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The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America

Michael T. Taussig

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The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America Michael T. Taussig
In this classic book, Michael Taussig explores the social significance of the devil in the folklore of contemporary plantation workers and miners in South America. Grounding his analysis in Marxist theory, Taussig finds that the fetishization of evil, in the image of the devil, mediates the conflict between precapitalist and capitalist modes of objectifying the human condition. He links traditional narratives of the devil-pact, in which the soul is bartered for illusory or transitory power, with the way in which production in capitalist economies causes workers to become alienated from the commodities they produce. A new chapter for this anniversary edition features a discussion of Walter Benjamin and Georges Bataille that extends Taussig's ideas about the devil-pact metaphor.

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