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> "Thus are traced the destiny of optical instruments:
> To show what the eye does not see;
> To show what the eye sees, but in a different way."
> —J. Brunius, "La Photo et le cinéma" (1938)[1]

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Modernism defined itself partly in relation to a dual sense of time as simultaneously diachronic and synchronic. This dual sense of time was linked to the modernist idea of primitivism in a way that is perhaps best expressed by T. S. Eliot as an "historical sense" in his essay from 1919, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," as "a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and the temporal together," as Ronald Bush suggests in "The Presence of the Past: Ethnographic Thinking/Literary Politics."[2] Characterizing Eliot's positive reviews of Emile Durkheim's *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* from 1916 and 1918 as representing "a significant moment of intersection between ethnographic and literary modernism," Bush argues that, with regard to "Eliot's admonition that the poet cultivate a 'historical sense,' a 'perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence'": "It is impossible to read Eliot's statement, or the poetry it framed, without acknowledging how much the ethnographic discourse of primitivism had colored both his idea of the past and his notion of the present."[3]

The "ethnographic discourse of primitivism" to which Bush refers was endemic to European modernism in a broad sense. The "primitive" was the name given to tribal art as seen in the West and as a wealth of inspiration for Western modern artists. In the catalogue from the Museum of Modern Art show from

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1984, *"Primitivism" in 20th-Century Art*, Kirk Varnedoe describes "primitivism" as "the tendency to admire the virtues of early or materially less developed societies" which has "a long and diverse history within Western thought. Even in classical antiquity. Western literature contains laments for lost simplicity and praise for less sophisticated societes."[4] Tribal art was consequently labeled "primitive," even though, as Robert Goldwater spelled out in his 1965 preface to *Primitivism in Modern Art*, published in 1938: "It is of course widely accepted today (as it was not in 1938) that the art of the so-called primitive peoples is not itself 'primitive,' i.e. neither technically crude nor aesthetically unsubtle. . . . However much or little primitive art has been a source for modern art, the two in fact have almost nothing in common."[5] William Rubin elaborated on this explanation in 1984: "That the derived term primitivism is ethnocentric is surely there—and logically so, for it refers not to the tribal arts in themselves, but to the Western interest in and reaction to them. Primitivism is thus an aspect of the history of modern art, not of tribal art."[6]

The luxurious journal *Minotaure*, published by Albert Skira and E. Tériade in France from 1933 to 1939, was exemplary of ethnographic modernism in its focus on ethnography, in particular in the first three issues from 1933. The journal also became a vehicle for Bretonian surrealism, which had begun to focus increasingly on objects.[7] The inaugural issues from 1933 presented tribal practices and art brought back from the ethnographic Dakar-Djibouti Misson alongside work by such contemporary artists as Pablo Picasso, André Masson, Man Ray, and Brassaï. In the double number 3–4 from December 1933, *Minotaure* published a series of six photographs of "involuntary sculptures" by Brassaï, born Gyula Halasz in Brasso Transylvania (1899–1984), which serve as a sort of "preface" to an article on Art Nouveau by Salvador Dalí, who most likely also wrote the captions for Brassaï's images (Fig. 1). In their simultaneous evocation of scientific-historical and aesthetic-ahistorical time, these photographs exemplify the ethnographic thinking Bush ascribes to Eliot in 1919.[8]

This double issue from December, 1933, expressed a subtle change in editorial mission that had been implicit from the start, namely the explicit inclusion of science in the journal's vision of the spirit of the modern movement.[9] Following in the footsteps of the alternative surrealist journal edited by Georges Bataille, *Documents*, which ran from 1929 through 1930, issue number 3–4 of *Minotaure* stated that: "It is impossible today to isolate the plastic arts from poetry and science. The most characteristic modern movements have closely linked these three areas."[10] The most obvious reference here is to surrealism, for which Sigmund Freud's theory of the unconscious served as much as a point of departure as Pierre Reverdy's definition of the poetic image, and which became explicitly linked to art with the publication of the first installment of Breton's essay "Surrealism and Painting" in the July 1925 of *La Révolution surréaliste*. In addition to Brassaï's so-called "sculptures," this number features five articles on psychology, including a psychoanalytic study by Jacques Lacan, three articles on automatism, two articles each on photography and divination, and one each on painting, sculpture, architecture, and music, together with a survey on objective chance. Critics have been correct in claiming that "the quest of *Minotaure* . . . was nothing less than a new definition of humanity."[11]

