



***OKTOBAR: ISPITIVANJE  
(MOTIVA) POSTAVLJANJA  
HETEROLOGIJE <sup>1</sup>***

BOJANA  
MATEJIĆ

***OCTOBER: AN EXAMINATION  
OF HETEROLOGICAL POSITS<sup>1</sup>***

## PREGLEDNI RAD / REVIEW ARTICLE

PREDAN / RECEIVED: 22. 1. 2014.

PRIHVAĆEN / ACCEPTED: 10. 3. 2014.

UDK / UDC: 165:130.2

**SAŽETAK:** Ovim se tekstom ispituje antiessentialistička usmjerenost *motiva* postavljanja heterologije u teorijskom postmarksističkom diskursu američkog časopisa *Oktobar* (*October*), reviji za suvremenu teoriju i politiku umjetnosti, umjetničku kritiku i (vizualnu) umjetnost. Primjenom i interpretacijom pojmovnog aparata Georgesa Bataillea (1897.–1962.), usmjerenom prema marksističko-materijalističkoj analizi teorijskih implikacija heterologije, u tekstu se izvodi kritika hermeneutičke moći, hegemonističkog, normativnog, *zapadnog* modernizma i postmodernizma. Teza rada je da *motiv* postavljanja Batailleova (anti)filozofskog pojmovnog okvira u projektu *Oktobar* „počiva“ na dispozitivu kritike marksističko-materijalističkog idealizma. Pisanje nove *zapadne* hibridne povijesti umjetnosti možemo, po tome, označiti i odrediti (novom) *utopijskom povijesnom heterologijom*.

**KLJUČNE RIJEČI:** heterologija, transgresija, Bataille, Oktobar, materijalizam

## Heterologija kao teorija o znanju: prema kritici formalističke dekontekstualizacije

## Heterologija

Termin i pojam *heterologija*,<sup>2</sup> izveden iz pridjeva *heterologan*, koji u medicinskom diskursu anatomske patologije označava bolesno tkivo, Georges Bataille je elaborirao zanimajući se za mogućnost formulacije teorije elementa ili viška koji nema utilitarnu društvenu vrijednost, kulturalnu funkciju i svrhovitost. Ljudska „skrivena ponašanja“ – poput seksualne aktivnosti, defekacije, kulta mrtvih, tabua, ritualnog kanibalizma, omofagije, religijske ekstaze, bespoštednog trošenja dobara, ludila, sumanutosti – ocrtavaju „opće“ karakteristike odbačenih objekata (leš, otpadci, tjelesne izlučevine). Oni bivaju uvijek prepoznati kao „prijeteće tijelo“ (*das ganz Anderes*) za integritet danog društva.

Heterologija je bliska Batailleovoj konceptualizaciji „prokletog (u)djela“ (*La Part Maudite*)<sup>3</sup> kao „srednjeg medijatornog pojma“ između heterogene i homogene sfere – elementa koji ugrožava, polarizira i postavlja nerazrješive napetosti. To je višak koji se ne može „pripitomiti“ i kanalizirati u rast u području svrhovite društveno-ekonomske proizvodnje, razmjene i potrošnje. Jacques Lacan (1901.–1981.) će, implicitno, u ključu Batailleove heterologije, elaborirati pojam *realnog* kao traumatičan prostor

**SUMMARY:** The aim of this text is to explore the anti-essentialist orientation of the motif of heterology positing in the theoretical, post-Marxist discourse of the American journal *October*, dedicated to the contemporary theory and politics of art, art criticism, and the (visual) arts. By applying and interpreting the terminological apparatus of Georges Bataille (1897-1962), directed at a Marxist-materialist analysis of the theoretical implications of heterology, this text aims at offering a critique of hermeneutical power, of the hegemonic, normative, and *Western* modernism and postmodernism. The leading hypothesis is that the motif of positing of Bataille's (anti-)philosophical terminological framework in the *October* project can be traced back to the dispositive of a critique of Marxist-materialist idealism. The writing of a new, *Western* and hybrid art history can thus be defined and determined by a (new) *utopian historical heterology*.

**KEY WORDS:** heterology, transgression, the other, Bataille, *October*, materialism

## Heterology as a Theory of Knowledge: Towards a Critique of Formalist De-contextualisation

## Heterology

The term and notion of *heterology*,<sup>2</sup> derived from the adjective *heterologous*, which in the medical discourse of anatomic pathology denotes bad tissue, was coined by Georges Bataille, who was interested in the possibility of formulating a theory for the element or surplus that has no utilitarian social value, cultural function, or utility. Human “hidden behaviours” such as sexual intercourse, defecation, the cult of the dead, the taboos, ritual cannibalism, omophagy, religious ecstasy, relentless expenditure of goods, madness, or mania, are defined by the “general” features of discarded objects (cadavers, waste, bodily fluids). These are always identified as the “threatening body” (*das ganz Anderes*) for the integrity of the given society. Heterology is close to Bataille's conceptualization of “the accursed share” (*La Part Maudite*)<sup>3</sup> as the “middle”, mediatory term between the heterogeneous and homogeneous realms – the element that threatens, polarizes and establishes insoluble tensions. It is a surplus that cannot be “tamed” and channelled into growth in the field of useful socioeconomic production, exchange, and consumption. Jacques Lacan (1901-1981) has implicitly, in the key of Bataille's heterology, elaborated the term

nesvodljivog, kontradiktornog jaza u boromejskom čvorištu *imaginarnog* i *simbolnog* – prostor nepremostive pukotine u sustavu. Heterologiju zanima taj „medijatorni srednji pojam“ između dvaju polova: (i) *homogenog* kao područja korisnog i produktivnog društva i (ii) *heterogenog*, točke ponora u nespješnom prostoru.

