

# Theory Of Religion Georges Bataille

This volume provides the first English translation of all the known correspondence to and from Søren Kierkegaard, including a number of his letters in draft form and papers pertaining to his life and death. These fascinating documents offer new access to the character and lifework of the gifted philosopher, theologian, and psychologist. Kierkegaard speaks often and openly about his desire to correspond, and the resulting desire to write for a greater audience. He consciously recognizes letter-writing as an opportunity to practice composition. Unlike most correspondence, Kierkegaard's letters expressly "do not require a reply"--he insists on this as a principle, while he clearly and earnestly yearns for a response to his efforts. Among his other principles are purposefulness, directness, and the equality of a letter to a visit with a friend (Kierkegaard preferred the former to the latter). Perhaps more than anything else in print, Kierkegaard's Letters and Documents reveal his love affair with the written word.

For Bataille, 'the absence of myth' had itself become the myth of the modern age. In a world that had 'lost the secret of its cohesion', Bataille saw surrealism as both a symptom and the beginning of an attempt to address this loss. His writings on this theme are the result of profound reflection in the wake of World War Two. The *Absence of Myth* is the most incisive study yet made of surrealism, insisting on its importance as a cultural and social phenomenon with far-reaching consequences. Clarifying Bataille's links with the surrealist movement, and throwing revealing light on his complex and greatly misunderstood relationship with Andre Breton, *The Absence of Myth* shows Bataille to be a much more radical figure than his postmodernist devotees would have us believe: a man who continually tried to extend Marxist social theory; a pessimistic thinker, but one as far removed from nihilism as can be. Introduced and translated by Michael Richardson. 'Theory for Religious Studies' takes major theoretical writers in the humanities & social sciences, & explains their relevance to the study of religion.

Despite Georges Bataille's acknowledged influence on major poststructuralist thinkers—including Foucault, Derrida, Kristeva, Lacan, Baudrillard, and Barthes—and his prominence in literary, cultural, and social theory, rarely has he been taken up by scholars of religion, even as issues of the sacred were central to his thinking. Bringing together established scholars and emerging voices, *Negative Ecstasies* engages Bataille from the perspective of religious studies and theology, forging links with feminist and queer theory, economics, secularism, psychoanalysis, fat studies, and ethics. As these essays demonstrate, Bataille's work bears significance to contemporary questions in the academy and vital issues in the world. We continue to ignore him at our peril.

The Joy of Secularism

Sacred Revolutions

Letters and Documents

Durkheim and the Collège de Sociologie

Three Godly Discourses

Inner Experience

**Religion and European Philosophy: Key Thinkers from Kant to Žižek draws together a diverse group of scholars in theology, religious studies, and philosophy to discuss the role that religion plays among key figures in the European philosophical tradition.**

**Designed for accessibility, each of the thirty-four chapters includes background information on the key thinker, an overview of the main themes, concepts, and concerns that occupy his or her attention, and a discussion of the religious and theological elements present in his or her thought, in light of contemporary issues. Given the scope of the volume, Religion and European Philosophy will be the go-to guide for understanding the religious and theological dimensions of European philosophy, for both students and established researchers alike.**

**A radically interdisciplinary inquiry into the origins of human consciousness, community, and potential.**

**Essays on the French writer and critic Georges Bataille, that examine his thought in**

relation to Hegel, Nietzsche, and Derrida.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus tells his followers to let go of earthly concerns by considering the lilies of the field and the birds of the air. Søren Kierkegaard's short masterpiece on this famous gospel passage draws out its vital lessons for readers in a rapidly modernizing and secularizing world. Trenchant, brilliant, and written in stunningly lucid prose, *The Lily of the Field and the Bird of the Air* (1849) is one of Kierkegaard's most important books. Presented here in a fresh new translation with an informative introduction, this profound yet accessible work serves as an ideal entrée to an essential modern thinker. *The Lily of the Field and the Bird of the Air* reveals a less familiar but deeply appealing side of the father of existentialism—unshorn of his complexity and subtlety, yet supremely approachable. As Kierkegaard later wrote of the book, "Without fighting with anybody and without speaking about myself, I said much of what needs to be said, but movingly, mildly, upliftingly." This masterful edition introduces one of Kierkegaard's most engaging and inspiring works to a new generation of readers.

