CALS CIRCUS ARTS LIFE & SCIENCES

Circus as a pedagogy of fabulation: reflections based on the work of the A Penca collective

MARIA CAROLINA VASCONCELOS OLIVEIRA
Arts Institute - Unesp - Universidade Estadual Paulista Júlio de Mesquita Filho

This article discusses how circus arts engage a pedagogy of fabulation, a practice that expands our possibilities of perception beyond normative limits and which, if worked on intentionally, can also teach us about alternative ways of being and building relationships in the world. This reflection both informs, and is informed by, the work of the Brazilian circus collective A Penca, which explores the construction and management of the idea of nature in the city of São Paulo. The article discusses the poetics of overcoming risk in the context of contemporary climate and environmental emergency. The article further proposes alternative approaches to the theme of risk, with reference to the work of authors reconsidering modern perspectives on human control and domination.

Cet article traite de la manière dont les arts du cirque font appel à une pédagogie de la fabulation, une pratique qui étend nos possibilités de perception au-delà des limites normatives et qui, si elle est travaillée intentionnellement, peut également nous enseigner d'autres manières d'être et de construire des relations dans le monde. Cette réflexion s'appuie sur le travail du collectif de cirque brésilien A Penca, qui explore la construction et la gestion de l'idée de nature dans la ville de São Paulo. L'article aborde la poétique du dépassement du risque, dans le contexte de l'urgence climatique et environnementale contemporaine. Il propose en outre d'autres approches du thème du risque, en se référant au travail d'auteurs qui reconsidèrent les perspectives modernes sur le contrôle et la domination de l'homme.

Keywords: contemporary circus; circus and politics; risk; cirque contemporain; cirque et politique; risque

Contact: Maria Carolina Vasconcelos Oliveira <mcv.oliveira@unesp.br>

Introduction

Circus arts have always offered us tools for addressing risk—not only material and technical knowledge but also cultural technologies: ways of naming, modes of feeling, sensations and imaginaries. In recent years, circus researchers have noted the need to update established ways of thinking about and discussing risk such as the praise of prowess, dexterity, mastery and overcoming obstacles. Greater recognition of the negative sides of modernity, which draws attention to a range of other ways of living rendered invisible by modernity, invites us to rethink the over-exaltation of human capacities and the anthropocentric fiction that humans are in control of all processes. It also invites us to reflect on the assumptions and political implications within narratives of dexterity, control and superhuman capacity and on the bodies and social subjects that are left out when we are guided by these imaginaries.

Movements and events in the twentieth century—such as large-scale wars, the emergence of various types of authoritarianism and increasingly complex inequalities—challenged assumptions and beliefs underpinning the modern subject and its narratives of development. The twenty-first century adds to this the inexorability of climate change that threatens our existence as a species. How does this alter sensitivities and imaginaries regarding themes such as risk, prowess, technique and overcoming obstacles?

In other works, I have reflected on the updates and shifts that practices identified as contemporary circus have proposed to the poetics or scenic pedagogies that are more typical in classic circus forms (Vasconcelos Oliveira, *Reflexões, Políticas e poéticas*; Barbosa and Vasconcelos Oliveira). In this article, I will reflect on a specific mode of sensible formulation which is as central in our idea of circus as the poetics of overcoming risk and which, in my view, allows for useful reflection on the political and cultural context of our times. Here, I am calling this path a pedagogy of fabulation.

The poetics of the extraordinary in circus is strongly anchored in modern values and in an anthropocentric perspective (Bolognesi, "Philip Astley"; Lievens), which helps explain the emphasis on the demonstration of human capacities, control and overcoming—of oneself, of nature and of risks. But before that, the poetics of the extraordinary presupposes the possibility of envisioning and perceiving situations that lie outside the margins of normativity, of what our senses are accustomed to naming as normal. This is something the circus also teaches us: to broaden our perception, to see and imagine what lies outside the spectrum of the ordinary and the normative, to envision what might happen and to expand the realm of possibilities. By inhabiting this gap between what is and what could be, the circus invites a kind of pedagogy of fabulation that, if

intentionally cultivated and oriented, can also teach us to envision other possibilities of being in the world and coexisting.

In this study, I will address the ways in which these ideas simultaneously inform and are informed by the scenic practices that I carry out with the collective A Penca, a circus group guided by the assumption that artistic performances also have the potential for agency in the world. A Penca, formed by Andréa Barbour, Maria Carolina Vasconcelos Oliveira (both aerialists) and Bárbara Francesquine (juggler and object manipulator), is a São Paulo-based circus collective formalized in 2018, although the artists had already been working together in other collectives for over ten years. Like most circus artists from the Global South, we have a plural educational background which includes, in addition to circus practices, both informal and formal experiences in contemporary dance, visual arts, environmental studies and social sciences. Circus represents the best space to combine these different tools and creative approaches. We find common ground in our artistic questions: we address themes related to gender and nature-culture relations, "not forgetting that all these ideas are, in themselves, human inventions, situated in specific times, spaces, and systems of thought" (A Penca, *Plataforma*).

Inspired by post-humanist and decolonial thought and other ideas that criticize modern development ideas (Bispo), we ask ourselves about spaces designated for "nature," for womanhood and for other forms of existence in our imaginaries of city and civilization. Moreover, we use the circus—and its incredible capacity to invent worlds and broaden perceptions—to fabulate on other possible ways of existing, of relating to one another, of moving and of creating communities.

> We found in the circus our common ground and zone of militancy. The circus, this . . . invention that provides so many imaginaries and tools to address the issue of risk, is equally present when the subject is gender or natures. (A Penca, *Plataforma*)

We act in circus via creation, artistic-pedagogical practices, academic research and some of us also via national and international political articulation (especially in Latin America). *Fabulações simpoéticas* is the umbrella project to which we have dedicated ourselves over the last six years, which has resulted in street performances, two video works (*Para que eu esteja viva*, 2019 and *corpo-árvore*, 2021), the stage work *Viver com, morrer com*[1] (2023), the platform *Percurso das árvores*[2] (2023) as well as formative activities: residencies and the study group *Arte, gênero e natureza*.

The works produced within *Fabulações simpoéticas*, heavily influenced by authors such as Donna Haraway as I detail below, are our speculation on the

possibility of constructing multispecies narratives between us and some of the trees that were removed from the urban flora of São Paulo. They are also our way of reflecting on the socio-natural process through which we shape our ideas of city and humanity. Since 2018, we have carried out fieldwork that is a central part of our creative process:

> We accompany the municipal tree removal and pruning service in public areas of the city, collecting removed trunks and branches, in addition to many stories and sensations. The organic matter resulting from pruning and removals is almost entirely discarded as waste in São Paulo [. . .] A Penca's work consists of transforming organic material into scenic protagonists, aiming to awaken reflections on these issues. (A Penca, *Plataforma*)

The trunks and branches collected during fieldwork are re-enchanted as stage partners, endowed with the capacity to create subjectivities and to prompt reflections on how we name, manage and relate to nature. In terms of circus techniques, larger and denser trunks are anchored in suspension, participating in the work sometimes as aerial supports and sometimes as dancers themselves (see Figures 1 and 2). Smaller branches participate as partners in juggling manipulation.

