The Disenchantment of the Eye: Surrealism and the Crisis of Ocularcentrism

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"It is time to abandon the world of the civilized and its light."

—Georges Bataille[1]

"I have discarded clarity as worthless. Working in darkness, I have discovered lightning."

—André Breton[2]

If, as it is often claimed, the first world war challenged and in certain cases toppled the traditional hierarchies of European life, the domination of sight, long accounted the "noblest of the senses," was by no means impervious to its impact.[3] The interrogation of sight's hegemonic role in Western culture begun by certain prewar philosophers like Nietzsche and Bergson and artists like Mallarmé and Cézanne was given an intense, often violent inflection by the war, which also helped disseminate an appreciation of its implications. The ancien scopic regime, which might be called Cartesian perspectivalism[4], lost what was left of its leading role, and the very premises of ocularcentrism themselves were soon being called into question. In certain cases, the crisis of visual primacy expressed itself in direct terms; in others, it produced compensatory vindications of an alternative scopic order to replace the one that seemed lost. These effects were perhaps nowhere as evident as in interwar France, where many intellectuals from a wide variety of different camps experienced a palpable loss of confidence in the eye, or at a very minimum, in many of its time-honored functions. Even in the case of those who sought to reenchant the world, and thus renew the alleged innocence of the eye, an unexpectedly critical attitude towards visual experience ultimately developed. Even, that is, the Surrealists, who are often accounted among the most starry-eyed exponents of visionary redemption, came to question the possibility or even the desirability of that goal. In what follows, I hope to demonstrate the reasons for so counter-intuitive a claim, and in so doing, situate Surrealism in the context of the much larger anti-ocularcentric discourse whose outlines I have probed elsewhere.[5]

To generalize about the effects on visual experience and the discursive reflection on that experience stimulated by the first world war is very hazardous. Recent commentators such as Paul Fussell, Eric J. Leed, Stephen Kern, Kenneth Silver and Sidra Stich have made, however, a suggestive start.[6] The Western front's interminable trench warfare, they point out, created a bewildering landscape of indistinguishable, shadowy shapes, illuminated by lightning flashes of blinding intensity, and then obscured by phantasmagoric, often gas-induced haze. The effect was even more visually disorienting than those produced by such 19th-century technical innovations as the railroad, the camera or the cinema. When all that the soldier could see was the sky above and the mud below, the traditional reliance on visual evidence for survival could no longer be easily maintained. The invention of camouflage and the disappearance of differences in uniform between men and officers added to the experience of war as at once a frightening reality and a not so grand illusion. According to Leed, "the invisibility

of the enemy, and the retirement of troops underground, destroyed any notion that war was a spectacle of contending humanity....The invisibility of the enemy put a premium upon auditory signals and seemed to make the war experience peculiarly subjective and intangible."[7]

One reaction was a compensatory exaltation of the aerial perspective of the flyer, able to rise above the confusion of the earth-bound—and often earth-bespattered—combatants. Nadar's balloonist became St. Exupéry's aviator, heroically embodying the ancient myth of Icarian freedom.[8] From the air, the labyrinth of trenches could seem like a patterned carpet. Perhaps this was the perspective which earned Gertrude Stein's appellation "the cubist war."[9] Cubism, which was in fact on the wane in Paris, grew increasingly popular among artists with experience at the front.[10] But whereas from the perspective of the ground, it expressed the decomposition of spatial order, from that of the air, it suggested a landscape with unexpected intelligibility. Within the internal history of Cubism itself, the shift may have been reflected in the transition from its analytical to synthetic phases.

Another escape was provided by focussing on the one thing that remained visible from the trenches, at least when the gas or smoke was not interfering: the boundless sky, whose dreamy beauty could be ironically juxtaposed to the brutal reality of earthly combat. Such a sky could also become the locus for a projected, split vision in which the victim could somewhere become the distanced observer of his own fate. "The sky," Leed writes, "is charged with intense significance: It *must* be the residence of the observer watching himself struggle through the nightmare of the war, for only then will the eye survive the dismemberment of the body."[11]

Still another reaction, manifest in the avant-garde visual arts themselves, was the willed return to visual lucidity and clarity, which Silver has shown accompanied a new nationalist-inflected classicism in the arts as a whole. The new mood in Paris was evident in the waning popularity of Cubism, the reevaluation of Cézanne in non-Bergsonian terms, the revival of interest in Seurat's serene canvases, and the newly sober preoccupations of artists like Delaunay, Picasso and Gris. It culminated in the uncompromising Purism of Ozenfant and Le Corbusier in the late teens.[12] Postwar reconstruction would require, they reasoned, the restoration of a unified scopic regime, which would be compatible with the disciplined collectivist society they saw emerging from the ashes of the conflagration. Here the precarious "recall to order" of the 1920's found one of its origins, as certain Modernists sought to contain the more explosive and disintegrative implications of their predecessors' work.

But despite such compensatory myths and exercises in nostalgic purification, the actual impoverishment of normal visual experience also produced more directly disturbing effects. For, to cite Leed again, "the deterioration of the visual field experienced by many in trench warfare removed those visual markers that allow an observer to direct his attention to what comes first and what later....The constriction of vision eliminated most of those signs that allow individuals to collectively order their experience in terms of problems to be solved in some kind of rational sequence....Naturally, this chaotic world was judged entirely on the basis of the individual's own perspective, a perspective that mobilized deeply layered anxieties, animistic images, and surprising and unbidden associations."[13] "The cubist war" could thus also mean the practical collapse of that transcendental notion of a shared perspective that had been theoretically undermined by Nietzsche. And with it could come the return of all of the demons seemingly repressed by the "civilizing process," which was grounded to a significant extent in the domination of the dispassionate gaze.

Perhaps no figure during the subsequent decades expressed both the trauma and the ecstasy of that liberation as powerfully as did Georges Bataille. Certainly none tied it as explicitly to the dethronement of the eye as did he. Bataille's own wartime experiences have, however, rarely been given their due in the now voluminous literature on him, and one can indeed only conjecture about their direct impact. Perhaps, as his friend Pierre Andler contended, they left him with a visceral pacifism that undermined his willingness to endorse violent means even against fascism.[14] Yet on a deeper level, the war seems to have exercised a certain positive fascination. For it is striking that many of Bataille's obsessive themes would betray an affinity for the experiences of degradation, pollution, violence and communal bonding that were characteristic of life in the trenches. Perhaps none of those themes was as dramatically intertwined with the war's impact as that of the eye.

According to his own testimony (which not all commentators have accepted with equal trust), Bataille, born in 1897, fled the invading German army in 1914, was called up in January, 1916, fell seriously ill and was discharged a year later.[15] Although there is little to indicate he had any combat experience, it is significant that two decades later, on the eve of another war, he could exult in the risking of life in battle as a joyous release from petty, selfish concerns.[16] "Conflict is life," he insisted. "Man's value depends upon his aggressive strength. A living man regards death as the fulfillment of life; he does not see it as a misfortune."[17]

In seeking to evoke the mystical experience of "joy before

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Fig. 1. Photo by Man Ray.

death," Bataille turned to typical images from the first world war of the all-encompassing sky and blinding light. His sky, however, participated in the general destruction, rather than served as an escape from it: "I imagine the earth turning vertiginously in the sky, I imagine the sky itself slipping, turning and lost. The sun, comparable to alcohol, turning and bursting breathlessly. The depth of the sky like an orgy of frozen light, lost."[18] "I MYSELF AM WAR," he proclaimed, and added, "there are explosives everywhere that will soon blind me. I laugh when I think that my eyes persist in demanding objects that do not destroy them."[19]

Bataille's deeply charged summoning of blindness had another likely source, which has been remarked by virtually all of his commentators: his blind and paralyzed father, who died insane in November, 1916. Here too, however, the experience of the war seems to have played a role. For Bataille and his mother had abandoned the father to his fate when the Germans invaded Rheims in August, 1914. The son returned two years later to find only the sealed coffin of his dead father, with whom he at least partly came to identify.[20] "Today," he would write in 1943, "I know I am 'blind,' immeasurable, I am man 'abandoned' on the globe like my father at N. No one on earth or in heaven cared about my father's dying terror. Still, I believe he faced up to it as always. What a 'horrible pride,' at moments, in Dad's blind smile."[21]

Before Bataille came to identify with his father, however, he seems to have felt closer to his mother instead. The first essay he published, in 1920, was a lyrical reflection on the cathedral of Notre-Dame de Rheims, which had been destroyed during the German invasion.[22] According to Denis Hollier,[23] the cathedral functioned for Bataille as a visual metaphor of maternity, a regressive symbol of continuity and repose. Significantly, it was also linked to images of illumination. "Joan of Arc's vision," the young Bataille wrote, "still so thrilling to myself four years later, is the light I offer up to your desires, the vision of Notre-Dame de Rheims bathed in sunlight."[24] Shortly thereafter, for reasons that remain murky, Bataille repudiated this maternal identification, and with it his celebration of visions of clarity. "All of Bataille's writings would be aimed at the destruction of this cathedral," Hollier concludes; "to reduce

it to silence he would write against this text."[25] In fact, he would write "against architecture" of any kind, because it represented visual order and legible space, covering over tomb-like the subterranean disorder it abhorred.

Whatever the personal sources of Bataille's subsequent lucubrations, at once tormented and triumphant, on death, violence, eroticism, religious transgression[26] and blindness, the results would slowly find an appreciative audience able to understand their implications for the traditional privileging of vision. The first attempt he made to reach that audience came in 1926 with the composition of a short book written under the pseudonym Troppman and called *W.C.* "Of violent opposition to any form of dignity."[27] It was never finished, its fragments burned by the author. Significantly, it contained a drawing of an eye, the eye of the scaffold, which he called in tribute to Nietzsche "the Eternal Return." "Solitary, solar, bristling with lashes," he would later recall, "it gazed from the lunette of a guillotine."[28] This lunette, he confided, was mixed up in his mind with that of the toilet seat on which his blind father sat to void his bowels. A symbol of terrorist surveillance, it thus also stood for the liberating blindness through which the expended waste Bataille was to celebrate as *dépense* could explosively pass.

A year later, a slim volume published under the pseudonym Lord Auch appeared in a private edition of 134 copies, accompanied by eight lithographs drawn by Bataille's friend André Masson. It was called *Histoire de l'Oeil* (*Story of the Eye*) and was so transgressively pornographic that it never appeared under Bataille's name during his lifetime.[29] After his death and then with its republication in 1967, however, it became a widely discussed classic, eliciting commentaries by Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, Susan Sontag and a host of scholarly interpreters.[30] There can, in fact, be few works of this genre since Sade that have generated so much earnest exegesis.

Story of the Eye is a pivotal text for our own story of the eye's interrogation for a variety of reasons. Whatever else it may be, the eye in this story is, to borrow Brian Fitch's phrase, *l'oeil qui ne voit pas.*[31] Bataille finishes his tale with the enucleated eye of a garroted priest inserted in the anus and then vagina of the heroine, as the narrator realizes that he finds himself "facing something I imagine I had been waiting for in the same way that a guillotine waits for the neck to slice. I even felt as if my eyes were bulging from my head, erectile with horror..."[32] Enucleation, is in fact, a central theme of the story, which reproduces an actual episode Bataille witnessed in 1922: the ripping out of the matador Granero's eye by a bull's horn in Seville. Until he saw the famous scene of the slit eyeball in the Surrealist masterpiece *Un Chien Andalou* by Dali and Buñuel in 1928, about which he wrote enthusiastically in the pages of *Documents*,[33] he had no more vivid image to express his obsessive fascination with the violent termination of vision. For the enucleated eye was a parodic version of the separation of sight from the body characteristic of the Cartesian perspectivalist tradition. No longer able to see, it was then thrown back into the body via the anal or vaginal cavities, thus mocking in advance Merleau-Ponty's benign reembodiment of the eye in the "flesh of the world."

In more subtle ways, as well, the novel challenges the primacy of sight. As Barthes pointed out in an essay that in any other context could innocently be called seminal, Bataille's narrative can be read not merely as a sado-masochistic erotic revery, but also as a linguistic adventure. That is, the tale is motivated less by the increasingly bizarre couplings of its ostensible protagonists than by the metaphoric transformations of the objects on which they fetishistically focus. The most notable series is that linked to the eye itself, which is enchained with images of eggs, testicles and the sun. A second train is composed of the liquids associated with them (tears, egg yolks, sperm) and others like urine, blood and milk. According to Barthes, none of these terms is given any privilege, none has any foundational priority: "it is the very equivalence of ocular and genital which is original, not one of its terms: the paradigm *begins* nowhere....everything is given on the surface and without hierarchy, the metaphor is displayed in its entirety; circular and explicit, it refers to no secret."[34] Thus, the time-honored function of the penetrating gaze, able to pierce appearances to "see" the essences beneath, is explicitly rejected.

Bataille furthermore links the two metaphoric chains to each other in metonymic ways, so that signifiers from one, (e.g. eggs) are coupled with signifiers from others (e.g. urination). The result, Barthes concludes, are typically Surrealist images produced through radically decontextualized juxtapositions (e.g. suns that cry, castrated or pissing eyes, eggs that are sucked like breasts). Thus, what is transgressed is not merely normal sexual behavior, but also the rules of conventional language. Because in French, words like *couille* are near anagrams of *cul* and *oeil*, the effect of linguistic promiscuity is as strong as that of its more obvious sexual counterpart.

Barthes's structuralist reading, with its strongly textualist rather than experiential bias, may have its flaws[35], but it points to one important implication of the novel: that whether understood literally or metaphorically, the eye is toppled from its privileged place in the sensual hierarchy to be linked instead with objects and functions more normally associated with "baser" human behavior. This is, indeed, the most ignoble eye imaginable.

