



Theological Research Seminar



Tuesday, Feb 7, 2017

12:30—1:20pm

Hurlburt Hall

David Fuller

"The Sublime Object(s) of Idolatry:
Prophetic Aniconism and the
Ideological Formation of the Subject"

Abstract

In the aftermath of postmodernism, some continental philosophers have sought to freshly appropriate the legacy of German idealism. Slavoj Žižek's psychoanalytic resuscitation of Hegel produces an ontology in which the Absolute Idea is (in Lacanian fashion) structured around a traumatic void, as opposed to the "sublation" that assimilates all of reality. Accordingly, the symbolic order occurs at the juncture of the controlling ideology and a given signifier, resulting in the "subject" being both an artefact of this interpellation and a conceptual vassal of the condition of lack in the Other. In the prophetic corpus of the Hebrew Bible, a number of passages decry the creation and worship of physical representations of deities. The idols of the surrounding nations are said to be nothing more than the materials from which they are made, and thus wholly impotent. In contrast to older scholarship that viewed these texts as ignorant of ancient Near Eastern beliefs about idols (and thus attacking strawmen), more recent studies have argued that these prophetic passages intentionally responded to aspects of foreign animation rituals for the purposes of demystification and the promulgation of monotheism. As important as these works are, this topic contains a number of areas that can be explored further. It is the intention of the present to study to utilize this theory to contribute a new understanding of the ideological role these aniconic texts play in the formation of the subject.

Biography

David J. Fuller is a Ph.D. Candidate in Old Testament at McMaster Divinity College, currently working on a dissertation that studies Habakkuk through the lens of discourse analysis within the framework of functional grammar. His peer-reviewed research articles have been published in *The Bible and Critical Theory*, *Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism*, *Biblical Theology Bulletin*, and *Biblica*.



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