



# Circus as Multimodal Discourse: Performance, Meaning, and Ritual

*Paul Bouissac*

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# Circus as Multimodal Discourse: Performance, Meaning, and Ritual

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## **Circus as Multimodal Discourse: Performance, Meaning, and Ritual** Paul Bouissac

Now available in paperback, this volume presents a theory of the circus as a secular ritual and introduces a method to analyze its performances as multimodal discourse.

The book's chapters cover the range of circus specialties (magic, domestic and wild animal training, acrobatics, and clowning) and provide examples to show how cultural meaning is produced, extended and amplified by circus performances. Bouissac is one of the world's leading authorities on circus ethnography and semiotics and this work is grounded on research conducted over a 50 year span in Europe, Asia, Australia and the Americas.

It concludes with a reflection on the potentially subversive power of this discourse and its contemporary use by activists. Throughout, it endeavours to develop an analytical approach that is mindful of the epistemological traps of both positivism and postmodernist license. It brings semiotics and ethnography to bear on the realm of the circus.

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