

materialists who still haunt this world with the 'thought' that their materialism itself is not an ideology" (p. 202).

Scheffel says, "it is not for a reviewer to condemn an author for choosing a particular theoretical framework," but does just that by suggesting I should have drawn upon theories of ritual practice employed since the mid-1970s. (He does not reveal what these are.) I noted that my interpretation of rituals in terms of silence and space draws heavily on Stanley Tambiah (*Culture, Thought, and Social Action* [Harvard University Press, 1985]). Hutterian rituals are then situated within the theoretical paradigm of control, culminating in Rappaport's enlarged edition of *Pigs for the Ancestors* ([Yale University Press, 1984], p. 5). The point of departure for the book is the mid-1980s and not a paradigm ending a decade earlier. Finally, the research was done in Alberta (not Saskatchewan).

As for allowing the Hutterians to recede while broader issues of cultural evolution, ritual and population growth are described, I plead guilty. For me that is as much an obligation as the warm depiction of the Hutterians. MacLean, in *Young Men and Fire* (University of Chicago Press, 1985), observed that "one of the chief privileges of man is to speak up for the universe." My attempt to go beyond the borders of Hutterian culture is rooted in the same kind of thinking:

Hopefully . . . something of what the Hutterian People have learned may be passed on outside the borders of their own society and experience. To have created and tenaciously preserved an essentially egalitarian and pacifist culture out of near oblivion is no mean accomplishment. Perhaps the hope such a rare event can inspire may lead to real insight into the rebirth which many of the darkened corners and persecuted peoples of our world have despaired of ever finding. (p. 12)

Surely there is a risk of parochialism in viewing local knowledge strictly in terms of itself. Scheffel appears to suggest that descriptive writing which exudes charm is "good" writing, while attending abstract and analytical topics yields "bad" writing. What are we to make of writing which decontextualizes quotations and casts a work in the wrong place and time? Simple inaccuracy aside, is this not perhaps the tyranny of a new genre supplanting an older one? I object to the tone of Scheffel's remarks which seem intended to paint me as yesterday's ethnographer.

The Nervous System

Michael Taussig

New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, 1992. 207 pp. \$56.50 (cloth), \$19.95 (paper)

Reviewer: Christiane Paponnet-Cantat
University of New Brunswick

The Nervous System by Michael Taussig is, undeniably, a very challenging piece of writing. In order to outline a theory of culture, the author follows a complex procedure and tackles a number of issues such as power, control and the role of ritualization in political discourse. Questioning the commodification of culture in our post-modern world, Professor Taussig argues that the capitalist nature of modern culture is a product of reification by the state, by science and by the people themselves. Taussig reassesses the nature of modern capitalist culture by examining the social body and

the biological body. The state constructs the culture of the social body and science the culture of the biological body. State and science are masks. They render reality "inherently deceptive, real and unreal at one and the same time—in short, a thoroughly nervous Nervous System" (p. 113).

The nervousness of the social body is evidenced in the use of terror by the authoritarian state. For instance, the dirty war of Colombia is a war of silencing where terror becomes a social practice which gives force to the unsaid. However, coercion always brings resistance. The naming of the disappeared by their mothers is an effective way to oppose silencing, "the restless souls . . . return again and again in the collective sphere to haunt the living" (p. 27). The naming of the disappeared allows the moral and magical power of the unquiet dead to flow into the public sphere. This recuperation of the collective memory by the mothers has a generative character; it empowers the individual by re-enacting reality.

The nervousness of the social body is also apparent in the obsessive redefining, by the authority, of a sense of mystery to the pre-European, Indian past. This redefinition of the past as symbolized by the ruins of Machu Picchu is a form of control. It is in the attitude of the old Indian healer that Taussig sees resistance to this coercion. Taussig establishes a parallel between the refunctioning of the state by the women and of Machu Picchu by the old Indian healer. The latter unintentionally reverses the official montage of colonial experience. Here we see the mothers and the Indian healer rebelling against the appropriation by the ruling powers of their dead or of their past.

In the democratic state of Australia, the culture of nationalism expresses the nervousness of the Nervous System. According to the author, it is coercive in nature because it mystifies history. However, using the ANZACS tale, the old soldier shows how the past can be de-mythologized and re-enchanted by bringing new meanings to the notion of heroism "that crack open the reified exterior with which its usage by the state has wrapped it in medals and decoration" (p. 54).

The nervousness of the biological body is expressed in the clinical construction of reality where scientific management of illnesses denies the human relations embodied in symptoms, signs and therapy. Science explains the how (fact) but not the why (value) of disease. It is left to the patient to create his/her own theory of etiology because the "non-compliant" patient is searching for the social explanations and moral meanings of his/her illness.

Although written from an anthropological point of view, Taussig's work transcends established disciplinary boundaries to reveal the entangled nature of discursive relations. Conscious of the danger of empiricism, the author sets himself up against positivist, linear thinking. His work rejects subject/object dualism as well as the reification of categories.

The Nervous System represents a new way to conceptualize anthropological studies. For Taussig, the task of interpretation calls for an archaeology of the implicit so that the opaque is brought within the realm of concepts. Theory becomes a tool used for de-mystification and re-enchancement. This way, the everydayness of the post-modern world is de-reified. In the process it is also liberated and thus "realized" in its totality with all blind spots being given meaning.

Michael Taussig's mode of analysis is shamanic in essence. It works toward combining a critique of the modern world with a search for a new Archimedean mode of thinking. It expresses the will to transcend reality and to challenge scientific thinking. It aims at reconciling the secular with the magical by using the regenerative powers of the aesthetic mode of analysis. It is art and not science which enables the anthropolo-

gist to put order upon chaos. It is, according to Taussig, the "allegorizing mode of reading ideology into events and artifacts, cockfights and carnivals, advertisements and film, private and public spaces, in which the surface phenomenon, as in allegory, stands as a cipher for uncovering horizon after horizon of otherwise obscure systems of meanings" (p. 147). It drags into consciousness what was previously left unsaid or unconscious of the dialectic between self and other.

This mode of analysis is surprising. It is a "making-strange" approach to reality which constantly shocks the reader. According to the author this mode is akin to Roland Barthes' seismology or the production of shock in that it has the same "tactility."

Through the aesthetic experience and the shamanic mode of analysis *The Nervous System* seeks to provide meaning to the perpetually disintegrating state of modern life. It is also a primary intellectual document which brings the work of Walter Benjamin to the forefront of this exploration.

Animals & Society : The Humanity of Animal Rights

Keith Tester

London et New York : Routledge, 1991. vi + 218 p. 15.95 \$ (souple), 59.95 \$ (cartonne)

Animal Rights, Human Rights : Ecology, Economy and Ideology in the Canadian Arctic

George Wenzel

Toronto et Buffalo : University of Toronto Press, 1991. ix + 206 p. 18.95 \$ (souple), 55.00 \$ (cartonné)

Reviewer: Daniel Clément

Musée canadien des civilisations

Ces deux livres récents, aux titres similaires, abordent différemment la question des «droits des animaux» et des droits des humains. Le premier de Keith Tester, un enseignant à Portsmouth, provient d'une thèse de doctorat présentée à l'université de Leeds en Angleterre, le second de George Wenzel, anthropologue et géographe de l'université McGill à Montréal, est issu d'une expérience d'au moins vingt ans en milieu inuit. Ces origines inégales expliquent en partie les différences de contenu et de ton des deux ouvrages.

Le livre de Tester est avant tout théorique et consiste en un examen critique continu des auteurs ayant abordé la question des «droits des animaux». En s'inspirant d'auteurs tels Foucault et Douglas, Tester tente ainsi de découvrir les relations et processus sociaux qui sous-tendent à la fois le discours actuel en Angleterre sur la pertinence de reconnaître aux animaux des droits moraux *et* les comportements des membres de certaines sociétés de défense des animaux. Les théories aussi à la mode que celle de Singer sur l'espèceisme (l'équivalent du racisme mais cette fois fondé sur une hiérarchie des espèces), celle de Regan sur la reconnaissance de «droits» aux animaux ou celle de Clark sur l'égalité morale des hommes et des animaux sont présentées en premier. Suit une analyse historique et épistémologique des divers aspects liés à cette problématique avec comme hypothèse de départ la suivante : selon Tester, les énoncés relatifs aux «droits» des animaux ne visent nullement les animaux; au contraire, ces idées reflètent les perceptions humaines de la société, les animaux ne servant que de prétexte pour différencier l'humanité de l'animalité.