To understand fully the depths of that ignobility, we have to recall the speculative claim Freud was advancing at virtually the same time in *Civilization and its Discontents.*[36] Human civilization, Freud conjectured, only began when hominids raised themselves off the ground, stopped sniffing the nether regions of their fellows and elevated sight to a position of

superiority. With that elevation went a concomitant repression of sexual and aggressive drives, and the radical separation of "higher" spiritual and mental faculties from the "lower" functions of the body.

Bataille was himself in analysis with Dr. Adrien Borel when he wrote *Story of the Eye*. He later contended that "by August 1927, it put an end to the series of dreary mishaps and failures in which he had been floundering, but not the state of intellectual intensity, which still persists."[37] Nor would his fascination with Freudian ideas end, as he continued to draw on them throughout his life. Although there is no evidence that he knew of Freud's specific conjectures about the connections between elevated vision and repression—indeed, the chronology of their respective publications suggests otherwise, even if it is possible that Freud's ideas were in circulation among analysts before coming into print—*Story of the Eye* can be read as a tacit plea for the reversal of this most fateful of human developments. Bataille's later defense of what he called a "general" as opposed to "restricted" economy, one based on *dépense* (waste or expenditure), loss, transgression and excess, rather than production, exchange, conservation and instrumental rationality, was closely tied to this critique of the primacy of vision.[38] The only light cast by the potlatch ceremonies he found so fascinating was produced by the flames consuming the wealth destroyed. So too Bataille's critique of absolute knowledge, most notably that sought by Hegel, in favor of a "non-knowledge" or "un-knowing," which always defeats the ability to think it clearly and distinctly, drew on the same impulse.[39] If, as Robert Sasso puts it, Bataille wanted to go "*du savoir au non-savoir*,"[40] he certainly understood the importance of *voir* for *savoir*. It could be undermined only through the explosive sound of laughter or the blurred vision produced by tears.[41]

No less subversive of traditional ocularcentrism was Bataille's unprecedented transfiguration of the familiar metaphor of the sun. In a short piece entitled "The Solar Anus," written in 1927 and published, with drawings by Masson, four years later, he identified himself with the sun, but one of violent aggression rather than benign illumination, a "filthy parody of the torrid and blinding sun."[42] It was a sun that loves the night and seeks to copulate with it: "I want to have my throat slashed," Bataille wrote, "while violating the girl to whom I will have been able to say: you are the night."[43] Such a sun could thus be conflated with an anus, the darkest of possible holes.

In another brief essay, written in 1930, Bataille invoked the "rotten sun" as an antidote to the elevated sun of the dominant Western tradition.[44] The latter was based on the prudent refusal to stare directly into it, the former with the self-destructive willingness to do so. The Platonic tradition of rational heliocentrism could thus be subverted by a mythic alternative, which he identified with the Mithraic cult of the sun: "If we describe the notion of the sun in the mind of one whose weak eyes compel him to emasculate it, that sun must be said to have the poetic meaning of mathematical serenity and spiritual elevation. If on the other hand one obstinately focuses on it, a certain madness is implied, and the notion changes meaning because it is no longer production that appears in light, but refuse or combustion, adequately expressed by the horror emanating from a brilliant arc lamp. In practice the scrutinized sun can be identified with mental ejaculation, foam on the lips, and an epileptic crisis. In the same way that the preceding sun (the one not looked at) is perfectly beautiful, the one that is scrutinized can be considered horribly ugly."[45] The two ways of conceiving the sun are represented in the myth of Icarus, who seeks the sun of elevated beauty, but is destroyed by the vengeful sun of combustion.

Bataille furthermore linked the ability to stare at the "rotten sun" with artistic creativity. This essay was itself written as a brief tribute to Picasso, whose decomposition of forms challenged the search in academic painting for elevated beauty. Later, in a celebration of Blake, Bataille would write of *The Tyger*, "never have eyes as wide open as these stared at the sun of cruelty."[46] But it was perhaps in two essays of 1930 and 1937 on Van Gogh that he made the connections between looking at the sun, self-destruction and aesthetic creativity most explicit.[47]

Drawing on a case study of an auto-mutilator called Gaston F, written up by Dr. Borel and two collaborators, he pondered the implications of the painter's own auto-mutilation.[48] The patient had torn off one of his fingers after staring at the sun, symbolically instantiating the psychoanalytic link between blindness and castration. For Bataille, Van Gogh's sun paintings and his severed ear enacted a similar sacrificial mutilation: "The eagle-god who is confused with the sun by the ancients, the eagle who alone among all beings can contemplate while staring 'at the sun in all its glory,' the Icarian being who goes to seek the fire of the heavens is, however, nothing other than an automutilator, a Vincent Van Gogh, a Gaston F."[49] Such a sacrifice, according to the logic of Bataille's general economy, was an act of de-individuating freedom, an expression of ecstatic and "sovereign" heterogeneity. At the moment Van Gogh introduced the sun into his work, "all of his painting finally became *radiation, explosion, flame*, and himself, lost in ecstasy before a source of *radiant* life, *exploding, inflamed*."[50]

If the sun could thus be split into an elevating, ennobling, rational source of light, not to be looked at directly, and an aggressive, dismembering, sacrificial source of destruction, joyously blinding those who dare to stare at it unflinchingly, so too the eye itself could have several conflicting meanings for Bataille. In a 1929 essay for *Documents*, simply entitled "Eye," he explored examples of the fears and anxieties engendered by the experience of ocular surveillance.[51] Citing such instances of the "eye of conscience" as Grandville's lithograph "First

Dream: Crime and Expiation," Hugo's poem "La Conscience," and the illustrated weekly "The Eye of the Police," he emphasized the sadistic implications of being the object of the punishing gaze. The slitting of the eye in *Un Chien Andalou*, "this extraordinary film,"[52] showed, he claimed, how the eye could be related to cutting, both as its victim and as its perpetrator. But such violence, Bataille concluded, was not without its positive implications: "If Buñuel himself, after filming of the slit-open eye, remained sick for a week..., how then can one not see to what extent horror becomes fascinating, and how it alone is brutal enough to break everything that stifles?"[53] For Bataille, submission to the aggressive power of the "cutting" gaze, like that to the blinding power of the sun, could be a source of liberating subversion.

In two other essays written around 1930, Bataille turned to another concept, that of the "pineal eye," which had played a central a role in Descartes's philosophy.[54] Strictly speaking, Descartes had known it only as a gland, not a vestigial eye, which was understood only by 19th-century science. But significantly, he had accorded it a pivotal role in the transformation of the visual experience of the two physical eyes into the unified and coherent sight of the mind or soul. The pineal gland was thus the very seat of rational intellection. In contrast, Bataille concocted a phantasmatic anthropology which pitted the pineal gland against both the two eyes of everyday sight and the rational vision of the mind's eye.

Interestingly, he did so by subtly reversing the axes of verticality and horizontality posited by Freud as connected, respectively with civilization and bestiality. Normal sight, he claimed, was a vestige of man's originally horizontal, animal status. But it was a burden rather than a blessing: "the horizontal axis of vision, to which the human structure has remained strictly subjected, in the course of man's wrenching rejection of animal nature, is the expression of a misery all the more oppressive in that it is apparently confused with serenity."[55]

In contrast, the pineal eye yearns to burst out from its confinement and blind itself by staring at the sun, that destroying sun ignored by rational heliocentrism: "the eye, at the summit of the skull, opening on the incandescent sun in order to contemplate it in sinister solitude, is not a product of the understanding, but is instead an immediate existence; it opens and blinds itself like a conflagration, or like a fever that eats the being, or more exactly, the head."[56] This version of verticality is not, *pace* Freud, an escape from man's "lower" functions, but is intimately linked with them. Its volcanic eruptions are "discharges as violent and as indecent as those that make the anal protuberances of some apes so horrible to see;" its bursting through the skull is like an erection, "which would have vibrated, making me let out atrocious screams, the screams of a magnificent but stinking ejaculation."[57]

The sun that it seeks to reach through these explosions is at once a solar anus and a fecal or bronze eye. Here the distantiating function of normal sight and the elevating tradition of rational heliocentrism are undone, as eye, sun and anus are all indiscriminately mingled in a general economy of ecstatic heterogeneity. Here blindness and castration are less to be feared than welcomed as the means to liberate the mundane self from its enslavement in a restricted economy based on the fastidious discriminations of servile sight.

Bataille's radical devaluation of conventional visual experience and its metaphorical appropriation continued to be manifest throughout his career. Thus, for example, during his most Marxist phase, around 1930, he defended a version of "base" materialism very different from the conventional philosophical kind, linking it to the Gnostic principle of darkness which was opposed to the Hellenic worship of clarity and light.[58] Like Bergson, although without acknowledging the similarity, he rejected a materialism based on a visual image of matter in favor of one derived from the bodily experience of materiality. Likewise, he repudiated the classical—and, we might add, high modernist—fetish of form, which was so dependent on visual distance. Instead, he privileged the "*informe*," that formlessness apparent in phlegm and putrefaction.[59] As Rosalind Krauss has shown, the same sentiment generated the fascination shown by Bataille and other contributors to *Documents* for primitive art.[60] Unlike most modernists who saw in primitive artifacts models of universal, abstract form, the group around Bataille appreciated instead their links with sacrificial rituals of mutilation and waste.

Later in the 1930's, Bataille adopted the image of the headless, "acephalic" man as the central symbol for the community he and his friends Michel Leiris and Roger Caillois wanted to create around the Collège de Sociologie.[61] *Acéphale*, their journal, published four issues between 1936 and 1939.[62] Here the explosion of the pineal eye was understood to have taken with it the head, that symbol of reason and spirituality based on the hegemony of the eyes. The gruesome work of the guillotine was also invoked, as still haunting the Place de la Concorde. Today, that square was dominated, Bataille wrote, by "eight armored and acephalic figures" with helmets "as empty as they were on the day the executioner decapitated the king before them."[63] Even the bull's head affixed to another symbol beloved by Bataille's circle, the minotaur, was gone.[64]

The sacred community he wanted to resurrect would only come when "man has escaped from his head just as the condemned man has escaped from prison....He reunites in the same eruption Birth and Death. He is not a man. He is not a god either. He is not me but he is more than me: his stomach is the labyrinth in which he has lost himself, loses me with him, and in which I discover myself as him, in other words as a monster."[65] Rather than seeking a way out of the labyrinth through aerial flight, that compensatory myth sustaining so many veterans of the trenches

on the Western front, Bataille urged instead a joyous entanglement in its coils.[66] The labyrinth, as Hollier has noted, served as the antidote to the pyramid, that architectural symbol of solidity and substance, which was homologous to the optical cone.[67]

Even after the second world war, when the ambiguous political implications of Bataille's interwar fantasies had a certain sobering effect on him, he continued to criticize the ocularcentric traditions of our culture in a variety of ways. Taking issue with Sartre's defense of pellucid prose as the clear passage of ideas from one subjectivity to another, he contended that true communication at the deepest level demands obscurity. "Communication, in my sense," he wrote in *Literature and Evil*, "is never stronger than when communication, in the weak sense, the sense of profane language or, as Sartre says, of prose which makes us and the others appear penetrable, fails and becomes the equivalent of darkness."[68] Like Maurice Blanchot, with whom he became friends in 1940, Bataille came to see literature, prose no less than poetry, as the privileged locus of obscure communication, the guilty repository of sovereign and transgressive Evil.

There were visual manifestations of the same phenomenon as well, for Bataille was deeply taken with the possibility of what one commentator has called an anti-idealist "iconography of the heterogeneous."[69] Fascinated by the primitive cave paintings discovered at Lascaux,[70] Bataille invidiously contrasted the visual tradition that emerged when men left the cave and sought to paint in the clarity of sunlight with one in which darkness and obscurity still reigned supreme. And even his book of 1955 on Manet, in many ways a conventional appreciation of modernist opticality, contained, as Rosalind Krauss has noted, a short paean to Goya, whose art of excess and violence provided a counter-model comparable to those he had celebrated in Van Gogh and Picasso during the interwar years.[71] In short, when Bataille was discovered in the 1960's by a generation of post-structuralist thinkers eager to follow his philosophical, literary and anthropological lead, his critique of vision was also readily available as a vital inspiration to their own ruthless interrogation of the eye.

Bataille's obsessive visual concerns may well have had a personal source, as his own reminiscences of his blind father imply. But the frequency of themes in his work that can be traced to the wartime experiences of so many others of his generation suggest that they were by no means uniquely his own. The group of artists and writers who came to be called Surrealists were themselves deeply disturbed by those experiences. As their first historian Maurice Nadeau observed, "Breton, Éluard, Aragon, Péret, Soupault were profoundly affected by the war. They had fought in it by obligation and under constraint. They emerged from it disgusted; henceforth they wanted nothing in common with a civilization that had lost its justification, and their radical nihilism extended not only to art but to all its manifestations."[72] Was ocularcentrism one of the manifestations they chose to reject? If, as Sidra Stich has argued, the traumas of the war were reproduced in the "anxious visions" of Surrealist art, did they lead as well to an anxiety about vision itself? And if so, were the mainstream Surrealists as violently hostile to the hegemony of the eye as Bataille?

To answer these questions is no simple task, as the Surrealists were a large and heterogeneous group of artists with countless internal quarrels and many reversals of opinion over the long duration of the movement (which has not entirely given up the ghost even today). Despite all the best efforts of their "pope" André Breton, to keep order, they remained an unruly and obstreperous assemblage of individuals radically unwilling to submit to discipline for very long. However much the Surrealists wanted to suppress the traditional idea of the artistic genius and work collectively, the narcissism of small differences often interfered. Moreover, the many visual artists associated with them—painters, photographers, cinematographers and those who invented their own media of expression—developed clearly disparate and individual styles; no one can confuse an Ernst with a Dali or a Miró with a Magritte. And although there is no shortage of verbal statements of their intentions in manifestoes, memoirs, interviews and exhibition catalogues, the visual results cannot be assumed to correspond with or merely exemplify their avowed purposes. Thus, to pretend to have located a monolithic Surrealist attitude towards the visual would indeed be foolish.