**Critical Essays**

**Saints of the Impossible**

**A Phenomenology of Media**

**Erotism**

**Kierkegaard's Writings, XXV, Volume 25**

**Selected Writings, 1927-1939**

One of the most profound thinkers of the twentieth century, Georges Bataille has only recently come to prominence in the Anglophone academy, partly through the influence of post-structuralism. Once seen as no more than a philosopher of eroticism and a writer of avant-garde pornography, Bataille is emerging as an absolutely central figure to discussions of culture, economy, subjectivity and difference. Bataille is the first volume of its kind to offer lucid, diverse and relevant examples of the ways of reading literary and cultural texts in the light of Bataille's work. The essays explore the significance of Bataillean notions like heterology, general economy, transgression and eroticism, through detailed readings of Shakespearean, Elizabethan and Jacobean literature; in analyses of Gothic and postmodern fiction; and in critiques of popular culture, rock music and Hollywood movies. In order to make Bataillean notions more comprehensible to contemporary readers, his concepts are situated in relation to the ideas of renowned critical and cultural theorists like Baudrillard, Deleuze, Derrida, Kristeva, Lacan, as well as Hegel, Freud, Nietzsche and Marx. Here the influence of Bataille is outlined in intellectual and historical terms and the significance of his work can be seen for both contemporary and futural modes of cultural analysis.

An important literary and philosophical figure, Georges Bataille has had a significant influence on other French writers, such as Foucault, Derrida and Baudrillard. *The Thirst for Annihilation* is the first book in English to respond to Bataille's writings. In no way, though, is Nick Land's book an attempt to appropriate Bataille's writings to a secular intelligibility or to compromise with the aridity of academic discourse - rather, it is written

as a communion . Theoretical issues in philosophy, sociology, psychodynamics, politics and poetry are discussed, but only as stepping stones into the deep water of textual sacrifice where words pass over into the broken voice of death. Cultural modernity is diagnosed down to its Kantian bedrock with its transcendental philosophy of the object, but Bataille's writings cut violently across this tightly disciplined reading to reveal the strong underlying currents that bear us towards chaos and dissolution - the violent impulse to escape, the thirst for annihilation. An examination of the practice and philosophy of sacrifice in three religious traditions In the book of Genesis, God tests the faith of the Hebrew patriarch Abraham by demanding that he sacrifice the life of his beloved son, Isaac. Bound by common admiration for Abraham, the religious traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam also promote the practice of giving up human and natural goods to attain religious ideals. Each tradition negotiates the moral dilemmas posed by Abraham ' s story in different ways, while retaining the willingness to perform sacrifice as an identifying mark of religious commitment. This book considers the way in which Jews, Christians, and Muslims refer to " sacrifice " —not only as ritual offerings, but also as the donation of goods, discipline, suffering, and martyrdom. Weddle highlights objections to sacrifice within these traditions as well, presenting voices of dissent and protest in the name of ethical duty. Sacrifice forfeits concrete goods for abstract benefits, a utopian vision of human community, thereby sparking conflict with those who do not share the same ideals. Weddle places sacrifice in the larger context of the worldviews of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, using this nearly universal religious act as a means of examining similarities of practice and differences of meaning among these important world religions. This book takes the concept of sacrifice across these three religions, and offers a cross-cultural approach to understanding its place in history and deep-rooted traditions.

