

Axe

Jonathan Bowden

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Between the late 1970s and the early 1990s, Jonathan Bowden wrote 27 books, about which almost nothing was known until after his death. Combining cultural criticism with memoir, high journalism, and selected correspondence, these texts belong to no particular genre, the prose being allowed to roam where it may, drawing from many strands, finding unexpected links, and collecting shrewd insights along the way. More than anything, they are exercises in exploration and self-clarification, wherein one will find, as work in progress, many of the themes that would later emerge in his orations. The Jonathan Bowden Collection aims at making these obscure texts readily available for the first time, complete with annotations and indeces, so that they may be studied and / or enjoyed by present and future generations interested in the dissidents at the margins of British intellectual life at the turn of our century. Axe begins with the Right and ends with conservatism, but it is largely a commentary on art, literature, and intellectuals on the Left. Bowden begins with a criticism of Wyndham Lewis and then builds a catena of digressions, whose topics include Andrea Mantegna, J. G. Ballard, Stephen King, a foray into personal memoir, Jean Baudrillard, the New Left, Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, and Roberto D'Aubuisson. Throughout his commentary, Bowden compares the meaning and approaches of the Right against those of the Left in the intersection between modern politics and culture. This is not an essay in any conventional sense, but rather a succession of fervid and unpredictable snapshots that acrete into a grotesque panorama of Western civilisation in the 20th century.



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