

Georges BATAILLE

Born September 10, 1897 in Billon in the Puy de Dôme region of central France.

His father became blind and suffered from syphilis.

In 1901, his family settled in Reims.

It was in 1914 when he converted to Catholicism and decided to write and above all develop a "paradoxical philosophy." Because of the war, he fled Reims with his mother, abandoning his father who died the following year alone and destitute. Bataille was wrought with guilt.

In 1916, after having served in the army, he was discharged because of respiratory problems.

Leading a pious life, he dreamed of becoming a monk and joined the seminary at Saint-Fleur in 1917. The following year, he began studying at the Ecole des Chartes in Paris. But in 1920 he renounced his monastic vocation.

In 1922 he received a fellowship at the School of Advanced Hispanic Studies in Madrid. Later, his apprentice position at Paris' National Library is where he discovered Nietzsche, then Freud.

In 1924 he became an official librarian and deputy keeper at the National Library. He met Michel Leiris and Andre Masson, then, in 1926, André Breton. During this period, he collaborated with *Arethuse*, a magazine of art and archeology. He wrote a first book, but destroyed it.

It was in 1928 that he published his first book: "The Story of the Eye (*Histoire de l'œil*)" under the pen name of Lord Auch. Bataille went on to edit journals that revealed his interests in sociology, religion, and literature. In 1935, with Breton he cofounded the anti-Fascist group "Contre-Attaque." In 1936, he created the secret society which published the review *Acephale*. The following year, with Roger Caillois and Michel Leiris, he co-founded the College of Sociology for the study of the manifestation of the sacred in society.

In 1941 he published "Madame Edwarda" under the pen name Pierre Angelique.

In 1942, because of tuberculosis he had to leave the National Library and move to Vezelay.

In 1943, he published "The Inner Experience (*L'expérience intérieure*)."
He founded the review "Critique" in 1946.

Beginning in 1947, he was published more regularly : "The Accursed Share (La part maudite)" (1949), "The Abbot C (L'abbé C)" (1950)... In 1951, he was named head librarian at the Library of Orleans. The following year he was awarded the French Legion of Honor. Then publication of "Blue of Noon (Le Bleu du ciel)" (1957), "The Trial of Gilles de Rais (Le procès de Gilles de Rais)" (1959) and "The Tears of Eros (Les larmes d'Eros)" (1961). He died July 8, 1962 in Vezelay.

Driven by a desire to transcend the realms of thought and go beyond oneself, the works of George Bataille, novelist, essayist and poet, remains "one of the most important of the century" (Michel Foucault). Whether spiritual, political or literary, his work always sought to reveal a supreme life, free of the mundane's constraints.

Selected Works:

- **My Mother (Ma mère)**: The story of Pierre, initiated into perversion by his mother. Violent, magnificent and scandalous...
- **The Inner Experience (L'Expérience intérieure)**: The inner experience as the only authority and value, fusion of the inner and outer, social life and communication...
- **The Accursed Share (La Part maudite)**: Central pillar of Bataille's work, his view of the world, from global physics to political economy, through sociology, history and biology.
- **The Story of the Eye (Histoire de l'œil), Le Mort, Madame Edwarda**: Three texts pushed to the limits of horror, joy and indecency lost in a neverending silence...