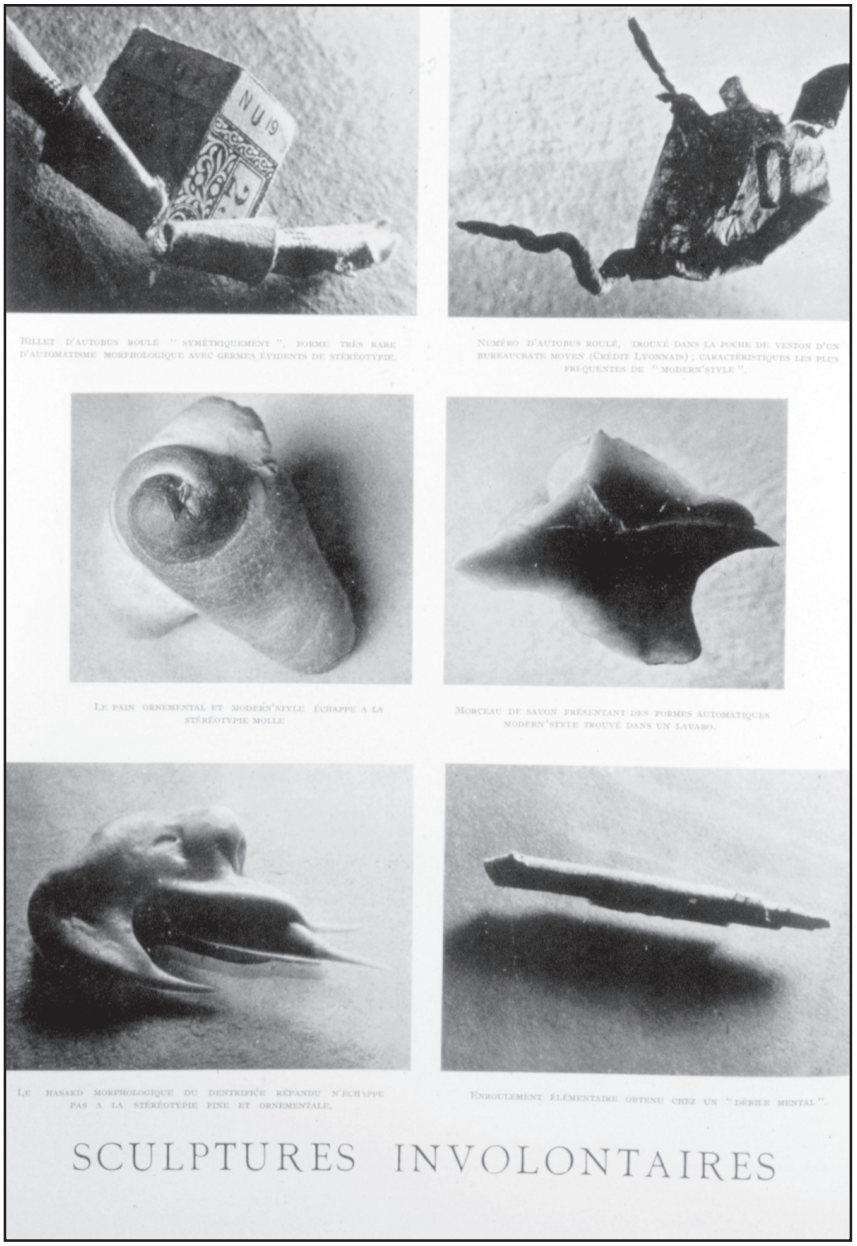


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Fig. 1. Brassaï's "Involuntary Sculptures," *Minotaure* 3–4 (1933). The captions were most likely written by Dalí, as a result of their collaboration on this work: "Symetrically rolled bus ticket, very rare form of morphological automatism with evident seeds of stereotyping"; "Rolled bus ticket, found in the vest pocket of an ordinary bureaucrat (from the Crédit Lyonnais bank)"; "the most frequent characteristics of the 'Modern'Style'"; "Ornamental and Modern'Style bread escapes from limp stereotyping"; "Piece of soap presenting the automatic forms of Modern'Style found in a bathroom"; "The morphological chance quality of smudged toothpaste does not escape delicate and ornamental stereotyping"; "Elementary rolling found in the possession of a mentally retarded person." Courtesy of Mme Gilberte Brassï.

Explaining his highly pertinent term "ethnographic surrealism," a variant on the concept of ethnographic modernism, and one which very accurately describes the orientation of *Minotaure* in 1933, James Clifford states that "[e]thnography cut with surrealism emerges as the theory and practice of juxtaposition."[12] He elaborates the extent to which this combination made sense in the 1930s in France in particular (as opposed to England or the United States):[13]

> I am referring to a more general cultural predisposition that cuts through modern anthropology and that this science shares with twentieth-century art and writing. The ethnographic label suggests a characteristic attitude of participant observation among the artifacts of a defamiliarized cultural reality. The surrealists were intensely interested in exotic worlds, among which they included a certain Paris. Their attitude, while comparable to that of the fieldworker who strives to render the unfamiliar comprehensible, tended to work in the reverse sense, making the familiar strange. (*POC*, 121)

That "certain Paris" seen by the surrealists as "exotic" was nowhere better represented than in the nocturnal photographs of Brassaï, who settled in Paris in the 1920s and whose work illuminated, as though from within, his adopted "city of lights's" nightlife.[14] *Minotaure* published roughly one hundred and fifty photographs by Brassaï, who claimed that "the surrealism of my pictures was only reality made more eerie by my way of seeing. I never sought to express anything but reality itself, than which there is nothing more surreal."[15] His *Minotaure* photographs blur the distinction between ethnography as science and as aesthetic by examining familiar European objects with the same scientific detail as unfamiliar tribal objects and by making them visible in their newfound strangeness—as decontextualized as a mask hanging in a Paris art museum.

Surrealists responded so strongly to tribal art because they saw themselves as pursuing primitivist goals, according the French definition of *primitif*: "Adj. 1. Which is at its origin, or close to it. 2. Which is the first, the oldest. 3. Which is the source, the origin (of something with the same nature)."[16] As Varnedoe summarizes: "It thus may refer both to foreign peoples and to that which is most deeply innate within oneself."[17] Goldwater finds three "aspects of the surrealists' view of their method and art" that "may be called primitivist" (*PIMA*, 217). The first one coincides with the third definition of *primitif*, "Which is at its origin, or close to it": "In the first place they looked upon themselves as continuing a tradition of anti-rational exteriorizing of the subconscious that went back to the alchemists" (*PIMA*, 217). The second coincides with the second dictionary definition, "Which is the first, the oldest": "In the second place the surrealists, although recognizing some valuable ancestors, saw themselves as beginners, as pioneer explorers in the realm of the subconscious" (*PIMA*, 217). The third may be associated with the first definition, "Which is the source, the origin (of something with the same nature)": "And lastly . . . the surrealists considered that they were working with the essentials of human nature as finally revealed by psychology" (*PIMA*, 217).

These surrealist properties linked to "primitivism" by Goldwater—irrationality, pioneer exploration of the unconscious, and the study of human nature through psychol-

ogy—are all evident in number 3–4 of *Minotaure*.[18] This number also features an article by Brassaï on graffiti art, "Du Mur du caverne au mur d'usine," illustrated with his own photographs, in which he claims that the primitive in the form of "the stone age" is "a state of mind" that is as visible on Parisian walls in 1933 as it was on cave walls thousands of years ago. He sees graffiti as emerging from the very source of the human drive to make signs: "These succinct signs are nothing less than the origin of writing, those animals, those monsters, those demons, those heroes, those phallic gods—nothing less than the elements of mythology."[19] Mention of the concept of "the primitive" also surfaces in Breton's reiteration of the importance of automatism to surrealism in "Le Message automatique," where he characterizes automatic writing as a "verbal flow" with a desirably "primitive direction" ("LMA," 58). It appears a third time in Jean Frois-Wittman's article on modern art and the pleasure principle. The entire issue also explores the mysterious intersections between chance and destiny that so fascinated the surrealists, exemplified by the reproduction of Rimbaud's horoscope, and it does so with disregard for the probable tastes of those who could afford what Brassaï himself called a "sumptuous review . . . beyond the reach of proletarian pocketbooks."[20]

Outside of *Minotaure*, whose eclectic pages showed no hesitation in mixing "high" (sculptures by Picasso) and "low" (cheap postcards) art, found objects and tribal art could be easily confused by 1933 because the generic confusion between art and ethnography had become irrevocably established by then.[21] By 1936, the exhibition of surrealist objects in Charles Ratton's art gallery was interspersed with tribal ones.[22] In the first issue of *Documents*, Georges-Henri Rivière described plans for the renovation of the Trocadéro museum almost as an "anti-Museum of Fine Arts," a place where objects would explicitly *not* be classified according to their aesthetic appeal.[23] But three years later, under the influence of Ratton, the Trocadéro became the venue for the "Exposition de Bronzes d'Ivoires du Royaume du Bénin," organized by Ratton himself, who set up the exhibit to show off the beauty of the pieces displayed. As Jean-Louis Paudrat explains, "despite the 'counter-aesthetic' orientation a few years earlier of those who had reorganized the Trocadéro Museum, 'certain rare and beautiful pieces' were transformed from indexes of another way of life into masterpieces of world art."[24]

From the start, this divided attention paid to tribal objects—viewed as keys to a deeper scientific understanding of foreign cultures whose goal in creating them had not been aesthetic, but also as models of artistic skill, achievement, and beauty—diversified the ways in which they were perceived. Certain critics and collectors, like Goldwater, Max Ernst, and Tristan Tzara, retained an awareness of the historical context in which these objects were made.[25] Others, like Breton, and, according to William Rubin, Picasso, cared far more for their symbolic, conceptual and formal values, appreciable with no historical knowledge. That view, it is true, entailed misunderstandings of their original function, called "creative misreadings" by Rubin, which, in the case of Picasso, resulted in turn in some of the masterpieces of Western art.[26] This double perception of tribal objects as existing within historical time and outside of it, as temporal and timeless, added to their mystery—a mystery which spilled over onto

the surrealist objects that co-existed with tribal art in the studios of most of the surrealists. Through a similar process of decontextualization, surrealist objects likewise became timeless aesthetic objects nevertheless haunted by an unknown historical past.

The most important quality shared by tribal art and surrealist objects was a perceived sacred presence within the object capable of marshalling "latent forces" and communicating with the viewer. Brassaï's "sculptures" were initially labeled "large-scale" or "automatic objects," which he photographed "in collaboration" with Dalí. He argued in a newspaper article from 1950 that photography was the art of giving "things the chance to express themselves."[27] Certainly the surrealists sought what Walter Benjamin called "*profane illumination*, a materialistic, anthropological inspiration" in their everyday world and in the material objects populating that world.[28] For despite their iconoclastic attitude towards such sacred icons of bourgeois taste as the *Mona Lisa*, the surrealists sought, in those "lowly" objects they discovered in flea markets alongside the inexpensive African masks they collected, a similar kind of aura to that of the "high" art hanging in the Louvre.

