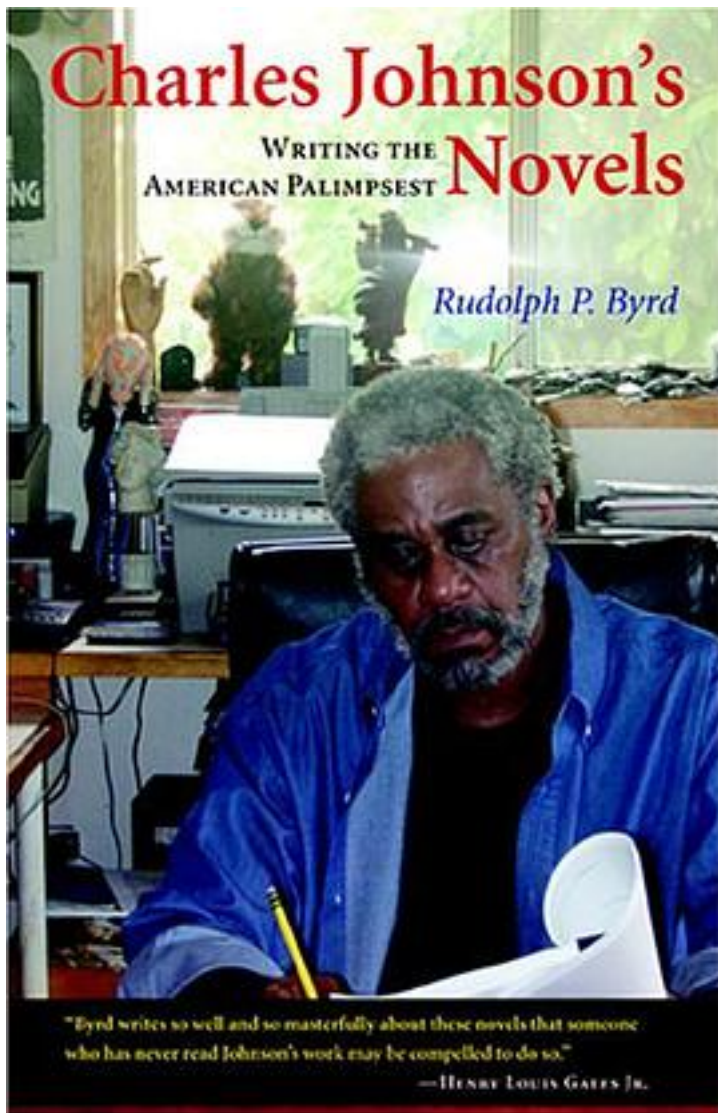


Charles Johnson's Novels



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著者:Byrd, Rudolph P.

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Charles Johnson came of age during the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s and 1970s. His fiction bears the imprint of his formal training as a philosopher and his work as a journalist and cartoonist with a well-honed interest in political satire. Mentored by the American writer John Gardner, Johnson is preoccupied with questions of morality, which are informed by his knowledge of Continental and Asian philosophical traditions. In this book, Rudolph Byrd examines Johnson's four novels - "Faith and the Good Thing", "Oxherding Tale", "Middle Passage" (National Book Award Winner), and "Dreamer" - under the rubric of philosophical black fiction, as art that interrogates experience. Byrd contends that Johnson suspends, shelves, and brackets all presuppositions regarding African American life. This bracketing accomplished, the African American experience becomes a pure field of appearances within two poles: consciousness and the people or phenomena to which it is related. Johnson's principal themes are identity and liberation. Intent upon the liberation of perception, for the reader and the writer, Johnson's fiction aims at 'whole sight', encompassing a plurality of meanings across a symbolic geography of forms, texts, and traditions from within the matrix of African American life and culture. And like a palimpsest, Johnson's texts contain multiple layers of meaning of disparate origins imprinted over time with varying degrees of visibility and significance. "Charles Johnson's Novels" will appeal to fans of the writer's work, but it also will serve as a helpful guide for readers newly introduced to this brilliant contemporary American writer. Rudolph P. Byrd is Associate Professor in The Graduate Institute of the Liberal Arts at Emory University. Byrd has also published "Traps" (IUP, 2001) and "I Call Myself an Artist" (IUP, 1999). He lives in Atlanta, Georgia.

作者介绍:

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