

gives a history of the belief that it would cause blindness and insanity. He is also the cause of wit in other men, as when the editor notes that the practice “has had an almost universal appeal though no official cultural endorsement, then or now.”

If, as Greene maintains, “much literary criticism ... is autobiographical,” each reader will have different favorites. Since I know something about theology, have written on Western literature, have reviewed a number of infuriating literary biographies, and have suffered the posturings of literary theorists, I find most satisfying “The Sin of Pride: A Sketch for a Literary Exploration,” for its clear definitions and range of knowledge; “Western Canadian Literature,” which finds three writers are who not too bad among a great many who are; “’Tis a Pretty Book, Mr. Boswell, But—,” which debunks Boswell as biographer; and “Literature or Metaliterature? Thoughts on Traditional Literary Study,” which he finds far superior to work by those who ignore and even dislike literature.

Greene’s work on the eighteenth century is more extensive and more important than his work on Waugh, represented in this volume by two short pieces, “The Great Long Beach Waugh Memorial” and “Evelyn Waugh’s Hollywood.” Both deal with factual backgrounds to a Waugh novel, and there is far too little of that in the study of Waugh or most other writers. But this is the stuff of handbooks — Greene, some other scholars, and I once thought briefly of doing one on Waugh — not of literary criticism. Since Greene regards *Brideshead* as “somewhat embarrassing” and the life of Ronald Knox as a major mid-twentieth-century biography, perhaps it is just as well that he didn’t attempt to go further.

Each of the essays is introduced by a head note; the illustrations are few but useful; and the index is an unusual feature, and unusually copious, for a collection of this type. Missing, unaccountably in a tribute to an important scholar, is a bibliography of Greene’s writings.

### **Déjà-Vu All Over Again**

*Radicals on the Road: The Politics of English Travel Writing in the 1930s*, by Bernard Schweizer. Charlottesville, VA: UP of Virginia, 2001. 216 pp. \$19.50. Reviewed by Jonathan Pitcher, Bennington College.

Travel in those days may have suggested the possibility of an escape from the cramped and tense conditions at home, but for the traveler it was conducive to a sense of déjà-vu: the uncanny feeling that one was returning to familiar social and political conditions, but displaced, in a foreign land. (Schweizer 145)

While the instilment of fear is not the exclusive domain of writing, writing does expand its region of influence.

--Roberto González Echevarría, *Myth and Archive: A Theory of Latin*

The second of the epigraphs appears in a book premised on the theory that every definitive Latin American novel quests after an always mythic, atemporal beginning while simultaneously dismantling its own historical, linguistic, archival apparatus. The fear instilled by the episteme of the Spanish Conquest is ultimately reflected back on the mendacity of the epistemology itself. The end is exclusive to the means, and this exclusion becomes the story, one of successive, literary dystopias. González Echevarría recognizes his own work as archival, as but another act of similarly vulnerable destruction, and the theory is indeed contentious, not least because of the reductive grandiosity of its paradigm. It is also, despite the relatively esoteric focus, available at your local mall. The book rapidly attained biblical status, not merely among Latin Americanists, but as a master-narrative of postcolonialism, of how to read or rescue any text from an appropriately postmodern stance.

Although Bernard Schweizer does not mention González Echevarría, and his text begins with the claim that “this study resets the parameters for a critically productive, contextualized approach to travel writing” (2), with a comparison of travel and revolution, both substantiated by the dust-jacket blurb averring a more complicated postcolonialism, by 2001 he was treading familiar ground. The journeys, as is typical, are no longer outward but inward; quests for self. Success is determined by the degree of doubting (the more the better), by the self-criticism admitted by the authors when their preconceived ontological templates do not function abroad or, for that matter, at home. Schweizer attempts to rescue four authors three times, his means ranging from an initially standard literary criticism to more erratic use of neo-philosophy. In short, Graham Greene, whether in Africa or Mexico, is portrayed as a would-be primitivist plagued by a more latent “middle-class ethos” (149) and “the return of his repressed conservatism” (150). Rebecca West is described as a rejuvenator of Byzantine, Serbian nationalism, though her pursuit of this “life force” (137) is simultaneously undercut by Orthodox Christianity’s anti-nationalist discourse of sin and atonement: “It is West’s fear of giving in to the death wish herself, a fear that implies the return of a repressed desire, that constitutes the biggest anxiety” (170). George Orwell, the most self-analytical and therefore the most sophisticated of the four, while nominally empathetic with the working class, never transcends his own sense of “ingrained class status” (163). Rather than a comrade-in-arms, here he is an anthropologist, an outsider mimicking an ever-exotic poverty, whether fetishizing Parisian street life or being betrayed by the totalitarian Left in Spain. Evelyn Waugh the traveler is depicted as a reactionary, never engaging in the primitivist pretence. He overwhelms the other three, but only as the least circumspect, the most bumbling. His work is defined as “noxious” (42), “naïve” (51), “monologic and didactic” (57), “profascist” (176) and “rather embarrassing” (176), manifesting a “straightforward conservatism” (37) (surely an oxymoron) and a “systematic racial bias” (41). He is compared to Belloc,

