

these overtly diverse essays to one another would have to be their concern with Kafka as a writer rather than as an existentialist philosopher or as a prophet of the holocaust or as a disciple of Freud. The first two essays, Charles Bernheimer's "The Splitting of the 'I' and the Dilemma of Narration: Kafka's *Hochzeitsvorbereitungen auf dem Lande*" and James Rolleston's "Kafka's Time Machines" share an interest in the influence of Flaubert on Kafka; Bernheimer proposes that "Flaubert's narrative technique represented for Kafka the perfect achievement of 'self-forgetting'" (p. 15), that is, of allowing the author to be inside (autobiographical) and outside of his text (fictional) at the same time. On the other hand, Rolleston contends that Flaubert's realism "is [not] even imaginable in a Kafka-story" (p. 28) because Kafka is instead "a direct exponent of Romantic poetics" (p. 29). These involve principally the Romantic concept of time, which, according to Rolleston, places the writer in the realm of creative activity but at the same time makes him or her more aware of separation from the realm of the absolute. Rolleston analyzes the three-fold nature of the creative artist's time, proposing prescriptive time (the future), encyclopedic time (the past), and ecstatic time (the present). He interprets three pairs of stories, two for each frame of reference. Although Rolleston's analysis might lead the reader to a better understanding of the ambiguous stories, it tends at the same time to increase the difficulty of understanding Kafka the writer.

In a manner of speaking, Patrick O'Neill in his article "The Comedy of Stasis: Narration and Knowledge in Kafka's *Prozess*" addresses the problem of ascertaining which goals Kafka aspired to in his writing by theorizing that Kafka's stories have not only a narrator and a reader but also an "implied narrator," interposed between the author and the character from whose point of view the story is told, and an "implied reader," Kafka's ideal reader, who responds correctly to the riddles which his prose, that is, the implied narrator, evolves. In another of the essays in this collection, Ernst Loeb's "Kafka's 'In the Penal Colony' as a Reflection of Classical and Romantic Religious Views," the terminology of literary criticism also establishes the direction that his interpretation takes; in this case, the classical element in the story, the machine which represents the Kantian concept of moral law, is pitted against sensibility, the Romantic element in the human equation. The machine malfunctions because of the gap "between 'technology' and the moral will that was supposed to guide it" (p. 97). Yet another of the articles based on literary terms (here in use only after Kafka's time), Ruth Gross's "Of Mice and Women: Reflections on a Discourse," discusses the antifeminist dimensions of Kafka's work and concludes with a question left unanswered: in regard to Josephine, Kafka's only female protagonist [but is it actually female?], does she figure in "a parable of domination—male over female, narrator over subject—and [which is] thus clearly hostile to woman?" (p. 136). All of these approaches to Kafka's work which seek to perceive certain literary motifs in it end in uncertainty: the possibility that they exist has been presented, the probability that Kafka conceived of them remains in doubt.

However, the influence of the animal fable on Kafka, which Egon Schwarz discusses in general terms but in a knowledgeable and clearly stated fashion in "Kafka's Animal Tales and the Tradition of the European Fable," is not an equivocal matter; regrettably, Schwarz takes into account only two cat-and-mouse fables by way of examples and none at all of Kafka's animal protagonists. Mark Harman's article "Life into Art: Kafka's Self-Stylization in the Diaries" also makes an undebatable point: that the selves Kafka assumes to be in life are his "workshop selves," the same selves he provides himself in his fiction. The final paper in the collection has been converted by its author W. G. Kudsus in the course of translation from the German into a personal essay in letter form which seeks to convey his enthusiasm for reading Kafka; necessarily it reveals a great deal about the critic and little about Kafka. In regard to giving insight into the work of one of the world's great authors, the other articles in this book play an interesting but modest role.

