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| Acéphale |
| **[Enter any *variant forms* of your headword – OPTIONAL]** |
| The name *Acéphale* refers to two related projects: one is a journal, founded by Georges Bataille (1887-1962), published between 1936 and 1939, whose articles often extolled Friedrich Nietzsche’s philosophy; the second refers to a secret society that formed around Bataille. That the term derives from the Greek ἀκέφαλος (akephalos, ‘headless’) made it an appropriate name for the counter-religion Bataille aimed at founding to revitalize the mythic experience of plenitude: the head, Bataille maintained, stands for hierarchical organization and God, so the society and journal that gave the gnostic-inflected counter-religion expression should be headless. Bataille’s interest in an atheological counter-religion was grounded in the principle of expenditure he saw manifested in unproductive forms of consumption, which have no end beyond themselves, and thereby constitute an irrecoverable loss. This anti-Platonic, anti-renascence social body would beheadless because it would recover, within the isolation that confines modern humans, the vitalizing experience of the sacred—that is, of a privileged moment of communal unity and convulsive communication of ordinarily suppressed sensations. It would headless, too, because the Dionysian-orgiastic rituals of the secret society would be aimed against both reason and identity. Bataille’s conviction that ultimate expenditure is ‘the gift of the self’ led the participants in *Acéphale* to an interest in sacrifice*.* |
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| Further reading:  (Bataille)  (G. Bataille)  (Surya)  (Weiss) |