured circus caravans in Spain. Since then, most Spanish circuses have been blessed by the presence of Christ, from above blessing and applause, risk and magic. It became one of the most beautiful prayers to come from the heart of these nomads, messengers of a dream for the paths of the world.

These two were my favourite missions: Circus and children. Why not put them together? (ibid, p. 36).

In searching for a 'literature' on the subject of circus and young people, we find many frustrating examples like this - where the words and ideals are simply and passionately expressed, not couched in any methodology beyond enthusiasm and aspiration. The practical work itself, like the work of poets, painters and musicians is the essential literature. Unlike the work of these artists, so much of circus is ephemeral and

forgotten, carried only by a collective cultural memory, and the inadequate archives of programmes, posters and reviews.

In chapter three I shall review representations of circus seen from many angles, including the attentions of academic researchers and writers. One category is the educationalists. There will be crossovers between the study of youth circus and circus in education. Here in this section, I am specifically looking at the literature on youth circus outside the school curriculum, although my findings will involve a merging of these streams.

Now, we move on to some accredited academic writers who have given attention to the general subject of youth circus, and here follows a brief summary of work from four countries.

In France, Hughes Hotier has done most to enlighten the field of circus in education. His *Cirque Educatif* has operated an annual big top season since 1975. He is an advocate of 'Le Cirque Traditional' and himself appears sometimes as M. Loyal (Ringmaster) or an Auguste clown. His *Fichier [Dossier] du Cirque Educatif* describes his organisation as:

a popular cultural movement which tries, at the same time, to promote the values of traditional circus, and make of them this basis for an attractive pedagogy, and finally to reconstitute a future public to put the circus arts back into our cultural heritage. (Hotier, 1999, p. 1, trans. Bolton)

As the French government recently spent \$16,600,000 on a Year of Circus Arts, (2001,2002) benefiting both traditional and new circuses, clearly, it has never strayed far from that country's cultural heritage. (Baillet, 2001, p. 72). Hotier, however, although at the forefront of the revolutionary promotion of circus as education, is less than enamoured of the radical, confronting manifestations of new circus, so much of which is created by his compatriots. He seems to have *Archaos* in his sights in this passage from *Cirque Communication and Culture*:

New forms of spectacle have claimed the name "circus" on the pretext that they are presented in a ring under a big top. Others, despite themselves are seen as circus even though they refute the name. All this is confusing to the potential public. The horses don't whinny anymore, they throb. And solvent has replaced the shovel for tidying up after them. They want us to believe that grease has replaced dung in this modern age. In our polluted streets, possibly, but in the ring, we know what we want to see [...]" (Hotier, 1995, p. 11, trans. Bolton)

This jibe does not fully represent Professor Hotier's wide knowledge of circus, old and new, and his well-based belief in the essentially integral qualities of what he calls traditional circus. He sees circus as an organic product of society:

but it seems that, for several years, it has not been able to follow its natural evolution. It is true that this is not simple for an art form inscribed in a

tradition. Sometimes it stagnates, and sometimes, in reaction, it abandons itself to highbrow aberrations and loses all credibility (p. 69).

Hotier actually uses the word 'intello', which I have represented here with 'high-brow'. It is interesting that in English, the word 'intellectual' is often derogatory in itself. Not so in France, so 'intello' represents the pseudo-intellectuals, rather than "true philosophers who help us to think and to understand and to progress our knowledge" (p. 69, footnote 42).

Hotier's semiological and cultural works certainly "progress our knowledge", although his candour and personal aesthetic may challenge some current ideologies. His more recent work on circus as education, has also stirred up critics. A reviewer in *Arts de la Piste*, reviewing Hotier's *Un Cirque Pour Education* (2001) resents the fact that Hotier's 1992 production parodied *Archaos* - an ultra modern 'chain-saw' circus. What is so refreshing for a non-French researcher is to see that this debate exists at all. Not only 'intellos' but also intellectuals (*Arts de la Piste* is full of impressive critics) can publicly debate the role of circus as education. The reviewer, Marc Moreigne, seems to have a fundamental opposition to using circus as a pedagogical tool, or instrument of social intervention, claiming that Hotier ignores circus as an "artistic project with multiple aesthetics" (Moreigne, 2001, p.47).