Already in 1931, in his essay "Objets surréalistes" in *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution*, Dalí had claimed that the surrealist object was invested with erotic power. André Breton attributes the same power to the found object in "La Beauté sera convulsive," in the May 1934 issue of *Minotaure* (the issue following the one with Brassaï's "involuntary sculptures"). Breton compares being in Paris to being in a *forêt d'indices* to which the surrealist responds eagerly, eyes wide open.[29] Within this "forest" of signs Breton includes the sort of found object he had already described in *Nadja* years earlier, and which alone reveals :

> the marvelous precipitate of desire. It alone can enlarge the universe, causing it to relinquish some of its opacity, letting us discover its extraordinary capacities for reserve. . . . Daily life abounds, moreover, in just this sort of small discovery, where there is frequently an element of apparent gratuitousness. . . . I am profoundly persuaded that any perception registered in the most involuntary way . . . bears in itself the solution, symbolic or other, of a problem you have with yourself. . . . You have only to know how to get along in the labyrinth.[30]

Like the mythological Minotaur trapped in the labyrinth, human beings must try to decipher the world that surrounds them as a way of understanding themselves and their own natures divided between conscious and unconscious minds, just as the Minotaur's nature was divided between human and animal. Unlike the Minotaur, the surrealist hopes to survive the experience of the labyrinth and to emerge from it whole.[31]

Surrealist objects aid this process of exploration and survival by helping to clarify our own desires and drives: they reflect back aspects of the self to the person who finds them, as Breton suggests. They operate in two ways: making the familiar strange, as Clifford claims, and also making the strangeness in ourselves comprehensible. In this way they manifest characteristics of the Freudian uncanny, the deeply disquieting nature of finding the strange in the familiar, of discovering that a woman is only a doll, for example, that an animate being is in fact inanimate (or the opposite). Freud's essay,

translated into French only in 1933, the same year that *Minotaure* was launched, bolstered the surrealists in their on-going investigations of the psychic properties of objects.

In their quasi-animate status, surrealist objects resemble the tribal masks brought back by ethnographers from Africa and Oceania and placed in museums. These were initially studied not aesthetically—as what became known in Europe as "primitive" works—but scientifically, as elements of religious worship whose value lay in the transformation they underwent during rituals when, momentarily, they seemed to become inhabited by the potent spirit forces called upon by the tribal group. At the height of the religious ceremony, therefore, these objects became double, embodying and representing a force other than themselves in a manner parallel to the way the surrealist experienced the dawning awareness, through automatism (often practiced in a group), of the functioning of the unconscious mind, as though it were a separate and mysterious part of the self.[32]

Ethnography, the social science that studied tribal art in context, thus shared in common with surrealism a turning away from Cartesianism. Michèle Richman argues that "although methodologicially closer to the social sciences," ethnography "drew insights from other cultures into modes of thought resistant to the definition of logic sanctioned by the West."[33] *Minotaure* presented the point of view of what Clifford calls the "participant observer." The artists in these pages look at their own cultures as closely as they examine those of others and thus define themselves as receptors as much as creators of art and culture. They provide the "scientific description of individual cultures" from the dictionary definition of *ethnograpy*; it is left to the reader to process these juxtaposed descriptions and images according to the interest in *ethnology* pronounced by the journal's masthead, which purports to "analyze cultures," both foreign and familiar, rather than merely to describe them. Thanks to the journal's equalizing strategy of juxtaposition, within its pages, Brassaï's "involuntary sculptures" received equal billing with art by mediums and the mentally ill, as well as African masks and with sculptures by such artists as Picasso and Giacometti photographed in their studios.

Ideologically, ethnography also strove to contextualize and equalize. As Michel Leiris passionately affirmed in an article in *Documents* from 1930 announcing the Dakar-Djibouti mission, in which he participated and upon which he later reported in *Minotaure*, ethnography is the "most generally human science, because not limited—like most of the others—to white men . . . it extends to the totality of humankind."[34] Similarly, in his article on graffiti art, in number 3–4 of *Minotaure*, Brassaï claimed that what could be called ethnographic thinking had made all people equal, throughout historical time ("DMDC," 6). Breton applies the same principle to the equalizing force of surrealist automatism in the same number: "The main quality of surrealism is to have proclaimed the total equality of all normal human beings in front of the subliminal message" ("LMA," 62). *Minotaure* certainly equalized photography with sculpture and painting, by elevating it far above the role of mere illustration and inviting photographers like Brassaï and Man Ray to contribute articles about it to the journal.[35]

Within the larger context of *Minotaure*, what is the reader to make of Brassaï's so-called "involuntary sculptures"—which are sculptures, not objects, as Dawn Ades reminds us, because made by human hands, their "authors" identified by a triple "X" in the issue's table of contents?[36] The first two are more or less recognizable for what they are, rolled bus tickets. The first one invites a flash of recognition for all those private moments when we have nervously toyed with a piece of paper in our pockets. The second could at first glance be confused with an animate creature like an insect. Its mystery derives partly from the fact that it is blown up and consequently distorted to our eyes in relation to its "natural" appearance, precisely as though the photograph were intended for scientific observation. The framing underscores the fact that the viewer doubles the photographer's position, which is that of an ethnographic "observer."

These photographs have the psychological effect of reminding the viewer of some of her or his most thoughtlessly private moments and invite us to wonder if something meaningful might not be attached to such haphazard fiddling, in the way that Freud discovered that meaning might be extracted from the recital of a person's dreams, the leftovers of everyday activities. Could, in fact, truths about the self and about humanity itself lurk in such "automatic" creations? Who would save such things, let alone preserve them by photographing them? Are not these images linked, in part, by their disposability? Are they perhaps, like the broken pots so closely examined in archeological excavations, the everyday trash that reveals and identifies us as a people—the detritus that marks an era: in the detailed scroll design on the first bus ticket, for example, which would no longer be made with such care? And do they have aesthetic value?

I will begin to answer the question of the aesthetic value of these photographs with my own subjective response to them. The fifth photograph struck me as strangely beautiful when I first looked at it on its own at the Brassaï retrospective in Paris in the summer of 2000.[37] At first glance I thought it was an enlarged photograph of an exotic flower, of the sort immortalized by Karl Blossfelt in *Documents*.[38] I admired what I took to be its glossy petals and wondered whether it might not be one of those floral carnivorous oddities: an insect-eating plant. Only after checking the label did I learn what the photograph was of—an accidental blob of toothpaste. The label repeated the *Minotaure* caption by Dalí: "the morphological chance quality of smudged toothpaste does not escape delicate and ornamental stereotyping."[39]

This revelation, which made me laugh, prompted me to go backwards and forwards in the exhibition to the others of these "sculptures" and to look at them more carefully, with their label identification in mind. Thus what Dalí calls an "elementary" rolling stopped being a mysterious cigarette, the ornamental bread was no longer a stone goddess, the soap bubble ceased to resemble blown glass, just as the toothpaste dab had become un-transformed and had lost its identity as an exotic blossom. And yet my new view of these unmasked images remained haunted by my first impression. They remained, for me, almost like those psychological double or "reversible images," like the two faces and the urn or the young beauty and the old woman, which can be described as "anamorphic" because they represent two images in one which cannot be

apprehended fully in a single glance. In the case of Brassaï's "involuntary sculptures" it had to do with the scale of the photographs and with the manner of their distortion.

Shot in such tight close-up and enlarged, with an almost irrationally lavish attention, these objects are literally transformed by their framing into more than the ephemera that they are—bread to be eaten; rolled bits of paper to be thrown out with the garbage—having outlived their usefulness as signs of minor economic transactions. What is more, rarely would a person, particularly an adult, see these objects in such an intimate way. And that intimacy, that spectral sense, is part of what makes these "sculptures" surrealist, because, like surrealist "found" objects, they seem almost animate and organic.

I believe that that is what I was seeing when I mistook the blob of toothpaste for a carnivorous flower—I was seeing a "being" where there ought to have been none. When Brassaï wrote in 1950 that photography was the art of giving "things the chance to express themselves" he was arguing that objects contained communicable messages which he attempted to reveal, even if he was also perpetrating a visual joke in the spirit of Salvador Dalí, whose essay on Art Nouveau architecture, designated by the name "Modern'Style" in an abbreviated form of the French for Art Nouveau ("Modern Style"), these photographs precede and, to a limited extent, illustrate. For despite the fact that a reading of the pseudo-scientific/art-critical captions probably composed by Dalí for Brassaï's photographs elicits laughter, there remains the uncanny sense that by making us look twice at these disposable bits of ordinary urban life, Brassaï succeeds in making them come alive.[40] They seem eerily to communicate "involuntarily," and, as it were, thus to produce a visual version of automatic writing. Rosalind Krauss argues this when she proposes that the surrealist photographer's frame "announces the camera's ability to find and isolate what we could call the world's constant production of erotic symbols, its ceaseless automatic writing."[41]

Furthermore, with the echo they conjure between contemporary everyday objects and archeological discoveries from the historical past, these "sculptures" combine the sense of historical and ahistorical time typical of ethnographic modernist thinking.

In their three-dimensionality, Brassaï's "sculptures" resemble the wild flights of fancy embodied in the Art Nouveau architecture so admired by Dalí, partly because in this style, too, Dalí saw automatism at work. In "De la beauté terrifiante et comestible de l'architecture Modern'Style," beginning on the page facing Brassaï's "sculptures," Dalí claims that, like the surrealist object, Art Nouveau architecture awakens a sense of desire in the viewer who responds to both its latent psychic and evident physical qualities. It is the product of the transformation of past styles, through a "formal, convulsive" "birth," into a new style that is so utterly "impure" it paradoxically attains the highest degree of "immaculate" purity, with its dream-inspired curves. For him, the manner in which it provokes desire is directly, and humorously, linked to hunger: Art Nouveau architecture makes buildings look like cakes, which, far from being problematic, for Dalí, enhances their appeal and accentuates their "hyper-materialization" of the instinctual urges in which all supposedly "ideal" desires are rooted. Art Nouveau architecture embodies "continuous erotic ecstasy," and consequently is utterly antirational, even "hysterical."[42]

The wild, "convulsive" psychological effects of Art Nouveau architecture, which, Dalí acknowledges, is held to be the epitome of bad taste by most of his contemporaries, adds weight to my contention that Brassaï's preceding "sculptures," (three of which are explicitly described as showing "Modern'Style" characteristics), were understood by Dalí and Brassaï as strangely animate. Unlike surrealist objects, however, Brassaï's mysterious "sculptures" have no "life" beyond the photograph. Reduced to their actual size, they would lose their power; they would probably no longer seem haunted and would return to being trash. Similarly, several of the tribal artifacts featured in the second issue of *Minotaure*, devoted entirely to the Dakar-Djibouti mission, would have lost their magical potency once the ceremony for which they had been created was over, according to anthropologists. For, as art historian Thomas McEvilley insists:

> In their native contexts these objects were invested with feelings of awe and dread, not of esthetic ennoblement. They were seen usually in motion, at night, in closed dark spaces, by flickering torchlight. . . . [M]any primitive groups when they have used an object ritually (sometimes only once), desacralize it and discard it as garbage.[43]

Thus these ephemeral "sculptures" exemplify most precisely the junction of ethnographic and aesthetic perspective representative of *Minotaure* and the surrealist group in 1933 ("TEOA," 134). They show how deeply Brassaï had internalized the conceptual functioning of tribal art and reflect the extent to which he understood the tricky union and division bonding and separating an ethnographic sensibility to and from a surrealist one. These works are beautiful, but only in the instant of distortion permitted by the photographic moment, which stands in mechanically for the ritual ceremony that transforms tribal art into awe-inspiring icons. The ritualizing event is equivalent to the photographic process. After the images were taken, the toothpaste and soap would have been cleaned up and washed away, like the tribal masks thrown out after the ceremony for which they were created. These photographs endow the real with the surreal.

Brassaï's photographs focus the ethnographic gaze on the Parisian "participant observer" and invite Western viewers to reconsider their own culture in light of discoveries made about others. These works are typical of modernist and surrealist ethnographic thinking because of the ways in which they conflate what is timeless because ancient with what is temporal because contemporary, a stone goddess with an ornamental bread roll. They make us aware that sometimes what we hold sacred are exactly those things we tend to take most for granted, that an ornamental bread roll *can* be beautiful and, albeit fleetingly, as precious as a newly discovered piece of ancient art. At a UNESCO banquet in 1963, Brassaï remarked that "the *surreal* exists within us . . . in the things which have become so banal that we no longer notice them, and in the *normality of the normal*."[44]

Beginning with the tarot cards on the cover, number 3–4 of *Minotaure* invites the reader to see latent forces at work everywhere we look. As Brassaï writes in the opening sentences to his essay on graffiti: "Everything is a question of optical focus. Living analogies establish vertiginous rapprochements across the ages by the simple elimina-

tion of the factor of time" ("DMDC," 6). What is caught in time can be seen anew by a release from temporality into timelessness. It all depends on how you look, which, in conclusion, sums up the entire thrust of this issue and of its ethnographic thinking: juxtapositions, like accidental meetings or coincidences, can make the receptive participant observer "see, really see," as André Breton had claimed about chance seven years earlier, in *Nadja*.[45] And seeing anew the mundane, mixing the timeless and the temporal, defamiliarizing the familiar in order to recover its lost originary magic, was, in many ways, what surrealism was all about. Furthermore, Brassaï's non-verbal focus on seeing brings surrealism back to modernist ethnographic thinking, at least the way Frank Kermode describes it in "Modernism, Postmodernism, and Explanation" in which he emphasizes modernism's focus on looking.[46]

Kermode characterizes one of Freud's accomplishments, and Wittgenstein's ambitions, as compelling the reader "to undertake a change of aspect," to come to a new level of understanding of the familiar ("MPAE," 361). This "change of aspect" resembles Eliot's dual reading of time as both timeless and temporal because of the way it refers to the modernist way of seeing influenced by ethnographic thinking which impells the viewer to see something once, and then again under a different "aspect," and thus to understand that not everything can be logically "explained." What Kermode concludes about literary modernism as influenced by ethnographic thinking could also be proposed about Brassaï's photography in *Minotaure*: "Thus there grew up a new veneration for art that leaves out, and so has a chance of containing, the unutterable. . . . Hence there is a sense that to represent the truth . . . is to write what must be looked at, rather than explained" ("MPAE," 366). Brassaï made his viewer look at the obvious in new ways, rendering visible that which had become invisible in everyday life.

## Notes

1. These lines from Brunius, originally published in *Photographie*, are cited in Edouard Jaguer, *Les Mystères de la chambre noire* (Paris: Flammarion, 1982) 4. All translations from the French are my own, unless indicated otherwise.

2. T. S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, (New York: W. W. Norton, 1974), 2199, cited in Ronald Bush, "The Presence of the Past: Ethnographic Thinking/Literary Politics," in *Prehistories of the Future: The Primitivist Project and the Culture of Modernism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 23.

3. Bush, "The Presence of the Past," 37, 40.

4. Kirk Varnedoe, "Gauguin," in *"Primitivism" in 20th-Century Art*, Vol. I., ed. William Rubin (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1984), 180.

5. Robert Goldwater, *Primitivism in Modern Art* (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), xvii. Henceforth abbreviated as *PIMA*.

6. William Rubin, *"Primitivism" in 20th-Century Art I.*, ed. William Rubin (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1984), 5.

7. In "Le Message Automatique," his contribution to number 3–4, for example, André Breton reveals the extent of his own editorial control by suggesting that he himself selected Salvador Dalí's article on Art Nouveau architecture (for which Brassaï's "sculptures" serve as "preface") because it was a subtle accompaniment to his own. See André Breton, "Le Message Automatique," *Minotaure* 3–4 (1933): 60. Henceforth abbreviated as "LMA."

