

Art History 477/ English 666: Violence and Representation

Fall, 1997

W. J. T. Mitchell

Office: Wieboldt 203

Hours: Tues. & Wed. 3-4, and by appointment

Texts at bookstore: Rene Girard, Violence and the Sacred; Allen Feldman, Formations of Violence; Mitchell, Picture Theory; Peter Weiss, Marat/Sade.

Texts to be scrounged: Leo Bersani, Forms of Violence; Walter Benjamin, "Critique of Violence" in Reflections; Jacques Derrida, "Force of Law," in Cardozo Law Review and other selected essays from CLR; Georges Sorel, from Reflections on Violence; Karl Schmitt, from Concept of the Political and The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes; Catherine MacKinnon, from Feminism Unmodified; Hannah Arendt, "Power and the Space of Appearance," from The Human Condition; Foucault, "About the Dangerous Individual"; Discipline and Punish, part one: "The Body of the Condemned"; "The Spectacle of the Scaffold."

A short list of recommended films: Spike Lee, Do the Right Thing; Turner Home Entertainment, Desert Storm; Stephen Spielberg, Jurassic Park and Schindler's List; David Cronenberg, Videodrome; Wim Wenders, The End of Violence; Peter Brook, Marat/Sade; Quentin Tarantino, Pulp Fiction; Oliver Stone, Natural Born Killers; Ridley Scott, Alien, and of course all the Michael Douglas endangered white male films of the last decade.

Sept. 31: Violence/Representation: preliminary planning, mapping, definitions, and dialectics. Typologies of violence and representation. Crossings: the representation of violence and the violence of representation. The concept of "natural violence."

October 7: Trauma, Commemoration, Amnesia, Iconoclasm, and the Monstrous Form of Total Violence: readings from Picture Theory: "Narrative, Memory, and Slavery"; "The Photographic Essay"; "The Violence of Public Art"; "From CNN to JFK"; and "Representation and Responsibility." Also read the "interchapters" entitled "Pictures and Power" and "Pictures and the Public Sphere." Also, Hobbes, "Of the Naturall Condition of Mankind," Leviathan ch. 13.

View The End of Violence (Wenders, Fine Arts Theatre downtown); Do the Right Thing (Spike Lee); Jurassic Park.

October 15: (note change to Wednesday evening): Myth, Ritual, Tragedy, Mimesis, Spectacle, Sacrifice, Victims, Scapegoats: Rene Girard, Violence and the Sacred

October 21: Narrative, Form, Pleasure, Fascination, Sadism, Masochism: Leo Bersani, Forms of Violence

October 28: Law, Justice, Right, Morality, Politics, Power, Force, Fraud, War, Revolution: Walter Benjamin, "Critique of Violence" and Jacques Derrida, "The Force of Law" Cardozo Law Review 11: 5-6 (July/Aug 1990); selections from Georges Sorel, Karl Schmitt, and special number of Cardozo Law Review; Foucault, "About the Concept of the Dangerous Individual in 19th Century Psychiatry," International Journal of Law and Psychiatry 1:1 (January 1978).

November 4: Terrorism, Torture, Assassination, Removal. Surveillance: Allen Feldman, Formations of Violence

November 11-December 9: Reports: order to be determined.