

Seminar: Totemism, Fetishism, Idolatry (Art History 463; English 697) CWAC 152 M 1:30-4:30

Instructor: W. J. T. Mitchell

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Hours: Tuesdays 2-4 & by appointment

Texts (available at Seminary Coop Bookstore):

Emily Apter and William Pietz, Fetishism as Cultural Discourse. Cornell U.P.

Emile Durkheim, The Elementary Forms of Religious Life. Free Press

Sigmund Freud, Totem and Taboo. Norton

Moshe Halbertal and Avishai Margalit, Idolatry. Harvard

Claude Levi-Strauss, Totemism. Beacon Press

Burton Feldman and Robert Richardson, The Rise of Modern Mythology. Indiana (out of print, but a few copies are available from the instructor).

W. J. T. Mitchell, Iconology; Picture Theory; The Last Dinosaur Book: The Life and Times of a Cultural Icon (recommended as background).

Friedrich Nietzsche, Twilight of the Idols. Penguin

Texts to be scrounged and photocopied (a partial list):

Bible: "The Golden Calf" in Exodus; text(s) of the second commandment

William Blake, "The Ancient Poets" in Marriage of Heaven and Hell

Auguste Comte, "Fetichism," chapter 7 of The Positive Philosophy

Charles de Brosses, On the Worship of the Fetish Gods in Feldman and Richardson, The Rise of Modern Mythology

Sir James Frazer, The Golden Bough, Part IV, Ch. 5.

Freud, "Fetishism" and "The Uncanny"

Carlo Ginzburg, "Origen, Homilies on Exodus VIII.3, and Its Reception," in Sight and Insight: Essays in Honor...of Gombrecht, ed. John Onians, 55-67.

Rene Girard, "Totem and Taboo and the Incest Prohibition," in Violence and the Sacred, 193-222.

Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art"(1935), in Basic Writings, ed. David Krell.

Kant, on the sublimity of the second commandment, Critique of Judgment Sec. 29

Bruno Latour, "A Few Steps Toward an Anthropology of the Iconoclastic Gesture," Science in Context 10:1 (1997) 63-83.

Marx, "On the Fetishism of Commodities" in Capital

Mitchell, "What Do Pictures Really Want?" October 77 (Summer 1997)

Nietzsche, Preface to Twilight of the Idols

William Pietz, "The Problem of the Fetish: 1-2," Res 9 and 13 (Spring 1987 and 1995)

Jean-Pierre Vernant, "The Birth of Images," in Mortals and Immortals, 164-185.

Ludwig Wittgenstein, "Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough."