

faces

IN THE MIRROR

Oscar Micheaux & Spike Lee



John R. Howard



About the Author

John Howard retired from the State University of New York as a Distinguished Service Professor. His last book was *The Shifting Wind: The Supreme Court from Reconstruction to Brown*. He has also been the recipient of a National Endowment for the Humanities Focus Grant for a program on African American Art and Culture.

Faces in the Mirror

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John Howard's *FACES IN THE MIRROR: Oscar Micheaux and Spike Lee* provides a fresh look at the history of African-American filmmaking in the twentieth century. His engaging exploration of the life stories of the century's two most significant black movie directors chronicles the struggles of African-Americans in the film industry and against Hollywood's traditions of segregation and stereotyping.

Recounting the lives of Micheaux, whose career spanned the period from the silent era through the late 1940s, and Spike Lee, who came of age during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and emerged as one of the most important film directors of recent times, Howard demonstrates that both men, despite their very different experiences, encountered similar circumstances in their efforts to practice their art. Lee's later work emerges as the heir, at least indirectly, of Micheaux's attempts to forge a black aesthetic that addressed the concerns of the African-American American community. This is a deeply meaningful contribution to the history of African-Americans as well as to the history of American film.

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