Heterologija je „nauka o onome što implicira radikalnu drugost“.<sup>4</sup> Međutim, kada kažemo da *heterologija* „znanstveno“ ispituje probleme heterogenog, ne podrazumijeva se da je heterologija u očekivanom i općeprihvaćenom smislu dane formulacije znanost o heterogenosti. Heterologija ne ide prema tome da „vrati“ drugo sustavu, nego se njezina motiviranost kreće prema transgresiji koja krši prag zabrane, „skidajući je (zabranu), ali ne ukidajući je“.<sup>5</sup> Eksces se, po heterologiji, ne može reprezentirati, ali se može indikativno demonstrirati i proizvesti učinke na danu sociopolitičku ili umjetničku konstelaciju.

### Heterološka kritika formalističke dekontekstualizacije

Polazeći, djelomice, iz antropološkog diskursa u elaboraciji heterologije, drugost je, po Batailleu, neutilitarni višak. On je „sakralni“ i „ukleti“ element, budući da pripada „svetu nasilja“,<sup>6</sup> koji uzajamno artikulira područje neizrecivog, iskustvenog, *sakralnog* i iskazivog, *profanog* svijeta rada i razuma. U Batailleovu ogledu o *općoj ekonomiji* inicirana je

fundamentalna kritika razmjenske vrijednosti. Riječ je o kritici proizvodnje, razmjene i potrošnje kulturalnih artefakata koji se realiziraju njihovim apstrahiranjem iz konteksta dane materijalne upotrebne vrijednosti. Kako objašnjava Holie za *Oktober*, avangardno djelovanje je bilo inicijalno zasnovano na samopotrošnji, „a onda je dopustila da bude kupljena“<sup>7</sup> [...] „Pre tog momenta, avangarda je reagovala i odgovarala na neizrecivo, na 'neprenosive opsesije', a sada visi na izložbenim policama“.

Značajan moment u avangardnom djelovanju kulturalnog projekta *Dokumenti (Documents)* obilježen je evociranjem želje za „regresijom“, za nečim što se može nazvati „primitivizmom“ u upotrebnoj vrijednosti, čime je provedena kritika formalističke dekontekstualizacije umjetnosti. „Primitivizam“ u upotrebnoj vrijednosti treba razumjeti kao materijalnu vrijednost koja nema autonomnu egzistenciju.<sup>8</sup> Upotrebna vrijednost se iscrpljuje u samoj potrošnji, imajući na umu da ona ne može biti ni transponirana ni prevedena. Ona se opire premještanju i reprodukciji. Upotrebna vrijednost (ritualna, kulturna) nalazi se „izvan“ svrhovitog područja. Po Batailleu, ritualnim razaranjem objekta, ili *profanacijom*,<sup>9</sup> postiže se njegovo transformiranje u simboličku vrijednost; dezintegracija objekata u službi je njihova „simboličkog veličanja“. Žrtveni čin je tako „suvereni<sup>10</sup> čin“, imajući na umu da je insubordiniran svijetu upotrebe, čime

of the *Real* as a traumatic space of the irreducible, contradictory gap in the Borromean intersection of the *imaginary* and the *symbolic* – the space of an unsurpassable crack in the system. Heterology is interested in that mediatory, “middle term” between the two poles: (i) the *homogeneous* as the sphere of useful and productive society; and (ii) the *heterogeneous* as the point of abyss in unconscious space.

Heterology is “the science of what is completely other”.<sup>4</sup> However, when saying that *heterology* explores the issue of the heterogeneous in a “scientific” way, it does not imply heterology in the expected and generally accepted sense of a doctrinal formulation. Heterology does not aim at “returning” the other to the system; instead, its motif tends towards transgression that violates the threshold of prohibition, “lifting it (the prohibition) without cancelling it.”<sup>5</sup> Thus, excess cannot be represented according to heterology, but it can be indicatively demonstrated and have impacts on the given socio-political or artistic constellation.

### Heterological Critique of Formalist De-contextualization

Partly basing himself on the anthropological discourse in elaborating the notion of heterology, Bataille defined the other as a non-utilitarian surplus. It is a “sacral” and “accursed” element, since it belongs to the “world of violence,”<sup>6</sup> which mutually

articulates the domain of the unutterable and experiential, *sacral* and enunciatable, *profane* world of work and reason.

Bataille’s essay on *general economy* introduces a fundamental critique of exchange value. It is a critique of production, exchange, and consumption of cultural artefacts, which is realized by means of their abstraction from the context of material use-value. As Hollier explains in regard to *October*, the avantgarde expended itself, “now it allowed itself to be bought” [...] “Before, it had responded to unspeakable, untransposed obsessions; now it hung on display shelves.”<sup>7</sup>

An important moment in the avantgarde activity of the cultural project *Documents* was marked by evocation of a desire for “regression”, for something that may be identified with “primitivism in use-value,” which resulted in a critique of the formalist de-contextualization of art. “Primitivism” in use-value should be understood as a material value that has no autonomous existence.<sup>8</sup> Use-value is exhausted in consumption as such, as it can be neither transposed nor translated. It resists all dislocation and reproduction. Use-value (ritual, cultic) is situated “beyond” the utilitarian domain. According to Bataille, the ritual destruction of objects, or their *profanation*,<sup>9</sup> results in their transformation into symbolic value; the disintegration of objects serves their “symbolic glorification.” The act of sacrifice is thus a “sovereign<sup>10</sup> act,” since it is not subordinated to the

transformira postojanje u ono koje je indiferentno u odnosu na servilnost sustava komodifikacije. Dani oblik žrtvenog gubitka u dezintegraciji objekta za Bataillea podrazumijeva „opći princip potrošnje“. Taj se princip odvija na organskoj, individualnoj i univerzalnoj razini unutar društvenih i ekonomskih sustava.

### Aproprijacija i ekskrecija

U heterologiji postoji „igra“ između homogenog i heterogenog, drugim riječima, polariziranih ljudskih impulsa – *aproprijacije* i *ekskrecije*, koji su, možemo reći, funkcije tih dvaju polova. Rascjep socijusa na *sakralnu sferu* (neproduktivna os) i *profano područje* (produktivna os) predstavlja prag za utvrđivanje i ostvarenje danih polariziranih ljudskih impulsa. Aproprijacija se javlja na mjestu provale stranog, heterogenog tijela u službi zaštite i utvrđivanja homogenog područja kojim upravljaju restriktivne konvencije. Aproprijacija, međutim, generira vlastiti *excrément*, čime se izlaže stanju samougroženosti. Proizvođači vlastito nestabilno stanje, ona „radi endogeno“ – „iznutra“ otvara neko moguće. Aproprijaciju ocrta homogenost i objekti kao finalni rezultati danog kretanja, dok se ekskrecija realizira kao učinak heterogenosti – nemogućeg: „Hipertrofija nemogućeg, projekcija svakog trenutka u beskonačnost, poziva moguće da egzistira bez čekanja, dovodi ga na razinu nemogućeg [...]”

nemoguće je gubitak same/og sebe [...] jer, mamac dobitka omogućava gubitak“.<sup>11</sup>

### Oktober: prema povijesnoj heterologiji vizualnih umjetnosti?

Dominantna umjetnička kritika današnjice je, čini se, izgubila vlastiti objekt bavljenja lišavanjem jezika njezine kritičke obrane, koji je za nju bio „povijesno prirodan“. Ona je postala mnogostruko pisanje, ali ne u smislu kraja njezine povijesti, nego u kontinuiranom postavljanju refleksije prema danoj povijesti i unutar nje. Umjetnička kritika ima sposobnost da uvijek iznova privlaka riječ i vraća se na rubove vlastitih granica. U povijesnom *prostiranju*<sup>12</sup> ona ima i tendenciju da se u vlastitom „cijepanju“ i kontradikcijama uspostavlja više kao mjerilo homogenosti nasuprot „potresu“ koji dano prostiranje ipak demonstrira. Iznevjeravanje smisla u susretu s heterogenim, međutim, čini da to samo *po sebi* postaje imperativ suvremene, hegemonističke, *zapadne* umjetničke kritike, premda je u pojedinim trenucima i njezina autokritika. Projekt *Oktober* je, moglo bi se reći, jedno takvo pisanje, jedno „opće“ pisanje u kojemu djeluju *strategeme*, pisanje u izmicanju suglasno Batailleovoj *općoj ekonomiji*, bar u onoj situaciji pisanja gdje *Oktober* čita Bataillea. Poseban oblik primjene heterologije od strane autora projekta *Oktober*, konkretno Rosalind Epstein Krauss (1941.–) i Yve-Alaina

OKTOBAR:  
ISPITIVANJE  
(MOTIVA)  
POSTAVLJANJA  
HETEROLOGIJE

OCTOBER: AN  
EXAMINATION OF  
HETEROLOGICAL  
POSTSILABOUR

world of use, thus transforming existence into that which is indifferent to the servility of the commodification system. For Bataille, offering an aspect of sacrificial loss in the disintegration of an object implies a “general principle of consumption.” That principle occurs on the organic, individual, and universal levels within social and economic systems.

### Appropriation and Excretion

In heterology, there is a “play” between the homogeneous and the heterogeneous; in other words, between the polarized human impulses – *appropriation* and *excretion* – which are, so to say, functions of these two poles. The division of the socius into the *sacral sphere* (the non-productive axis) and the *profane domain* (the productive axis) is the threshold for determining and actualizing the given polarized human impulses. Appropriation occurs on the site of penetration of the foreign, heterogeneous body functioning as a protection and fortification of the homogeneous area ruled by restrictive conventions. However, appropriation also generates its own *excrément*, by means of which it exposes itself to threat. By producing its own state of instability, it “operates endogenously” – creating the possible “from within.”

Appropriation is characterized by homogeneity and by objects as the final results of the given movement, whereas excretion is

actualized as an effect of heterogeneity – the impossible: “The hypertrophy of the impossible, the projection of each instant into the infinite, grants the possible a dwelling wherein it may exist without waiting – at the level of the impossible [...] The impossible is the loss of self [...] gain is the bait that makes loss accessible.”<sup>11</sup>

### October: Towards a Historical Heterology of the Visual Arts?

The dominant art criticism of today has lost, so it seems, its own objective of attempting to deprive the language of its critical defence, which was “historically natural” to it. It has become a sort of multiple writing, not in the sense of the end of its history, but in a continuous reflection towards and within the given history. Art criticism has the ability to repeatedly appropriate the word and to return to the margins of its own boundaries. In historical *espacement*,<sup>12</sup> it also has the tendency to reveal itself, in its own “divisions” and contradictions, as a measure of homogeneity with regard to the “jolt” that nevertheless demonstrates this extension. The betrayal of meaning in an encounter with the heterogeneous, however, becomes *itself* an imperative of modern, hegemonic, *Western* art criticism, although in certain moments it proves to be its own self-criticism. The *October* project is, so to say, that kind of writing,