Risk in the circus

I begin this discussion by addressing the theme of risk in the circus, as the line between existence and ceasing to exist is a central theme in A Penca's work. As mentioned, we reflect on spaces designated for nature and womanhood, which, along with other marginalized categories, typically represent the oppressed side in development processes guided by modern, patriarchal values (Federici 2017, and other authors associated with ecofeminist thought). Even though, on an aesthetic level, we choose to forgo virtuosic corporealities and narratives of control and overcoming, we claim our identity as circus artists primarily because our main material is risk. Several authors view the poetics of risk as an essential constituent of circus language that distinguishes it from other performing arts—in communication scholar and former circus artist Hugues Hotier's terms, risk is a central trait of the very imaginary we evoke in the circus. Among many works that reflect on the circus from this perspective, I opt to highlight some produced in the Latin American context, aiming to contribute to circus studies emerging from the Global South.[3]

For Brazilian researcher Mario Bolognesi, circus performance has always "manifested its predilection for risk and the impossible" ("O corpo" 103), with

Figures 1 and 2 Scenes from *Viver com, morrer com* (2023) - A Penca

Photograph by: Aline Braga

the body— "a living organism that challenges its own limits" ("O corpo" 103)— as its primary operator. Similarly, Marina Guzzo locates the body as the central element in what she terms a risk aesthetic typical of the circus: it is the body that, "in its form as finite and precious matter, [. . .] materializes risk and amplifies the performance" (114). She observes the trajectory and structure of performances that "are aesthetically organized to produce risk" (Guzzo 113), as well as the safety strategies that simultaneously confirm and control it.

Leles and Camargo also draw attention to the dimension of finitude: for them, in practices such as aerial acrobatics, what is at stake is a certain "symbolic game with death," marked by a confrontation with risk (4). Carolina Mandell states that "risk as the becoming of death is obstinately present in the poetics and aesthetics of the circus [. . .]. The greater the exposure to risk, the more interest is aroused in the audience" (77). For Argentine researcher Mariana Saez (see also Infantino et al.), in circus arts, risk exists not solely as an aesthetic but rather as a sensibility. According to her, "pain, effort, adrenaline, freedom, excitement and wonder [. . .] are articulated in the sensible configuration that enables the practice of acrobatics and can be integrated around the notion of risk" (Saez 292). She characterizes risk as "a way to connect with one's own feelings and with the perception of the body, [. . .] a way of expressing oneself" (Saez 292).

Situating risk as sensibility is interesting because it emphasizes the dimension of experience, which necessarily involves the body, and, above all, opens space for recognizing the agency of language in the world: it teaches us particular ways of feeling, perceiving, experiencing, creating and expressing meaning. Guilherme Veiga Almeida is another author whose discussion transcends the aesthetic, treating the circus as a practice that removes performers and audiences from their ordinary sensorial parameters.

A question many authors frequently raise is whether risk present in the circus is truly real or, to some extent, represented. Authors such as Bolognesi contend that, in the circus, "the bodies of athletes and acrobats do not symbolize; they are not figurative" ("O circo" n.p.), and that the possibility of failure "can occur in any performance, regardless of training and expertise" ("O corpo" 103). Guzzo, Leles and Camargo argue that risk in the circus is managed primarily by safety protocols, training and repetition. According to the latter, "in the search for such situations of risk, there is also an effort to exert a certain control, so that success is achieved at the end of the act [. . .]. Training and repetition of techniques constitute this process" (Leles and Camargo 4). Similarly, Guzzo identifies a certain simulacrum or illusion of risk, also enabled by mastery of the body.

In a classic study from 1976, Paul Bouissac discussed "controlled failure" and identified, in traditional circus performances, a "patterned display of typical events, carefully planned and repeated day after day in similar circumstances," even when the narrative presented is "a unique attempt" or "a first

time" (101). This acknowledges a certain layer of representation (of failure, error and attempt), which contributes to the construction of the spectator's sensation of risk.[4]

Overcoming and mastering risk as narratives of modernity

It seems reasonable to think that many circus modalities, although indeed more marked by the limits of performativity than other dramatic forms, present the experience of risk in a considerably controlled manner via technical expertise and the very idea of mastery. Moreover, in my view, the circus has historically called forth a poetics of *overcoming risk*—or of *controlling/mastering risk*—a specific aspect of what a broader poetics of risk might encompass. This broader poetics would include other performative practices that work with extreme corporealities with the aim of highlighting vulnerability rather than overcoming it.[5]

The poetics of the extraordinary in the circus is typically invoked by attractions whose extraordinary attributes are either portrayed as supposedly natural (as in the exhibition of wild animals or non-normative bodies such as people with disabilities, bearded women and others[6]) or as achieved/acquired, usually via training routines and techniques that enable the supposedly impossible. Notably, in both cases, we are operating outside the normative spectrum of what is understood as human: in the first instance, the extraordinary supposedly originates in nature (a representation that modern discourse constructs as subhuman, as I will discuss later); and in the second, in a superhuman domain. In both cases, staging the extraordinary presupposes, first and foremost, mastery—of the animal, of gravity, of the object, of the body and of everything that lies beyond the safe zone of what is normatively constructed as human. As Foucault once noted, naming monsters is, above all, a way to demarcate normativity. We could argue that in circus, just as the spectacular exhibition of non-normative corporealities can serve to reinforce normativity (Vasconcelos Oliveira, "Circo e gênero"), the demonstration of risk overcoming can also serve to highlight the narrative of control.

All these questions take on further dimension when we recall that the cultural expression known as the circus was named as such in late eighteenth century England. The circus was constructed in a symbiotic relationship with modernity, both drawing on modern values and helping to build and affirm them. Bolognesi, analyzing the hippodramas staged at Philip Astley's amphitheater, comments:

> Horses, tamed beasts from various parts of the world, acts staged with costumes alluding to well-known (almost always, conquered) places

> were adequate material—more than sufficient—for the creation of the historical hippodramas, the magical and grand spectacles that narrated the feats of the conqueror. The ultimate purpose was the consolidation of a notion of nation and of power expanding boundaries, both physical and of the imagination. ("Philip Astley" 5)

Juno Nedel Aguiar, a Brazilian circus artist and researcher who offers important reflections on gender, stated that "one cannot think about the circus body without thinking about colonial hegemony. About what has been conventionally called the matrix of intelligibility of bodies [in Judith Butler's terms]" (8). Such hegemony also attributes what it terms humanity to characteristics of race and gender: according to him, to understand circus discourse of virtuosity and domination of humans over the natural word, we first need to ask about which bodies are included in this definition of human (Aguiar 12). Belgian artist/researcher Bauke Lievens is another author whose stimulating texts call on us to rethink some of the modern values that sustain the circus.

The aim of this article is not to extend this discussion of gender but it is worth mentioning that, not coincidentally, the *history* that presents Astley as the father of the circus not only renders invisible the various generations of street performers and acrobats who preceded him (as Erminia Silva aptly points out) but also hides a *herstory*. Patty Astley, Philip's partner, is rarely mentioned. A recent study by Vanessa Toulmin shows that, although Patty has been reduced to a footnote by most circus historians (3), her importance was immense. She appears in over fifty different references in the London papers in 1772, recognized for her skills in staging with horses and even with bees.

> See, Mrs. ASTLEY, well known for her great Command over the Bees, will (this Day and To-morrow) exhibit with three Swarms of Bees, which will truly surprise the Spectators (she will command them her Arm, imitating Lady's Muff will order them to march across a Table, which they will absolutely a manner beyond Conception. (*Saunders Newsletter* 1774 qtd. in Toulmin 8)

Imagining Patty Astley riding a horse with swarms clinging to her body, choreographing the movement of her companion bees in the ring, inevitably calls us to reflect on the many so-called others that have been left unnamed or relegated to secondary roles in the staging of modern man as protagonist and master: women, dissident bodies, racialized individuals and many other non-human or not-so-human beings. On a side note: Astley's horse—or at least the most famous one—was named Gibraltar.

Re-significations of risk at the turn of the twenty-first century

In 1986, the German sociologist Ulrich Beck published *Risk Society*, a work that continues to serve as an important reference for reflecting on risk in a broader sense. In the nearly forty years since, perspectives on risk have also changed. In that work, Beck discussed contemporary issues in terms of a reflexive modernity—one that looks at itself, questioning some of its pillars while attempting to accommodate its tensions. Scott Lash and Brian Wynne, in the preface to the first English edition of *Risk Society* in 1992, positioned the work as a sort of middle path between a postmodern tendency of "abandonment of scientific-instrumental modes of thought" and the modernist tendency to endow those systems of thought with unconditional power (6).

Beck already placed environmental risks at the core of his analysis, recognizing many problems stemming from technical-scientific development. For him, risks at that time more frequently assumed a global scale which led to a growing expectation of the future playing an increasingly central role in defining present actions: "the center of risk consciousness lies not in the present, but in the future. In the risk society, the past loses the power to determine the present. Its place is taken by the future" (Beck 34). In other words, risk should be recognized as a means of mediating life and the very idea of the future. Decades later, we have reached the sad conclusion that the understanding of environmental threats has not been sufficient to redirect human actions in their interference with the planet which once again calls into question the reputation of *Homo rationalis*. As I write this text in August 2024, 5.65 million hectares were burned in Brazil—an area corresponding to almost two-thirds of Portugal—in just the month of August (MapBiomas). The Amazon rainforest and other fundamental biomes such as the Pantanal are among the areas most affected by the fire, and authorities point to indicators of coordinated criminal actions, especially in regions dominated by agribusiness. It is estimated that seventy percent of the country is experiencing drought and heat islands have become a very serious problem in highly urbanized environments. Moreover, several Brazilian cities near the burned areas have been shrouded in smoke and the population has been advised to avoid outdoor exposure (Agência Brasil).

The increase in temperatures is not a localized issue. Scholars such as Bruno Latour have coined the term "New Climatic Regime," as the term "climate crisis" might misleadingly suggest something temporary. In 2018, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warned that human activities had raised the global average temperature by 1.0°C above pre-industrial levels and estimated that this could rise to 1.5°C from 2030 to 2052 (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2018). In its 2023 report, the panel further highlighted that urban areas—now home to more than half of the world's population—are experiencing a series of impacts on health and quality of life,

particularly related to heat peaks (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2023). Climate Promise/UNDP states that cities play a fundamental role in the climate agenda for the coming years and recommends investing in green areas such as urban forests, parks and gardens—recognizing that urban forests are important not only for temperature regulation but also for pollution management and rainwater drainage (United Nations Development Programme).

The proposal to accommodate the tensions of modernity is becoming a distant, increasingly blurred dream, much like the prospect of human control. On the other hand, the option of abandoning scientific modes of thought does not appear to be a viable solution—Brazil, which suffered under a federal denialist government during the COVID-19 pandemic, knows this all too well (Castilho et al; Caponi et al; Miskolci).

For several authors, the construction of the idea of nature as something passive, external and supposedly separate from humanity seems to lie at the heart of the issue. Latour demonstrates how modern thought constructed "nature," as well as other living beings, as "devoid of the power of agency" (*Onde Aterrir?* 80), or diminished in its capacity for agency, sometimes reduced to mere resources. Latour identifies 1989 as a turning point: while the fall of the Berlin Wall marked the triumph of the liberal West (from the perspective of development narratives), the first global conferences on the state of the planet signaled the end of hopes for capitalism's "limitless conquest and total domination over nature" (*Onde Aterrir?* 14). It is worth noting that the 1990s were precisely when concepts such as environmental racism began to emerge, revealing how classic social markers of race and poverty correlate with environmental vulnerability.[7]

Latour, like Isabelle Stengers, uses the term Gaia to refer to the planet. According to her, this term was used by James Lovelock and Lynn Margulis in the early 1970s to draw attention to the interconnection of what "scientific disciplines were accustomed to treating separately: living beings, the oceans, the atmosphere, the climate, soils of varying fertility" (Stengers 49–50). For Latour, it is within this network that "living beings find themselves irreversibly entangled," including those who "self-proclaimed" as human (*Diante de Gaia* 10).

The perception that life on the planet is entangled, that "we" and "nature" are not so separate and that we do not occupy the apex of a control hierarchy, took on a revelatory quality at the turn of the twenty-first century, particularly in the Global North. But especially those of us who produce knowledge from the Global South know that this is not new in other systems of thought, particularly the most ancestral ones. The Brazilian Quilombola[8] philosopher Antônio Bispo dos Santos, in his brilliant critique of humanism, wrote:

> Humanism is a word allied with development [desenvolvimento], the idea of which is to treat human beings as creators rather than creatures of

> nature, as entities that want to overcome nature. On the opposite side of the humanists stand the diversity-oriented, the cosmological or organic. [. . .] For them, *it is not a matter of de-eveloping/disengaging* [desenvolver], *but of involving/engaging* [envolver][9] [. . .] Humanism is against involvement; it is against living intertwined with trees, with the earth, with forests. Development is synonymous with disconnecting, with removing from the cosmos, with breaking originality. (30)

The emergence of decolonial and anti-colonial thought has contributed to the uncovering and dissemination of other types of knowledge and world-sense (Oyewùmí), especially those with origins in communities which for centuries have formulated and practiced more entangled forms of existence, and which inspire us to imagine other possibilities for coexisting with other beings and materials on the planet. In Brazil, Indigenous thinkers have also played a major role in this movement, contributing to the updating of a science that "turned its back" on the knowledge built on more communal foundations, according to the Maxacali educator and activist Cristine Takuá. Aílton Krenak, a philosopher, writer and activist reflecting on the humanity we "think we are," argues that the attachment to the idea of Earth as "landscape" for human action is the deepest mark of the Anthropocene ("A vida" 29). In his reflections, he advocates for "wild" knowledge (claiming a positive connotation for this term, which is usually presented as pejorative) as alternatives to this way of thinking (Krenak "A vida"). For him, we must abandon "the view of nature that we invented for our own 'consumption'" (Krenak *Ideias* 32–33), in order to reorder the relationships and "understandings of how we can relate to that which is admitted as nature, as if we were not nature" (Krenak *Ideias* 32).