The 2002 colloquium *La Fonction Educations du Cirque*, organized by *Cirque Educatif* resulted in the book of the same name, edited by Hotier (2003). Papers, including mine about circus in the Australian Central Desert³, came from researchers, teachers, circus school trainers, and social workers. Nothing like this collection has been published in English yet.

The keynote speaker, with the most substantial contribution to this collection, is Hubert Montagner, professor of psychophysiology and psychopathology. His paper is entitled "In What Way Can Circus Help the Child/Student Construct and Reform Himself?" and is a deep analysis of the psychological effects of watching circus, and the physical/social effects of learning circus. He is particularly keen to show how circus can activate the mind and body of the solitary or 'dormant' child.

Many of the other writers in this book are educationalists, whose studies show how a circus programme reduces absenteeism and develop students' commitment to school. Unfortunately none of the contributors answers the question, 'If it is so good, then why is it not more widespread?' In my research, I have recorded over one hundred thoughtful answers to this question. Most interviewees assume that it is everywhere. Others cite insurance concern and lack of teacher training. The most perceptive answer came from a 12-year-old girl at an Australian Circus Festival. "We don't want our school teachers to teach us circus - they would spoil it!" (Interview, 2000). This is very close to Hotier's conclusion to *La Fonction Educative du Cirque* in which he cautions that the institutionalisation of circus in education must not alter "la vraie nature du cirque". (2003, p. 236).

³ "Un Cirque Dans Une Valise", a translation of "Suitcase Circus".

Sharon McCutcheon, a high school theatre arts teacher in New South Wales, presented, for her M.A., a considerable paper, *Negotiating Identity Through Risk: A Community Circus Model for Evoking Change and Empowering Youth* (2003). Her methodology involves post-hoc longitudinal data gathered in many forms, from five case studies - school circus programmes in New South Wales and Western Australia. Her literature review is extensive and covers linked disciplines of community arts, youth culture, risk, and scholastic, physical, sociological and mental effects of circus in schools. Interestingly, she dwells on the question posed in the previous paragraph - the obstacles and prejudices facing circus programmes, and laments "a gap in the literature on circus in education as to how circus actually attracts young people and how it works". (p. 106). Her thesis, and the present work, will go towards filling that gap.

McCutcheon's conclusions underpin many of the theories I have developed in this research. Among her 'principles' are the necessity of safe risk, of magic and of performance. Echoing the points made earlier, she also concludes, "Circus tutors need [...] most importantly passion, enthusiasm and respect for circus and the innate abilities of young people." (p. 127).

Olivia Ricken's honours thesis at Bielefeld University, Germany, is entitled *Circus Teaching in Child and Youth Work* (2001). She reports on three case studies from Bemposta, Amsterdam and Berlin, and draws on her contacts with some of the hundreds of youth circuses in Germany. Listing specific skills like equilibristics, acrobalance, juggling and clowning, she examines their particular challenges and values. The thesis has special emphasis on the development of the child's motor and social skills, and also deals with the success of circus activities with marginalized groups. In this section she asks the provocative questions, "social integration through circus - is it a contradiction in terms?" Her examples of work with immigrant groups, 'unsporting' children and children of different ages show that circus, although itself seen as a marginalized world, can be an agent of integration.