Art | Theory | Criticism | Politics

OCTOBER

36

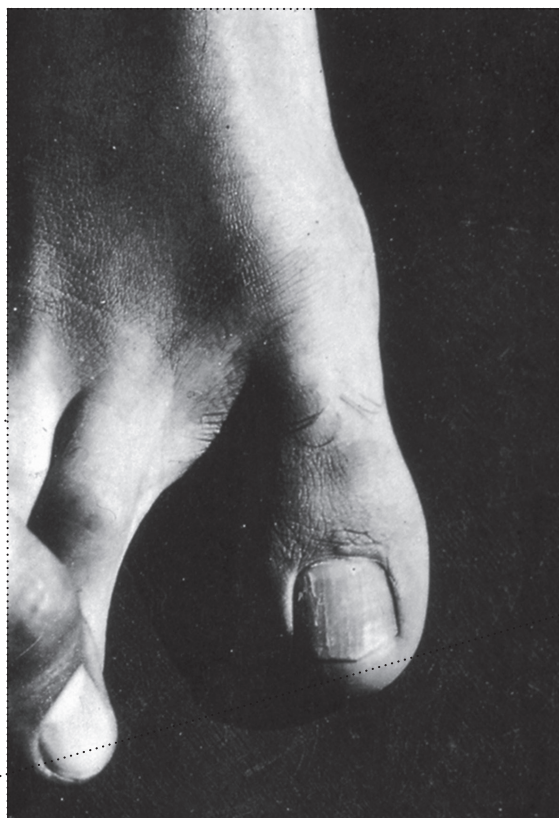
GEORGES BATAILLE

*Writings on Laughter, Sacrifice,  
Nietzsche, Un-Knowing*

*translated by Annette Michelson  
with essays by Rosalind Krauss,  
Annette Michelson, and Allen S. Weiss*

\$6.00/Spring 1986

Published by the MIT Press



54

BOJANA  
MATEJIC

Boisa (1952.–), deduciran je u reinenciji *zapadnog* modernizma, u ispisivanju „anomalija“ u samoj jezgri modernizma, u rukopisu „Bezoblično: uputa za upotrebu“ (*Formless: A User's Guide*), nudeći neku alternativnu optiku modernizma. Rukopis je izveden u povodu izložbe posvećene „anomalijama modernizma“, održane u Centru Pompidou 1996. godine. Konceptualiziran je po uzoru na Batailleov „Kritički rječnik“ (*Dictionnaire critique*), objavljen u časopisu *Dokumenti* 1929. godine.

*Kritički rječnik* demonstrira jedan od najsnažnijih Batailleovih činova sabotaze akademskog sustava. Sabotaža „crpi“ snagu iz sukoba između (i) „formalne prevare“ koja aludira na upotrebu forme i strukture rječnika kao jednog od najočiglednijih markera ideje o totalnosti i (ii) efekta izigravanja smisla, onoga što denaturalizira i remeti stabilnost podrazumijevajućeg. Batailleov rječnik nije artikuliran po konvencionalnom abecednom redu, nego oko više različitih tema ili objava, poput riječi „oko“ ili „metamorfoza“. Objave su tu da izgraju svaku povezanost i retoričnost razrade. Rječnik se ispisuje u kontinuiranim pokušajima da ne isključi heterogene elemente koji „prljaju“ i opovrgavaju formalni poredak strukture rječnika u igri smjenjivanja i pogrešaka, u terminima Hegelove dijalektike, između teze i antiteze, u *Aufhebung*u, odnosno, homogenog i heterogenog. Abecedna arbitrarnost ne kazuje „ništa“, nego transgresira sigurno mjesto istine.

Akteri u projektu *Oktober* će staviti u pogon Batailleovu riječ „bezoblično“ (*l'informe/formless*) imajući na umu da bi, Batailleovim riječima, „neki rječnik zaista počeo raditi onog trenutka kad više ne bi davao smisao nego 'poslove riječi'“. U pitanju je element koji nema ni sadržaj ni formu i izmiče dualnoj podjeli. Taj element ima operativnu, „programsku“ funkciju u projektu *Oktober*, zapravo funkciju programa koji potkopava samu ideju programa i „validnost razloga“.<sup>13</sup> *Bezoblično*, tako, nema funkciju dodjeljivanja značenja, nego radije „deklasira“ – „obara, spljoštava niže od kategorije niskog: Ono je performativno nasilje, poput opscenih riječi, onog što se ne izvodi iz semantike već iz samog čina oslobađanja“.<sup>14</sup> Projekt pisanja alternativne povijesti umjetnosti autora projekta *Oktober* zasniva se na hibridizaciji postojećih kodova znanja unutar *zapadnog* modernizma i upisivanju neočekivanih kodova znanja u očekivani diskurs: etnoloških, zooloških, bioloških, tematskih, amfiboličkih, poetskih i metaforičkih kodova u heterološkom kretanju asimilacije i ekskrecije: „Naš projekat ima za cilj da 'pretrese' modernističke kodove, [...] da vidimo kako će jedinstvo modernizma, građeno u opoziciji između formalizma i ikonologije, biti razbijeno 'iznutra' i kako određeni radovi više neće biti tumačeni na način kao što je to činjeno ranije.“<sup>15</sup> Autori su tako izveli četiri vektora posredstvom kojih je moguće indeksirati logiku „anomalije“ u *mainstream* modernizmu: (i)

OKTOBAR:  
ISPITIVANJE  
(MOTIVA)  
POSTAVLJANJA  
HETEROLOGIJE

FOTOGRAFIJA NASLOVNICE AMERIČKOG AVANGARDNOG ČASOPISA OCTOBER KOJI SU POKRENULE ANNETTE MICHELSON I ROSALIND KRAUSS, BROJ POSVEĆEN TEORIJSKOM RADU GEORGESA BATAILLEA, 1986.

JACQUES-ANDRÉ BOIFFARD, FOTOGRAFIJA UNTTITLED IZ SERIJE FOTOGRAFIJA LE GROS ORTEIL, KOJA PRATI ISTOIMENI ESEJ GEORGESA BATAILLEA, OBJAVLJEN U FRANČUŠKOM NADREALISTIČKOM ČASOPISU DOCUMENTS, 1929.

OCTOBER: AN  
EXAMINATION OF  
HETEROLOGICAL  
POSITIVILABOUR

PHOTOGRAPH FROM THE COVER OF THE AMERICAN AVANTGARDE MAGAZINE OCTOBER, LAUNCHED BY ANNETTE MICHELSON AND ROSALIND KRAUSS, THE ISSUE DEDICATED TO THE THEORETICAL WRITINGS OF GEORGES BATAILLE, 1986.