I recall one of the stories that Davi Kopenawa, the Yanomami shaman and thinker, told a French anthropologist:

> In the beginning, we all belonged to the same people. The Brazilian tapirs, the peccaries, and the macaws that we hunt in the forest were also human. [. . .] Today, we remain the same as those we call 'prey,' *yaro pë*. The *coatás*, which we call *paxo*, are people like us. They are human *coatás*, but we grab them and butcher them to serve as food at our *reahu* celebrations! Despite this, in their eyes, we continue to be one of them. Although we are human, they call us by the same name they give themselves. (473)

I think once again of Philip Astley, Patty Astley, the horses and the bees—from the "more human" to the "less human" in the modern scale. I wonder if Patty, with some awareness of her place on this scale, also knew that she and the bees were entangled and that their capacity for agency was profoundly

interwoven. I imagine whether, in the eyes of the bees, Patty was not seen as one of them.

Staying with the trouble and imagining new ways of being in the world

To return to the work of the collective A Penca, I bring in Donna Haraway, the American philosopher and biologist whose contributions to feminist thought and science studies are notable, as is her ability to relate and tell stories. For her, no being "pre-exists its relations" (*The Companion Species* 15). Haraway uses the term nature-culture, refusing to treat these two concepts as objective and mutually exclusive realities.

Haraway proposes that staying with the trouble should be the slogan of our time. Her invitation is to imagine alternative arrangements—that is, ones that break away from modern, capitalist, colonial and patriarchal paradigms— "living and dying in response-ability on a damaged earth" (*Staying with* 117), as well as to envision possible forms of recovery. Staying with the trouble would anchor responsibility in the experience of the present and in the relationship built with other forms of life on the planet. This is in contrast to acting on the basis of a future envisioned in modern terms; for Haraway, "in urgent times, many of us are tempted to address trouble in terms of making an imagined future safe, of stopping something from happening that looms in the future, of clearing away the present and the past in order to make futures for coming generations" (*Staying with* 1).

Staying with the trouble and "eschewing futurism" (*Staying with* 4), in Haraway's terms, is a way to not succumb to narratives of despair or hope regarding what is to come—narratives that are not "tuned to the senses, to mindful matter, to material semiotics, to mortal earthlings in thick copresence" (*Staying with* 10). It is important to clarify that this does not mean denying our instruments and tools nor does it imply an adherence to a *laissez-faire* ideology; on the contrary, it implies a political commitment to all forms of life and to the planet in its present moment. In Latour's terms, to do so "we need to count on the full power of the sciences [. . .], which also means not failing to praise rationality," while also acknowledging that, on many occasions, this notion has been misapplied in modernization projects (*Onde Aterrar?* 81).

For A Penca, the proposal of staying with the trouble inspires new ways of dealing with the materiality of risk as alternatives to narratives of control and overcoming. As mentioned, both in the video work *corpo-árvore* (2020) and the stage work *Viver com, morrer com* (2023), we work with very specific materialities—remnants from pruning of urban green areas of São Paulo designated by the

municipal management as "green waste"—to prompt reflections on the fine line between existence and ceasing to exist, on the way we manage the idea of nature to build our city-humanity stories and on what is designated as residue or as an obstacle in those stories.

More specifically, regarding the stage work *Viver com, morrer com*, created between 2022 and 2023, which we have presented at several circus festivals including the Achura Karpa festival that accompanied the 2024 Circus and its Others conference in Bogotá, and in cultural venues in and around São Paulo, the proposal to attune to materiality and to create a relationship of dense co-presence, in Haraway's terms, is the starting point of the dramaturgy. We work primarily with a sensory dramaturgy, structured by relationships between the bodies of the artists (in which their circus knowledge is also inscribed, especially aerial and juggling techniques) and the materiality of tree pieces. This narrative is punctuated by projected images and soundscapes from our fieldwork (such as pruning records and employee testimonies) which provide a documentary foundation anchoring the question that gives rise to the stage research. Scenes materialize specific events, more through the logic of performativity than that of representation, as with the reading of an excerpt from the book *In the Eye of the Wild* (see Figure 3) in which Nastassja Martin narrates an encounter with a bear that nearly killed her, transforming her into a hybrid between human and animal; or a scene in which the fall of a tree trunk destroys a toy house. The intention is not to create a closed narrative or a dramaturgy that resolves or overcomes the issue but rather to summon (and sometimes invent) a more varied set of references and sensibilities that inspire new ways of experiencing these questions. In the words of dance researcher Laurence Louppe, this also means seeing artistic language as a system of thought in itself, as something that not only represents the world but also helps to construct it.

It should be noted that this perspective aligns more with the field of performativity—which presupposes an ethical commitment to what is done in the time-space of the present—than that of representation. Not coincidentally, similar practices can be found in other works of contemporary circus (see Vasconcelos Oliveira "Políticas e poéticas" for other examples). In theatrical terms, this is also related to an openness to improvisational practices even though the work does include a general script of more fixed scenes. In *Viver com, morrer com*, this was further supported by body-preparation work that primarily drew on somatic approaches and improvisational practices in contemporary dance which, during the creation process, occupied even more space than more technical training related to acquiring circus skills.[10]

One of Haraway's main proposals is to "make kinship" with non-human beings, in the sense of creating meaningful relationships with other species, establishing a radical commitment to practices that help us in "learning to live

Figure 3 Scene from *Viver com, morrer com* (2023) – A Penca

Photograph by: Aline Braga

and die well with each other in a thick present" (*Staying* 9). Underlying this proposal, in addition to her critique of modern assumptions that separate us from nature and diminish its power of agency, is the prerogative that we can learn solutions from other living beings, broadening our spectrum of possibilities for being in the world. Haraway tells multispecies stories, narratives of interwoven plots and symbioses that allow us to perceive lessons and envision responsible partnerships with other living beings. For her, stories appear as alternatives to Histories which claim a more objective version of reality. In her perspective, narratives are always products of specific subjectivities (even those that claim to be objective) and they are always ways of naming, worlding and creating realities.

A key term in Haraway's methodology is the polyphonic *SF*. The author uses this acronym variously to signify *speculative fabulation*, *science fiction*, as well as *string figures*, *speculative feminism* and *so far* (see Haraway "SF"). In the first two cases, at stake is mainly the critique of the objectivity/subjectivity binary and of the construction of science as something entirely objective. She also understands that speculating and fabulating are in themselves a way of worlding and that stories have the agency to impact the world and its inhabitants. With string figures,

the author alludes to figures made of string (points connected by threads), a metaphor for the proposal to weave relationships that permeates all her work.[11]

Haraway's persistence around multispecies alliances stems partly from her perception that these relationships are mutually constitutive. In her "Cyborg Manifesto"—a major contribution to feminist thought—the author invokes the figure of the cyborg to emphasize that bodies, technologies and ideas are mutually constituted, calling for more fluid boundaries between binaries such as body/machine and reality/fiction.[12] In *The Companion Species Manifesto*, for example, she undertakes a similar process to discuss how, in their historical symbiosis, humans and dogs not only live together but also constitute each other. It is a matter of recognizing the agency of other beings, including over our own humanity, as well as acknowledging that we can learn from some of their strategies and ways of living.