At the Sorbonne, Paris, Brigitte Bailly is working on a PhD thesis in socio-anthropology, on circus as an intervention tool for helping young people in difficulty. For years she has been associated with *Cirque Pour Tous*, a French based organization which founded *Circo Para Todos* now a full-time circus school in Cali, Colombia. Like the *Belfast Community Circus*, *Cirque Pour Tous* puts evaluation as a high priority, and Brigitte Bailly has conducted a thorough examination of the project in Cali, which will no doubt inform her PhD thesis. As an interim measure, she presented a paper *Circus: an Interventional Tool Suitable for Young People in Difficulty*, at the international gathering on circus and social work, in La Seyne-sur-Mer, France 2002. In common with many of the South American delegates at that gathering, she demonstrates little sympathy for the indulgent make-believe youth circuses of the affluent north. She emphasizes aspects of 'social circus' which become starkly clear in the context of one of the world's most dangerous cities - Cali:

Circus is a tool of emancipation for girls and for equality of the sexes [...]
Circus breaks the 'aid' paradigm which prevails in work with "youth at risk"
(Bailly, 2002, p. 3).

The problem, according to researchers who have examined this theme, is that the perception of the child as victim leads to a denial of competencies and potential, and so he is considered first and foremost as an object, in an assistance equation. The logic underlying the [circus] project in Cali is different. The participant is not considered a victim or a potential malefactor, but as a student. The young people live up to these expectations. (ibid. p. 4)

Bailly is no blind idealist, and her observations of newly acquired solidarity, co-operation and esprit-de-corps take her looking beyond the circus school to the children's lodging houses, where all is not instantly transformed to peace and joy. Violence still exists there,

and this point should make us think about the limits of social circus programmes; it seems to me that circus can help develop the harmony of the individual, but to change social conditions - that is a political issue, and the best intentions and the best strategies of social circus are no substitute. It is important to remember this when setting one's objectives (ibid. p. 5).

I have begun to use the term 'Social Circus'. This is one used in Montreal by *Cirque de Monde* - the humanitarian arm of internationally successful *Cirque du Soleil*. Their promotional brochure explains:

Despite [Soleil's] success, Cirque's first performers have not forgotten their origins [as street performers]. Now they would like to share the challenges and magic of circus arts with young people in difficult circumstances, especially those who live on the streets (Cirque du Monde, 2001).

Cirque de Monde runs three assistance programmes.⁴ In 1996, Paul Laporte, Director of Social Affairs and International Cooperation for *Cirque de Soleil*, instituted a research programme, which he explained to me in Montreal:

We hope to demonstrate through academic research that joint action involving the public, community and private sectors, and using the circus arts as a teaching method, is an investment that holds great promise for the new millennium. (Interview, Laporte, 2001)

The millennium is upon us, and we may expect a cascade of research work from Canada, as researchers in sociology, physiology and psychology are co-funded by *Cirque de Soleil* to evaluate the work. An early report, by Nicole Ollivier, entitled *The Social Artist and Cirque de Monde* starts badly. "It has been nearly a decade already since circus artists began taking part in 'actions and intervention' projects aimed at youth in difficulty". (2000, p. 3). Having worked in community circus projects in Craigmillar and Pilton, Edinburgh's most deprived suburbs, three decades ago, I prepared myself for a

⁴ 1. Substantial funding of some established groups, e.g. *Circo Para Todos* and *Circus Ethiopia*.
2. The placement of social circus trainers (always with local partnerships).
3. Free tickets for *Cirque du Soleil* shows (which may be traded).

Information from interviews with Paul Laporte, Montreal and Susan van Esch, Amsterdam.

blinkered vision of our history. As will happen in all research of this kind (and my work is no exception) the bias, the background, the culture of the writer will show through in the work. Ollivier, in her search for the essence of the social artist, draws on the Latin-American 'agit-prop' tradition of Boal and Freire, rather than a direct historic antecedent of community circus in Europe which germinated in Paris and Amsterdam in the late 1960's with *Le Grand Magic Circus*, and the *Festival of Fools*.

She quotes Fellini, "I know nothing/everything about circus". This brilliant observation epitomizes the arrogance that so many of us bring to the study of circus - where an apparent absence of scholarship presents a sort of academic virgin territory in which anyone may plant a flag. We look forward to the new papers as they come from Montreal. In such a new field, none of us can claim the high ground, and it is always interesting to see the subject analysed through different theories, different disciplines.