JACQUES-ANDRÉ BOIFFARD, PHOTOGRAPH UNTTITLED FROM THE SERIES LE GROS ORTEIL, PUBLISHED WITH GEORGES BATAILLE'S ESSAY OF THE SAME NAME IN THE FRENCH SURREALIST MAGAZINE DOCUMENTS, 1929.

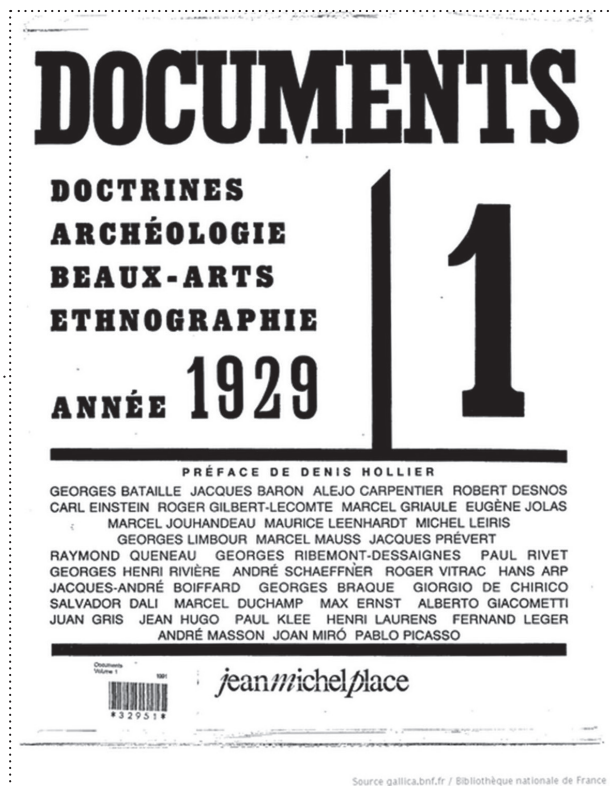
such “general” writing in which *stratagems* are at work, writing in evasion according to Bataille’s *general economy*, at least in the situation of writing where *October* reads Bataille.

A special aspect of heterology introduced by the authors of *October*, specifically by Rosalind Epstein Krauss (b. 1941) and Yve-Alain Bois (b. 1952), is deduced in the reinvention of *Western* modernism, in listing the “anomalies” at the very core of modernism in the text called *Formless: A User's Guide*, which offers an alternative view of modernism. The text was published for an exhibition dedicated to the “anomalies of modernism,” which took place at Centre Georges Pompidou in 1996. It is conceptualized according to Bataille’s “Critical Dictionary” (*Dictionnaire critique*), published in the *Documents* in 1929. The “Critical Dictionary” demonstrates one of Bataille’s most powerful acts of sabotage directed against the academic system. His sabotage “draws” its strength from the conflict between (i) “formal delusion,” which alludes at the use of form and structure of a dictionary as one of the most evident markers of the idea of totality, and (ii) the effect of thwarting the meaning, which denaturalizes and obstructs the stability of the self-evident. Bataille’s dictionary is not articulated by means of the conventional alphabetic order; instead, it is organized around a series of topics or statements such as “eye” or “metamorphosis”. The statements are there to thwart any

association or rhetoric in elaboration. The dictionary consists of repeated attempts at not excluding the heterogeneous elements that “stain” and contradict the formal order of the dictionary’s structure, in a play of alternations and errors between, in terms of Hegel’s dialectics, the thesis and the antithesis, that is, in the *Aufhebung* of the homogeneous and the heterogeneous. Alphabetic arbitrariness tells “nothing”; it transgresses the safe place of truth.

The protagonists of *October* have applied Bataille’s word “formless” (*l'informe*) keeping in mind that, according to Bataille, “[a] dictionary would begin at the moment when it no longer provided meaning of words but their job.” It is about an element that has neither content nor form, and evades dual opposition. That element has an operative, “programmatic” function in the *October* project; it is, in fact, the function of a programme that scuttles the very idea of programme and the “self-assurance of reason.”<sup>13</sup> Thus, the *formless* has not the function of assigning meaning; instead, it “operates a declassification” – “in the double sense of lowering and of taxonomic disorder [...] it is a performative, like obscene words, the violence of which derives less from semantics than from the very act of their delivery.”<sup>14</sup> The project of writing an alternative art history, undertaken by the *October* authors, was based on the hybridization of the existing codes of Knowledge within *Western* modernism, and on

„horizontalnost“ (*Horizontality*) kao prag pervertiranja sigurnog, vertikalnog poretka *zapadnog* modernizma; (ii) „bazni ili niski materijalizam“ (*Base Materialism*) kao element koji stoji „između“ visokog/dostojnog i niskog/nedostojnog, tako da je „niže od kategorije niskog“. Na planu društvenog klasnog poretka to „nisko“ bilo bi nesvodljivi prostor lumpenproletarijata koji ispada iz povijesne dualne klasne podjele na radničku i visoku klasu; (iii) „puls“ (*Pulse*) ili vektor koji denaturalizira tradicionalni modernistički mit o „čistoj percepciji“, zasnovan na radikalnom isključenju temporalnosti iz vizualnog polja koju *pulsiranje* implicira; (iv) „entropija“ (*Entropy*) kao kretanje koje vodi prema ireverzibilnom povećavanju nereda i nemogućnosti diferencijacije unutar materije.



FOTOGRAFIJA NASLOVNE STRANE AVANGARDNOG NADREALISTIČKOG ČASOPISA DOCUMENTS KOJI JE POKRENUO GEORGES BATAILLE, 1929.