> Perhaps as sensual molecular curiosity and definitely as insatiable hunger, irresistible attraction toward enfolding each other is the vital motor of living and dying on Earth. Critters interpenetrate one another, loop around and through one another, eat one another, get indigestion, and partially digest and partially assimilate one another, and thereby establish sympoietic arrangements that are otherwise known as cells, organisms, and ecological assemblages. [. . .] Critters do not precede their relatings; they make themselves with each other through semiotic material involutions, out of the beings of previous such entanglements. (Haraway *Staying* 59–60)

It is worth briefly noting that one of Haraway's main references in the field of biology is Lynn Margulis, "a radical evolutionary theorist" (Haraway 60), who placed symbiotic associations at the core of evolutionary processes. For Margulis, "attraction, union, fusion, incorporation, cohabitation, recombination [. . .] and other types of forbidden couplings" (7) are major sources of genetic variation among species—something Darwin, focused as he was on natural selection, overlooked. Haraway, with her fluid training between biological and human sciences which allows her to flow between the domains of science and poetics, helps us extend the idea of symbiosis beyond biology, broadening the scope to nature-culture relations, telling multispecies stories in which capacities for agency (and therefore for survival) intermingle and interweave. In her approach, symbiosis also unfolds into simpoetics—which for Haraway simply means doing-with, creating-with. Thus, Haraway investigates and imagines how beings rooted in different knowledge practices can "continue together," radically committing to "taking differences seriously" in a postcolonial context (*Staying* 16).

The idea of simpoesis and the proposal to fabricate multispecies plots unfold into two dimensions in *Viver com, morrer com*: one more related to the treatment of materials and corporealities, and the other to dramaturgical construction. Regarding the former, the creative process is marked by a desire to give the corporeality of the materials themselves (tree trunks and branches from pruning) protagonism, betting on their capacity for agency and for creating meaning and subjectivities. It is worth mentioning that one of the group's members, Andrea Barbour, in addition to being a circus artist, is a visual artist; hence, discussion about materialities is very present in the group. From the outset, we have explored working with trunks and branches not merely as scenery or as "circus apparatus"—options that place them in a hierarchically inferior position in terms of the potential for agency. The protagonism of these materialities is a guiding principle throughout the work, unfolding in choices regarding lighting, temporalities/rituals (in some moments, the larger trunks remain alone on stage for a time as principal agents) and in interplay with projected documentary images. For example, there is a moment when a projection shows a pruned tree being hoisted onto a truck and shortly after a trunk is raised on stage, creating, without the presence of a human figure, a continuity of meaning and the suggestion that this may be the same tree. Alternatively, in scenographic proposals—such as having some larger and denser trunks suspended on stage, hanging by a very thin, high-strength rope—the impression is that these trunks move on their own and float on stage; this is also our way of re-enchanting them. At times, we also play with the relationships of continuity between the trunks and our bodies, constructing a visual illusion of reconstructing the tree, which is our way of invoking a phantom tree.

The circus corporealities in the work follow the same principle of not overshadowing the agency of these scene partners—which means refraining from treating them as mere apparatuses via which we display our technique and mastery. During the improvisational practices that gave rise to the movement scripts (which are also considerably open for variation), investigative proposals were related, for example, to exploring the physical qualities of these partners (weights, shapes, textures), how they can move us and suggest movement (rather than merely "how we can move them"), the supports they offer us and what we might offer in return. The choreographies, in this sense, hardly involve codified movements already recognized as circus tricks—even though my over twenty-year experience practicing fixed trapeze, for example, certainly helps me move on a horizontally suspended trunk and suggests some movement repertoire (as can be seen in Figure 1 above). Nor do we prioritize movements whose artistic effectiveness lies in demonstrating dexterity: although we do invoke risk in various movements—for example, by balancing a large branch on the chin (see Figure 4) or standing on a moving suspended branch—we forgo the

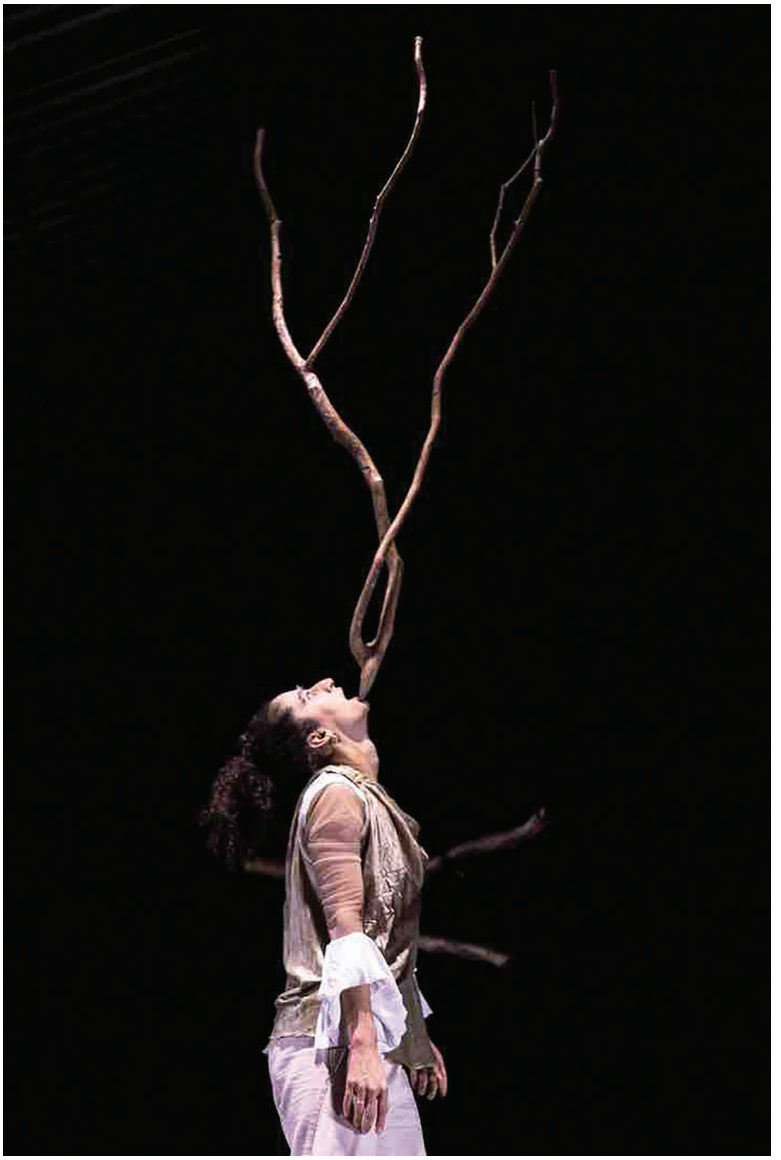

Figure 4 Scene from *Viver com, morrer com* (2023) – A Penca

Photograph by: Aline Braga

gestures and rhythms that traditionally contribute to a demonstration of prowess, conventions such as slowing down in preparation for a major trick to generate suspense or executing long pauses in more challenging positions. Allowing space for the scene's subjectivity to develop from the agency of the trunks and branches operates metaphorically to distance us from the modern narrative of nature as a resource to be managed.

This emphasis on the possibilities for cross-agency between human and more-than-human beings is also present at the level of narrative. Also inspired by the notion of giving visibility to hidden stories, we developed the idea that urban trees, within a complex narrative of meaning-making, possess agency not only in the impacts they have on air quality, noise levels and the thermal sensation of public spaces but also because they are co-authors of our city stories.

Living things that perform both "landscape" and "waste"

Viver com, morrer com is also our way of telling stories about the city and imagining alternative possibilities for coexisting with what we manage and name as nature during its construction process.