Sensible Ecstasy investigates the attraction to excessive forms of mysticism among twentieth-century French intellectuals and demonstrates the work that the figure of the mystic does for these thinkers. With special attention to Georges Bataille, Simone de Beauvoir, Jacques Lacan, and Luce Irigaray, Amy Hollywood asks why resolutely secular, even anti-Christian intellectuals are drawn to affective, bodily, and widely denigrated forms of mysticism. What is particular to these thinkers, Hollywood reveals, is their attention to forms of mysticism associated with women. They regard mystics such as Angela of Foligno, Hadewijch, and Teresa of Avila not as emotionally excessive or escapist, but as unique in their ability to think outside of the restrictive oppositions that continue to afflict our understanding of subjectivity, the body, and sexual difference. Mystics such as these, like their twentieth-century

descendants, bridge the gaps between action and contemplation, emotion and reason, and body and soul, offering new ways of thinking about language and the limits of representation.

The Priority of Love

An Intellectual Biography

Visions of Excess

Georges Bataille and the Study of Religion

The Cradle of Humanity

Writings on Surrealism

Against the two dominant ethical paradigms of continental philosophy—Emmanuel Levinas' s ethics of the Other and Michel Foucault' s ethics of self-cultivation—The Self-Emptying Subject theorizes an ethics of self-emptying, or kenosis, that reveals the immanence of an impersonal and dispossessed life “ without a why. ” Rather than aligning immanence with the enclosures of the subject, The Self-Emptying Subject engages the history of Christian mystical theology, modern philosophy, and contemporary theories of the subject to rethink immanence as what precedes and exceeds the very difference between the (human) self and the (divine) other, between the subject and transcendence. By arguing that transcendence operates and subjects life in secular no less than in religious domains, this book challenges the dominant distribution of concepts in contemporary theoretical discourse, which insists on associating transcendence exclusively with religion and theology and immanence exclusively with modern secularity and philosophy. The Self-Emptying Subject argues that it is important to resist framing the relationship between medieval theology and modern philosophy as a transition from the affirmation of divine transcendence to the establishment of autonomous subjects. Through an engagement with Meister Eckhart, G.W.F. Hegel, and Georges Bataille, it uncovers a medieval theological discourse that rejects the primacy of pious subjects and the transcendence of God (Eckhart); retrieves a modern philosophical discourse that critiques the creation of self-standing subjects through a speculative re-writing of the concepts of Christian theology (Hegel); and explores a discursive site that demonstrates the subjecting effects of transcendence across theological and philosophical operations and archives (Bataille). Taken together, these interpretations suggest that if we suspend the antagonistic relationship between theological and philosophical discourses, and decenter our periodizing assumptions and practices, we might encounter a yet unmapped theoretical fecundity of self-emptying that frees life from transcendent powers that incessantly subject it for their own ends.

"Bataille enacts a "monstrous" mode of reading and writing in his approaches to other thinkers and artists - a mode that is at once agonistic and intimate. *Ecce Monstrum* examines this monstrous mode of reading and writing through investigations of Bataille's "sacrificial" interpretations of Kojève's Hegel and Friedrich Nietzsche; his contentious relationship with Simone Weil and its

implications for his mystical and writing practices; his fraught affiliation with surrealist Andre Breton and his attempt to displace surrealism with "hyperchristianity"; and his peculiar relations to artist Hans Bellmer, whose work evokes Bataille's "religious sensibility."--BOOK JACKET.

### Theory of Religion

This book explores the relation between agape (or Christian charity) and social justice. Timothy Jackson defines agape as the central virtue in Christian ethical thought and action and applies his insights to three concrete issues: political violence, forgiveness, and abortion. Taking his primary cue from the New Testament while drawing extensively from contemporary theology and philosophy, Jackson identifies three features of Christian charity: unconditional commitment to the good of others, equal regard for others' well-being, and passionate service open to self-sacrifice for the sake of others. Charity, prescribed by Jesus for his disciples and named by Saint Paul as the "greatest" theological virtue, is contrasted with various accounts of justice. Jackson argues that agape is not trumped by justice or other goods. Rather, agape precedes justice: without the work of love, society would not produce persons capable of merit, demerit, and contract, the elements of most modern conceptions of justice. Jackson then considers the implications of his ideas for several questions: the nature of God, the relation between Christian love and political violence, the place of forgiveness, and the morality of abortion. Arguing that agapic love is to be construed as a gift of grace as well as a divine commandment, Jackson concludes that love is the "eternal life" that makes temporal existence possible and thus the "first" Christian virtue. Though foremost a contribution to Christian ethics, Jackson's arguments and the issues he takes up will find a broader readership.