Still, what allows us (and allowed them) to call Surrealism a relatively coherent phenomenon suggests that at least some recurrent patterns can be discerned, which with due caution can be called typical. One way to approach them would be to focus for a moment on the quarrel between Bataille and Breton, which involved, *inter alia*, a difference of opinion about vision.[73] As Bataille would remember it, contact began around 1925, was almost immediately followed by a falling out which came to a head in 1929, then was succeeded by a rapprochement in 1935 with their joint membership in a political group called *Counterattack*.[74]

Part of the tension was caused by Breton's suspicion that Bataille wanted to challenge his leadership and set up a rival group, which became a self-fulfilling prophecy when he did become the figure around whom disaffected Surrealists like Caillois, Leiris, Masson, Desnos, Vitrac and Limbour could rally. Another part was due to Breton's personal distaste for Bataille's perverse pornographic and excremental obsessions,[75] as well as for the hypocritical contradiction he saw between Bataille's advocacy of violence and his professional career as

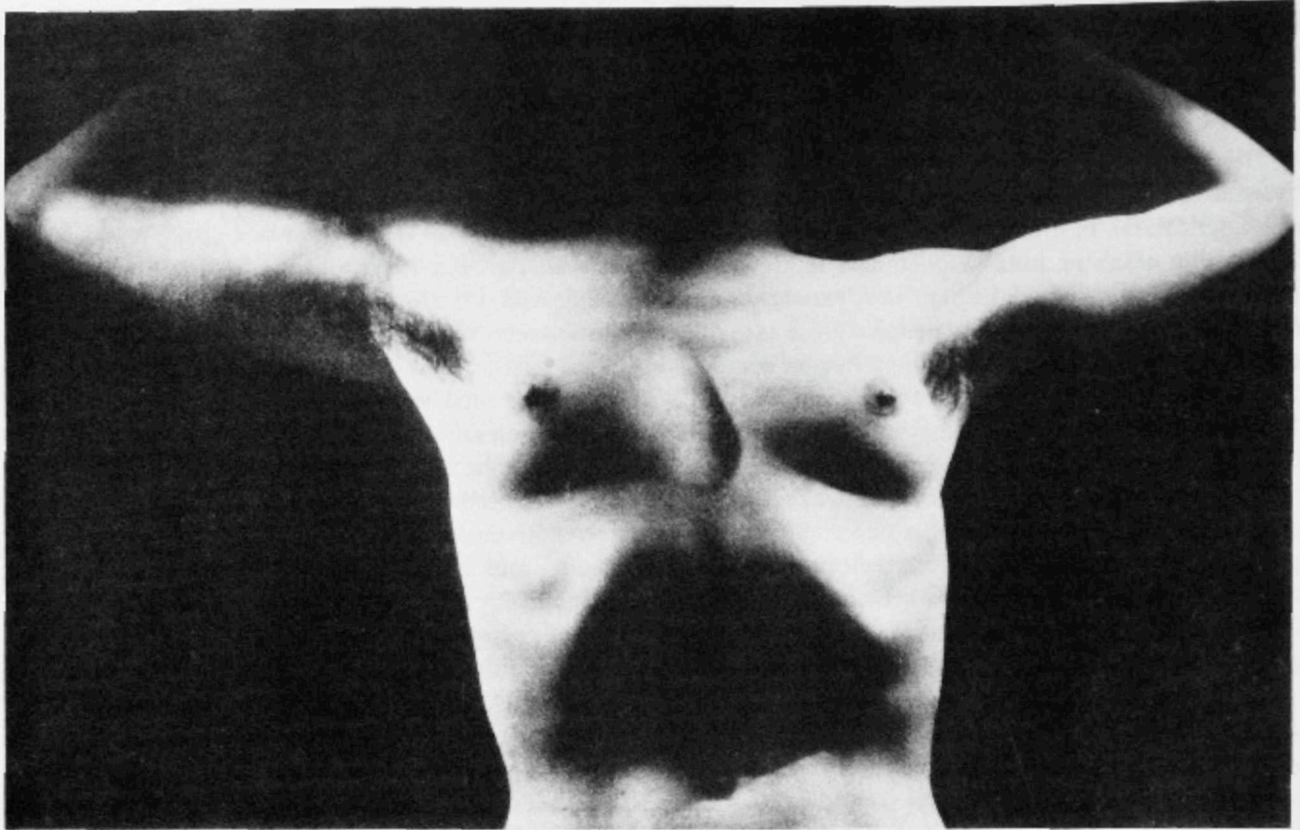

Fig. 2. Photo by Man Ray, published in *Minotaure* in 1935, and referred to in footnote 64.

a librarian at the Bibliothèque Nationale. But issues of substance were also involved, which bear on their different attitudes towards vision.

Breton's rejection of Bataille was made public in the *Second Manifesto of Surrealism* of 1930, where he defended himself against what he called Bataille's "absurd campaign against...'the sordid quests for every integrity'."[76] Bataille, he claimed, was interested only in the vilest and most corrupt things, was indifferent to anything useful, and had returned to an old anti-dialectical notion of materialism, which was simply the reverse of idealism. Moreover, his wholesale repudiation of the homogenizing powers of rationality produced a performative contradiction, in so far as he had to engage in communicative rationality to express it (a charge that would be repeated against Bataille many years later by Jürgen Habermas[77]): "M. Bataille's misfortune is to reason: admittedly, he reasons like someone who 'has a fly on his nose,' which allies him more closely with the dead than the living, but *he does reason*. He is trying, with the help of the tiny mechanism in him which is not completely out of order, to share his obsessions: this very fact proves that he cannot claim, no matter what he may say, to be opposed to any system, *like an unthinking brute*. What is paradoxical and embarrassing about M. Bataille's case is that his phobia about the 'idea,' as soon as he attempts to communicate it, can only take an ideological turn."[78]

Bataille's response came in two pieces written around 1930, although not immediately published: "The Use Value of D.A.F. Sade (An Open Letter to My Current Comrades)" and "The 'Old Mole' and the Prefix *Sur* in the Words *Surhomme* [Superman] and Surrealist."[79] The former, which was one salvo in an on-going war over the correct reading of Sade involving many other combatants,[80] contains little directly bearing on the issue of vision.[81] The latter, however, drew on and expanded Bataille's earlier ruminations on the contrast between ennobling vision and baser forms of knowledge (or non-knowledge). Here the metaphor he introduces pitted the eagle against the "old mole," the latter derived, of course, from Marx's celebrated image of the Revolution in *The Eighteenth Brumaire*.

The eagle, Bataille points out, is more glamorous and virile a symbol than the mole. With its hooked beak, it has "formed an alliance with the sun, which castrates all that enters into conflict with it (Icarus, Prometheus, the Mithraic bull.)"[82] As such, it might be expected that Bataille would interpret the eagle as an ambivalent figure, like the sun, at times Platonic and at times "rotten," with whom it allies itself. But because of the polemical intent of the essay, it is only its unattractive implications that he chose to stress: "politically the eagle is identified with imperialism, that is, with the unconstrained development of individual

authoritarian power, triumphant over all obstacles. And metaphysically the eagle is identified with the *idea*, when, young and aggressive, it has not yet reached a state of pure abstraction."[83] Breton's desire to ride the eagle on a revolutionary flight would thus be disastrous: "revolutionary idealism tends to make of the revolution an eagle above eagles, a *supereagle* striking down authoritarian imperialism, an idea as radiant as an adolescent eloquently seizing power for the benefit of utopian enlightenment. The detour naturally leads to the failure of the revolution and, with the help of military fascism, the satisfaction of the elevated need for idealism."[84] Even Nietzsche, Bataille concedes, fell prey to the same temptation with his concept of the Superman, despite his understanding of the base roots of the "highest" ideas.

Instead, the Revolution must look to the bowels of the earth, where the blind mole burrows. Its materialism must reject any Icarian strategy of idealizing that base world. "The passage from Hegelian philosophy to materialism (as from utopian or Icarian socialism to scientific socialism)," he insisted, "makes explicit the necessary character of such a rupture."[85] Although Bataille's own engagement with Hegel would grow more complex after his attendance at Alexander Kojève's famous lectures in the mid-1930's, his disdain for the Surrealist appropriation of the Hegelian themes of transcendence and sublation would remain constant. The identification of the eagle with Hegel, which is especially compelling in French because both words sound alike, would also have a long future in the antivisual discourse Bataille helped disseminate; it would reappear in spectacular fashion in Derrida's *Glas* in 1974.

How justified, we must ask, was Bataille's characterization of Surrealism as an Icarian movement that sought out heterogeneous, transgressive material only to transfigure it in an idealist direction? How bewitched were its adherents by a positive notion of visual sublimity? Or did even the Surrealist search for new visual experience, for what may well be called visionary redemption, paradoxically contribute to the crisis of ocularcentrism?

The tenacious hold of ocularcentrism over Western culture was abetted by the oscillation among models of speculation, observation and revelation. When one or another faltered, a third could be invoked as the foundation of a still visually privileged order of knowledge. In the case of Surrealism, it is readily apparent that speculative reason, bathing in the light of clear and distinct ideas mirrored in the mind's eye, and mimetic observation, trusting in the reflected light of objects apparent to the two physiological eyes, were both explicitly scorned. It is no less evident that the third tradition, that of visionary illumination, was elevated in their place to a position of honor.

Once the more nihilistic and destructive impulses of Dadaism, out of which Surrealism emerged in the early 1920's, were overcome (or at least so it seemed), the movement sought to realize the avant-garde's optimistic project of transforming daily existence by infusing it with the redemptive power of art. Although often employing the provocative verbal violence we've seen in Bataille,[86] the Surrealists were never as willing to celebrate waste, expenditure and destruction as ends in themselves. Combining, as Breton famously put it, Rimbaud's injunction to "change life" with Marx's call to "transform the world,"[87] they hoped to revolutionize more than just aesthetic fashions.

This ambition not only led them into a series of tragi-comic alliances with Communist and Trotskyist parties[88], but also permitted them to adopt the self-image, as old as the earliest prophetic religions and as recent as Rimbaud's *"Lettre d'un voyant,"* of the seer. One of Breton's first manifestoes, written in 1925, was in fact called "A Letter to Seers" and in 1934, he would still insist that "'I say that we must be *seers*, make ourselves seers': for us it has only been a question of discovering the means to apply this watchword of Rimbaud's."[89] As Blaise Cendrars put it in 1931, "let us open this third eye of Vision; let us surnaturalize."[90] Max Ernst would add in 1936, "Blind swimmer, I have made myself a seer. *I have seen.*"[91] Indeed, as late as 1943, Benjamin Péret would embrace Novalis' dictum "the man who really thinks is the seer."[92]

The Surrealist adoption of the visionary model was evident both in their verbal and their plastic creations. Indeed, virtually from its inception, Surrealism would be fascinated by the interaction of the eye and the text.[93] Mallarmé's *Un Coup de dés* was one of their most admired poems. Apollinaire's *Calligrames* were no less revered. Indeed, Apollinaire, who had coined the term Surrealism for his 1917 drama, *Mamelles de Tirésias*, was instrumental in redirecting French poetry away from its Symbolist stress on musicality.[94] "Until the beginning of the twentieth century," the editors of *Surréalisme* wrote in 1924, "the *ear* had decided the quality of poetry: rhythm, sonority, cadence, alliteration, rhyme; everything for the ear. For the last twenty years, the *eye* has been taking its revenge. It is the century of the film."[95] Breton's personal distaste for music has been widely acknowledged,[96] and indeed, there was little, if any explicitly Surrealist musical composition. Surrealism, as Breton put it in *Mad Love*, sought instead to recover the virginal sight, the *jamais vu*, that would be the uncanny complement of the *déjà vu*.[97]

This visionary project would involve following two trails already blazed by Rimbaud: self-conscious sensual derangement and the suppression of the mundane, rational ego. Breton explicitly contended in 1925 that "to aid the systematic derangement of all the senses, a derangement recommended by Rimbaud and continuously made the order of the day by the Surrealists,

it is my opinion that we must not hesitate to *bewilder sensation*."[98] The Surrealist painter Paul Nougé added that the production of radically new experiences in the viewer could only be brought about by creating forbidden images, "bewildering objects."[99]

The suppression of the rational self was to be sought through the celebrated and controversial technique of automatic writing, which allowed free association to produce arresting images unobtainable by conscious creative effort.[100] Chance, which Mallarmé had realized could never be abolished by the throw of the dice, was thus preferable to deliberate manipulation.[101] Other techniques included the game that became known as "exquisite corpse,"[102] which involved the stringing together of arbitrarily chosen phrases by different poets unaware of what preceded or followed, and Raymond Roussel's method of writing a novel by beginning with one sentence and ending with its homophonic, but semantically distinct double. Although the precise proportion of chance to contrivance in all of these techniques continues to spur debate, the results were often strikingly unexpected images, unlike virtually any in previous Western literature.