São Paulo was originally covered by the Atlantic Forest, Araucaria forests, *Cerrado* and floodplain vegetation but that original cover has been almost completely eliminated. Ricardo Cardim, historicizing the relationship between the city and nature, explains how the Portuguese colonizers brought with them their repertoires of native plants and ideas: "the colonial city followed one of the most characteristic aspects of Portuguese cities: the impression of incompatibility and the absence of vegetation in public spaces" (18). As Cardim argues, this was fueled by the colonizers' imagination of Brazil as an unknown territory, full of wild animals, enormous insects, cannibal Indigenous groups and even monsters. Native nature is figured as "a vividly threatening scenery justified a constant war against it" (Cardim 18). Once again, we could revisit the discussion about otherness, risk and control. The desire to clear vegetation, "as if nature were something unclean" (Cardim 23), shaped the development of several colonial cities both in South America and on the African continent. According to Cardim, the appreciation of landscaped public areas began to strengthen in Portugal and the colonized regions in the eighteenth century, and exotic species were prioritized in these gardens (controlled spaces for demonstrating nature).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, São Paulo underwent an intense and precarious process of industrialization; the lack of urban infrastructure triggered unsanitary conditions, causing a series of problems. Projects then emerged that, under the banner of modernizing the city, implemented water and sewage systems as well as the arborization of certain areas, actions already associated with a vague idea of wellbeing. In this process, the unequal access to territory began to take shape, marked by the massive displacement of the poorest population to the most peripheral regions. From 1930 to the 1980s, a period of intense growth and land occupation in the city, the perception of space as a value triggered a "construction epidemic" (Cardim 36), especially of tall buildings which,

combined with the increasing number of roads for cars, made the remaining native vegetation disappear. In parallel, the dynamics of social differentiation in the city continued: the wealthier neighborhoods were built as garden suburbs, involving the planting of fast-growing exotic species that guaranteed shade and green areas for the upper classes while the peripheries grew in an unplanned and precarious manner, consolidating a scenario of environmental inequality. From the 1980s onward, environmental movements began to proliferate, drawing attention to the impacts of environmental degradation on public health at a time when climate change, heat islands and even alterations in rainfall patterns were already noticeable (Cardim 45).

Currently, eighty percent of the urban vegetation in São Paulo consists of exotic species, that is, trees placed in certain locations to perform a managed idea of landscape. Many of these specimens, even in upscale neighborhoods, do not receive preventive pruning or sufficient care in the context of a city whose public budget is fiercely contested among many agendas. For example, consider Tipuanas, an exotic species from Bolivia and Argentina that was widely planted in São Paulo during the 1960s. These are trees with low-density wood and therefore rapid growth, which means they provide shade and green areas within just a few years. They were planted in areas invented as upper-middle-class neighborhoods, following the logic of real estate speculation. Tipuanas make important contributions for neighboring beings: they reduce temperatures and noise levels; improve air quality and rainwater drainage; serve as habitat and food source for various species of birds, insects, bats and even monkeys; and contribute to the psychological and sensory wellbeing of the human population. But today, about sixty years later, many Tipuanas—whether due to the passage of time or insufficient preventive care—also represent risks to humans: during the rainy season, many of them fall, sometimes onto houses, cars or people. The municipality opts for the preventive removal of various specimens during these times of year. In other cases, poor soil drainage due to excessive asphalt causes diseases or root fragility. There are also cases in which, having no room to grow, the roots run over—or try to entangle themselves—with underground plumbing as do the branches aboveground with electrical wiring. The standard so-called solution is removal, carried out by outsourced companies hired by the municipality: human workers (cisgender men, at least all those I have encountered over the years), poor, almost always immigrants from other states and almost always in precarious working conditions. Entangled in this living-dying with the trees, they co-write the city's story as well as their own stories of survival in this land.

The organic matter resulting from these removals is given a peculiar name: green waste. Part of it is discarded together with regular waste generated by the nearly twelve million human inhabitants of the city, accumulated in heaps

at peripheral landfills—the main one, managed by a foreign company, frequently appears in the media implicated in news stories about nearby environmental damage. There are several clocks ticking in this story: that of the Tipuanas reaching maturity (though they could still live longer if well cared for); that of the city council receiving about 200 daily service calls for tree evaluation and maintenance in public areas (a number that could also be lower if the trees received adequate preventive management); that of the growth time for new native tree seedlings that are planted (or should be planted) in place of the removed trees; that of the rising temperature in the city (increasingly noticeable, especially in areas with little vegetation); that of the ever-growing heaps of landfill waste that are reaching their limit; and that of the workers whose survival in the city's informal economy depends on the removal of the next trees.

This narrative involves social, cultural, economic, symbolic and political elements. It is curious to think about this management of nature by the city: natural elements are artificially implemented in certain places to serve as a landscape and, after having been part of the local fabric for decades, they transform into "green waste." These species are companions in the constitution of our idea of the city, our idea of nature, and, consequently, our own urban human imaginary. They teach us about ways of living and dying together and they inspire us to imagine alternative ways of being.

It is interesting to note that Haraway also reflects on trees, commenting on the acacias discussed by Ursula Le Guin. This is another species that was displaced to various environments around the world to perform the idea of a natural landscape and that today is treated as a pest or invasive species.

> These species [acacias] in all their complexities and ongoingness both do great harm and sustain whole worlds, sometimes in association with human people, sometimes not. The devil is truly in the details of response-able naturecultures inhabited by accountable companion species. (Haraway *Staying* 125)

The work of A Penca, in the words of Noel Rosas, a member of the dramaturgical team for *Viver com, morrer com*, confabulates a multispecies community that questions the care, dangers and pleasures of living together in the time of Anthropocene crisis (A Penca, *Material de divulgação*). Mobilizing symbolic risk through the circus, we seek to reflect on real risks in a desire to give visibility to contemporary issues. And by harnessing the potential that circus arts have to reveal pathways for broadening perceptions beyond the confines of normativity, we strive to envision other possible ways of coexisting and writing stories.

Final Considerations

These two inventions we call modernity and circus arts have many entangled stories in their trajectories. Providing us with tools to feel, sense, imagine, fabulate and create worlds, on numerous occasions, they have mutually constituted one another, naming their protagonists and heroes (almost always human), their threats, villains, technologies and sensibilities. Other-than-human or not-so-human beings can play a fundamental role in updating these systems of thought, in the sense of unveiling sensibilities that have been rendered invisible and conspiratorially crafting new ways of being-doing-thinking. The list of these others is enormous: critters (in Haraway's terms) and forbidden compounds, womanhood, queer groups, racialized groups and persons with disabilities—and it should be remembered that these groups are far from coherent or bounded, as intersecting markers of inequality operate within them, causing certain bodies to be seen as more human than others.

Many artists, particularly those from the Global South, are imagining circuses beyond the limits of modernity. I believe this is being done in a more powerful and exciting way by artists from Black, LGBTQIAPN+ and Arte Def communities (the term used in Brazil to designate art made by persons with disabilities) and also by women with feminist perspectives—for instance, there is a vibrant feminist clowning scene that offers very interesting provocations.