### The Self-Emptying Subject

Bataille

Religion and European Philosophy

Negative Ecstasies

11 Essays for How We Live Now

Key Concepts

"... brilliantly original ... brings cultural and post-colonial theory to bear on a wide range of authors with great skill and sensitivity." Terry Eagleton

In the autumn of 1924, just before André Breton published the *Manifeste du surréalisme*, two young men met in Paris for the first time. Georges Bataille, 27, starting work at the Bibliothèque Nationale; Michel Leiris, 23, beginning his studies in ethnology. Within a few months they were both members of the Surrealist group, although their adherence to Surrealism (unlike their affinities with it) would not last long: in 1930 they were among the signatories of 'Un cadavre,' the famous tract against Breton, the 'Machiavelli of Montmartre,' as Leiris put it. But their friendship would endure for more than 30 years, and their correspondence, assembled here for the first time in English, would continue until the death of Bataille in 1962. Including a number of short essays by each of them on aspects of the other's work, and excerpts on Bataille from Leiris' diaries, this collection of their

correspondence throws new light on two of Surrealism's most radical dissidents.

Reprint. Originally published: *Death and sensuality*. New York: Walker, 1962.

*The Tears of Eros* is the culmination of Georges Bataille's inquiries into the relationship between violence and the sacred. Taking up such figures as Giles de Rais, Erzebet Bathory, the Marquis de Sade, El Greco, Gustave Moreau, Andre Breton, Voodoo practitioners, and Chinese torture victims, Bataille reveals their common obsession: death. This essay, illustrated with artwork from every era, was developed out of ideas explored in *Erotism: Death and Sexuality* and *Prehistoric Painting: Lascaux or the Birth of Art*. In it Bataille examines death--the "little death" that follows sexual climax, the proximate death in sadomasochistic practices, and death as part of religious ritual and sacrifice. Georges Bataille was born in Billom, France, in 1897. He was a librarian by profession. Also a philosopher, novelist, and critic he was founder of the College of Sociology. In 1959, Bataille began *The Tears of Eros*, and it was completed in 1961, his final work. Bataille died in 1962.

Prehistoric Art and Culture

The Unfinished System of Nonknowledge

The Internal Papers of the Secret Society of Acephale and Lecturers to the College of Sociology

Sensible Ecstasy

A Critical Introduction

Georges Bataille and Virulent Nihilism

*The work of Georges Bataille (1897-1962) has often been reduced to his outrageous, erotic, and libertine fiction and essays. This book presents contemporary interpretations that situate Bataille in French and European intellectual traditions, and brings forward key concepts to understand the challenges posed by his important work and philosophy*

*Translated by Krzysztof Filjalkowski and Michael Richardson Winner of the 1987 Prix Goncourt for Biography Georges Bataille (1897-1962), philosopher, writer and founder of the influential literary review Critique, had an enormous impact on the thinking of Foucault, Derrida and Baudrillard, and his ideas have been the subjects of recent debates in a wide range of disciplines. In this acclaimed intellectual biography Michel Surya enters into a complicity with Bataille's oeuvre to provide a detailed exposition of its themes as they developed against the backdrop of his life. The essence of Bataille's life and work were defined by transience and effacement, reflecting a will both to contest the impermanence of things and to confront death. His troubled childhood, his relationships with surrealism and his paradoxical position at the heart of twentieth-century French thought are enriched here with testimonies from Bataille's closest acquaintances, making this a vivid and detailed study. Revealing the contexts in which he worked, and the ways in which his work and ideas took shape, Surya sheds essential light on a figure Foucault described as "one of the most*