PHOTOGRAPH OF THE COVER PAGE OF THE AVANTGARDE SURREALIST MAGAZINE DOCUMENTS, LAUNCHED BY GEORGES BATAILLE, 1929

BOJANA  
MATEJK

### Povijesna heterologija zapadnog modernizma

U uvodnom dijelu knjige piše: „Kako je ovo područje relevantnosti počelo da raste, postalo nam je jasno da bi izložba *L' Informe: Mode d'emploi*, okupljajući različite efekte *besformnih* impulsa, mogla kao takva imati vid operacione sile, budući da ona ne bi mogla da demonstrira moć konceptualnih instrumenata a da ne pokupi određene kategorije koje su nam time postajale sve više beskorisne.“<sup>16</sup> Ta „operaciona sila“ unutar *zapadnog* modernizma ocrtava pojam koji možemo označiti *povijesnom heterologijom*.

Termin *povijesna heterologija* naizgled paradoksalno zvuči, imajući na umu da se heterologija usmjerava prema nepremostivom mjestu borbe (klasni antagonizam) između svake uspostave idealizma: „lako su možda težili da se obračunaju sa duhovnim entitetima, većina materijalista je postavila poredak stvari čije su ih hijerarhijske relacije odredile kao idealiste. Oni su utvrdili mrtvu materiju na vrhu konvencionalne hijerarhije različitih činjenica, bez uvida u to da su na taj način popustili pred

as an element in between the high/dignified and low/undignified, which is “lower than the category of low”; on the level of social class order, that “low” would be the irreducible space of *lumpenproletariat*, which falls out of the historical dual class division into the working class and the high class; (iii) “pulse” or vector that denaturalizes the traditional modernist myth of “pure perception”, based on the radical exclusion of temporality from the visual field that the *pulsation* implies; and (iv) “entropy” as the movement leading to an irreversible increase in disorder and the impossibility of differentiation within matter.

### The Historical Heterology of Western Modernism

The introduction to *Formless* says the following: “As this field of relevance began to grow, it became clear to us that an exhibition bringing together the various effects of this formless impulse could itself have a kind of operational force, since it could not only demonstrate the power of the conceptual tool, but would also pick apart certain categories that seemed to us increasingly

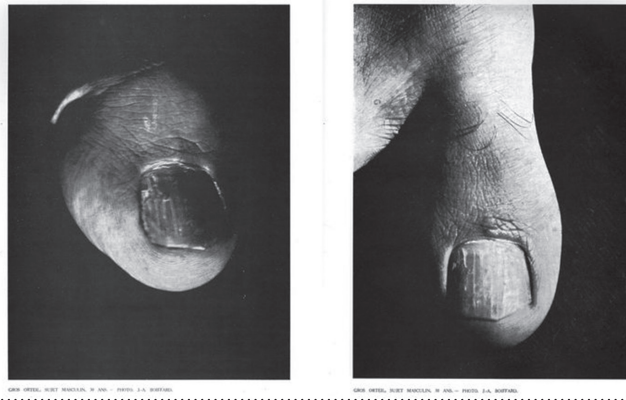
inscribing the unexpected codes of knowledge into an expected discourse: these were ethnological, zoological, biological, thematic, amphibolic, poetical, and metaphorical codes in the heterological movement of assimilation and excretion: “Our project is to redeal the modernism’s cards [...] to see that the unity of modernism, as constituted through the opposition of formalism and iconology, will be fissured from within and that certain works will no longer be read as they were before.”<sup>15</sup> Thus, the authors derived four vectors by means of which it was possible to index the logic of “anomaly” in mainstream modernism: (i) “horizontality” as the threshold of perverting the safe, vertical order of *Western* modernism; (ii) “base materialism”

opsesijom za idealnom formom materije (stvari).<sup>17</sup> Batailleov materijalizam je „niski materijalizam“<sup>18</sup> koji ima „spjloštavajuću“, oslobađajuću funkciju od svih „ontoloških tamnica“. Jer, Batailleova heterologija upućuje da postoji proturječnost, kanonska paradigma između dvaju polova: dostojno/nedostojno ili visoko/nisko, ili pak buržoazija/proletariat, fundamentalna podjela ljudi na dostojne i nedostojne, ali da je tu i jaz, neko nepremostivo, „srednji“ termin *nisko* koje je „niže od niskog“, termin koji nije neutralan (ni visoko niti nisko), niti sintetičan (visoko i nisko). Taj je „termin-anomalija“, nepravilan, ekscentričan, drugi, poput *bezobličnog* koji potkopava podjelu na polove suprotnosti i njihove pretenzije na istinu. To je nestabilni element koji je zahvaćen paradigmom visoko/nisko koji imitira smisao izigravajući *po-sebi* materije. Drugim riječima, *povijesna heterologija* nije povijesni materijalizam koji putem dijalektičkog sukoba vodi prema nekom progresivnom ustanovljenju smisla, prema razrješenju (klasnog) antagonizma, nego je *povijesna heterologija* kontinuirana

borba u kojoj se prolazi kroz nemoguće, prestupanjem praga Zabrane. Jer, kako kaže Sartre, na tragu Hegelove misli Bataille uviđa da je stvarnost sukob, ali za razliku od Hegela on napušta element sinteze (u Hegelovoj trijadi teza, antiteza, sinteza/*Aufhebung*) tako da „dijalektičku viziju sveta zamenjuje tragičnom, dramatičnom vizijom“.<sup>19</sup> *Aufhebung*, u tom smislu, nema sposobnost da prekorači vlastiti prostor konstitucije i time potkopa totalitet diskursa, povijesti, smisla, Zakona itd. Neutralizacijom pozitivnog pojma (teza) koji treba da dovede do njegova isključenja u novom smislu/*Aufhebung*u, povijest se odvija kao kontinuirano kruženje zabrana umjesto da se kreće u kontinuiranom prekoračenju svakoga mogućeg. Stoga možemo reći da alternativni *zapadni* modernizam i postmodernizam u projektu *Oktobar povijesnom heterologijom* demonstrira potrebu kontinuiranog transgresiranja Znanja u vlastitoj nedovršenosti.