Orla Muldoon of the Queen's University, Belfast, produced a research paper of interest (1996): "St Patrick's Training School is a residential establishment for boys between the ages of ten and seventeen years who have been awarded a Training School Order (TSO) for either Care and Control or Detention due to criminal activities." This study evaluates the responses and the developments of the boys who took part in weekly circus workshops with tutors from Belfast Community Circus. The study had two streams - quantitative data in each boy's portfolio, generated by the circus tutors' assessment of the boy's progress, and a qualitative study based on ongoing interviews with the boys (for which they were paid \$10). The researcher's conclusions indicate clear improvement in the boys' behaviour, physical skills and feelings of self-worth, though she cautions that this is all taking place in a closed environment and may not translate to their life and behaviour in the outside world. Her stress on the circus students' control over their environment has echoes of the work of Sharon McCutcheon at Bateman's Bay Senior High School, New South Wales, as expounded in her thesis (2003).

As I said earlier, this is a rapidly growing field, and we may expect many new relevant publications in the near future. *Kaskade*, the European juggling journal, has a regular column, 'Bibliographic Notes', frequently citing scholarly papers on aspects of circus and circus in education. I have not been able to review much of what is available in German, and none of what I imagine must be available in Russian and Finnish, judging by the wide networks of youth circus in those countries.

2 The Challenges of Childhood

Too often a lacklove childhood combined with a minimum of tactile stimulation, compounded by the experience of a Public School, produced a rather emotionally arid human being who was quite incapable of warm human relationships. Such individuals made efficient governors of the British Empire, since they were seldom capable of understanding genuine human need.

Ashley Montagu, *Touching: The Human Significance of the Skin*, 1971, (p. 262)

There are many conflicting theories of childhood development, but many agree on one point: that there are stages that an individual must go through to achieve a wholesome maturity.⁵ This thesis suggests that, in many cases, this maturity is not being reached. Brazelton, in *The Irreducible Needs of Children*, includes "the need for developmentally appropriate experiences" as one of his seven needs. (Brazelton, 2000). His list has much in common with the UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child, (United Nations Organisation, 1959) and other such charters. In this thesis, I am not concerned with re-iterating these rights and needs, but rather in identifying deficits in contemporary Western childhood experiences.

Today, perhaps more than ever before, a lot of adults in Western societies spend a lot of time having fun, taking risks, and exhibiting other childish behaviour. However, a stable society is predicated on the assumption that adults will behave like adults.⁶ When they do not, either they are punished (for inappropriate sexual, physical or proprietary behaviour) or the code of acceptable behaviour is stretched to fit the particular cultural modality. Thus in Australia, the widespread inclination towards sport, partying, waste and greed - which can be seen as very infantile attributes - is incorporated into what is acceptable, even laudable, behaviour. The Australian Prime Minister, at a moment of national grief, in Bali, October 2002, proudly and defiantly defended the Australian's right to party:

Our nation has been changed by this event. Perhaps we may not be so carefree as we have been in the past, but we will never lose our openness, our sense of adventure. The young of Australia will always travel. They will always seek fun in distant parts. They will always reach out to the young of other nations. They will always be open, fun-loving, decent men and women.

(Howard, 2002)

Our society seems to have paused at this adolescent phase of childhood, with no apparent desire to progress to a greater maturity. A glorification of youthful qualities among adults (and adult qualities among children) is a characteristic of our times, and

⁵Freud's (1958) and Erikson's (1950) psychoanalytic theories and Piaget's (1952) and Vygotsky's (1962) cognitive theories are all based on a progression of stages to be achieved by a growing person.

