

# Freak Show: Presenting Human Oddities for Amusement and Profit

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interesting pieces are those by Howard C. Horsford and Christine Brooke-Rose. Horsford's "He was a Man" suggests that the work is a "more or less consistently ironic treatment of Fleming's illusions, rationalizations, and self-justifications." By emphasizing the "constant alteration" of Fleming's thinking, Horsford concludes that no "reliable finality" is constituted in the "concluding self-contemplation."

In "Ill Logics of Irony," Christine Brooke-Rose shows how the major concepts in *The Red Badge of Courage* deconstruct themselves, so that the "irony... is bound to be unstable." By establishing four major oppositions subsumed in the "courage/cowardice" juxtaposition, she examines the role of the author, who is "theoretically objective, and yet classifies and judges" to expose "the swallowing of each concept by its opposite." Thus, for example, "The monster and the hero are in fact one."

As an introductory guide, the *New Essays* series provides a wide range of critical thought on selected texts, plus informative selected bibliographies. My only criticism is that in this volume too much space is devoted to historical background: this is readily available elsewhere, and is unlikely to be of specific use to the undergraduates to whom this book is aimed.

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Robert Bogdan, *Freak Show: Presenting Human Oddities for Amusement and Profit* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988, £23.95 cloth). Pp. 322. ISBN 0226 06311 9.

MGM's *Freaks*, released in 1932 and featuring sideshow exhibits normally employed by the Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circuses was in one sense a culminating record of the exhibition of "human oddities." In another, its rejection by critics and theatre managers marked the end of a hundred-year period in which that exhibition was an acceptable public spectacle. The *New York Times* review observed: "The difficulty is in telling whether it should be shown at the Rialto — where it opened yesterday — or in, say, the Medical Centre."

*Freak Show* is a social history of the attitudes towards disability represented by the exhibition of human oddities in the century between 1840 and 1940, when it was a normal feature of American small town and urban life. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, "the human oddity was the king of museum entertainment;" a realm embraced by nineteenth-century scientists concerned with the classification and nomenclature of *lusus naturae*, as well as urban dime museums, amusement parks, the midways of the World's Fairs, and circuses, the major form of popular amusement for rural Americans between 1870 and 1920.

Robert Bogdan maintains that "'Freak' is a frame of mind, a set of practices, a way of thinking about and presenting people." He argues that the demise of the freak show was brought about by a redefinition of the meaning of being different in American society. What ruined the business careers of these showpeople, he suggests, was that by the 1930s medicine had redefined certain forms of human variation as diseases, to be regarded with pity rather than curiosity, and therefore, not to be publicly regarded at all. "Pity did not fit in with the world of

Robert Bogdan's fascinating social history brings to life the world of the freak show and explores the culture that nurtured and, later, abandoned it. Freaks were not born, Bogdan reveals; they were manufactured by the amusement world, usually with the active participation of the freaks themselves. PDF On Jun 1, , David W. Frayer and others published *Freak Show: Presenting Human Oddities for Amusement and Profit*. By Robert Bogdan. Chicago. Biological Anthropology: *Freak Show: Presenting Human Oddities for Amusement and Profit*. Robert Bogdan. *Freak Show: Presenting Human Oddities for Amusement and Profit*. By Robert. Bogdan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, xiii plus pp. \$). *FREAK SHOW Presenting Human Oddities for Amusement and Profit* by Robert Bogdan (University of Chicago: \$). August 28, ALEX RAKSIN. Available in: Paperback. From until , freak shows by the hundreds crisscrossed the United States, from the smallest towns to the. *Freak Show: Presenting Human Oddities for Amusement and Profit* by Robert Bogdan: Contemporary Sociology. Gary A. Fine Sociology. Research output. *Freak Show: Presenting Human Oddities for Amusement and Profit*. By Robert Bogdan. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Pp. xiii. Sturdy scholarly study of a fringe topic long taboo in polite society. Booktopia has *Freak Show, Presenting Human Oddities for Amusement and Profit* by Robert Bogdan. Buy a discounted Paperback of *Freak Show* online from . Get this from a library! *Freak show: presenting human oddities for amusement and profit*. [Robert Bogdan]. *Freak Show: Presenting Human Oddities for Amusement and Profit* is the first of my City Lights books that I read and finished and fairly quickly. Alma Editeur, , p., 29 euros. (Originally published as *Freak Show: Presenting Human Oddities for Amusement and Profit*, University of. (GAUK), project Imaginations of Bodily Otherness and Pragues Freakshow Culture *Freak Show: Presenting Human Oddities for Amusement and Profit*. A freak show is an exhibition of biological rarities, referred to in popular culture as "freaks of .. Jump up ^ Bogdan, Robert (). *Freak Show: presenting human oddities for amusement and profit* (Paperback ed., [Nachdr.] ed.). Chicago: Univ. *Freak Show: Presenting Human Oddities for. By Robert* them in a pathological light, and made the freak show nearly and disability for amusement and profit. David Gerber. Robert Bogdan. *Freak Show: Presenting Human Oddities for Amusement and. Profit*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, xiii + pp. Once promoted as "freaks" at dime museums and circus sideshows of *Freak Show: Presenting Human Oddities for Amusement and Profit*.

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