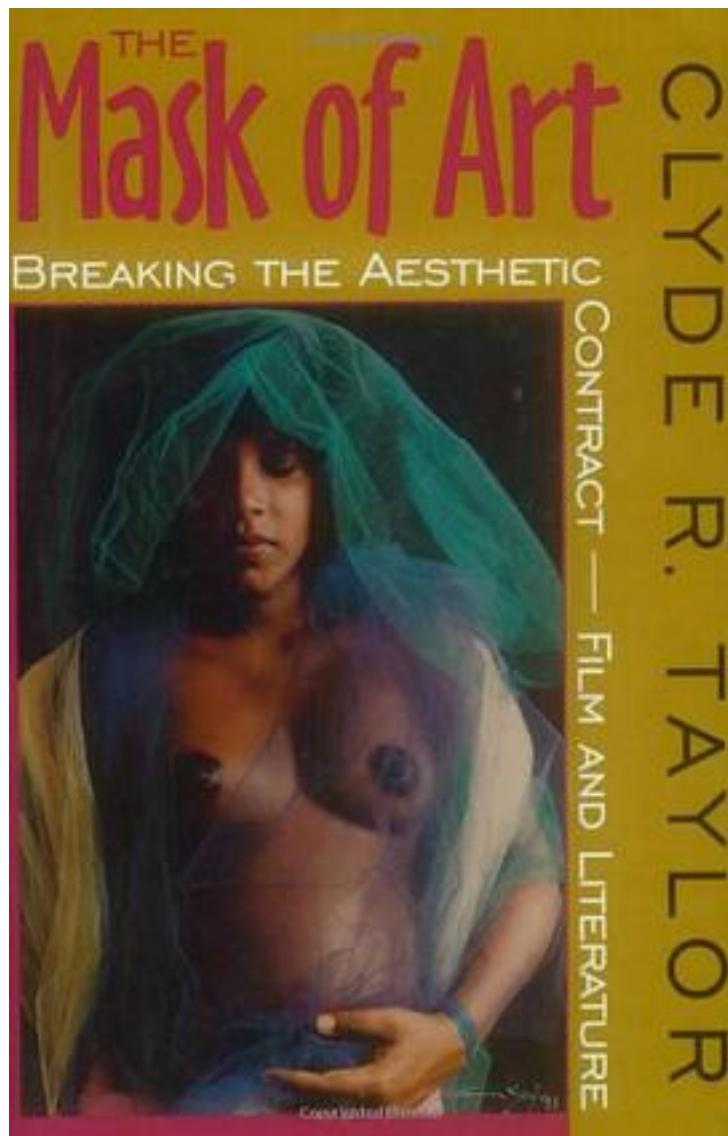


The Mask of Art



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Clyde Taylor exposes the concept of art as a tool of ethnocentrism and racial ideology. He challenges the history of aesthetics as a recent invention of privileged Western consumerism, and questions the myth of its ancient Greek origin. Aestheticism, he says is a party to the establishment of whiteness as cultural norm. The aesthetic experience is revealed to be the stylistic/structural contribution to the Western master narrative which dominates historical interpretation. Areas such as cinema studies, the avant garde, Marxist and feminist criticism are seen as seriously compromised by this aesthetic reasoning. Examining various texts including *The Birth of a Nation*, Taylor demonstrates how rationales of art are used to mask personal, class, and cultural biases. Taylor offers a critique of representation as one alternative to aestheticism. *Imitation of Life*, *The Cotton Club*, and *The Marrow of Tradition* are read as *doppelganger* discourses where the values of one social group are mobilized as the narrative double of a more powerful group. Taylor's innovative analysis of the semantics of unequal power refers to these doublings as ironies of discourse. Novels and films by Chinua Achebe, Toni Morrison, Richard Wright, Ousmane Sembene, Spike Lee, Souleymane Cisse, Victor Masayesva, and Julie Dash, and the Vietnam Memorial design of Maya Lin are scrutinized in terms of resistance to the reign of the dominant system of aesthetics. According to Taylor whatever was once gained through this narcissistic aesthetic gaze has long since been exhausted. Liberation from its narrow assumptions will open richer resources to human imagination and creativity.

作者介绍:

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