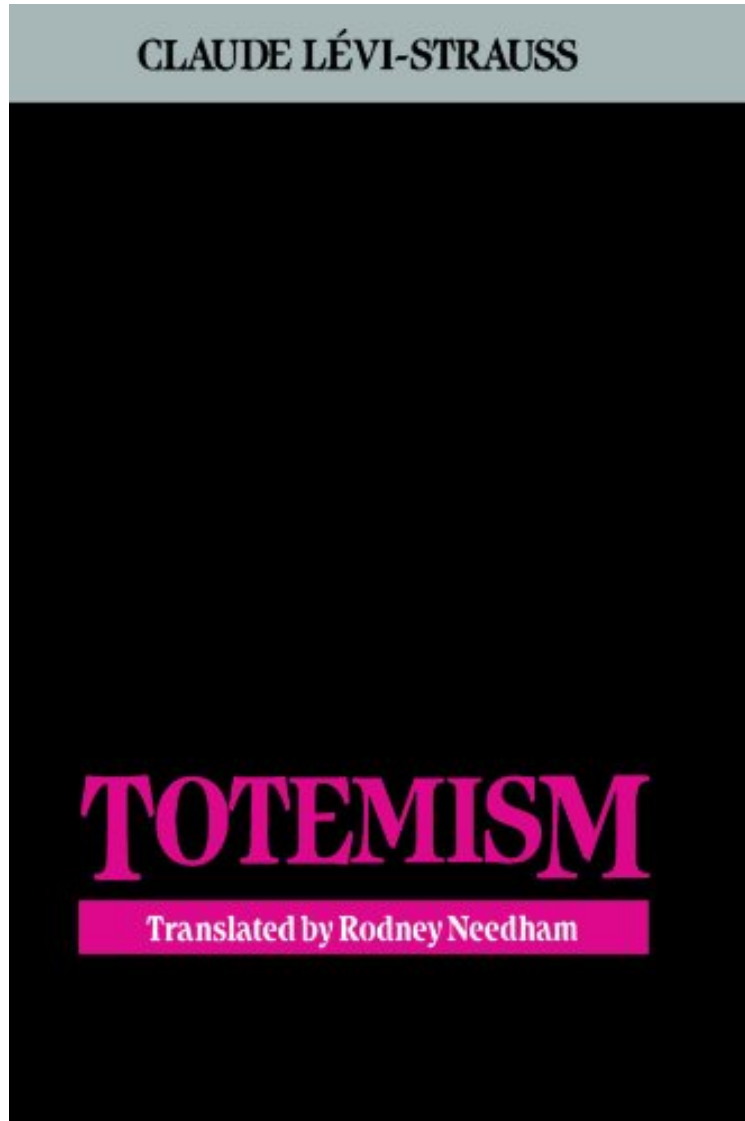


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# Totemism

*Claude Levi-Strauss*

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#999417 in Books Beacon Press 1971-06-01 1971-06-01 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.50 x .25 x 5.50l, .40 #File Name: 080704671X128 pages | File size: 77.Mb

**Claude Levi-Strauss : Totemism** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Totemism:

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Down with fuzzy thinking! By krebsman I had no intention of reading this book. The book I wanted to read was Levi-Strauss's THE SAVAGE MIND. However, that book begins with This book is complete in itself, but the problems it discusses are closely linked to those which I surveyed more hastily in a recent work entitled TOTEMISM (trans. Rodney Needham, London, 1964). Without wishing to oblige the reader to refer to it, it is proper to draw his attention to the connection between the two: the first forms a kind of historical and

critical introduction to the second. So I put down the book and ordered TOTEMISM. I do not have a strong background in anthropology. My reason for reading the book is to research another project. Totemism was the most difficult thing for me to understand in Durkheim's THE ELEMENTARY FORMS OF RELIGIOUS LIFE. But I just decided that it wasn't important for me to understand for my particular project. However, I was obviously not the only one who didn't understand Totemism. On reading this book, I now understood why: because there's no such thing! (Levi-Strauss compares it to writing about Hysteria.) Levi-Strauss carefully lays out all the reasons that such eminent and respected minds as Boas, Malinowsky, and Durkheim (among others) were mistaken. Most of the time, I had no difficulty following Levi-Strauss's arguments, but I occasionally found it helpful to read some brief encyclopedic entries about some of the people and things he mentions. But those with a better background should have no problem. This was, for me at least, a fascinating book and I was awed by the solution that Levi-Strauss comes up with. According to him, the anthropologists had got it all wrong! For the correct answer, look all the way back to Rousseau (!) and then hear what the 20th Century philosopher Henri Bergson has to say. And Levi-Strauss makes it seem perfectly obvious. I can't wait to start THE SAVAGE MIND. Five stars. 1 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Fundamental thematic development totems ... By Customer I loved this book, even did a painting on it. I can't imagine not having read it. 10 of 13 people found the following review helpful. An awakener from Anthropology By Michel Heller A classic of 20th Century intellectual creativity, that has been recognized as such, but that has not yet received the full attention it deserves. It has momentarily be dispensed of as "old fashioned", when social sciences based on neuro-sciences has clearly not yet integrated the vast web of implications the formulations of this volume generate. An absolute must, even - or because - many formulations are arguable. It is not a book that proposes conclusions, but awakens our intelligence.

"Levi-Strauss continues his assault on the myth of the primitive as savage by turning to the phenomena of totemism and totemic classification ... to show, contrary to this myth, that primitive thought rests upon a rich and complex conceptual structure." Commentary

"Levi-Strauss's consideration of totemism is a theoretical tour de force." The Humanist "An exceptionally brilliant and pathbreaking thinker. Serious students cannot afford to miss this book." Library Journal "From the startling analogy in its very first line to its valedictory bow in the direction of Rousseau, this is a stimulating book." American Anthropologist Language Notes Text: English, French (translation) About the Author Claude Lévi-Strauss (28 November 1908 - 30 October 2009) was a French anthropologist and ethnologist, and has been called, along with James George Frazer and Franz Boas, the "father of modern anthropology".