



On Nietzsche

Georges Bataille

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A poetic, philosophical, and political account of Nietzsche's importance to Bataille, and of Bataille's experience in Nazi-occupied France.

Georges Bataille wrote *On Nietzsche* in the final months of the Nazi occupation of France in order to cleanse the German philosopher of the “stain of Nazism.” More than merely a treatise on Nietzsche, the book is as much a work of ethics in which thought is put to the test of experience and experience pushed to its limits. At once personal and political, it was written as an act of war, its publication contingent upon the German retreat. The result is a poetic and philosophical—and occasionally harrowing—record of life during wartime.

Following *Inner Experience* and *Guilty*, *On Nietzsche* is the third volume of Bataille's *Summa Atheologica*. Haunted by the recognition that “existence cannot be at once autonomous and viable,” herein the author yearns for community from the depths of personal isolation and transforms Nietzsche's *will to power* into his own *will to chance*.

This new translation includes *Memorandum*, a selection of 280 passages from Nietzsche's works edited and introduced by Bataille. Originally published separately, Bataille planned to include the text in future editions of *On Nietzsche*. This edition also features the full notes and annotations from the French edition of Bataille's *Oeuvres Complètes*, as well as an incisive introductory essay by Stuart Kendall that situates the work historically, biographically, and philosophically.

Georges Bataille (1897–1962), a medievalist librarian by training, founded the College of Sociology and the secret society Acéphale. He was equally famous for his contributions to French literature, art criticism, anthropology, philosophy, and theology. Bane of theologians, existentialists, and surrealists during his lifetime, he became an essential reference for the poststructuralist generation of French intellectuals, including Roland Barthes, Jean Baudrillard, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Derrida.

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