Kipling, and W. H. Hudson. At first, Waugh the novelist fares little better. Both *Black Mischief* and *Scoop* are summarized as “reactionary wish-fulfillment fantas[ies]” (49; 53). He is only rehabilitated by *Remote People*’s London “Nightmare,” in which the metropolitan center outstrips Africa’s supposed barbarism, and by Tony Last, a self-doubter *par excellence*. Until the final third, the book is under-theorized, although given the repeated discursive oscillation between civilized spuriousness and the latter’s manifestation through primitivist experience, it is obvious that Freud is lurking in the wings. He becomes an unquestioned authority, fittingly accompanied by brief mentions of Dennis Porter’s *Haunted Journeys*, Ali Behdad’s *Belated Journeys* (both former deconstructions of the orientalist archive, of the foreign-made-home oscillation, now archived themselves), Homi Bhabha (the potential “menace” [67] of in-between spaces), and Pierre Bourdieu, who furthered Freudian suspicion in multi-relational contexts (the superstructural problem isn’t simply Mummy and Daddy, or the education system, but the bridge club, the rugby team etc.).

At a mechanical level, there is the odd spelling hiccup, some difficulty with prepositions, occasional loss of a subject mid-way through a sentence, generally unwieldy prose, weak concluding sentences (see particularly 79, when Greene’s Catholic stance against the Mexican Revolution is vindicated after pages of abuse), and average remarks are often made with revelatory force: “One may want to add, though, that in Waugh’s case the experience of space was *ideologically* rather than socially constructed” (111) [emphasis definitely Schweizer’s], or “It all goes to show that political travel writing works in mysterious ways” (179). I am less than convinced, furthermore, with the possible exception of Orwell, that any of these writers were radical, nor would they wish to be, so Schweizer’s criterion is skewed from the off. Even if we accept this skewing, the book should be read backwards. Since the theory is artificially withheld, the opening pages seem pedestrian, expounding on Orwell’s liberal humanism or Waugh’s imperialism, both conventional, almost non-critical, positions. Bhabha’s “menace” (67), appears early, without any explanation of why such threatening in-betweenness is preferable to less fearsome, monadic, approaches. Much of the pre-theory opinion is ambiguous, arguably belonging either to Schweizer or the travelers: “It was this unrest and anxiety that constituted a major motivating force for English intellectuals of the 1930s to leave their country . . . in pursuit of the worst that can be imagined – the zero point of culture and society” (104). Is this the worst in the 1930s, or still the worst in 2001? Perhaps all such glitches are tacit, preemptive strikes against the book’s own episteme, thus thwarting the reader’s orderly expectations.

Leaving aside the inherent limitations of any neo-Freudian technique, unless we are to remain trapped in the entropy of oscillation, between impossible myth and suspicion of our archive, the litmus test for any such study lies in its proposed alternatives. Ultimately, *Radicals on the Road* is less of a rescue operation than a negation, discarding its four authors over the last few pages in favor of the asserted historical accuracy and “straightforward

political analyses” (180) of the mass media, Joan Didion, V. S. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, and Robert D. Kaplan. While Schweizer finally recognizes that there is “no politically innocent methodology” (185), Kaplan’s *Balkan Ghosts* apparently offers the right kind of “fundamentally humanistic” (182) politics, for he “remains faithful to his American, liberal ideas of freedom” (184). In the 1990s, as Schweizer knows, President Clinton used *Balkan Ghosts* to define his policy of non-intervention in Bosnia. I shall allow the reader to decide whether to spend an afternoon reading the overtly dogmatic *Robbery Under Law* or watching “accurate” CNN, but most significantly, the debate has shifted here, from supposedly atrophied to competing forms of mediation, to different interpretations of the same archive. If this is *Radicals’* point, then far too little is devoted to explaining how American liberalism is less mythic and indeed more viable than West’s version of Serbian nationalism, or Orwell’s democratic socialism. Jorge Luis Borges, one of González Echevarría’s many examples, once suggested that *Don Quixote* is now more real than the actual geography of Cervantine Spain. Although I am wary of disillusioning the disillusioners, Freud’s genealogy, from the primal horde on, is one man’s invention. It is certainly one of modernity’s most cherished, reality-shaping myths, but it is mythic nonetheless. It may be time for Schweizer, however fearfully, to self-reflect.

#### *Works Consulted*

Borges, Jorge Luis. “Parábola de Cervantes y de Quijote.” *El hacedor*. Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1960.  
 González Echevarría, Roberto. *Myth and Archive: A Theory of Latin American Narrative*. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1998.

#### **A Sense of Loss and Desertion**

*The Diaries of A. L. Rowse*, by A. L. Rowse. Ed. Richard Ollard. London: Penguin, 2004. 480 pp. £10.99. Reviewed by Mircea Platon .

Born in 1903 to a working-class family in Cornwall, Alfred Leslie Rowse made his way up to Oxford thanks to a Douglas Jerrold Scholarship. He was to become a Fellow of the British Academy and Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford. An authority on the Elizabethan Age, a doctrinaire member of the Labor Party until the Suez Affair (when he resigned), an author of verses published by T. S. Eliot and read by Rebecca West and John Betjeman (if not by anybody else), a diarist and essayist full of bubbling acidity, he developed into a popular author of historical speculations (as in *Simon Forman: Sex and Society in Shakespeare’s Age* and *The Poems of Shakespeare’s Dark Lady*) using his deep knowledge of all the back alleys of Renaissance and Baroque England.

In 2003, upon publication of the hardcover edition of Rowse’s *Diaries*, Stefan Collini deplored in the *Times Literary Supplement* the “crankiness and