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Georges Bataille
The Promise and Limits of the Impossible

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Introduction to this Issue

This issue of CTSJ contains art work and essays turned toward a critical representation and reading of Georges Bataille and his heterology, particularly his episteme of the impossible. Alex Wolf’s representation of Bataille takes up the problem of the tension, or the barrier, between the commonly used photographs of Bataille as archivist and librarian, staid and sober-looking, and the graphic strangeness of his work. Alex’s drawing of Bataille, which insists on the interaction of these alterities, is the cover image of this volume. Alex’s other image, at the top of each page, achieves a similar fusion of Bataille’s concepts. Bataille’s work has inspired depictions of the female form that are generally graphic and sometimes simply misogynistic. Agne Jomantaite engages the problem of the representation of the female in relation to Bataille’s writings. The four interspersed progressing images work toward deploying the power of the feminine without the currents of fear and hatred evident in Bataille’s representation of women. Both artists’ statements are found at the end of this volume.

The first essay, Mukasa Mubirumusoke’s *Georges Bataille and the Ruinous Role of Nonknowledge in Derrida’s Unconditional Hospitality*, uses Bataille’s concept of nonknowledge to problematize and extend Jacques Derrida’s already far-reaching notion of unconditional hospitality. By Mukasa’s argument, self-ruination and the other impossible demands of nonknowledge are required of a host and constitute the more rigorous meaning of hospitality in a fractious global community. The essay by sophomore Tania Flores, *Georges Bataille’s Vertigo and the Flamenco of the Other*, is critically concerned with the problem of exoticism in Bataille’s “architecture of sovereignty and transgression,” the structure of the impossible. The cost of Bataille’s variant of primitivism, she argues, is the obscuration of the imminent political meaning of the flamenco club and the sovereignty it represents for its female practitioners. Brenda McNary’s essay, *Synaesthesia and Transgression in “Story of the Eye,“* follows the examinations of Bataille’s disruptive descriptors to the boundary of his linguistic efforts to induce the impossible. She discovers, along with Michel Foucault, a boundary that is language itself.

This is the first in what we hope will be several issues devoted to the endlessly provocative work of Georges Bataille.

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