The nature of Surrealist images, verbal and pictorial, has been the subject of extensive critical reflection, only a few of whose conclusions can be advanced here.[103] As in the case of Bergson, "image" was a counter-term to "concept," the latter being identified with the stifling logic of the rationalism Surrealism generally denigrated.[104] Also reminiscent of Bergson, when he used the term honorifically, was the Surrealists' refusal to identify "image" with a mental representation of an external object, a thing in the world, a mimetic sensation. It referred instead to the revelation of an internal state, a psychological truth hidden to conscious deliberation, what Mary Ann Caws has called an "inscape" rather than an "outlook."[105]

The often-cited classic example of the quintessential Surrealist image was Lautréamont's "chance meeting of an umbrella and a sewing machine on a dissecting table" from his *Chants de Maldoror*. What made it so arresting for Breton and his collaborators was the effect produced by the juxtaposition of two incongruous and seemingly unrelated objects in a space utterly unlike their normal context (although they may well have also liked its scarcely veiled sexual connotation). As Breton put it, images of this kind were "incandescent flashes linking two elements of reality belonging to categories that are so far removed from each other that reason would fail to connect them and that require a momentary suspension of the critical attitude in order for them to be brought together."[106] The relationship between the two objects is not, strictly speaking, metaphorical because the principle of paradigmatic similarity does not work to create a unified symbol. Nor do such images signify through metonymic linkages along a syntagmatic chain, as is the case with realist prose. Instead, their ineffable effect is produced by their very resistance to such traditional modes of signification. Their power, when they succeed, is produced by their evocation of that uncanny "convulsive beauty" Breton would call "the marvelous." They are, he claimed, "endowed with a persuasive strength rigorously proportional to the violence of the initial shock they produced. Thus it is that close up, they are destined to take on the character of things *revealed*."[107]

Because of the Surrealists' fascination with psychoanalysis and F.W.H. Myers' "gothic psychology" of the subliminal,[108] what was revealed was often understood as a direct manifestation of unconscious desire.[109] Reversing Augustine's anxiety about the "lust of the eyes," they reveled in the fact that, as Breton put it, "as far as the eye can see, it recreates desire."[110] More precisely, the Surrealist image sought to duplicate the mysterious workings of dreams, which allowed desire to be expressed, without conscious intervention, in plastic and verbal form. Rejecting Bergson's metaphysical belief in *durée* as the locus of human volition, the Surrealists claimed that the onrush of oneiric images evinced a kind of causality of desire, which overwhelmed the conscious will. Although the Surrealists contrived mechanisms that could be manipulated to produce "the marvelous," once it came, conscious volition was left far behind. Breton may have denied the resemblance to a spiritualist who is merely a vessel for external voices,[111] but the Surrealist poet nonetheless succumbed to powerful forces beyond his or her conscious control. Citing Baudelaire on the effects of drugs, Breton claimed, "it is true of Surrealist images as it is of opium images that man does not evoke them; rather they 'come to him spontaneously, despotically. He cannot chase them away, for the will is powerless now and no longer controls the faculties'."[112] This process corresponded to what in life Breton called the law of "objective chance," in which serendipitous meetings—like that he describes with Nadja in *Mad Love*—produce the "marvelous."

Surrealism began by stressing poetic language as the medium through which its images could best be expressed, but soon its emphasis shifted to include the visual arts as well. Breton himself noted that automatic writing could induce visual hallucinations.[113] The unconscious could also be visually manifest in hysterical symptoms, which Breton and Aragon, sounding more like Charcot than Freud, celebrated in 1928 as "the greatest poetic discovery of the later nineteenth century."[114] Was it also possible to achieve convulsive beauty by more conventional visual means, such as painting? Could one make visible—*donner à voir*, in Eluard's phrase,[115]—the lightning flash of profane illuminations? Not all Surrealists were immediately convinced. In the third issue of *La Révolution surréaliste*, Pierre Naville, fearing that it would become just another art journal and betray its revolutionary mission, claimed that "everyone knows that there is no *surrealist painting*."[116] Even when Naville's objections were brushed aside, Breton could

still call painting a "lamentable expedient" and confess his boredom in art museums in the essays that became *Surrealism and Painting*.[117]

But the title essay of that book did appear in 1928, thus ratifying what was already clear in practice: Surrealism was as much a visual as verbal phenomenon. In a few years, Breton could proclaim that "at the present time there is no fundamental difference between the ambitions of a poem by Paul Eluard or Benjamin Péret and the ambitions of a canvas by Max Ernst, Miró, or Tanguy."[118] Breton himself even tried his hand at fashioning collages and what he called "poem-objects," integrating ready-mades and poetry. He and his collaborators sat for or composed innumerable portraits, individual and group, which presented their images to the world.[119]

What in part allowed the visual in through the side door, as Nadeau has remarked, was the trick of defining what the Surrealists championed as being "beyond painting"[120] or "painting defied."[121] And indeed, like Duchamp, whose "anti-retinal" work they so much admired, Surrealism sought to challenge many of the received truths about the creation of visual beauty. Even their self-portraits problematized the narcissistic premises of the genre, relentlessly displacing, as Martine Antle has put it, "the 'who I am' toward the 'whom I haunt,' the visible toward the invisible, the 'figural' toward the 'spectral' elements."[122]

If the Surrealists radically defied visual conventions, they did so, at least initially, in the hope of restoring the Edenic purity of the "innocent eye," an ideal which had been defended by the Romantics, if not earlier.[123] By violently disturbing the corrupted, habitual vision of everyday life, the visionary wonder of childhood, so they believed, might be recaptured. "The eye," Breton began *Surrealism and Painting* by announcing, "exists in its primitive state."[124] Unlike the music he generally denigrated, painting could therefore provide spiritual illuminations: "auditive images, in fact, are inferior to visual images not only in clearness but also in strictness, and with all due respect to a few melomaniacs [passionate lovers of music], they hardly seem intended to strengthen in any way the idea of human greatness. So may night continue to fall upon the orchestra, and may I, who am still searching for something in this world, may I be left with open or closed eyes, in broad daylight, to my silent contemplation."[125]

How did painting (or going "beyond" it) provide the occasion for stimulating the eye to regain its innocence? Revitalizing a metaphor seemingly discredited by modernist abstraction, Breton admitted "it is impossible for me to consider a picture as anything but a window, in which my first interest is to know what it *looks out on*, or, in other words, whether, from where I am, there is a 'beautiful view,' for there is nothing I love so much as that which stretches away before me and *out of sight*. Within the frame of an *unnamed figure, land- or seascape*, I can enjoy an enormous spectacle."[126] But rather than revealing an external world situated in Cartesian perspectivalist space, the window opened "out" on the psychic world within: "the plastic work of art, in order to respond to the undisputed necessity of thoroughly revising all real values, will refer to a *purely interior model* or cease to exist."[127]

Windows, as Susan Harris Smith has recently shown,[128] were, in fact, an abiding preoccupation of the Surrealists, and by pausing with their complicated meaning, we can begin to understand the implicit tensions in their visionary celebration of the innocent eye. The epiphanous experience Breton himself underwent before hitting on automatic writing as the royal road to the unconscious was produced by an image that suddenly came to him, "a phrase...*which was knocking at the window*," of a man being cut in two by a window.[129] Many Surrealist painters would later play on the theme of the window as a transitional or liminal plane between reality and imagination, foreground and background, external and internal worlds. Often deploying it to suggest yearning for the beyond, they also used the window as an aperture through which a face could look into the shadowy room of the unconscious.

More unsettling, however, were the uses to which Surrealists like Magritte could put windows. In a number of his works, such as *La Condition Humaine I* (1933), *The Domain of Arnheim* (1949) or *Euclidean Walks* (1955), he used them to create visual paradoxes or puns, incommensurable spatial orders which were disjunctively combined to challenge the viewer's faith in his eyes.[130] At times, the Surrealists could also play on the theme of the shattered window, literally embodied in Duchamp's *Large Glass*, or the opaque window, as in his *Fresh Widow* (1920), thus problematizing the notion of the transparency of visual experience, even when it pretended to be that of the seer.

These last uses alert us to some of the ways in which Surrealist painting could defy the High Modernist ethic of pure opticality. Even as they self-consciously sought to renew vision, the Surrealists were calling into question many of the assumptions underlying that very project. They did so in part by rehabilitating subject matter and resisting the lures of non-representational abstraction, based on the dream of complete visual presence and self-sufficient form. The rehabilitation of subject matter did not, of course, mean restoring naive mimesis, but rather wrenching objects out of their original contexts and allowing them to follow the uncanny logic of the Surrealist image. Representation was resurrected only to call it into question, thus exposing the arbitrary nature of the visual sign. As Magritte put it in "Words and Images" in *La Révolution surréaliste* in 1929, "everything points to the fact that scarcely any relationship exists between the object and that which represents it."[131] In relation tc the conventions of realist art, Surrealist painting thus could seem to be, following the title of

one of Magritte's most famous works, "the betrayal of images."

In fact, titles themselves played a key role in this effort. Often chosen with the goal of disrupting or contesting the apparent meaning of the image, titles could also be introduced directly into the picture, as in Miró's *Un Oiseau poursuit une abeille et la baisse* (1941).[132] Or words could be introduced into the painting calling its apparent visual meaning into question, the most famous example being Magritte's *"ceçi n'est pas une pipe"* under the image of a pipe painted in 1928.[133] As in the case of Duchamp, the discursive was thus allowed to undermine the self-sufficiency of the figural in radical ways. "Painting the impossible," as Magritte liked to call it, meant giving "precedence to poetry over painting."[134] As Breton recognized, Magritte "put the visual image on trial, stressing its weakness and demonstrating the subordinate character of figures of speech and thought."[135] The eye should not only be in the text, the Surrealists seem to be saying; the text must also be in the eye.[136]

In a very different register, Surrealist experiments in producing arresting visual effects by techniques such as collage, frottage, decalcomania, fumage, coulage and *étréticissements*,[137] also challenged the integrity of optical experience. Their tactility invoked the hegemony of touch over vision, which Diderot had defended during the Enlightenment.[138] Ernst, who was the pioneer in developing certain of these methods, saw them as the visual equivalent of automatic writing, and Breton compared them to a graphic version of the "exquisite corpse" game.[139] One Surrealist painter, the Rumanian-born Victor Brauner, took them to an extreme by drawing with his eyes entirely closed. Such techniques problematized the adequacy, self-sufficiency and, in Brauner's case, even the necessity of perception in general, and of vision in particular. As Rosalind Krauss has argued, collage provided a kind of metalanguage about the visual, which makes explicit the differential play of presence and absence, presentation and representation, that High Modernism sought to efface. "Collage," she argues,

> operates in direct opposition to modernism's search for perceptual plenitude and unimpeachable self-presence. Modernism's goal is to objectify the formal constituents of a given medium, making these, beginning with the very ground that is the origin of their existence, the objects of vision. Collage problematizes that goal, by setting up discourse in place of presence, a discourse founded on a buried origin, a discourse fueled by that absence.[140]

Other techniques like frottage and fumage generated whatever meaning they did by a combination of indexical signification, produced by the physical residue of their material source, and the pattern "discovered" in them by their viewers. As such they were related to another medium to which the Surrealists turned for help in their search for "the marvelous:" photography.[141] For despite its more iconical character, its signification by resemblance, the indexical quality of the photograph was often explicitly foregrounded by its Surrealist practitioners.

The importance of this medium for the Surrealist project has only recently come, as it were, into focus. It has, to be sure, often been noted, that the movement's first journal, *La Révolution surréaliste*, lacking the typographic fireworks of its Dadaist predecessors, would have seemed like an austere scientific journal, if not for the presence of photographs by Man Ray, as well as sketches by other Surrealist artists.[142] It has also been remarked that many other Surrealist texts, such as Breton's *Les Vases communicants* (1932), *Mad Love* (1937), and *Nadja* (1938), had accompanying photos by Jean-André Boiffard, Brassaï, and Man Ray, a practice we've already noted in the case of Bellmer and Bataille's *Story of the Eye*. And the Surrealists' discovery of Eugéne Atget, then virtually unknown, has also not gone unnoticed.[143]

But in general, the putative mimetic or iconic imperative of the medium—acknowledged by Breton himself when he credited photography with undermining realist painting[144]—seemed to make it an unlikely tool for Surrealist purposes. Thus, Simon Watney articulated a widespread assumption, when he claimed that "photography proved by and large to be resistant to the surrealist imagination, and Man Ray's photographs have far more to do with a Modernist aesthetic derived from Cubist painting than with Surrealism....In the majority of cases the long-term influence of Surrealism meant little more than the creation of the extended sense of the picturesque."[145] Even when the links between Surrealist photography and the politically motivated defamiliarization effects sought by other modernist artists such as the Russian Futurists are acknowledged, its ultimate impact has seemed limited. For as a tool of radical social enlightenment, it had little direct success.

In the different context of our narrative of the interrogation of vision, however, the Surrealists' experiments with the medium can be deemed of greater importance. As Rosalind Krauss has suggestively demonstrated,[146] Surrealist photography presented a dual challenge to the High Modernist attempt to wrest a new visual order from the wreckage of Cartesian perspectivalism. First, it introduced into the photographic image a kind of temporal deferral or "spacing,"[147] which might be called internalized montage. Second, it often drew on the explicitly anti-visual implications of Bataille's work, rather than on the search for an "innocent eye" in Breton.

Despite the extraordinary heterogeneity of Surrealist photographic practice, ranging from Boiffard's close-ups of big toes to Man Ray's solarizations, Krauss finds a common theme in all of them. Implicitly introducing the principle of Dadaist photomontage into a seemingly intact and undoctored image,

they undercut the temporal instantaneity of the traditional snapshot: "without exception the surrealist photographers infiltrated the body of this print, this single page, with spacing....more important than anything else is the strategy of doubling. For it is doubling that produces the formal rhythm of spacing—the two-step that banishes the unitary condition of the moment, that creates *within* the moment an experience of fission. For it is doubling that elicits the notion that to an original has been added its copy."[148], A famous example of the technique was Man Ray's portrait of *La Marquise Casati* of 1922, which seems to have two or maybe three sets of eyes superimposed on each other.

