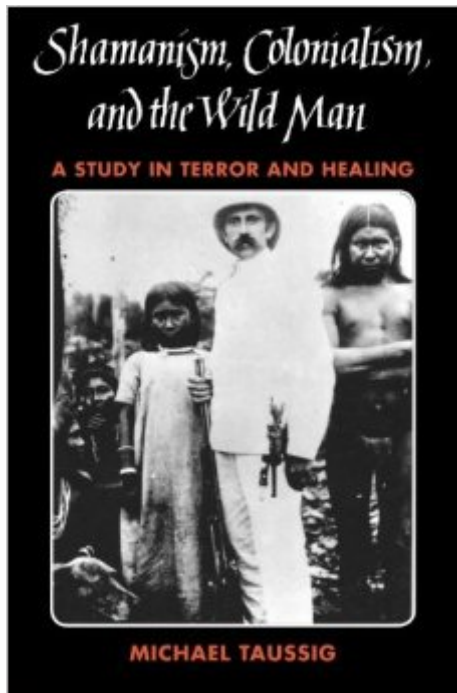


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# Shamanism, Colonialism, And The Wild Man: A Study In Terror And Healing



## Synopsis

Working with the image of the Indian shaman as Wild Man, Taussig reveals not the magic of the shaman but that of the politicizing fictions creating the effect of the real."This extraordinary book . . . will encourage ever more critical and creative explorations."â "Fernando Coronil, [I]American Journal of Sociology[I]"Taussig has brought a formidable collection of data from arcane literary, journalistic, and biographical sources to bear on . . . questions of evil, torture, and politically institutionalized hatred and terror. His intent is laudable, and much of the book is brilliant, both in its discovery of how particular people perpetrated evil and others interpreted it."â "Steven G. Bunker, Social Science Quarterly

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Arguably one of the most accomplished anthropologists working today, Michael Taussig provides an intensely individualistic bricolage of literary, historical, and ethnological interpretations of his many years of fieldwork in the Upper . One of the most detailed and poignant accounts of shamanism in its cultural context - will very soon be regarded as a classic.

trip through the rubber boom of the 1800's in South America. From detailed historical survey to his first hand accounts of life around the , he never ceases to confront the reader with reality. His study is comprehensive in that he brings attention to all different aspects of the European, Indian and African people who live there. The study helps integrate the anthropological view of society to

consider the religious, political, economic and moral as part of the collective consciousness of a community. Powerful book.

Generally expressions of shamanism are associated with the lower classes of society who may be subject to great systematic oppression. This reality is exemplified in Michael Taussig's description of the colonization and slavery the Colombians. Taussig speaks of wildness as a "death space of signification", which implies that rather than expressing subservience to the will of the colonial powers, shamans eliminate meaning as they turn away from civilization. The "death spaces of signification" - the consequences of a culture of oppression - are a means of negation of the oppression though accepting death. There are strong conceptual associations with the work of Dambudzo Marechera, especially his shamanistic outlook in *Black Sunlight* (Penguin Classics). One also notes that Georges Bataille's writing, for instance in *Unfinished System Of Nonknowledge* upholds the value of seeking within a different mode of signification that has the appearance of being "nothing". Whereas death or "nothing" may seem to be the object of shamanistic seeking, one is advised to look much more deeply.

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