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978-0-521-87529-5 - Lévi-Strauss, Anthropology, and Aesthetics

Boris Wiseman

Frontmatter

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AND AESTHETICS

In a wide-ranging and original study of Claude Lévi-Strauss's aesthetic thought, Boris Wiseman demonstrates not only its centrality within his oeuvre but also the importance of Lévi-Strauss for contemporary aesthetic enquiry. Reconstructing the internal logic of Lévi-Strauss's thinking on aesthetics, and showing how anthropological and aesthetic ideas intertwine at the most elemental levels in the elaboration of his system of thought, Wiseman demonstrates that Lévi-Strauss's aesthetic theory forms an integral part of his approach to Amerindian masks, body decoration and mythology. He reveals the significance of Lévi-Strauss's anthropological analysis of an 'untamed' mode of thinking (*pensée sauvage*) at work in totemism, classification and mythmaking for his conception of art and aesthetic experience. In this way, structural anthropology is shown to lead to ethno-aesthetics. *Lévi-Strauss, Anthropology and Aesthetics* adopts a broad-ranging approach that combines the different perspectives of anthropology, philosophy, aesthetic theory and literary criticism into an unusual and imaginative whole.

BORIS WISEMAN is Senior Lecturer in French at the University of Durham. His previous publications include *Introducing Claude Lévi-Strauss and Structural Anthropology* (second edition, Icon Books, 2000) and he is currently editing *The Cambridge Companion to Lévi-Strauss* (forthcoming, 2008).

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*University of Durham*



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*To my father and mother  
In memory of John Taylor*

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