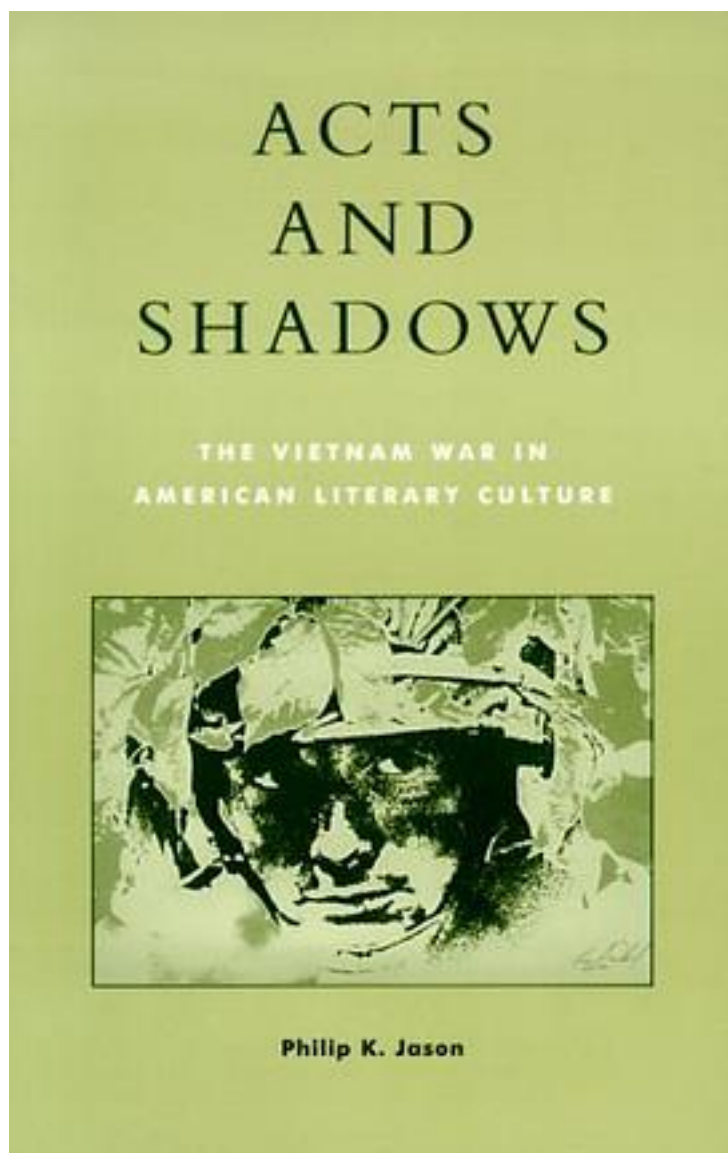


Acts and Shadows



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The imaginative literature of the Vietnam War participates-both overtly and covertly-in a struggle for national memory. First-generation Vietnam War literature, focusing on representations of combat and life in the battlefield, strove to give testimony, to write history. Later writings, in their range of genre and style, investigate and interrogate the very meaning of war-and ultimately reveal the deep and far-reaching impact of the Vietnam experience on the American psyche. To reflect these two stages, Philip Jason divides his newest book of literary criticism into two sections: 'acts' and 'shadows.' In 'Acts,' Jason provides formal and cultural readings of combat narratives-by such authors as James Webb, Larry Heinemann, and Joe Haldeman-and explores the meaning of 'authenticity' as applied to Vietnam War texts. 'Shadows' looks both forward and backward from the combat zone, challenging the parameters of what we define as 'Vietnam War literature.' Jason brings to the fore the literary treatment of Vietnamese Americans; he explores the representation of the war in contemporary detective fiction, focusing on the work of James Lee Burke; and he raises questions of genre and canon by placing Korean War and Vietnam War fiction side by side. Two final chapters on teaching the literature of the Vietnam War make this book a particularly useful reference for teachers. As a new contribution to the contemporary debates on authority, authenticity, and canonicity, Acts and Shadows is crucial reading for scholars and students of American literature in the twentieth century and beyond.

作者介绍:

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