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| **Your article** |
| Bataille, Georges Albert Maurice Victor (1897-1962) |
| **[Enter any *variant forms* of your headword – OPTIONAL]** |
| Georges Bataille (10 September 1897-9 July 1962) was a French writer who synthesised ideas from many disciplines. He converted to Catholicism at the start of WWI, joined a seminary, and abandoned the Church by 1920, entering into psychoanalysis and suffering from tuberculosis. He embarked on a pilgrimage to transgression, combining sadistic pain, sexual pleasure and the sacred ecstasy of sacrifice. By day, he was a librarian at the Bibliothèque nationale, focusing on medieval artefacts; his nights he devoted to brothels. He drew ideas from Gilles de Rais, the Marquis de Sade, Friedrich Nietzsche, Marcel Mauss, and Alexandre Kojève’s reading of Hegel. Bataille was a dissenting Surrealist, finally breaking with André Breton after they formed the anti-fascist Contre-Attaque circle. Bataille, Michel Leiris and Roger Caillois founded the Collège de Sociologie (1937-39), devoted to sacred forms of transgression, and the journal *Acéphale*. His major novels, *Histoire de l’oeil* and *Le Bleu du Ciel*, later achieved cult status. Bataille developed Mauss’ work on the gift and potlatch into a notion of *dépense* [expenditure], rejecting the utilitarian labour theory of value (‘restricted economy’) for the idea that sexual, moral, economic, and political value is produced by the glorious ‘general economy’ of waste and destruction. Bataille applied this idea to fascist psychology and throughout *La Part maudite* [*The Accursed Share*], his grandiose history of economics, the scapegoat, and the *dépense* of the Marshall Plan after WWII. |
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| Further reading:  (Surya) |