Drawing on reflections from the work of the collective A Penca, I have sought here to consider how the circus can build perspectives on issues from the broader world, broadening its range of possible themes. In reflecting on the sensibility of risk, I echo questions posed by Noel Rosas at the outset of our creative process: "In what multiple ways can risk be incorporated into our artistic practice? How to translate and reframe both risk and the virtuosity of the circus body within other logics, in the frame of contemporary circus forms?" I have also reflected on how the circus can teach us to fabulate, to imagine, to envision new possibilities for being in the world, to broaden our perceptions. In Guzzo's words, it can show us ways to invert given understandings and "construct other meanings, weaving the network of human aspirations and desires" (114).

In this sense, I emphasize that circus arts can stimulate an imaginative capacity that is, first and foremost, political—it ultimately concerns our ability to believe in and envision possibilities, to name new ways of living and to re-enchant things and relationships that are taken for granted.

–Translated from Portuguese by Rafael Esteque

Notes

1 *Viver com, morrer com* was carried out in partnership with Noel Rosas (dramaturgical provocation), Ilana Elkis (movement preparation) and Flaira Ferro (soundtrack).

2 https://percursodasarvores.hotglue.me/.
3 From the Global North, on this theme, I highlight the aforementioned Hotier, the various authors gathered in Emmanuel Wallon's edited volume (notably Goudard) as well as Legendre.
4 From a more recent French context, I highlight Florence Legendre who, referring to an ethnographic study in a circus school, pointed out how learning how to deal with risk is central to the very idea of becoming a circus artist. She identifies mastery in doing, anchored in rigidly regular training, as a strategy to deal with risk, configured as a certain management of the body—a term also used by Loic Wacquant in his classic study of boxers.
5 I am thinking of some body art works from the 1960s or even scenic practices such as Japanese Butoh.
6 See Pedraza, 2011.
7 Isabelle Stengers, writing about climate issues, states that drawing attention to topics such as climate change does not mean sidelining issues related to social inequality. In fact, the opposite pertains, as people in more vulnerable social conditions are often the greatest victims of environmental catastrophes.
8 Quilombola communities consist of Brazilian "ethnic-racial groups with their own historical trajectory, with specific territorial relations, and a presumption of black ancestry related to resistance to historical oppression suffered through the process of enslavement" (Brazil). These communities are recognized as holders of land rights.
9 The word in Portuguese for development—*desenvolvimento*—also communicates disengagement, dis/non-involvement. Many modern theories of development, conceiving it as a linear and teleological process, promote the idea that overcoming/disengaging from some local cultural traces and beliefs was mandatory to achieve development. Reacting to this ideology, Antonio Bispo plays with the words and states in which we need to engage (envolver). Through this formulation, he makes claims for a mode of existence in which we can move, intertwined not only with our cultural traces but other non-human beings and entities (including what we call nature).
10 Each of the members of A Penca has between fifteen to twenty-five years of experience in circus arts; thus vast technical knowledge and corporealities are already inscribed in their bodies.
11 Notably, Haraway is a collaborator of, and influenced by, other authors in the philosophy/sociology/anthropology of science who question the discourse of objectivity such as Latour and Stengers, already mentioned here. All are also influenced, more broadly, by poststructuralist currents of thought. Haraway's links to feminist thought are also significant.
12 Haraway also refers to cyborgs as figures who call us "for living within contradictions, attentive to the naturecultures of mundane practices, opposed to the dire myths of self-birthing, embracing mortality as the condition for life, and alert to the emergent historical hybridities actually populating the world at all its contingent scales" (*The Companion Species* 11).

References

A Penca. *Material de Divulgação de Viver com, Morrer com*. 2023.
———. *Plataforma Percurso das Árvores*. 2024, https://percursodasarvores.hotglue.me/.

Agência Brazil. "Brasil concentra 71,9% das queimadas na América do Sul nas últimas 48h." *Agência Brasil*, 2024, https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/geral/noticia/2024-09/brasil-concentra-719-das-queimadas-na-america-do-sul-nas-ultimas-48h. Accessed Sept. 2024.

Aguiar, Juno Nedel Mendes. "Performatividades trans no circo: confabulando sobre estética política e epistemologias dissidentes." *Urdimento – Revista de Estudos em Artes Cênicas*, vol. 1, no. 50, Apr. 2024, https://www.revistas.udesc.br/index.php/urdimento/article/download/25138/16789?inline=1.

Almeida, Luiz Guilherme Veiga de. *Ritual, Risco e Arte Circense: O Homem em Situações-Limites*. Editora Universidade de Brasília, 2008.

Argentieri Mariani, L., et al. "Words Can Hurt: How Political Communication Can Change the Pace of an Epidemic." *Covid Economics*, Center for Economic Policy Research, no. 12, 2020, pp. 104–137.

Barbosa, Diocelio, and Maria Carolina Vasconcelos Oliveira, editors. *Circo e Comicidade: Reflexões e Relatos sobre as Artes Circenses em Duas Diversas Expressões*. Paco Editorial, 2021, pp. 15–38.

Beck, Ulrich. *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*. Sage, 1992.

Bispo, Antônio dos Santos. *A Terra Dá, a Terra Quer*. Ubu Editora/PISEAGRAMA, 2023.

Bolognesi, Mario Fernando. "O Circo 'Civilizado'." *Sixth International Congress of the Brazilian Studies Association*, Atlanta, Georgia, Apr. 2002.

———. "O Corpo como Princípio." *Trans/Form/Ação*, vol. 24, no. 1, 2001, pp. 101–112, http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_abstract&pid=S0101-31732001000100007&lng=en&nrm=iso&tlng=pt.

———. "Philip Astley e o Circo Moderno: Romantismo, Guerras e Nacionalismo." *O Percevejo (online)*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2009.

Bouissac, Paul. "Circus Performances as Texts: A Matter of Poetic Competence." *Poetics*, vol. 5, no. 2, 1976, pp. 101–118.

Brasil. *Decreto No. 4.887, November 20th, 2003*. Brasília, 2003.

Butler, Judith. *Problemas de Gênero: Feminimo e Subversão da Identidade*. Civilização Brasileira, 2003.

Caponi, Sandra, et al. "O Uso Político da Cloroquina: COVID-19, Negacionismo e Neoliberalismo." *Revista Brasileira de Sociologia*, vol. 9, no. 21, Jan. - Apr. 2021, pp. 78–102.

Cardim, Ricardo. *Paisagismo Sustentável para o Brasil: Integrando Natureza e Humanidade no Século XXI*. Olhares, 2022.

Castilho, Marta, et al. "Negationism and the Role of Political Factors in Covid-19 Mortality in Brazil." *Nova Economia*, vol. 33, no. 1, 2023, pp. 65–93.

Federici, Silvia. *Calibã e a Bruxa*. Elefante, 2017.

Foucault, Michel. "Aula de 22 de Janeiro de 1975." In *Os Anormais: Curso no Collège de France 1974–1975*, Martins Fontes, 2001.

Gell, Alfred. "A Tecnologia do Encanto e o Encanto da Tecnologia." *Revista Concinnitas*, vol. 2, no. 8, 2020, pp. 40–63.

Goudard, Philippe. "Estética do Risco: Do Corpo Sacrificado ao Corpo Abandonado." In Wallon, Emmanuel, editor. *O Circo no Risco da Arte*. Autêntica, 2009.

Guzzo, Marina Sousa Lobo. *Risco como Estética, Corpo como Espetáculo*. Annablume, 2009.