⁶ A study of inappropriate behaviour by adults, and its consequences, might start with *Childlike Achilles: Ontogeny and Phylogony in the Iliad*. MacCary, W. Thomas (1982)

the industries based on fashion, fitness, body care and recreation have such momentum and such inertia that it is hard to see a return to a time when adults could grow old gracefully. John Betjeman's poem *Late Flowering Lust* evokes the grotesque potential of human actions out of joint with time. He imagines a scene of geriatric carnality:

My head is bald, my breath is bad,
Unshaven is my chin,
I have not now the joys I had
When I was young in sin

I run my fingers down your dress
With brandy-certain aim
And you respond to my caress
And maybe feel the same

But I've a picture of my own
On this reunion night
Wherein two skeletons are shown
To hold each other tight;
[...]
Too long we let our bodies cling,
We cannot hide disgust
At all the thoughts that in us spring
From this late-flowering lust.

(Betjeman, 1990, p. 171)

I shall recall this final phrase at various points through this chapter.

There is general agreement that behavioural abnormalities or psychoses are linked to developmental stages having been missed, uncompleted, repressed or associated with trauma.⁷ For this argument I shall focus on the importance of not missing these stages. A child should have had a rich and varied experience of life by adolescence, and it is during these high school years that a child's deficits become really apparent, manifested in self-esteem problems and social misbehaviour.

My contention is that caring adults, who may not necessarily be trained counsellors or psychologists, by offering the circus experience to children and teenagers, can provide them an opportunity to make good those deficits, giving them more chance to advance to adulthood without gaping holes in their psycho-social personae.

At this stage I must admit that this claim is not scientifically verifiable. This dissertation is not offered through a school of education or psychology but, by choice, through the English department of a progressive university. The work does not claim to prove a truth, but to offer a suggestion. It may be criticised as too wide-ranging and too disconnected from accepted theoretical frameworks. My response is that I fully intend to range widely. Circus itself cannot be confined to one style, one culture or one period. I have to be open and inclusive to all interpretations of circus. Similarly,

⁷ Again, the works of Freud, Erikson, Piaget and Vygotsky suggest these consequences.

I will not confine myself to one specific behaviour or one developmental element in childhood. To the other possible criticism, that the work is not closely tied to the framework of an accepted cultural theory, may I explain, "in all humility" to quote the immodest showman Astley (Wykes, 1977, p. 71), that this is a co-relational study. I am comparing two paradigms, which are at one time both full of theoretical possibilities, but also undeniably physical. I take each one, childhood and circus, as a framework for the other. As an example, without presuming to offer my work as a comparison, I refer to Bakhtin's work on carnival. He produced a work of totally original theory, by juxtaposing two cosmologies - the grotesque epic novel of Rabelais, and the hidden history of mediaeval street life, with all its debauches and reversals. Kwint suggests that Bakhtin uses "such an avowedly anti-historical doctrine as structuralism as a tool of historical analysis" (Kwint, 2002) 47. But just as Kwint uses Bakhtin to justify his own approach to an historical study, so I see the originality of Bakhtin's syntenic juxtaposition as inspiration for my own methodology. Introducing his study of Rabelais, Bakhtin argues that "when viewed against the background of folk tradition [,] Rabelais' images are completely at home within the thousand-year-old development of popular culture." (Bakhtin, 1984) 3. In this way, he uses the patchwork blanket of "folk tradition", interpreted from the very personal perspective of a provincial lecturer in nineteen thirties Russia, laid across a reading of Rabelais' novels, and develops a theory of carnival, which some see as a satire aimed at criticising the authoritarian soviet system of the time. I can aspire to no such grand scheme. However, inspired by Bakhtin's 'double patchwork' method, I hope to make discoveries in a way similar to the methodology of geneticists comparing complicated structures, looking for significantly homologous elements.

In this chapter I shall attempt, using references from Western literary and popular culture, to establish a degree of common recognition of some shared childhood experiences. Clearly, every childhood is unique, and experience across cultures will have vast differences. This thesis is written after thirty years of working mostly with British, American and Australian children. Even within these societies there are clearly huge differences across the socio/economic spectrum, sometimes even more marked than the differences I have found working throughout Europe, in China, Japan, Papua and with remote Australian Aboriginal communities.