OKTOBAR:  
ISPITIVANJE  
(MOTIVA)  
POSTAVLJANJA  
HETEROLOGIJE

OCTOBER: AN  
EXAMINATION OF  
HETEROLOGICAL  
POSITSLABOUR



JACQUES-ANDRÉ BOIFFARD,  
FOTOGRAFIJA UNTITLED IZ SERIJE  
FOTOGRAFIJA *LE GROS ORTEIL*, KOJA  
PRATI ISTOIMENI ESEJ GEORGESA  
BATAILLEA, OBJAVLJEN U  
AVANGARDNOM NADREALISTIČKOM  
ČASOPISU *DOCUMENTS*, 1929.

JACQUES-ANDRÉ BOIFFARD,  
PHOTOGRAPH UNTITLED FROM THE  
SERIES *LE GROS ORTEIL*, PUBLISHED  
WITH GEORGES BATAILLE'S  
ESSAY OF THE SAME NAME IN THE  
FRENCH SURREALIST MAGAZINE  
*DOCUMENTS*, 1929.

useless.”<sup>16</sup> That “operational force” within *Western* modernism outlines a term that we may define as *historical heterology*. The term *historical heterology* may seem paradoxical at the first glance, taking into consideration that heterology is directed at the unsurpassable site of struggle (class antagonism) in any positing of idealism: “Most materialists, even though they may have wanted to do away with all spiritual entities, ended up positing an order of things whose hierarchical relations mark it as specifically idealist. They situated dead matter at the summit of a conventional hierarchy of diverse facts, without perceiving that in this way they gave in to an obsession with the *ideal* form of matter.”<sup>17</sup> Bataille’s materialism is indeed “base materialism”<sup>18</sup> that operates a “declassing” function and liberates from all “ontological prisons”. For Bataille’s heterology indicates that there is a contradiction, a canonical paradigm between the two poles of dignified/undignified or high/low, or perhaps bourgeoisie/proletariat, the fundamental classification of people into worthy and unworthy, but also that there is a gap,

something unsurpassable, a “middle” term *low* that is “lower than low”, a term that is far from neutral (neither high nor low) or synthetic (high and low). That “term-anomaly” is irregular, eccentric, other, like the *formless* that undermines the division to the poles of opposition and their pretensions to the truth. It is an unstable element caught into the paradigm of high/low, which imitates meaning by playing the *in-itself* of matter. In other words, *historical heterology* is not historical materialism that would lead, by means of a dialectical conflict, towards a progressive establishment of meaning, or the solution of (class) antagonism; instead, *historical heterology* is a continuous struggle in which one passes through the impossible by crossing the threshold of Prohibition. For, as Sartre says, Bataille follows Hegel in realizing that the reality is a conflict, but contrary to Hegel, he abandons the element of synthesis (from Hegel’s triad of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis/*Aufhebung*) and “substitutes the dialectical vision of the world through one that is tragic, or to borrow his words: dramatic.”<sup>19</sup> *Aufhebung*,





GEORGES BATAILLE (1897 - 1962)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georges\\_Bataille#mediaviewer/File:GeorgesBataille.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georges_Bataille#mediaviewer/File:GeorgesBataille.jpg)

## Završna riječ

Projekt *Oktober* je, pišući alternativnu, hibridnu povijest moderne (*zapadne*) umjetnosti, postavio Batailleovu heterologiju radi kritičkog preispitivanja *zapadnog*, hegemonističkog, tradicionalnog modernizma, usmjeravajući se prema kritici materijalističkog idealizma. On je, međutim, u danom procesu proizveo nestabilne, atopične ispuste (druge). U jednoj situaciji ovog teksta spomenuto je da heterologija ne teži vratiti drugo sustavu, nego da se heterologija zanima za ekskrecione potencijale kršenja norme, što i nije ništa drugo do susret s nemogućim i prolaz kroza nj. Projekt *Oktober* je ponudio alternativne vrijednosti koje „razdosaduju“ Znanje; međutim, čini se da se na tome i zadržava. „Izvan“ *zapadnog* hegemonističkog modernizma, na suvremenoj geopolitičkoj ravni koegzistiraju brojni singularni modernizmi, umjetničke prakse i pojave koje nemaju stabilan reciprocitet prema *zapadnom*, sigurnom modernizmu, koje su drugo i „prijeteće“ za *Zapadni* Subjekt cenzure.

<sup>1</sup> Ova studija je realizirana u okviru projekta *Identiteti srpske muzike u svetskom kulturnom kontekstu* (ev. br. 177019) Katedre za muzikologiju Fakulteta muzičke umetnosti u Beogradu, koji je podržan od Ministarstva prosvete i nauke Republike Srbije.

<sup>2</sup> Stuart Kendall, „Heterology“, *Georges Bataille*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2007, 78.

in that sense, has no capacity for surpassing its own space of constitution and thus undermine the totality of discourse, history, meaning, Law, etc. By neutralizing the positive term (thesis) that should lead to its abolition in new meaning/*Aufhebung*, history evolves as a continuous circulation of prohibitions instead of moving in a continuous surpassing of everything possible. We may therefore say that the alternative *Western* modernism and postmodernism in the *October* project demonstrates, by means of *historical heterology*, the need of continuously transgressing Knowledge in one's own imperfection.

## Conclusion

By writing an alternative, hybrid history of modern (*Western*) art, the *October* project posited Bataille's heterology with the aim of critically questioning the *Western*, hegemonic, traditional modernism, directed at a critique of materialist idealism. In this process, however, it produced unstable, atopic outlets (the others). At one point in this text, I have mentioned that heterology does not seek to return the other to the system; instead, it is interested in the excretive potential of violating the norm, which is nothing else than an encounter with and the passage through the impossible. The *October* project offered alternative values that “de-dull” Knowledge, but apparently it stopped at that. There are many singular modernisms, artistic

practices, and phenomena at the contemporary geopolitical level “beyond” the hegemonic *Western* modernism, which have no stable reciprocity towards the *Western*, safe modernism, but operate as the other that “threatens” the *Western* Subject of censorship.