Hablemos de Circo. "Poéticas Circenses Expandidas y Políticas: Entrevista com A Penca." *Temporada 3, Capítulo 2*, 2023, https://open.spotify.com/episode/55Hx2Shwzvs4Wdz36xoZUz?si=6oa4d6fd82ef41bf.

Haraway, Donna J. *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness*. Prickly Paradigm Press, 2003.

———. "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century." In *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, Routledge, 1991.

———. *Ficar com o Problema: Fazer Parentes no Chthuluceno*. Translated by Ana Luiza Braga, Editora n-1, 2023.

———. "SF: Science Fiction, Speculative Fabulation, String Figures, So Far." *Ada New Media*, 24 Feb. 2021, https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/server/api/core/bitstreams/e419ecd4-1e69-4d35-a8aa-00ad55244761/content. Accessed Sept. 2024.

———. *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. Duke University Press, 2016.

Hotier, Hugues. *L'Imaginaire du cirque: art de la piste et de la rue*. L' Harmattan, 2005.

Infantino, Julieta, et al. "Nuevas/viejas formas entre técnica, creatividad, riesgo e libertad." *Pedagogias circenses: experiencias, trayectorias e metodologias,* by Infantino et al., Club de Hem Editores, 2023, pp. 249–278.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). "Summary for Policymakers." *Global Warming of 1.5°C*, Cambridge University Press, 2018, pp. 3–24, https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009157940.001. Accessed Aug. 2024.

———. "Summary for Policymakers." *Climate Change 2023: Synthesis Report*, Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [Core Writing Team, H. Lee and J. Romero (eds.)]. IPCC, Geneva, 2023, pp. 1–34, doi: 10.59327/IPCC/AR6-9789291691647.001 https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/syr/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_SYR_SPM.pdf. Accessed Sept. 2024.

Kopenawa, Davi, and Bruce Albert. *A Queda do Céu: Palavras de um Xamã Yanomami*. Companhia das Letras, 2015.

Krenak, Aílton. "A Vida é Selvagem." *Cadernos Selvagem*, Dantes/Biosfera, 2020, https://selvagemciclo.com.br/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/CADERNO12-AILTON.pdf.

———. *Ideias para Adiar o Fim do Mundo*. Companhia das Letras, 2019.

Lash, Scott and Wynne, Brian. Preface. *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity,* by Ulrich Beck, Sage, 1992, pp. 1–8.

Latour, Bruno. *Diante de Gaia: Oito Conferências sobre a Natureza no Antropoceno*. Translated by Maryalua Meyer, Ubu/Ateliê de Humanidades, 2020.

———. *Investigation sobre los Modos de Existencia*. Paidós, 2013.

———. *Jamais Fomos Modernos: Ensaio de Antropologia Simétrica*. Translated by Carlos Irineu da Costa, ed. 34, 1994.

———. *Onde Aterrar? Como se Orientar Politicamente no Antropoceno*. Translated by Marcela Vieira, Bazar do Tempo, 2020.

———. *Onde Estou? Lições do Confinamento para Uso dos Terrestres*. Translated by Raquel Azevedo, Bazar do Tempo, 2021.

Le Guin, Ursula. "The Author of the Acacia Seeds?" *The Unreal and the Real: Volume II - Outer Space, Inner Lands*, Small Beer Press, 2012.

Legendre, Florence. "Devenir Artiste de Cirque: L'Apprentissage du Risque." *Travail, Genre et Sociétés*, no. 36, Nov. 2016, https://shs.cairn.info/revue-travail-genre-et-societes-2016–2-page-115?lang=fr&tab=texte-integral. Accessed Aug. 2024.

Leles, Marília, and Robson Camargo. "O Circo e as Performances Aéreas: A Simulação do Risco e a Dissimulação da Dor." *Revista Brasileira de Estudos da Presença*, vol. 12, no. 3, 2022.

Lievens, Bauke. "Second Open Letter to the Circus: The Myth Called Circus." *e-tcetera*, 7 Dec 2016, https://e-tcetera.be/the-myth-called-circus/. Accessed July 2025.

Louppe, Laurence. *Poética da Dança Contemporânea*. Orfeu Negro, 2012.

Mandell, Carolina H. "Circo: Risco, Performatividade e Resistência." *Sala Preta*, vol. 16, no. 1, 2016, pp. 71–81.

MapBiomas. "Agosto Responde por Quase Metade da Área Queimada no Brasil em 2024." 13 Sept. 2024, https://brasil.mapbiomas.org/2024/09/13/agosto-responde-por-quase-metade-da-area-queimada-no-brasil-em-2024/. Accessed Sept. 2024.

Margulis, Lynn. *Planeta Simbiótico*. Editora Dantes, 2022.

Martin, Nastassja. *Escute as Feras* (In the Eye of the Wild). Editora 34, 2021.

Miskolci, Richard. "Desinformação Durante a Pandemia de Covid-19." *Muito Além do Negacionismo*, 2021.

Oyęwùmí, Oyèrónké. *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses*. University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

Pedraza, Pilar. "Sobre la Mujer Barbuda y Otras Anomalias." In Antich, X., *De Animales e Monstruos*, Contra Textos, 2011.

Rosas, Noel. "#fornicadoresdelapocalipsis o Como Seguir Imaginando Circos Possibles." *Pistas de Circo*, no. 14, Dec. 2023, https://www.pistasdecirco.com/noelrosas. Accessed Sept. 2024.

Saez, Mariana. *Presencias, Riesgos e Intensidades*. 2017. Universidad de Buenos Aires, PhD dissertation.

São Paulo - Secretaria Municipal do Verde e Meio Ambiente. *Manual Técnico de Arborização Urbana*. 2015, https://www.prefeitura.sp.gov.br/cidade/secretarias/upload/meio_ambiente/MARBOURB.pdf.

Silva, Erminia. *O circo: sua arte e seus saberes. O circo no Brasil do final do século XIX a meados do XX*. 1996. Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Master thesis.

Stengers, Isabelle. *No Tempo das Catástrofes*. Cosac Naify, 2015.

Takuá, Cristine. *Seres Criativos da Floresta*. Dantes/Biosfera, 2020.

Toulmin, Vanessa. "'My Wife to Conclude Performs the Rest' – Patty Astley the First Lady of Circus." *Early Popular Visual Culture*, vol. 16, no. 3, 2019, pp. 1–11. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17460654.2019.1569866

United Nations Development Programme. "Cities Have a Key Role to Play in Tackling Climate Change – Here's Why." *Climate Promise*, 4 June 2024, https://climatepromise.undp.org/news-and-stories/cities-have-key-role-play-tackling-climate-change-heres-why. Accessed Sept. 2024.

Vasconcelos-Oliveira, Maria Carolina. "Circo e gênero: as mulheres e suas possibilidades de existência simbólica e material". In: Infantino, Julieta (org). *El arte de circo en América del Sur*, 2023.

———. "Políticas e Poéticas do Circo Contemporâneo em Sisma, Tra Tra e Corpo-Árvore." *Urdimento - Revista de Estudos em Artes Cênicas*, vol. 2, no. 47, July 2023, https://revistas.udesc.br/index.php/urdimento/article/view/23196/15649.

———. "Reflexões sobre o Circo Contemporâneo: Subjetividade e o Lugar do Corpo." *Revista Repertório*, no. 34, 2020.

Wallon, Emmanuel, editor. *O Circo no Risco da Arte*. Autêntica, 2009.