*important writers of the century."*

*In these three works of erotic prose Georges Bataille fuses sex and spirituality in a highly personal and philosophical vision of the self. My Mother is a frank and intense depiction of a young man's sexual initiation and corruption by his mother, where the profane becomes sacred, and intense experience is shown as the only way to transcend the boundaries of society and morality. Madame Edwarda is the story of a prostitute who calls herself God, and The Dead Man, published in 1964 after Bataille's death, is a startling short tale of cruelty and desire. This volume also contains Bataille's own introductions to his texts as well as essays by Yukio Mishima and Ken Hollings.*

*'The Accursed Share' provides an introduction to Bataille the philosopher. Here he uses his unique economic theory as the basis for an incisive inquiry into the very nature of civilization. Unlike conventional economic models based on notions of scarcity, Bataille's theory develops the concept of excess - a civilization, he argues, reveals its order most clearly in the treatment of its surplus energy.*

*Bataille, Weil, and the Politics of the Sacred*

*On Nietzsche*

*Under Suspicion*

*Christian Charity and Social Justice*

*Correspondence*

*The Absence of Myth*

Keuze uit het werk van de Franse filosoof (1897-1962).

Georges Bataille (1897-1962) was an essayist, poet, novelist and philosopher of excess. His philosophy emerges from the aesthetic avant-garde of the 1920s and 30s, when he was associated with the surrealist movement, and has since been explored by the major figures of poststructuralism and postmodernism. His classic works include *The Story of the Eye* and *The Accursed Share*. *On Nietzsche* takes up Nietzschean thought where Nietzsche left off - with the Death of God. Written against the backdrop of Germany under the Third Reich, the book explores the possibility of a spiritual life outside religion. In so doing it weaves an astonishing tapestry of confession, theology, philosophy, myth and eroticism - all shot through with the images of war. Translated by Bruce Boone Introduced by Sylvère Lotringer

The public generally regards the media with suspicion and distrust.

Therefore, the media's primary concern is to regain that trust through the production of sincerity. Advancing the field of media studies in a truly innovative way, Boris Groys focuses on the media's affect of sincerity and its manufacture of trust to appease skeptics. Groys identifies forms of media sincerity and its effect on politics, culture, society, and conceptions of the self. He relies on different philosophical

writings thematizing the gaze of the other, from the theories of Heidegger, Sartre, Mauss, and Bataille to the poststructuralist formulations of Lacan and Derrida. He also considers media "states of exception" and their creation of effects of sincerity—a strategy that feeds the media's predilection for the extraordinary and the sensational, further fueling the public's suspicions. Emphasizing the media's production of emotion over the presentation (or lack thereof) of "facts," Groys launches a timely study boldly challenging the presumed authenticity of the media's worldview.

The transgressive writing of Georges Bataille (1897-1962) and the rigorous ethical philosophy of social activist and Christian mystic Simone Weil (1909-1943) seem to belong to different worlds. Yet in the political ferment of 1930s Paris, Bataille and Weil were intellectual adversaries who exerted a powerful fascination on each other. *Saints of the Impossible* provides the first in-depth comparison of Bataille's and Weil's thought, showing how an exploration of their relationship reveals new facets of the achievements of two of the twentieth century's leading intellectual figures and raises far-reaching questions about literary practice, politics, and religion. Book jacket.

The Tears of Eros

Death and Sensuality

Georges Bataille and the Sacrifice of Form

Mysticism, Sexual Difference, and the Demands of History

My Mother, Madame Edwarda, The Dead Man

Argues that religion is the search for lost intimacy, discusses its connection to the general economy, and examines the sacrifice of war

Essays discuss the work of Emily Bronte, Baudelaire, William Blake, Proust, Kafka, Genet, and de Sade, and examine the depiction of evil