8. I believe that *Minotaure* continued to be ethographic in its orientation in the surrealist scenes of participant observation, despite James Clifford's claim that it ceased to be as ethnographic as *Documents* had been after the second issue devoted to the Dakar-Djibouti mission.

9. The mission statement facing the table of contents in the first issue and on the second unnumbered page in the second issue declared: "The most characteristic modern movements have closely linked those two domains."

10. The revised mission statement on the first, unnumbered, page.

11. Clio Mitchell, "*Minotaure*. A Surrealist State of Mind," *Apollo* 127.312 (February 1988): 127. See also Jean Jamin, "De l'humaine condition de «Minotaure»," in *Regards sur Minotaure* (Genève: Musée d'art et d'histoire, 1987), 83.

12. James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 147. Henceforth abbreviated as *POC*.

13. Clifford explains that the French social science of "ethnology" with its particular "cultural predisposition" was different from social anthropology in England and from cultural anthropology in America (*POC*, 121). Mary Douglas emphasizes the differences between British and French anthropologists, specifying that, in the United Kingdom, the focus was much more on the laws of succession and economics whereas the French orientation was more on the arts. Mary Douglas, "Réflexions sur le renard pâle et deux anthropologies: à propos du surréalisme et de l'anthropologie française," *L'Autre et le sacré*, ed. C. W. Thompson (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1995) 199.

14. Thirty-two of these photographs were published in the 1932 volume *Paris de nuit*, which has recently been re-issued. See Maria Morris Hambourg, "Photography between the Wars," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 45.4 (Spring 1988): 45.

15. Alain Sayag, "The Expression of Authenticity," in *Brassaï: The Monograph* eds. Alain Sayag and Annick Lionel-Marie (Boston: Little Brown—A Bullfinch Book, 2000), 14. Henceforth abbreviated as "TEOA."

16. See *Le Petit Robert* (Paris: Dictionnaires Le Robert, 1986).

17. Varnedoe, "Gaugin," 181.

18. It included at least four articles devoted to irrationality in the form of Jacques Lacan's study of the "paranoiac" crime of the Papin sisters who brutally murdered their employers, Benjamin Péret's analysis of ghosts, Breton's study of automatism illustrated with mediumistic art (as well as a short article devoted to the work of an outsider artist), and Dalí's article on Art Nouveau architecture, which he describes as "hysterical sculpture" (see Salvador Dalí, "De la beauté terrifiante et comestible de l'architecture Modern'Style" 3–4 *Minotaure* [1933], 73. This article has been translated by Haim Finkelstein as "Concerning the Terrifying and Edible Beauty of Art Nouveau Architecture," *The Collected Writings of Salvador Dalí* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998], 193–200). It lists at least six articles exploring the functioning of the unconscious in the form of automatism (Breton, Man Ray), taste (Dalí, Tzara Eluard), inspiration and spontaneity (Tériade, Rayal, Markevitch), and the working of "objective" chance (Dérain, Chardon, Eluard and Breton). Finally, it features four psychological studies: of sleep (Claparède), on the psycho-biological sources of sexual problems (Heine), fear (Brückner), and the pleasure principle (Frois-Wittman).

19. Brassaï, "Du Mur des cavernes au mur d'usine," *Minotaure* 3–4 (1933), 6. Henceforth abbreviated as "DMDC."

20. Brassaï, *Picasso and Company*, transl. Francis Price (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1966), 12.

21. Bourgeois distinctions between high and low culture were abolished by surrealist journals, as Roger Cardinal notes: "Whether in the voluntarily austere format of the *Révolution surréaliste*, which parodies the solemnity of scientific publications, or in the luxurious format of *Minotaure*, rich in color plates, the surrealist journal has always had the audacity to everything that cultivated French taste would have rejected as obvious impurities" (see Roger Cardinal, "Les Arts Marginaux et l'esthétique surréaliste," in *L'Autre et le sacré*, ed. C. W. Thompson [Paris: L'Harmattan, 195], 55).

22. Jean-Luis Paudrat, "From Africa," transl. John Shepley, in *"Primitivism" in 20th-Century Art I.*, ed. William Rubin (New York: the Museum of Modern Art, 1984), 163.

23. Georges-Henri Rivière, "Le Musée d'ethnographie du Trocadéro," *Documents* 1.1 (1929): 58.

24. Paudrat, "From Africa," 164.

25. Elza Adamowicz, "'Un Masque peut en masquer (ou démasquer) un autre': Le Masque et le surréalisme," in *L'Autre et le sacré* ed. C. W. Thompson (Paris: L'Harmattan, 195), 79.

26. Rubin, *"Primitivism" in 20th-Century Art I.*, 32, 73. Rubin, in turn, was accused by Thomas McEvilley of de-contextualising tribal art in his *"Primitivism" in 20th-Century Art"* exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in 1984 and in his catalogue. However, despite the problematic fact that the tribal pieces are not dated in the catalogue, Rubin and other contributors do make the distinction between "tribal" art and how it was used by Western artists who considered it "primitivist." Rubin explains that "the tribal sculptor creating ritual objects for a cult had no consciousness whatever of aesthetic solutions" (see Rubin, *"Primitivism" in 20th-Century Art*, 28) while arguing for what he calls "affinities" between the goals of Western and tribal artists: to attempt to make visible an ivisible inferior force.