It is easy for a travelling entertainer to say, "Children are the same everywhere". At a certain embryonic stage, even a medical doctor could say that, but genes and environment guarantee that complex differences will develop. However, my experience as a teacher and entertainer has shown me that there are enough significant similarities in children everywhere to make some elements of a show, or a game, universally acceptable to children.

What is a child? In this study I make no attempt to classify a child by age. I shall not grade them, assuming that a certain age corresponds with a certain literary, numerical or social ability. In teaching adults, I often observe that the moment they learn to juggle three balls, or to stay balanced on a tightrope, they produce behaviour more associated with early childhood. "Look at me! I can do it!" Achievement of circus skills

can happen at any age, and I hope to show that the circus experience can have great significance whether you are six, sixteen or sixty.

In this chapter I shall explain in detail the six elements currently being restricted to children. They are, in my view, elements essential to development, which can also be seen as six rights or six values, which a growing child needs to experience and absorb. Then, in chapters three and four we shall thoroughly examine the nature of the real or imagined circus. We shall be looking out for the presence of the six elements in circus representations and activity. Then, reviewing the elements in detail, including what we have learned about the nature of circus, I hope the thesis will be accepted that circus activity contains much of what is currently needed by the growing child.

In the remarkable book *Golden City*, J. T. R. Ritchie lists and celebrates dozens of Scottish skipping rhymes, hop-scotch patterns, playground jokes and songs, and concludes with this evocative paragraph:

and, after all, it's in the old industrial maze, it's in this tin-can city that many of us playing as children enjoyed the most glorious visions. When the summer days dragged by like dynasties of Egypt, when the sun and shadow sides of the street eyed each other for a millennium! When beyond such an immense present lay the unbelievable future.
(Ritchie, 1965, p. 171)

As I recall my own childhood, I remember my own parents and grandparents talking about their own golden age of childhood. I am inclined to say the same to my children, which suggests an illusion common to every generation, that "fings ain't what they used to be". (Bart, 1959). However, in this twenty-first century, in Western society, there has never been such a concerted campaign to appropriate the child's dreams, money, palate, affiliative enthusiasm, gathering instinct, image and body.

Like Marilyn Ferguson, in her book *The Aquarian Conspiracy* (1980), I use the word 'conspiracy' aware of its etymology, suggesting breathing or blowing together. Here I see it as a destructive hurricane resulting from the convergence of separate currents. Among the conspirators are manufacturers of sports shoes, computer games and toys, fast food and drink multi-nationals, and the advertisers of the above; insurance companies who would rather children take no risk, albeit they become fat, clumsy and scared (which would seem to bode ill for accident claims in the future); paedophiles and the media industry built on the misdeeds of these few immature and devious men; the so-called 'economic rationalist' system which sees both parents working harder and harder for less and less time with their children; television, which revels in its influential role of baby-sitter and former of young minds; and education authorities who have allowed the job of teacher to become an underpaid, low-status, over-regulated, bureaucratic, clinically hands-off, travesty of what is the probably most important profession in the world.⁸

⁸ Among the tomes of political and economic studies which convincingly argue both sides of the market forces debate, one which shines out for its wit and originality is Bob Ellis, *First Abolish the Customer: 202 Arguments Against Economic Rationalism* (1998).