Anthony Hassell

STRANGE COUNTRY: A STUDY OF RANDOLPH STOW

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Reviewed by Gerald Moore

This appears to be the first majority study of Randolph Stow's work yet published. The fact is surprising and cannot be explained by any slowness in the recognition of Stow's quality or importance as a writer. As long ago as 1958, when he was only twenty-three, he had already won international fame with his third novel, *To the Islands*, and had collected several literary

awards, including two of the Australian Literature Society's Gold Medals. The explanation must lie rather in a mistaken assessment of Stow's later work, from *Tourmaline* (1963) onwards. Typical of this attitude was the hostility shown by many Australian critics to that novel, one of them writing that "his undoubted talents are led into the wilderness." Somewhat similar hostility had greeted Patrick White's *Voss* a few years earlier. If both writers seem to be saying that the white Australian remains an alien in a landscape of which he has not truly taken possession (though successfully dispossessing the previous inhabitants), that was not a message which their readers wanted to hear. What Stow called in one of his poems: "only the last lost tremor of nomad fires" was not a welcome glimmer on the hearths of literary Sydney.

The same relative coolness greeted locally the lyrical and formal beauty of the autobiographical novel *The Merry-go-Round in the Sea* (1965) and the tragic grandeur of *Visitants* (1979). This lopsided view of Stow's development as an artist—for the two last-named books are certainly much finer and more fully achieved works than *To the Islands* — was given further currency by his long silence as a novelist between 1965 and 1979, though those years did see the appearance of a fine book of poems, two song cycles, and *Midnite*, one of the sharpest children's books ever to come out of Australia.

Now Australia itself, in the person of Professor Anthony Hassell, has made amends, for his fine study places the right critical emphasis on the later novels, which he handles with great sensitivity towards their innovations of form and language. Unlike many critics, he is not afraid of the poetry either, and has managed to relate it to the fiction in a truly revealing way. Stow did the same, by giving us "From the Testament of Tourmaline" several years after the novel, and by prefixing a poem from *Outrider* (1960) to his recent novel *The Girl Green as Elderflower* (1980), which makes clear that the genesis of that book lies in his decision to settle in Suffolk soon after the breakdown which ended his career as an anthropologist in 1959. That poem held the glimpse or promise of a fructifying relationship with Suffolk, the countryside of his ancestors, whose fulfillment is celebrated twenty years later in the novel: "Even such midnight years must ebb; bequeathing this: a dim low English room, one window on the fields."

Professor Hassell is measured in his praise of Stow's first two novels, *A Haunted Land* (1956) and *The Bystander* (1957), heavy as they are with impending doom for characters who are not yet fully developed from within. His searching heroes, adequate to their quest, really begin with Heriot in *To the Islands* and Tom Spring in *Tourmaline*. Hassell makes much of the Taoist element in the latter novel, and there is plenty of evidence of Stow's interest in Taoist ideas at the time, but an understanding of this influence does not seem to be essential to our appreciation of Spring's rational skepticism and his dislike of self-appointed messiahs. These tendencies sit quite naturally upon his character as a village storekeeper, without requiring us to refer to the *Tao Teh Ching*. Such reading has been consumed in the guts of the writer and recycled as fictional art.

Visitants is rightly singled out as the most complex and profound of these novels of search, with its richly varied narrative styles and shifts of viewpoint. Although Cawdor's lonely witness ends in disintegration and self-destruction, that book is not without images of renewal (such as the installation of Benoni and the frustration of the village conspirators) and in this way points forward to the very different denouement of Crispin Clare's search for recovery of his sanity and will to live in *The Girl Green as Elderflower*, a book which was actually finished before Stow, after long hesitation, was able to bring himself to write the tragic climax of *Visitants*.

Again, Professor Hassell is rightly enthusiastic about the carefully balanced architecture, the freshness and insight of *The Merry-go-Round in the Sea*, of which he writes, "No other Australian memoir or autobiography . . . can match his intensely vivid recreation of Geraldton and its hinterland in the forties, seen through the expanding mind of a boy." The book is thoroughly referenced on all aspects of Stow's career, making judicious use also of interviews with the author. It represents a worthy first step in the comprehensive study of this original and disturbing imagination.