The importance of spacing is that it destroys the fateful linkage of vision with pure synchronous presence and introduces the interruption of discursivity, or in the Derridean terminology Krauss adopts, *écriture*. The photograph is particularly adept at instantiating the deferral and doubling of writing because of its dual status as indexical and iconic sign, signifying both by the physical trace left by light waves and by the resemblance its image bore to the object off which those waves bounced:

> Surreality *is*, we could say, nature convulsed into a kind of writing. The special access that photography has to this experience is its privileged connection to the real. The manipulations then available to photography—what we have been calling doubling and spacing—appear to document these convulsions. The photographs are not *interpretations* of reality, decoding it, as in Heartfield's photomontages. They are presentations of that reality as configured, or coded, or written.[149]

Conventional notions of Surrealist imagery as wholly independent of external reality and based solely on the imagination were thus explicitly called into question by the mixed quality of photography. Rather than allowing the "innocent eye" of the seer to look inward into his unconscious to "see" images of the marvelous, Surrealist photographs were often as much creations of the darkroom as windows on reality, internal or external. They thus showed, even more than its painting, the composite quality of internal and external objects as well as the imbrication of the figural and the discursive, and thus the impure status of vision itself.

Even more disruptive of the assumption that Surrealism merely celebrated visionary optics is Krauss's demonstration that Bataille rather than Breton may best be seen as the inspiration for much of its photography. Noting that a number of visual artists excommunicated by Breton, such as Masson, Desnos, and Boissard, gravitated into Bataille's orbit around the journal *Documents*, she remarks that even before their break with mainstream Surrealism, they—and others like Man Ray—were already exponents of Bataille's notion of *informe*, the anti-idealizing distortion of the body's integral form. Bataille's influence was also apparent in the photographs in *Minotaure*, launched in 1933, with their degrading transformations of the human body into animal-like images and their confusion of organs, such as mouths and anuses. Such photographers as Boiffard, Bellmer, and Raoul Ubac subjected the body to a series of violent visual assaults reminiscent of *The Story of the Eye*, producing images "of bodies dizzily yielding to the force of gravity; of bodies in the grip of a distorting perspective; of bodies decapitated by the projection of shadow; of bodies eaten away by either heat or light."[150] Their often fetishistic, sexually charged displacements of familiar human forms were accompanied by an uncanny denaturalization of the spatial order in which they were situated. The results exemplified the nonreciprocal chiasmic intertwining of the eye and the gaze, each the apex of a different visual cone, that Lacan was beginning to explore at the same time and in the same milieu.[151]

As a result, Surrealist photography proved a scandal for what can be called the dominant tradition of "Straight Photography," with its assumed spectator still the unified subject of the Cartesian perspectivalist tradition. "That subject," Krauss concludes, "armed with a vision that plunges deep into reality and, through the agency of the photograph, given the illusion of mastery over it, seems to find unbearable a photography that effaces categories and in their place erects the fetish, the *informe*, the uncanny."[152] Thus Surrealist photography, long in the shadow of its other visual practices, must be seen as one of the movement's most consequential contributions to the 20th century's crisis of ocularcentrism.

Can the same be said of another realm of Surrealist optical experimentation, the cinema?[153] Eschewing the skepticism that can be seen in Bergson, the Surrealists avidly embraced the new medium. One of its earliest French champions had, in fact, been Apollinaire, who introduced cinematic effects into such poems as "Zone" and even tried his hand at writing a film script. As early as 1917, Soupault had written "cinematographic poems," based on montage-like transitions and the sudden transfiguration of objects; he too composed films scripts. Jacques Vaché, the absurdist whose life (and self-inflicted death) so inspired the Surrealists, was also spellbound by film. The year Breton spent with Vaché in Nantes in 1916 turned him as well into a passionate convert, who with his friends would hop from movie house to movie house seeing snatches of as many films as they could. Robert Desnos, who was the Surrealists' most serious film critic, spoke for many of them when he gushed, "for us and only for us had the Lumière brothers invented the cinema. There we were at home. That darkness was the darkness of our rooms before going to sleep. Perhaps the screen could match our dreams."[154]

The 1920's in France were especially congenial to experi-

mental cinema, partly because the widespread ciné-club movement allowed the easy distribution of non-commercial films.[155] Dada artists like Francis Picabia and René Clair exploited the new medium's capacity for trick photography in such works as *Entr'acte*, which owed more to the visual prestidigitation of Georges Méliès than to the realism of the Lumière brothers. Others drew on film's completely non-mimetic, mechanical potential, often producing non-narrative, illogical effects, like those developed in Duchamp's "Anemic Cinema." Man Ray's first film, *Le Retour à la Raison* of 1921, for example, included animated rayographs. But the Dadaists soon came to distrust the cinema's spectacle-like closeness to the 19th-century ideal of synaesthesia and the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, which rendered the audience overly passive.[156]

The Surrealists, on the other hand, admired precisely that result. They restored narrative, character and optical realism, but imbued them with the oneiric effects they sought elsewhere through poetic and plastic means. As early as 1911, the critic Jules Romains had noted a link between films and dreams in his discussion of the cinema audience: "the group dream now begins. They sleep; their eyes no longer see. They are no longer conscious of their bodies. Instead there are only passing images, a gliding and rustling of dreams."[157] Not surprisingly, the affinity between Surrealism and the film would be quickly recognized. Perhaps its classic statement came in a widely cited essay by Jean Goudal, not himself a member of the movement, in 1925.[158] The cinema, he contended, promotes conscious hallucinations in which the ego is suppressed; "our body itself undergoes a sort of temporary depersonalization which robs it of the sense of its own existence. We are nothing more than two eyes riveted to ten meters of white screen."[159] Cinema, he claimed, also brilliantly realizes the Surrealist project of generating meaning without recourse to the logical entailments of conventional language. It could even more vividly produce profane illuminations through visual juxtapositions than the verbal images in Surrealist poems.

How successful were the Surrealists in producing films of their own to realize this promise? Much of their talent was, in fact, spent in devising scenarios rather than shooting actual films, that is, in verbal rather than visual endeavors. Often published as *ciné-romans* in film journals, their scripts tried to transgress the stabilizing, conventionalizing function of the typical "*film racontés*" available on the mass market.[160] As a result, some of them are of considerable interest, for example certain of Antonin Artaud's, which play with the theme of high-altitude flight so popular in the aftermath of World War I.[161]

But the inability to transform most of them, for financial as well as aesthetic reasons, into actual films soon took its toll. The invention of talkies made production costs prohibitive for esoteric experiments without a mass audience. By the early 1930's, the Surrealists' infatuation with the cinema had begun to cool down. Breton himself had done little beyond his expression of youthful exuberance to sponsor their production. It was one thing to enjoy watching films, but quite another to make them. Few Surrealists became as explicitly bitter as the frustrated Artaud, who proclaimed in a 1933 essay called "The Premature Senility of the Film," "The world of the cinema is a dead world, illusory and truncated....we must not expect of the cinema to restore to us the Myths of the man and the life of today."[162] But most would come to share the later lament of Benjamin Péret: "Never had a means of expression witnessed as much hope as the cinema....And yet never has one observed such disproportion between the immensity of possibilities and the derisory results."[163]

Although the number of its successes was small, Surrealism did produce two universally acclaimed masterpieces before its interest waned: *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) and *L'Age d'or* (1930). Both were by the Spanish artists Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dali, who in this period were very much part of the Parisian avant-garde community. An enormous amount of critical attention has been devoted to both of these works, discussing everything from the relative role of the two collaborators to the shift in the political implications from one film to the other.[164] Rather than rehearse all of its conclusions, I want to probe the meaning of only one of these films' central episodes, which has special significance for the Surrealist contribution to the crisis of ocularcentrism: the celebrated slitting of the eye in *Un Chien Andalou.*

The film consists of a series of loosely linked, rebus-like scenes, which powerfully evoke the Surrealists' fascination for the world of dreams. According to Buñuel, "the plot is the result of a CONSCIOUS *psychic automatism* and, to that extent, it does not attempt to recount a dream, although it profits by a mechanism analogous to that of dreams."[165] Bataille, one of the work's most enthusiastic supporters, described its power as follows: "Several very explicit facts appear in successive order, without logical connection it is true, but penetrating so far into horror that the spectators are caught up as directly as they are in adventure films. Caught up and even precisely caught by the throat, and without artifice; do these spectators know, in fact, where they—the authors of this film, or people like them—will stop?"[166]

Another source of *Un Chien Andalou*'s fascination was its defiance of attempts to interpret it, even as it insistently solicited such attempts. Buñuel claimed that "NOTHING in the film SYMBOLIZES ANYTHING,"[167] but admitted that psychoanalysis might help to make sense of it. Its most widely interpreted episode occurred at the beginning, in what is sometimes called the film's prologue. Introduced by the caption, "once upon a time...," invoking mythic temporality, a cloud slices across the moon, to be followed by the slow, deliberate and unresisted slashing of a woman's eyeball with a razor.

Fig. 3. Still from Luis Bunuel and Salvador Dali, *Un Chien Andalou.*

According to Bataille, Buñuel told him that it had been devised by Dali, "to whom it was directly suggested by the real vision of a narrow and long cloud cutting across the lunar surface."[168] Years later, Buñuel would say he had dreamed it himself.[169] Whatever its provenance, it was realized with stunning efficacy, as the dead cow's eye substituted for the woman's by the magic of montage burst apart with devastatingly gruesome horror. Buñuel, who actually held the razor, was reported (rather gleefully) by Bataille to have been sick for a week afterwards.

Variously interpreted, *inter alia*, as a simulacrum of sexual cruelty against women, a symbol of male castration anxiety, the conception of an infant, an indication of homosexual ambivalence, and an extended linguistic pun,[170] the act's literal dimension has sometimes been overlooked.[171] That is, the violent mutilation of the eye, that theme so obsessively enacted in Bataille's pornographic fiction, is here paradoxically given to the sight of those with the courage not to avert their eyes from what appears on the screen. There is little visual pleasure, to put it mildly, in the result, which defies reduction to that seductive lure of the cinema critics like Christian Metz would later so vehemently denounce.

The eye was, in fact, a central Surrealist image, and indeed can be discerned in much 20th-century visual art.[172] Anticipated by Odilon Redon's haunting images of single eyes as balloons, flowers or Cyclops staring towards heaven, artists like de Chirico, Ernst, Dali, Man Ray and Magritte developed a rich ocular iconography. In most cases, the eyes (or often the single eye) were enucleated, blinded, mutilated or transfigured, as in *The Story of the Eye*, into other shapes like eggs, whose liquid could easily be spilled. Ernst's *Two Ambiguous Figures* (1919), with its transparent heads fitted with opaque goggles, Man Ray's *Object of Destruction* (original version, 1923), with its eye cut from a photograph of a lover and mounted on a metronome, Dali's *The Lugubrious Game* (1929), with its chilling mixture of images of castration and enucleation,

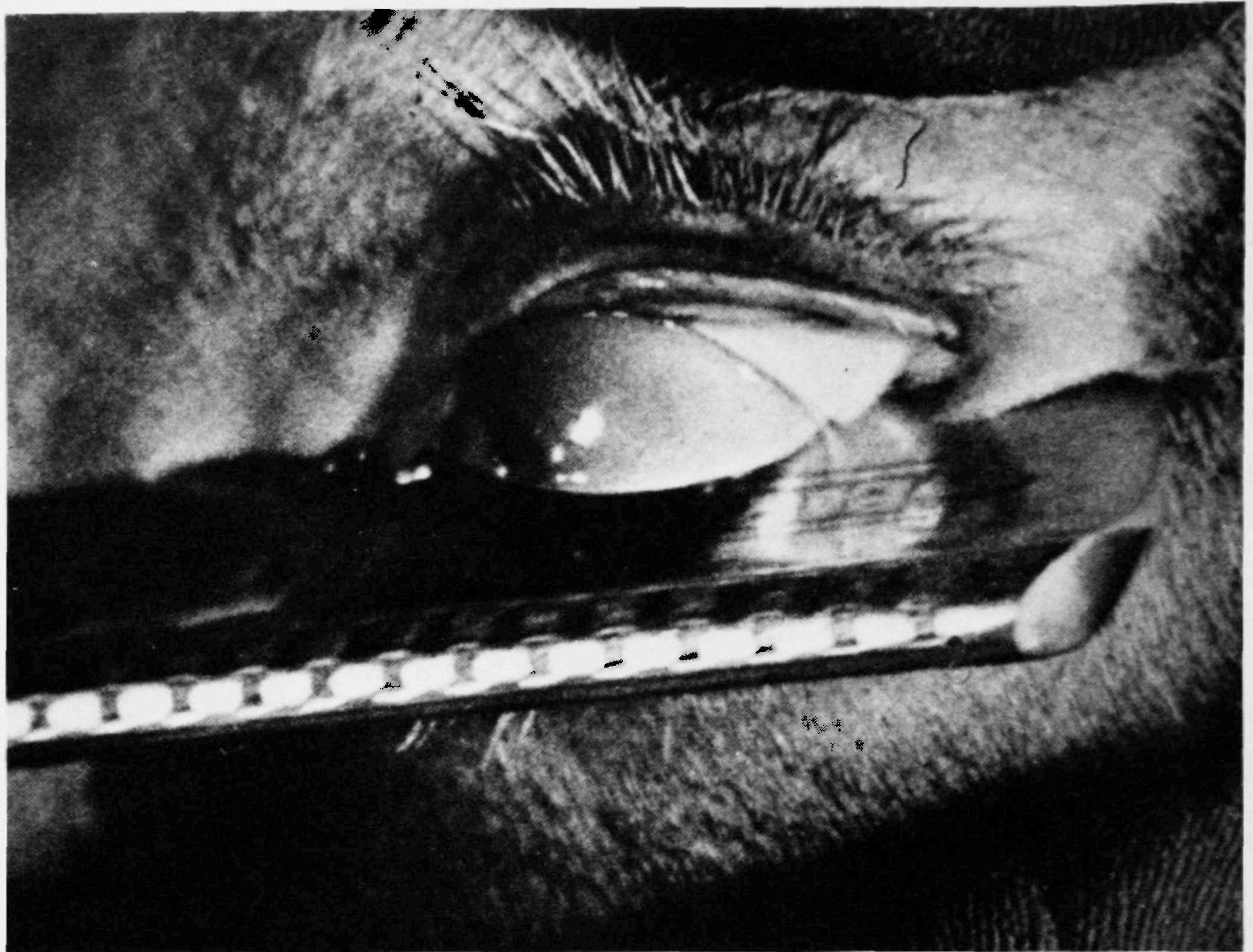

Fig. 4. Still from Luis Bunuel and Salvador Dali, *Un Chien Andalou.*

Giacometti's *Suspended Ball* (1930-31) with its globe erotically/sadistically split by a crescent wedge,[173] all typify the violent denigration of the visual that culminated in Buñuel's slashing razor.