From the listed suspects, whose misdemeanours are mostly self-evident, I shall examine one, the insurance industry, an apparently benign institution that has recently become increasingly restrictive to the natural development of a growing generation.⁹ All over the country, organisers of youth activities have spent thousands of hours explaining their procedures, and pleading with insurance brokers for liability cover. Whether it is a pony club, school camp, amusement park or indeed a youth circus, they have all suffered from sudden rises of premiums or total refusal of cover. Consequently, many youth activities have closed down, or are hedged around with such cumbersome safety regulations that the potential adventure element is nullified. As an example, there was a vigorous debate in *On One Wheel*, the unicycle journal, about whether or not to wear safety helmets. (Harden and Wood, 1999). Countering the usual emotional arguments about head injury, and the financial arguments about directors' liability, was the point that children joined a unicycle club because it was fun, and that riding gave them a sense of risk and adventure. If helmets were compulsory, some children would quit the group, and these were exactly those children whose bravado needed to be channelled, for their own safety. Other factors, like the relatively slow speed of a unicycle, and the fact that one's feet are never more than six inches from the ground, had no sway on the safety enthusiasts, who consider an unstable vehicle to be something children should be protected from, rather than directed towards.

Insurance practice is not easily understood by lay-people, but it has been thoroughly investigated by *The Center for Justice and Democracy* and *Americans for Insurance Reform*. The well-researched case by these bodies is that insurance companies lose money, not on claims but on the stock exchange, and that cyclical premium rises are always accompanied by fraudulently perpetuated anecdotes of ludicrous pay-outs:

Anecdotal descriptions of a few atypical lawsuits intended to shock or amuse the public have been the cornerstone of the business community's anti-jury advertising and public relations campaign since the 1980s. Focusing on a few rare, anecdotal cases, instead of the majority of cases that pass through the courts each year, feeds into a false and dangerous perception that the system is overflowing with frivolous lawsuits[...]

When journalists or researchers do track them down, they find in virtually every situation that such cases have been misrepresented and misused.

(Americans for Insurance Reform, 2004)

Their latest research concludes " there has been no 'explosion' in lawsuits, jury awards or any tort system costs at any time during the last three decades, [...] insurance companies raise rates when they are seeking ways to make up for declining interest

⁹ Television is another alleged conspirator in my theory, but unfortunately space does not permit me to build a convincing case here. Instead may I refer the reader to Gerry Mander, *Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television* (1980), Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death* (1987) and Robert Hodge and David Tripp, *Children and Television: A Semiotic Approach* (1986). These works attest to the geo-political power that is wielded by television against the most delicate of targets, the brain of a growing child. More recent explorations of this theme include Newton and LaMay, *Abandoned in the Wasteland* [...] (1995).

rates and market-based investment losses". (Freedland, 2003, p. 8). I shall argue later, in the section *Wednesday's Child - Risk* (2.3), that the restrictive actions of the insurance industry, whether fraudulent or not, are detrimental to a generation of young people, growing up deprived of the necessary element of adventure in their formative years. Later still, in *Risk re-visited* (5.3), I shall explain that circus activities are not only inherently safe, but may be a means of teaching risk-assessment and risk-management from an early age.

What if we miss childhood? A reading of *The History of Childhood* suggests that before the modern era, childhood was a dark tunnel of emotional, physical and sexual abuse, a purgatory of labour, trauma and neglect (de-Mause, 1974).¹⁰ Linda A Pollock, in *Forgotten Children*, examines diaries and autobiographies, 1500-1900, and finds the past not to have been so uncompromisingly bleak. Certainly, she finds that children were more "ephemeral creatures" in times when infant mortality was higher. (1983, p. 96). However, she has much evidence that children have always played, and that "cruelty to children was not as widespread as has been claimed" (268)

In 1974 I was in Puerto Rico, performing a clown show with my wife, Annie Stainer, and our small son, Jo. I remember being invited to perform in one of the shanty-towns on the hillside of San Juan. There was of course no theatre, not even a public open space. The biggest clear area they could find was a boxing ring. As we prepared, in a bare concrete changing room, I noticed big young men in uniform grey shorts and cropped hair sweeping the ring and picking up broken glass from the surrounds. Noticing my puzzlement, the organiser explained to me that these were all convicted juvenile offenders. Part of their rehabilitation, which they had all agreed to, was to relive some of the childhood they had missed. The re-education régime included the boyish clothes and hairstyle, early nights, plain food, simple games and story telling. A period of time spent like this apparently helped these boys pass through neglected stages. They were able to laugh and weep more, to enjoy physicality without aggression or sexuality. They could enjoy and pass through the stages of resenting authority, testing it and finally assuming the responsibilities of their true years. This unusual corrective régime seemed to be effective, and it is exactly this sort of deficit/catch-up option that circus activity offers young people.

I cannot, with authority, assert that children NEED this or that experience or quality in their formative years, although instinctively and from experience I might believe it. I can, however, from my vantage point of fifty-eight years, and from a study of literature, film, folklore and other cultural records assert what our children lack today compared with previous times, and other societies. As I stated earlier, I have identified six elements for specific examination.

As these elements will appear listed from time to time in this thesis, they may be recognized by one-word labels: **self**, **risk**, **trust**, **dream**, **work** and **fun**. Each concept will be explored and expanded with reference, where possible, to childhood

¹⁰ This theory set me thinking that perhaps it is necessary that everyone should go through a stage where they are subjected to a cruel, irrational discipline. How else do we explain Aerobics?

autobiographies, classical literature, or popular culture, to ensure recognition of the particular trait. Some investigation will be made into current theory and practice in education and child development. The result may be an unusual potpourri of academia and ephemera, but both childhood and circus comprise this mix. The Russian futurist, Nikolai Foregger, in his 1922 article, presaging the post-modernism of popular culture, *The Art of the Avant-Garde and the Music Hall* speaks of "the monstrous mélange of all sorts of entertainments". (Foregger, p. 231). I should warn the reader that this thesis contains the same 'monstrous mélange' as does circus itself. I have consciously provided many disparate examples, so that as I make the case, I hope we come to share an understanding of these six elements.

In searching for an exemplar which would present, in recognizable caricatures, these six aspects of childhood, I considered several rhymes, stories, models and cartoon strips, including Disney's *Seven Dwarves*, the *Bash Street Kids* from the British comic, *Beano*, Enid Blyton's *Famous Five* and *Secret Seven*, and *Our Gang*, formerly *Little Rascals*. Finally a well-known and surprisingly apt list was found in the Nursery Rhyme anthology. Written anonymously early in the nineteenth century, first recorded in 1838 (Opie and Opie, 1951), this jingle is known in various forms, throughout the English-speaking world. The first six items correspond neatly with the six categories of this study, with the final couplet evoking a satisfying integration of all the positives:

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| Monday's child is fair of face | self |
| Tuesday's child is full of grace | fun ¹¹ |
| Wednesday's child is full of woe | risk |
| Thursday's child has far to go | dreams |
| Friday's child is loving and giving | trust |
| Saturday's child works hard for a living | work |
| But the child that is born on the Sabbath Day | |
| Is bonny and blithe and good and gay. | |

As a personal aide-memoire, and as a means of explaining my theory in conversation and public speaking, I have another graphic schema, which I shall occasionally refer to, as I progress through the text. It consists of the five fingers of a hand, plus the palm. The index finger, the one that points, represents self-design, individuation, showing-off. The middle finger, the one that sticks out and gets hurt most often, represents risk. The ring finger, cosily enclosed by the others, suggests trust and comfort, and also raises the important issue of touching. The smallest finger, alongside all the bigger ones is about aspiration, as it dreams of being big one day. The thumb is utilitarian and functional, and evokes the idea of hard work and resilience. Finally, the ticklish, sensitive palm represents the element of fun, play, laughter and happiness.

I should stress that neither the 'Monday's child' nor the 'fingers' mnemonics have guided the development of the theory. The six elements have been observed and tested by me and others for many years. The devices are for the convenience of the reader, to help follow an argument through the proposition of six elements, a wide-ranging exploration and a comparative juxtaposition.

¹¹ The unexpected association of **grace** and **fun** is explained in section 2.2.

