

Crisp's life writing is analyzed, and it is shown that narrative inhibition of negativity turns Crisp's failure in life into a success later in his life. Ch. 10 discusses narrative identity in confessional poetry from a poetic perspective. It is found that identity in lyrical texts can be discussed more poignantly by using the concept of narrative identity.

In a word, an interdisciplinary understanding of narrative identity is presented in this volume, which shows how productive the notion of narrative identity is from various perspectives ranging from morality, persona, and discursive space to socio-narratology. It is a very useful book for those interested in both narratives and identity research.

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PAUL BOUISSAC, *Circus as multimodal discourse*. London: Bloomsbury, 2012.  
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This book presents a theory of the circus as a secular ritual and introduces a method to analyze its performances as multimodal discourse from the perspective of semiotics and ethnography. The book consists of twelve chapters, an introduction, and a conclusion. Various circus specialties are discussed to show how cultural meaning is produced, extended, and amplified by circus performance.

The introduction mentions the necessity of analyzing circus as multimodal discourse and introduces the structure of the book. Ch. 1 explains why circus performance can be regarded as a special form of secular ritual loaded with special patterns and conveying special cultural meaning. Ch. 2 elaborates the methodological framework and the author's approach to verbalizing the multimodal experience of circus performance. Both advantages and limitations of this approach are mentioned. Ch. 3 discusses magic as one typical type of circus performance and finds that magic acts can be displayed as forms of either entertainment or for deviant purposes. Chs. 4 and 5 focus on the role of horses in circus performance in expressing cultural meaning. Ch. 4 discusses horses as individual, personalized actors, and Ch. 5 examines horses as groups that can be used as a secondary modeling system to express social relations. Ch. 6 deals with dogs as trainable animal and finds that dog training in circus acts can simulate the discursive dynamics of circus performance. Ch. 7

discusses the changing attitude toward animals in contemporary societies. Discussion shows that ethical objections regarding circus animals derive from a wider cultural transformation of the moral and legal status of animals. Ch. 8 is dedicated to documenting disappearing circus acts such as lions lying down and tigers dancing. The possible disappearance of performances by predators like these moves attention from biology to art. Ch. 9 focuses on the performance of clowns, finding that clown acts also reflect social and cultural background. The semiotic gap between the contents of acts performed by actual circus acrobats and clowns and their roots in literature and art are discussed in Ch. 10, which reveals that cross-modal intertextuality exists and influences the actual production of circus acts. Ch. 11 addresses the question of how political information can be represented in circus performance. It is found that many political topics such as feminism, gay liberation, and community relations can all be reflected through circus acts. Ch. 12 briefly discusses future directions that circus performance will probably take as a result of influence from the animal liberation movement. As is pointed out, there will be fewer animals involved in future circus performance, which as a consequence will be more human-centered. In the conclusion, the author summarizes that the multimodal structure of circus acts, which express cultural meaning, is the main factor that keeps circus performance attractive.

This is the first book that systemically studies circus acts as multimodal discourse. It will be useful to scholars doing research in both semiotics and ethnography.

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ROBERT MCCOLL MILLAR, *English historical sociolinguistics*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012. Pp. 220. Hb. \$53.15.

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*English historical sociolinguistics* studies the political, cultural, and economic forces that affect a society's use of and views on language. Language contact, language standardization, and linguistic attrition are also investigated. This book is thematic rather than chronological and keeps sociolinguistic insights in the forefront, both microsociolinguistic and macrosociolinguistic. Microsociolinguistics and macrosociolinguistics inform each other, and the interaction between them can be played back into the history of the English language. This book is made up of seven chapters, with each chapter ending with further reading and potential research topics.