Here the third eye of the seer is deprived of its spiritualizing, elevating function and compelled to reveal its affinity with sadistic and erotic impulses instead. The Icarian flights of Breton's seer end in the bowels of Bataille's labyrinth.[174] Indeed, if Jeanne Siegel's conjecture is right, the explicit link between the third eye and transgressive sexuality argued by the psychoanalyst Rudolf Reitler in 1913, may have directly influenced Max Ernst and through him other Surrealists.[175] Whatever the source, there can be little doubt that the eye seemed to many Surrealist artists less an object to be revered, less the organ of pure and noble vision, than a target of mutilation and scorn, or a vehicle of its own violence. It is largely on the basis of an analysis of Surrealist eye imagery that the art historian Gerald Eager could generalize about all 20th-century painting, whose eyes

are not moist or movable, they are not alive and do not suggest the power to look back and see. When the viewer looks at them, they do not have the power to look back and see. So the individual or divine spark of contact does not exist in the missing or mutilated eye. In place of contact there is rejection; instead of sight, there is complete blindness.[176]

Although this analysis of the implications of Surrealist painting, photography and cinema might well be construed as demonstrating the triumph of Bataille over Breton, it should be noted in conclusion that the latter also came to evince doubts about the privileging of the visual. In "The Automatic Message" of 1933, he admitted that "verbal inspiration is infinitely richer in visual meaning, infinitely more resistant to the eye, than visual images properly so called."[177] Such a belief, he then confessed, "is the source of my unceasing protest against the presumed 'visionary' power of the poet. No, Lautréamont and Rimbaud did not *see* what they described; they were never

confronted by it *a priori*. That is, they never described anything. They threw themselves into the dark recesses of being; they heard indistinctly..."[178] It is thus no surprise to find Breton, like Bataille, availing himself of the metaphor of the labyrinth, as the enfolded, convoluted, unilluminated space where the Surrealist confronts the unconscious.[179]

Whether or not Breton's protest against the "visionary" model of poetic creation was quite as unceasing as he claimed—as we've seen, he approvingly cited Rimbaud's *Lettre d'un voyant* again in his 1935 "Surrealist Situation of the Object"—he clearly revealed his priorities, when he insisted that "I believe as fully today as I did ten years ago—I believe blindly...blindly with a blindness that covers all visible things—in the triumph *auditorily* of what is unverifiable visually."[180] Thus, when the painters ultimately failed Breton by remaining dogged egotists rather than submitting themselves to the discipline of collective work—even the much admired Ernst was excommunicated for accepting the Grand Prix at the Venice Biennale in 1953—he could fall back on his original distrust of the "lamentable expedient" that was the direct visual expression of the marvelous.[181]

In short, with the provocative slitting of the cow/ woman's eye in *Un Chien andalou*, we have come a long way indeed from the serene dissection of the *oeil de boeuf* in Descartes' *Dioptrique*. Surrealism, whether understood in Breton's terms or Bataille's, I hope it is now sufficiently clear, must be accounted a central episode in the progressive denigration of the noblest of the senses, whose full ramifications would only come, as it were, into view in our own day.[182]

Notes.

1. Georges Bataille, "The Sacred Company," in *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927-1939*, ed. Allan Stoekl, trans. Allan Stoekl et al. (Minneapolis, 1985), p. 179.
2. André Breton, written in collaboration with Jean Shuster, "Art Poétique," (1959); in Breton, *What is Surrealism?: Selected Writings*, ed. Franklin Rosemont (London, 1969), p. 299.
3. According to Paul Virilio, "1914 was not only the physical deportation of millions of men to the fields of battle, it was also, with the apocalypse of the deregulation of perception, a diaspora of another kind, the moment of panic in which the American and European masses no longer believed their eyes...." *La Machine de la Vision* (Paris, 1988), p.38).
4. For a discussion of its implications, see Martin Jay, "Scopic Regimes of Modernity," in Hal Foster, ed., *Vision and Visuality* (Port Townsend, Washington, 1988).
5. See, for example, Martin Jay, "In the Empire of the Gaze: Foucault and the Denigration of Vision in 20th-century French Thought," in David Couzens Hoy, ed., *Foucault: A Critical Reader* (Oxford, 1986)
6. Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (London, 1975); Eric J. Leed, *No Man's Land: Combat and Identity in World War I* (Cambridge, 1979); Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space: 1880-1918* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983); Kenneth E. Silver, *Esprit de Corps: The Art of the Parisian Avant-Garde and the First World War, 1914-1925* (Princeton, 1989); Sidra Stich, *Anxious Visions: Surrealist Art* (New York, 1990)
7. Leed, *No Man's Land*, p. 19.
8. St. Exupéry himself, as Leed notes, was too young to have flown in the war, but his writings of the 1920's drew on many actual accounts of aerial combat. The Icarian parallel, of course, holds as well for the outcome that many flyers suffered. Some 50,000 airman died by the end of the war. See J. M. Winter, *The Experience of War* (London, 1988), p. 108.
9. Gertrude Stein, *Picasso* (New York, 1959), p. 11. The precise formulation "cubist war" is actually a paraphrase of this passage by Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983), p. 288. Ernest Hemingway made a similar observation. See his remarks in "A Paris to Strasbourg Flight," in *By-Line Ernest Hemingway* (New York, 1968), p. 38. Other modernist movements also appropriated the visual experience of the war for their own purposes. Constructivists like El Lissitzky and Suprematists like Kasimir Malevich were fascinated by the implications of aerial photographs. As late as 1939, Italian Futurists like Tullio Crali were painting vertiginous scenes of pilots diving over geometrically rendered urban landscapes.
10. Silver, *Esprit de Corps*, p. 79.
11. Leed, *No Man's Land*, p. 137.
12. Kenneth E. Silver, "Purism: Straightening Up After the Great War," *Artforum* (March,1977). "Instead of indeterminacy, simultaneity, the mutability of time and space, the Purists will substitute something stable and durable. In place of Cubist complexity Jeanneret [Le Corbusier's original name] and Ozenfant will provide images with a freshly starched spiritual and moral rectitude, showing the certainty and direction of 'the great collective current'." (p. 57).
13. Leed, *No Man's Land*, p. 130-131.
14. Andler's personal recollections are discussed in Rita Bischof, *Souveränität und Subversion: Georges Batailles Theorie der Moderne* (Munich, 1984), p. 292.
15. Georges Bataille, "Autobiographical Note," *October*, 36 (Spring, 1986), p. 107.
16. Georges Bataille, "The Threat of War," *October*, 36 (Spring, 1986), originally written in 1936; and "The Practice of Joy Before Death," in *Visions of Excess*, originally written in 1939. In notes written in 1941, however, Bataille contended that his personal relation to war was always that of an outsider, who had never experienced ecstatic release at the front. "In war what is arresting for me," he wrote, "is a means of agonized contempla-

tion. For me that is still connected to a nostalgia for ecstatic states, yet this nostalgia today seems dubious and lugubrious to me: It never had, I must say, any active value. I never fought in any of the wars in which I might have been involved." Cited in Denis Hollier, ed., *The College of Sociology (1937-1939)*, trans. Betsy Wing (Minneapolis, 1988), p. 139.
17. Bataille, "The Threat of War," p. 28.
18. Bataille, "The Practice of Joy Before Death," p.238.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 239.
20. According to Rita Bischof, Bataille's disgust with the war was also directed against the paternal order which spawned it, an order represented by his own father. Thus the pseudonym used in his first published work was in part a repudiation of his patronym. His strong identification with certain maternal values, those of the "earth" as opposed to those of the heavens, may reveal the force of this choice. See Bischoff, *Souveränität und Subversion*, p. 293. Although Bataille was certainly no friend of paternal authority in its traditional guises, when it came to his father's blindness, it is hard not to discern an ultimate identification with him as well.
21. Bataille, "W.C. Preface to *Story of the Eye*," appended to *Story of the Eye*, trans. Joachim Neugroschel (New York, 1982), p. 123.
22. Lost until after his death, it is reprinted in Denis Hollier, *Against Architecture: The Writings of Georges Bataille*, trans. Betsy Wing (Cambridge, Mass., 1989), p. 15-19.
23. *Ibid.*, p.19.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
26. In 1917, he thought of becoming a monk and in 1920, went to stay with a Benedictine order on the Isle of Wight, only to lose his faith "because his Catholicism has caused a woman he has loved to shed tears." (*Autobiographical Note*, p. 107).
27. *Ibid.*, p. 108.
28. Bataille, "W.C. Preface to *Story of the Eye*," p. 120.
29. There were two other, changed editions published when he was alive, in 1940 and 1943, both in Paris, although giving Burgos and Seville as places of publication. In the *Oeuvres* published by Gallimard in 1967, five years after his death, the 1928 and the later editions appear as separate texts. The English translation is made from the 1928 edition. In 1943, Bataille explained the provenance of his pseudonym: "Lord Auch [pronounced *osh*] refers to a habit of a friend of mine; when vexed, instead of saying 'aux chiottes!' [to the shithouse], he would shorten it to 'aux ch'". *Lord* is English for God (in the Scriptures): Lord Auch is God relieving himself." (W.C. Preface to *Story of the Eye*, p. 120).
30. Roland Barthes, "The Metaphor of the Eye," in *Critical Essays* (Evanston, 1972), first publication in 1963; Michel Foucault, "A Preface to Transgression," in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard, trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Ithaca, N.Y., 1977); Susan Sontag, "The Pornographic Imagination," in *Styles of Radial Will* (New York,1981); among the more scholarly commentaries, see Michele H. Richman, *Reading Georges Bataille: Beyond the Gift* (Baltimore, 1982), chapter 3; Brian T. Fitch, *Monde à l'envers/ texte réversible: la fiction de Georges Bataille* (Paris, 1982), chapters 4 and 5; Peter B. Kussel, "From the Anus to the Mouth to the Eye," *Semiotext(e)*, II, 2 (1976), pp. 105-119; Paul Foss, "Eyes, Fetishism, and the Gaze," *Art & Text*, XX (February-April,1986), pp. 24-41; Susan Rubin Suleiman, "Pornography, Transgression and the Avant-Garde: Bataille's *Story of the Eye*," in Nancy K. Miller, ed., *The Poetics of Gender* (New York, 1986).
31. Fitch, *Monde à l'envers*, chapter IV.
32. Bataille, *Story of the Eye*, p. 103.
33. See his 1929 essay "The Eye," reprinted in *Visions of Excess*, p. 17-19.
34. Barthes, "The Metaphor of the Eye," p. 242.
35. For critiques, see the work cited above by Suleiman, Kussel, and Fitch. Suleiman contends that its blindspot is the importance of the view of the body, in particular the female body, in the story, which she connects to Bataille's castration anxiety produced by looking at his mother's genitals. Kussel claims that Barthes underplays the real fear of blindness in Bataille, which is underlined by the autobiographical information about his father he provides in his later prefaces. Fitch, however, argues that it is less a case of an object than a word, "*l'oeil*," that is at issue; he claims Barthes is too interested in objects in fictions, rather than words in texts.
36. Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, trans. James Strachey (New York, 1961), pp. 46-47.
37. Bataille, "Autobiographical Note," p. 108.
38. For a short presentation of these concepts, see "The Notion of Expenditure" in *Visions of Excess*. For a good summary of their roots in Bataille's reading of anthropology, especially that of Marcel Mauss, see Richman, *Reading Georges Bataille*. The distinction between the two economies has had a widespread impact in post-structuralist thought. See, for example, Jacques Derrida's influential essay "From Restricted to General Economy: A Hegelianism without Reserve." in *Writing and Difference*, trans. with intro., Alan Bass (Chicago, 1978).
39. See, for example, his remarks on Hegel's search for transparency in *L'expérience intérieure*, in his *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. V (Paris, 1973), p. 141; and his three essays on "Unknowing" in *October*, 36 (Spring, 1986).
40. Robert Sasso, Georges Bataille: *Le Système du Non-Savoir* (Paris,1978), chapter IV.
41. Bataille, "Un-Knowing: Laughter and Tears," *October* 36 (Spring, 1986), pp. 89-102.

