Georges Bernanos (1888–1948)

Still widely read in the 1950s, Bernanos has now become an outdated author, if not entirely forgotten. Though he had a very high reputation among his fellow writers—Claudel, Mauriac, and Malraux admired him—Bernanos has always remained an isolated figure. His Catholic faith is the driving force behind his whole work, as a novelist and a polemicist, and probably the reason why Bernanos may sound obsolete nowadays. Fulminating at the liberalizing spirit of modern France leading to spiritual decadence—he was until 1932 part of the circle of Charles Maurras and Léon Daudet, the intellectual leaders of the monarchist and extreme right movement L'Action Française—he nevertheless deeply denounces the violence of the pro-Franco, together with the dangers rooted in Facism and Nazism, in his famous pamphlet *Les Grands Cimetières sous la lune* (1938). His novels, always extremely profound, present the spiritual conflict of good and evil. His two most famous novels, *Sous le soleil de Satan* (1926) and *Journal d'un curé de campagne* (1936), revolve around the humble figure of a country priest confronted with the apparent absence of God in the gloomy landscapes of Northern France, exemplifying the Christian message of salvation in the face of failure and death.

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