27. This is quoted in Sayag, "TEOA," 15.

28. Walter Benjamin, "Surrealism," in *Reflections*, transl. Edmund Jephcott (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1978), 179, 190.

29. André Breton, "La Beauté sera convulsive," *Minotaure* 5 (1934): 14. This essay was later included in *L'Amour fou*, published in 1937 and translated as *Mad Love*, transl. Mary Ann Caws (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 5–19.

30. *Mad Love*, 13–15. Breton first describes the significance of found objects for surrealism in *Nadja*, transl. Richard Howard (New York: Grove Press, 1960), 51–55.

31. In *Picasso and Company*, Brassaï described the surrealist attraction to the Minotaur as to "the force which shatters the limits of the rational, flooding across its frontiers, tearing down the laws and offending the gods. They identified him with their own aspirations: constant and universal violence, absolute revolt, total defiance, unbridled liberty" (See Brassaï, *Picasso and Company*, 9).

32. The surrealists collected them in part because of their representations of the (at least) double nature of human beings, as Elza Adamowicz argues: "Putting into play surrealism's double aim, of integration and disintegration, of totalization and fragmentation, the mask, that equivocal space and figure of alterity, is the place of the appearance of the other within the same, of the apparition of the surreal in the heart of the real" (see Adamowicz, "Un Masque peut en masquer (ou démasquer) un autre," 91).

33. Michèle Richman, "Anthropology and Modernism in France: From Durkheim to the Collège de sociologie," in *Modernist Anthropology*, ed. Marc Manganaro (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 192.

34. Michel Leiris, "L'Oeil de l'ethnographe," *Documents* 2.7 (1930): 407. Ethographer Jean Jamin points to Paul Rivet and Rivière's situation of the "native" on that mission in *Minotaure*: "neither outside (savage) nor at the beginning (primitive) of Western Civilization, but beside it" (see Jean Jamin, "De l'humaine condition de «Minotaure»," 84).

35. See Jean Starobinski, "Face diurne et face nocturne," in *Regards sur Minotaure*, ed. Charles Goerg (Genève: Musée d'art et d'histoire, 1987), 30–41. Critics have repeatedly commented on the fact that "one of the magazine's truly revolutionary contributions was the use of photography," not only within surrealism but in the art world as well: "from then on, it is an 'art' with as much legitimacy as sculpture or painting" (see Lauren Otis, "Surrealism in Switzerland," *Art International* [1988]: 90–92 and Hendel Teichner, "Chairs nocturnes, délices photographiques," in *Regards sur Minotaure*, ed. Charles Georg [Genève: Musée d'art et d'histoire, 1987], 200–21).

36. Dawn Ades, *Dalí* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1995), 62.

37. I realized only much later that I had seen the photographs several times in books, but they had never struck me in the same way when presented in a series, although when I found them again in the context of *Minotaure*, I saw them as I had in the exhibition.

38. I thank Susan Doheny for reminding me of Blossfeldt's images.

39. Brassaï, "Sculptures involontaires," *Minotaure* 3–4 (1933): 68. The captions were most likely written by Dalí, as a result of their collaboration on this work. See note 13, p. 219 of Teicher, "Chairs nocturnes, délices photographiques," 200–21 as well as Ades, *Dalí*, 161–62. See also the proofs of these photographs annotated by Brassaï as having been made "in collaboration with Dalí," *Brassaï. A Monograph*, eds. Alain Sayag and Annick Lionel-Marie (Boston: Little, Brown, 2000), 134.

40. These are the captions for the photographs, most likely written by Dalí (see note 39): "Symetrically rolled bus ticket, very rare form of morphological automatism with evident seeds of stereotyping;" "Rolled bus number, found in the vest pocket of an ordinary bureaucrat (from the Crédit Lyonnais bank); the most frequent characteristics of the 'Modern'Style'"; "Ornamental and Modern'Style bread escapes from limp stereotyping;" "Piece of soap presenting the automatic forms of Modern'Style found in a bathroom;" "The morphological chance quality of smudged toothpaste does not escape delicate and ornamental stereotyping;" "Elementary rolling found in the possession of a mentally retarded person."

41. Rosalind Krauss, "Photography in the Service of Surrealism," in *L'Amour Fou*, eds. Rosalind Krauss and Jane Livingston (New York: Abbeville Press, 1985), 40.

42. Dalí, "De la beauté terrifiante," 70–73.

43. Thomas McEvilley, "Doctor, Lawyer, Indian Chief: *'Primitivism' in 20th-Century Art* at the Museum of Modern Art in 1984," *Artforum* 23.3 (1984): 59.

44. Annick Lionel-Marie, "Letting the eye be light," in *Brassaï. The Monograph* eds. Alain Sayag and Annick Lionel-Marie, 160.

45. Breton, *Nadja*, 19.

46. Frank Kermode, "Modernism, Postmodernism, and Explanation," in *Prehistories of the Future: The Primitivist Project and the Culture of Modernism,* eds. Elazar Barkan and Ronald Bush (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 357–72. Henceforth abbreviated as "MPAE."