42. Bataille, "The Solar Anus," in *Visions of Excess*, p. 9.
43. *Ibid.*
44. Bataille, "Rotten Sun," *Visions of Excess.*
45. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
46. Bataille, *Literature and Evil*, trans. Alastair Hamilton (New York, 1973), p. 73.
47. Bataille, "Sacrificial Mutilation and the Severed Ear of Vincent Van Gogh," in *Visions of Excess;* "Van Gogh as Prometheus," *October*, 36 (Spring, 1986).
48. H. Claude, A. Borel and G. Robin, "Une automutilation révélatrice d'un état shizomaniaque," *Annales médico-psychologiques*, vol I. (1924), pp. 331-39. Bataille notes that Borel told him of this case after he first thought to link Van Gogh's automutilation and his solar obsessions.
49. Bataille, "Sacrificial Mutilation," p. 70.
50. Bataille, "Van Gogh as Prometheus," p. 59.
51. Bataille, "Eye" in *Visions of Excess.*
52. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
53. *Ibid.*
54. Bataille, "The Jesuve," and "The Pineal Eye," both in *Visions of Excess*; for a comparison of his usage with that of Descartes, see David Farrell Krell, "Paradoxes of the Pineal: From Descartes to Bataille," in *Contemporary French Philosophy*, ed. A. Phillips Griffiths (Cambridge, 1987).
55. Bataille, "The Pineal Eye," p. 83.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
57. Bataille, "The Jesuve," p. 77.
58. Bataille, "Base Materialism and Gnosticism," *Visions of Excess*, p. 47.
59. Bataille, "Formless," in *Visions of Excess.*
60. Rosalind E. Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, Mass. 1985), p. 67f.
61. For a history of the group, see Hollier, ed., *The College of Sociology.*
62. For its program, see *October*, 36 (Spring, 1986), p.79; and the essay "The Sacred Conspiracy" in *Visions of Excess.* The latter is accompanied by a picture by Masson of an acephalic man, holding a sword in one hand, a flaming sacred heart in the other, his labyrinthine bowels open to view and a skull in the place of his genitals.
63. Bataille, "The Obelisk," *Visions of Excess.*
64. *Minotaure* was a journal to which Bataille's friends often contributed in the 1920's and 1930's. The marvelous photograph by Man Ray published in volume 7 (1935) of a torso with its head in shadows transformed into a bull's head suggests that even this symbol could somehow be acephalic. The prevalence of the image during this period is shown by its frequent adoption by Picasso after 1937.
65. Bataille, "The Sacred Conspiracy," p. 181.
66. The labyrinth, in fact, was a frequent image used by other modernist writers from Joyce to Borges. Guy Davenport goes so far as to call it "a life-symbol of our century." See his *The Geography of the Imagination* (San Francisco, 1981), p. 51. Its coils evoke those of the ear from whose power Icarus tried to escape by privileging the eye. Many years later, Jacques Derrida would spell out the connection. See *The Ear of the Other: Otobiography, Transference, Translation*, ed. Christie McDonald, trans. Peggy Kamuf and Avital Ronell (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1985),p. 11. Still another evocation of the image appeared in the work of Luce Irigaray, who speculated that its etymology may have been the same as that for "lips," *labra*, whose self-touching was emblematic of women's sexuality. See her essay "The Gesture in Psychoanalysis," in *Between Feminism and Psychoanalysis*, ed. Teresa Brennan (London, 1989), p. 135. It should also be noted that even earlier it was a favorite symbol of Nietzsche, who wrote "we are especially curious to explore the labyrinth, we try to make acquaintance with Mr. Minotaur, about whom they tell such terrible things...you wish to save us with the aid of this thread? And we—we pray earnestly, lose this thread!" *Werke*, ed. Kröner, 2nd ed., 20 vols. (Leipzig, 1901-1913, 1926), vol. XVI, p. 439-440. Ariadne was one of Nietzsche's heroines as well, and seems to have been identified with Cosima Wagner. For a general account of the labyrinth in world literature, see Gustav René Hocke, *Die Welt als Labyrinth* (Reinbeck, 1957).
67. Hollier, *Against Architecture*, p. 72.
68. Bataille, *Literature and Evil*, p. 170.
69. Bischoff, *Souveränität und Subversion*, chapter 1, which provides a thorough survey of Bataille's visual preoccupations. Hollier also remarks on Bataille's interest in painting as "the defacement of the human figure," which he contrasts with Bataille's distaste for architecture. "The space of painting," he writes, "is space where someone who has torn his eyes like Oedipus feels his way, blinded. Thus it is not to the eye but to the missing-eye that painting corresponds....automutilation needs to be thought of as a pictorial act, even *the* pictorial act, par excellence. For painting is nothing if it does not attack the architecture of the human body." (p. 79-80).
70. Bataille, *Lascaux ou la naissance de l'art* (Paris, 1955).
71. Bataille, *Manet*, trans. Austryn Wainhouse and James Emmons (Geneva, 1955); Rosalind Krauss, "Antivision," *October*, 36 (Spring, 1986), p. 152. Jean Starobinski's use of Goya in *1789: The Emblems of Reason*, trans. Barbara Bray (Charlottesville, Va., 1982) was similar.
72. Maurice Nadeau, *The History of Surrealism*, trans. Richard Howard, intro. Roger Shattuck (London, 1987), p. 45.
73. For a general overview of the dispute, see Richman, *Reading Georges Bataille*, p. 49f.
74. Bataille, "Autobiographical Note," *October*, 36 (Spring, 1986), p. 108-109.

75. Salvador Dali noted the limits of Breton's tolerance for the scatological and perverse phenomena that so obsessed Bataille: "Blood was acceptable. Even a little excrement. But not excrement alone. I could portray sexual organs, but not anally oriented optical illusions. The arsehole was frowned upon! Lesbians were welcomed, but not homosexuals." *Journal d'un génie* (Paris, 1964), p. 23.
76. André Breton, *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, trans. Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1972), p. 180.
77. Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*, trans. Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, Mass., 1987), p. 235-236. A similar complaint was made earlier by Raymond Queneau in 1939, who contended that "there is no antipathy between reason and that which exceeds it, whereas antireason only cures myopia with enucleation and headaches with the guillotine." Cited in Hollier, ed., *The College of Sociology*, p. 161.
78. Breton, *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, p. 184. The irony of this charge is that Breton was normally anxious to transcend the confinements of the very logical consistency that he here invoked against Bataille.
79. Both are translated in Bataille, *Visions of Excess*.
80. Along with Lautréamont and Rimbaud, Sade was the great example of the *poète maudit* so beloved by Surrealism. See the issues of *Le Surréalism au service de la revolution* from October, 1930 on. The great Sade scholar of the era was Maurice Heine, with whom Bataille was close friends. He asked him to verify the story he had told in an earlier essay, whose veracity Breton had attacked, concerning Sade's dipping rose petals in liquid manure. Heine could not. The battle over Sade's legacy continued after the war; see Pierre Klossowski, *Sade, Mon Prochain* (Paris, 1947), and the chapter on Sade in Bataille's *Literature and Evil*. For a good account of the stakes in the controversy, see Carolyn Dean, "Sadology," in Denis Hollier, ed., *History of French Literature* (Cambridge, Mass., 1989).
81. It does include, however, a kind of answer to Breton's charge of performative contradiction: "*As soon as the effort at rational comprehension ends in contradiction, the practice of intellectual scatology requires the excretion of unassimilable elements*, which is another way of stating vulgarly that a burst of laughter is the only imaginable and definitely terminal result—and not the means—of philosophical speculation." (p.99).
82. Bataille, "The 'Old Mole' and the Prefix *Sur*," p. 34.
83. *Ibid.*
84. *Ibid.*
85. *Ibid.*, p.43
86. See for example, their diatribes against the corpse of Anatole France in 1924, collected in Nadeau, p. 233f. What suggests an important difference between them and Bataille, however, is their respective attitudes towards war. As we have seen, he glorified the experience of sacrifice, whereas they were almost all pacifists.
87. Breton, "Speech to the Congress of Writers," (1935), in *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, p. 241.
88. For an account of their political affiliations, see Helena Lewis, *The Politics of Surrealism* (New York, 1988).
89. Breton, "Surrealist Situation of the Object," *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, p. 274.
90. Blaise Cendrars, *Aujourd'hui* (Paris,1931), p. 31.
91. Max Ernst, *Au-delà de la peinture* (Paris, 1936), excerpted in Patrick Waldberg, *Surrealism* (New York, 1971), p. 98.
92. Benjamin Péret, "A Word from Péret," in *Death to the Pigs and Other Writings*, trans. Rachel Stella et al. (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1988), p. 197.
93. For an exploration of this theme, see Mary Ann Caws, *The Eye in the Text: Essays on Perception, Mannerist to Modern* (Princeton, 1981).
94. For an analysis of the visual dimensions of Apollinaire's poetry, see Timothy Mathews, *Reading Apollinaire: Theories of Poetic Language* (Manchester, 1987), esp. chapter 2.
95. "Manifeste du surréalisme," *Surréalisme*, 1 (October, 1924), p. 1. This was the only issue of a journal edited by Ivan Goll, who ultimately had little to do with the group around Breton. The manifesto was followed by a short piece on the cinema, which extolled the virtues of its French versions over its American or German.
96. René Held, for example, speaks of Breton's "aversion towards music." See his *L'Oeil du psychanalyste: Surréalisme et surréalité* (Paris, 1973), p. 164. After World War II, however, Breton and the Surrealists came to appreciate American jazz, in part because of its Black roots. See his "Silence is Golden" (1946), in André Breton, *What is Surrealism?*
97. Breton, *Mad Love*, trans. Mary Ann Caws (Lincoln, 1987), p. 90. *Jamais vu* was used by Breton as early as his appreciation of Francis Picabia in the early 1920's. See *What is Surrealism?*, p. 14.
98. Breton, "The Surrealist Situation of the Object," p. 263.
99. Paul Nougé, *Histoire de ne pas rire* (Brussels, 1956), p. 239.
100. The origins of automatic writing have been variously attributed to the "mental automatism" examined by the French psychiatrist Pierre Janet, the 19th-century debates over sleepwalking and hysteria, and the literary experiments of the German writer Ludwig Börne, whom Freud later acknowledged as one of the forerunners of free association.
101. Man Ray produced a film in the late 1920's entitled *Le Mystère du Château de Dés*, which explicitly drew on Mallarmé's poem. See the discussion in Steven Kovács, *From Enchantment to Rage: The Story of Surrealist Cinema* (London, 1980),

p. 143.

102. The term comes from a phrase in the first game they played: "the exquisite corpse will drink new wine." Americans who grew up in the 1950's will remember the introduction of a related game called "Madlibs," which involved the insertion of arbitrarily chosen words in blanks in a narrative. The results were often hilarious, but rarely approached what Walter Benjamin had called the "profane illuminations" of Surrealism.

103. For a helpful account, see J.H. Matthews, *The Imagery of Surrealism* (Syracuse, 1977).

104. The qualifier has to be added, for, as we noted in examining Breton's critique of Bataille, Surrealism could employ rational arguments when it needed them.

105. Caws, *The Eye in the Text*, chapter 6.

106. Breton, "On Surrealism in its Living Works" (1953), in *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, p. 302.

107. Breton, *Mad Love*, p. 88.

108. Breton, "The Automatic Message," *What is Surrealism?*, p.100. Myers, an English psychologist of the paranormal, wrote *The Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death* (London, 1903). For an account of its importance for Breton, see Jennifer Munday, "Surrealism and Painting: Describing the Imaginary," *Art History*, 10, 4 (December,1987), p. 501.

109. The belief that language could somehow serve as the transparent medium for the revelation of desire was at odds with the often hermetically obscure nature of Surrealist poetry and prose. In fact, because of their sensitivity to the arbitrary, non-representational quality of language, they have sometimes been praised for understanding what more systematic linguists like Saussure and his followers were discovering at roughly the same time. Not surprisingly, the two intellectual currents could later mingle in thinkers like Lacan.

110. Breton, *Mad Love*, p. 15.

111. Breton, "The Automatic Message," (1933) in *What is Surrealism? Selected Writings*, ed. Franklin Rosemont (London, 1978), p. 105, where he writes, "contrary to what spiritualism proposes—that is, the dissociation of the subject's psychological personality—surrealism proposes nothing less than the *unification* of that personality."

112. Breton, "Manifesto of Surrealism," p. 36.

113. Breton, "The Automatic Message," p. 108.

114. Editorial entitled "The Fiftieth Anniversary of Hysteria," *La Révolution surréaliste*, 11 (1928), in *What is Surrealism?*, p. 320. The original was accompanied by six plates from Albert Londe's *Iconographie photographique de la Salpêtrière*. Other Surrealists would also draw on the iconography of hysteria, for example Dali in his *Phénomène de l'ecstase* in *Minotaure*, (December, 1933).

115. Paul Eluard, *Donner à voir* (Paris, 1939).

116. Pierre Naville, "Beaux-Arts," *La Révolution surréaliste*, I, 3 (April, 1925), p. 27. The quarrel over painting was part of a larger political dispute, which ultimately led to a break with Naville in 1929.

117. Breton, *Surrealism and Painting*, trans. Simon Watson Taylor (London, 1972), p. 3. It is often pointed out that rather than referring to Surrealist painting, Breton still uneasily linked them together as two distinct categories.

118. Breton, "Surrealist Situation of the Object," p. 260.

119. See Martine Antle, "Breton, Portrait and Anti-Portrait: From the Figural to the Spectral," *Dada/Surrealism*, 17 (1988), pp. 46-58.

120. Nadeau, *The History of Surrealism*, p. 110. *Beyond Painting*, was in fact, the title of a book by Max Ernst, trans. Dorothea Tanning (New York, 1948). He had used it as early as the announcement of one of his exhibitions in 1920.

121. Aragon, *La peinture au défi* (Paris, 1926).

122. Antle, "Breton, Portrait and Anti-Portrait," p. 48.

123. For a discussion of its history and revival among 20th-century photographers, including the Surrealists, see Simon Watney,"Making Strange: The Shattered Mirror," in Victor Burgin, ed., *Thinking Photography* (London, 1982). The idea of the "oeil sauvage" included the connotation of savagery, as well as innocence. The Surrealist eye was never very remote from the cruel potential in vision, perhaps most explicitly thematized in the work of Artaud and Bataille.