Georges Bataille (1897 - 1962) was a philosopher, writer, and literary critic whose work has had a significant impact across disciplines as diverse as philosophy, sociology, economics, art history and literary criticism, as well as influencing key figures in post-modernist and post-structuralist philosophy such as Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault. In recent years, the number of works published on Georges Bataille, as well as the variety of contexts in which his work is invoked, has markedly increased. In *Georges Bataille: Key Concepts* an international team of contributors provide an accessible introduction to and survey of Bataille's thought. The editors' introduction provides an overview of Bataille's work, while the chapters in the first section cover the social, political, artistic and philosophical

contexts that shaped his thought. In the second part, each chapter engages with a key theme in Bataille's philosophy, including: art, eroticism, evil, inner experience, heterology, religion, sacrifice, and sovereignty. The final chapter addresses Bataille's literary writings. *Georges Bataille: Key Concepts* is an invaluable guide for students from across the Humanities and Social Sciences, coming to Bataille's work for the first time. Contributors: Giulia Agostini, Elisabeth Arnould-Bloomfield, Tiina Arppe, Marcus Coelen, Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi, Patrick French, Marina Galletti, Nadine Hartmann, Mark Hewson, Andrew Hussey, Stuart Kendall, Claire Nioche, Gerhard Poppenberg, and Michèle Richman.

*Inner Experience* outlines a mystical theology and experience of the sacred founded on the absence of god. Originally published in 1943, *Inner Experience* is the single most significant work by one of the twentieth century's most influential writers. It outlines a mystical theology and experience of the sacred founded on the absence of god. Bataille calls *Inner Experience* a "narrative of despair," but also describes it as a book wherein "profundity and passion go tenderly hand in hand." Herein, he says, "The mind moves in a strange world where anguish and ecstasy take shape." Bataille's search for experience begins where religion, philosophy, science, and literature leave off, where doctrines, dogmas, methods, and the arts collapse. His method of meditation, outlined and documented here, commingles horror and delight. Laughter, intoxication, eroticism, poetry, and sacrifice are pursued not as ends in and of themselves but as means of access to a sovereign realm of inner experience. This new translation is the first to include *Method of Meditation and Post-Scriptum* 1953, the supplementary texts Bataille added to create the first volume of his *Summa Atheologica*. This edition also offers the full notes and annotations from the French edition of Bataille's *Oeuvres Complètes*, along with an incisive introductory essay by Stuart Kendall that situates the work historically, biographically, and philosophically.

*Sacrifice in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*

*Reading Bataille Now*

*Kenosis and Immanence, Medieval to Modern*

*An Essay on General Economy*

*On Bataille*

*Theory for Religious Studies*

**Since the publication of *Visions of Excess* in 1985, there has been an explosion of interest in the work of Georges Bataille. The French surrealist continues to be important for his groundbreaking focus on the visceral, the erotic, and the relation of society to the primeval. This collection of prewar writings remains the volume in which Bataille's positions are most clearly, forcefully, and obsessively put forward. This book challenges the notion of a "closed economy" predicated on utility, production, and rational**

consumption, and develops an alternative theory that takes into account the human tendency to lose, destroy, and waste. This collection is indispensable for an understanding of the future as well as the past of current critical theory. Georges Bataille (1897-1962), a librarian by profession, was founder of the French review *Critique*. He is the author of several books, including *Story of the Eye*, *The Accursed Share*, *Erotism*, and *The Absence of Myth*.

This book provides a balanced and thoughtful approach for understanding an enlightened, sympathetic, and relevant secularism for our lives today. Bringing together distinguished historians, philosophers, scientists, and writers, this book shows that secularism is not a mere denial of religion.

Having spent the early thirties in far-left groups opposing Fascism, in 1937 Georges Bataille abandoned this approach so as to transfer the struggle onto the mythological plane, founding two groups with this aim in mind. The College of Sociology gave lectures attended by major figures from the Parisian intelligentsia - intended to reveal the hidden undercurrents within a society that appeared to be bordering on collapse. The texts in this book comprise lectures given to the College; essays from the *Acephale* journal and a large cache of the internal papers of the secret society of *Acephale*.

**The Sacred Conspiracy**

**Literature and Evil**

**Georges Bataille**

**The Thirst for Annihilation**

**Ecce Monstrum**

**The Accursed Share**