<sup>1</sup> This study has been realized within the project *Identiteti srpske muzike u svetskom kulturnom kontekstu* [Identities of Serbian music in the global cultural context] (project nr. 177019) at the Chair of Musicology, Faculty of Music Arts in Belgrade, and sponsored by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development.

<sup>2</sup> Stuart Kendall, “Heterology”, in: *Georges Bataille* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 78.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Georges Bataille, *The Accursed Share: An Essay on General Economy. Volume I. Consumption* (New York: Zone Books, 1991).

<sup>4</sup> Fred Botting and Scott Wilson (eds.), *The Bataille Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 153.

<sup>5</sup> Ivan Čolović, “Književnost kao prestup” [Literature as transgression], in: *Žorž Bataj, Plavetnilo neba* [Georges Bataille, Blue of Noon] (Belgrade: Prosveta, 1979), 274.

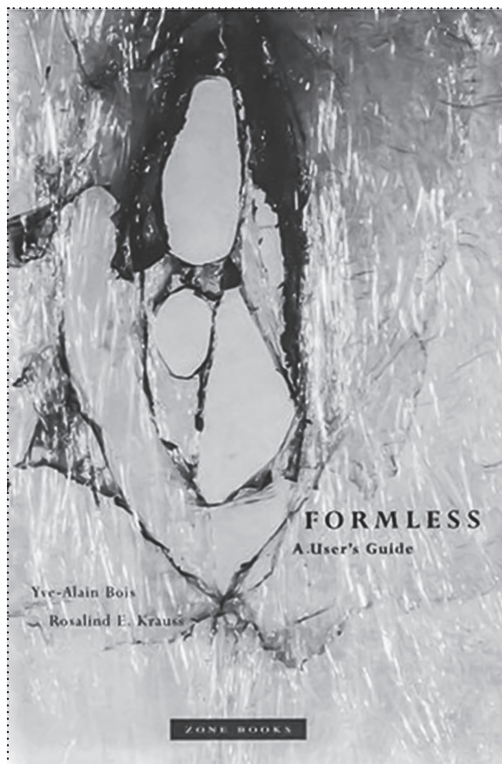
<sup>6</sup> Georges Bataille, *Death and Sensuality: A Study of the Eroticism and the Taboo* (New York: Walker and Company, 1962), 40f.

<sup>7</sup> Denis Hollier, “The Use-Value of the Impossible,” *October* 60 (New York: The MIT Press, 1992), 13.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>9</sup> Giorgio Agamben, *Profanations* (New York: Zone Books, 2007).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Georges Bataille, “The Sovereign,” in: *The Unfinished System of Nonknowledge* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 185-196.



OKTOBAR:  
ISPITIVANJE  
(MOTIVA)  
POSTAVLJANJA  
HETEROLOGIJE

OCTOBER: AN  
EXAMINATION OF  
HETEROLOGICAL  
POSITIONS/LABOUR

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Georges Bataille, *The Accursed Share. An Essay on General Economy. Volume I. Consumption*, Zone Books, New York, 1991.

<sup>4</sup> Fred Botting, Scott Wilson (eds.), *The Bataille Reader*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1997, 153.

<sup>5</sup> Ivan Čolović, „Književnost kao prestup“, u: Žorž Bataj, *Plavetnilo neba*, Prosveta, Beograd, 1979., 274.

<sup>6</sup> Žorž Bataj, *Erotizam*, u: *Službeni glasnik*, Beograd, 2009., 39.

<sup>7</sup> Denis Hollier, „The Use-Value of the Impossible“, u: *October*, no. 60, 1992., The MIT Press, New York, 13.

<sup>8</sup> Isto, 7.

<sup>9</sup> Dordo Agamben, *Profanacije*, Rende, Beograd, 2010.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Georges Bataille, „The Sovereign“, *The Unfinished System of Nonknowledge*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis–London, 2001., 185–196.

<sup>11</sup> Žorž Bataj, „Ničeoov smeh“, u: Slobodan Divjak (ur.), *Treći program*, br.72, Beograd, 1987., 278.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Jacques Derrida, *Positions*, Les Éditions de Minuit, Paris, 1972.

<sup>13</sup> Rosalind Krauss, Yve-Alain Bois (ed.), *Formless*, Zone Books, New York, 1996., 18.

<sup>14</sup> Isto.

<sup>15</sup> Isto, 21.

<sup>16</sup> Isto, 9.

<sup>17</sup> Georges Bataille, „Materialism“, *Vision of Excess*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1985., 15.

<sup>18</sup> Rosalind Krauss, Yve-Alain Bois (ed.), *Formless...op. cit.*, 53.

<sup>19</sup> Žan-Pol Sartr, „Jedan novi mistik“, u: Slobodan Divjak (ur.)...op. cit., 291.

NASLOVNICA KNJIGE *FORMLESS: A USER'S GUIDE*,  
YVE-ALAIN BOIS I ROSALIND KRAUSS, 1997.

COVER OF THE BOOK *FORMLESS: A USER'S GUIDE*,  
YVE-ALAIN BOIS AND ROSALIND KRAUSS, 1997

<sup>11</sup> George Bataille, „Nietzsche’s Laughter,“ in: *The Unfinished System of Nonknowledge* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 24.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Jacques Derrida, *Positions* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1972).

<sup>13</sup> Rosalind E. Krauss and Yve-Alain Bois (eds.), *Formless: A User’s Guide* (New York: Zone Books and MIT Press, 1997), 18.

<sup>14</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>17</sup> Georges Bataille, “Materialism”, in: *Vision of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927-1939* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 15.

<sup>18</sup> Krauss and Bois (eds.), *Formless* (as in n. 13), 53.

<sup>19</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, “Un nouveau mystique,” in: idem, *Situations, I: Essays critiques* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1947), 144.