124. Breton, *Surrealism and Painting*, p. 1. The phrase *l'état sauvage* was a reference an earlier description of the visionary Rimbaud by Paul Claudel. See the discussion in Mundy, "Surrealism and Painting," p. 498. Later, in an interview in 1946, Breton would continue to defend the Surrealist interest in non-European art by claiming "the European artist in the twentieth century can ward off the drying up of the sources of inspiration swept away by rationalism and utilitarianism only by resuming so-called primitive vision, which synthesizes sensory perception and mental representation." "Interview with Jean Duché," in Breton, *What is Surrealism?*, p. 263.

125. *Ibid.*, p. 1-2.

126. *Ibid.*, p. 2-3.

127. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

128. Susan Harris Smith, "The Surrealists' Windows," *Dada/Surrealism*, 13 (1984), pp. 48-69. Windows were also a favored metaphor of French poets much admired by the Surrealists, such as Baudelaire and Apollinaire. For a discussion of the former's use, see Sima Godfrey, "Baudelaire's Windows," *L'Esprit Créateur*, XXII, 4 (Winter, 1982), pp. 83-100.For an extensive analysis of Apollinaire's "Les Fenêtres" of 1913, which was written in connection with Robert Delaunay's Cubist canvases on the same theme, see Mathews, *Reading Apollinaire*, p. 132f.

129. Breton, "Manifesto of Surrealism," p. 21. Italics in origi-

nal.

130. Describing *The Human Condition*, Magritte wrote: "I placed in front of a window, seen from inside a room, a painting representing exactly that part of the landscape which was hidden from view by the painting. Therefore, the tree represented the real tree situated behind it, outside the room. It existed for the spectator, as it were, simultaneously in his mind, as both inside the room in the painting, and outside in the real landscape. Which is how we see the world: we see it as being outside ourselves even though it is only a mental representation of it that we experience inside ourselves." Cited in Suzi Gablik, *Magritte* (London, 1970), p. 184. Lacan was to invoke Magritte's windows in his discussion of phantasy in his 1962 *Seminaire*. See David Macey, *Lacan in Contexts* (London, 1988), p. 45.

131. Magritte, "Les Mots et les images," *La Révolution surréaliste*, 12 (December 15, 1929), p. 32. Magritte's close relations with the Paris Surrealists lasted only for three years, from 1927 to 1930, and he ultimately came to regret his connection. But his work was always admired by Breton.

132. For a discussion of the function of titles in Surrealism, see Laurie Edson, "Confronting the Signs: Words, Images and the Reader-Spectator," *Dada/Surrealism*, 13 (1984), pp. 83-93.

133. On the incorporation of words into images, see Judi Freeman, *The Dada and Surrealist Word-Image* (Cambridge, Mass., 1990) and Georges Roque, "Magritte's Words and Images," *Visible Language*, XXIII, 2/3 (Spring, Summer, 1989). For an earlier reflection on this theme, see Michel Butor, *Les Mots dans la Peinture* (Geneva, 1969).

134. Magritte in a letter to James Thrall Soby, May, 1965, cited in Matthews, *The Imagery of Surrealism*, p. 34. Apparently, it was the sight of de Chirico's *The Song of Love*, with its surgeon's rubber glove combined with an antique statue, that led to his decision to paint the impossible. See the discussion in Gablik, *Magritte*, p. 25.

135. Breton, "Genesis and Perspective of Surrealism in the Plastic Arts," in *What is Surrealism?*, p. 226.

136. For these reasons, it is hard to accept Mundy's contention that Surrealist painting is essentially an affair of transparent internal perception in which "the image must simply be seen." ("Surrealism and Painting," p. 499.)

137. Collage involved the chance juxtaposition and reassembling of different found objects on a canvas, without the goal of creating *trompe l'oeil* effects as in Cubist *papier collé*. Frottage meant rubbings of textures such as the grain of wood or the veins of leaves. Decalcomania meant spreading color on a sheet of paper, placing another sheet on top of it, then separating them to reveal a chance pattern. Fumage functions with the traces of smoke. Coulages were paint drippings on a canvas, anticipating the technique of Jackson Pollock. *Étréticissements*, developed in the 1960's by Marcel Mariën, are commercial photographs with parts of the original cut off (the word comes from *rétrécissements* with the first letter snipped off).

138. Breton explicitly praised Diderot's inspiration of "the possibility of a purely tactile art which would aim at apprehending the object by primitive means and reject all that might be tyrannical and decadent in the realm of *sight*." "Genesis and Perspective of Surrealism in the Plastic Arts" (1942), in *What is Surrealism?*, p. 220. Here the connection was made with Futurism, but it would work as well with certain Surrealist practices too.

139. Ernst, *Au-delà de la peinture*, in Waldberg, *Surrealism*, p. 98; Breton, *Le Cadavre Exquis: Son Exaltation*, in *Ibid.*, p. 95.

140. Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde*, p. 38.

141. For a wide selection of Surrealist photographs with excellent annotations, see Edouard Jaguer, *Les mystères de la chambre noire: le surréalisme et la photographie* (Paris, 1982).

142. Pierre Naville, who with Bernard Péret, was the initial editor, deliberately sought to emulate a scientific journal, thus conceding nothing to "the pleasure of the eyes." (Nadeau, *The History of Surrealism*, p. 98).

143. Walter Benjamin, "A Short History of Photography," *Screen*, 3 (Spring, 1972), p. 20; and Watney, "Making Strange: The Shattered Mirror," p. 171. Four of his works were reprinted in *La Révolution surréaliste* in 1926. In the 1930's, Man Ray's assistant Berenice Abbot brought Atget's work to the United States and helped stimulate Surrealist photography in America. In a different light, however, Atget can also be seen as a forerunner of the *neue Sachlichkeit* sensibility of the German New Vision of the 1920's. However he is understood, Atget's work represented a kind of voyeuristic capturing of urban life, often in danger of disappearing, that fit well with the Surrealists' fascination with wandering through the modern city.

144. Breton, "Max Ernst," in *What is Surrealism?*, p. 7; and "The Surrealist Situation of the Object," in *Manifestoes of Surrealism* p. 272. Breton, to be sure, did appreciate the non-mimetic potential of the medium as well, as shown by his enthusiasm for Man Ray's rayographs. He also saw its resemblance to automatic writing, which he calls "the true photography of thought" in the piece on Ernst.

145. Watney, "Making Strange: The Shattered Mirror," p. 170-171. These claims are part of a larger argument that challenges the political sufficiency of estrangement and defamiliarization as a means to expose social contradictions. He contends that different contexts of reception have to be taken into account as well, because certain contexts more easily absorb shocks than others. The history of Surrealism's refunctioning for advertising purposes bears out his warning.

146. Krauss, "The Photographic Conditions of Surrealism" in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist*

Myths; "Corpus Delicti," *October*, 33 (Summer, 1985), pp. 31-72; with Jane Livingston, *L'Amour Fou: Surrealism and Photography* (New York, 1985).

147. The term is Derrida's and it suggests an interplay of absence and presence, the sequential temporality lurking in even the most apparently static spatiality, that defeats "the metaphysics of presence."

148. Krauss, "The Photographic Conditions of Surrealism," p.109. The recent montage photographs of David Hockney, in which sections of an original image are dissected and then resynthesized, would seem to take the technique of spacing to an extreme.

149. *Ibid.*, p.113.

150. Krauss, "Corpus Delicti," p. 44. The gender dimension of this attack on the body, most obvious in Bellmer's dismembered dolls, has been the subject of considerable controversy. Krauss has argued against its importance, but other commentators are not convinced. See, for example, Steve Edwards, "Gizmo Surrealism," *Art History*, 10, 4 (December, 1987), p. 511f. His critique is situated in a larger defense of the value of Breton over Bataille because of their respective political implications. See also Hal Foster, "L'Amour Faux," *Art in America*, 74, 1 (January, 1986).

151. To be precise, the chiasmic intertwining she evokes was really only spelled out in Lacan's later work, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, but in the 1930s, his theory of the mirror stage was already developed and available to the group around Bataille. In fact, *Minotaure* published an essay in 1938 by Pierre Mabille, entitled "Miroirs," which discussed it.

152. *Ibid.*, p. 72.

153. The literature on the Surrealist cinema is now very extensive. Among the most helpful treatments are J.H. Matthews, *Surrealism and Film* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1971); Steven Kovács, *From Enchantment to Rage: The Story of Surrealist Cinema* (Rutherford, N.J., 1980); Linda William, *Figures of Desire: A Theory and Analysis of Surrealist Film* (Urbana, Ill., 1981); and the special issue of *Dada/Surrealism*, 15 (1986), which has a full bibliography. For Surrealist writings on film, see Paul Hammond, ed., *The Shadow and its Shadow: Surrealist Writings on Cinema* (London, 1978)

154. Robert Desnos, Cinéma, ed. André Tchernia (Paris, 1966), p. 154; cited in Kovács, p. 15.

155. For histories of French cinema, see *Richard Abel, French Cinema: The First Wave, 1915-1929* (Princeton, 1984), and Roy Armes, *French Cinema* (New York, 1985).

156. For an account of their disillusionment, see Thomas Elsaesser, "Dada/Cinema?," in *Dada/Surrealism*, 15 (1986), pp. 13-27.

157. Jules Romains, "La Foule au cinématographe," *Puissances de Paris* (Paris, 1911), p. 120.

158. Jean Goudal, "Surréalisme et cinéma," *Revue Hebdomadaire*, 34, 8 (February 21, 1925), pp.343-357, in English in Hammond, ed., *The Shadow and its Shadow*.

159. *Ibid.*, p. 308.

160. For an account, see Richard Abel, "Exploring the Discursive Field of the Surrealist Scenario Text," *Dada/Surrealism*, 15 (1986), pp. 58-71.

161. Kovács, *From Enchantment to Rage*, p. 170. In a note on p.180, he posits a connection between films and flight, which draws on Freud's speculations about their common links to sexuality, but he neglects the specific postwar context in which the aviator's vision was glorified.

162. Antonin Artaud, "La vieillesse précose du cinéma," *Les cahiers jaunes*, 4 (1933), in *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris, 1970), p.104 and 107; for an account of his disillusionment, see Kovács, *From Enchantment to Rage*, chapter 5 and Sandy Flitterman-Lewis, "The Image and the Spark: Dulac and Artaud Reviewed," *Dada/Surrealism*, 15 (1986), pp. 110-127. The latter focuses on his disastrous collaboration with Germaine Dulac in the making of *The Seashell and the Clergyman* in 1927.

163. Benjamin Péret, cited in Kovács, *From Enchantment to Rage*, p. 250.

164. For an extensive selection, see the entries under Buñuel and Dali in Rudolf Kuenzli's bibliography of works on Dada and Surrealist film in *Dada/Surrealism*. 15 (1986).

165. Luis Buñuel, "Notes on the Making of *Un Chien Andalou*," *Art in Cinema*, ed. Frank Stauffacher (New York, 1968), p. 29.

166. Bataille, "Eye," *Visions of Excess*, p. 19.

167. Buñuel, "Notes on the Making of *Un Chien Andalou*," p. 30.

168. Bataille, "The 'Lugubrious Game'," *Visions of Excess*, p. 29.

169. Carlos Fuentes, "The Discreet Charm of Luis Buñuel," *New York Times Magazine*, March 11, 1973, p. 87, cited in Kovács, *From Enchantment to Rage*, p. 191.

170. Buñuel himself seems to have been satisfied with none of these interpretations. See his remarks to François Truffaut in "Rencontre avec Luis Buñuel," *Arts* (July 25, 1955), p. 5; cited in Kovács, *From Enchantment to Rage*, p. 245.

171. One recent exception is Mary Ann Caws, "Eye and Film: Buñuel's Act," in *The Art of Interference: Stressed Readings in Verbal and Visual Texts* (Princeton, 1989).

172. For discussions, see Jeanne Siegel, "The Image of the Eye in Surrealist Art and its Psychoanalytic Sources, Part One: The Mythic Eye," *Arts Magazine*, 56,6 (1982), pp. 102-106 and "Part II: Magritte," 56, 7 (1982), pp.116-119; and Gerald Eager, "The Missing and Mutilated Eye in Contemporary Art," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, XX, 1 (Fall, 1961), pp. 49-59.

173. For an analysis of this sculpture, which links it to *The Story of the Eye* and *Un Chien Andalou*, see Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde*, p. 58.
174. For a reading of *L'Age d'or* that also interprets it in terms of Bataille's worldview, see Allen Weiss, "Between the Sign of the Scorpion: *L'Age d'or*," *Dada/Surrealism*, 15 (1986), pp. 159-175.
175. Siegel, "The Image of the Eye in Surrealist Art," p. 106. Reitler's essay was "On Eye Symbolism," *Internationale Zeitschrift für Ärztliche Psychoanalyse*, I (1913).
176. Eager, "The Missing or Mutilated Eye in Contemporary Art," p. 59.
177. Breton, "The Automatic Message," p. 107.
178. *Ibid.*
179. For a discussion of the various uses of the metaphor in Breton, see John Zuern, "The Communicating Labyrinth: Breton's 'La Maison d'Yves'," *Dada/Surrealism*, 17 (1988). He notes that Breton identified himself more with Theseus than the Minotaur, but adds, "the surrealist Theseus, the revolutionary, does not free the world from tyranny by entering the labyrinth and destroying the beast, but by taking the entire world into the labyrinth with him, where, confounded with the liberated unconscious, the world is transformed..." (p. 118).
180. *Ibid.*
181. For Breton's disillusionment with painters, see "Against the Liquidators" (1964) in *What is Surrealism?*
182. I hope to spell these out in a forthcoming book on the denigration of vision in 20th-century French thought, in which the preceding will serve as a chapter. For some preliminary thoughts, see Martin Jay, "The Rise of Hermeneutics and the Crisis of Ocularcentrism," in Paul Hernadi, ed., *The Rhetoric of Interpretation: The Interpretation of Rhetoric* (Durham, N.C., 1989).