

all, this much-discussed novel has not been exhausted by modern criticism. As one might expect, some of the material on the information revolution is only very obliquely related to Welsh's literary criticism; and his final chapters, in which he attempts to relate the information culture or revolution, modern psychology, and George Eliot's fiction, seem more suggestive than conclusive. Though Welsh's book is readable, at times (for instance, the chapter "Ideology in *Daniel Deronda*") it may lack conciseness and a clearly established progression toward definite conclusions. But the final note must be a positive one: obviously using terms quite unlike previous commentators, Welsh does offer further evidence of the continuity between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and does reaffirm George Eliot's modernity.

John Freccero

DANTE: THE POETICS OF CONVERSION

ed. Rachel Jacoff

Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986. Pp. 328. \$25.00

Reviewed by Linda Hill

John Freccero's *Dante* is a collection of seventeen essays published from 1959 to 1983. Rachel Jacoff has contributed an introduction to Freccero's critical methodology and furnished translations of quotations in the text. In the notes, citations are left in the original languages, including medieval Latin. The book is intended as a companion to the *Comedy*; the essays appear in the same order as the passages from the *Comedy* on which Freccero comments. Two thirds of the book deal with the *Inferno*. As Jacoff notes (p. xv), the essays proceed from convincing exegesis to broader insights.

Invoking Lukács on the *Comedy* as the last epic and first novel (p. 138), Freccero offers a number of observations on narrative technique. He discusses the need for a perspective from the ending in fictitious autobiographies, which he calls "novels of the self" (p. 58), and touches on suspense and linearity (p. 138). The chapter "Infernal Irony: The Gates of Hell" (1983) analyzes the "mimesis with a vengeance" (p. 102) through which Dante damns souls by representing them as bodies, that is, by reducing the signified (soul) to the signifier (body). The stimulating final chapter, "The Significance of *Terza Rima*" (1983), examines the logic of forward progression and recapitulation underlying Dante's rhyme scheme, the narrative structure of the *Comedy*, and autobiography in general. The triple rhymes which point forward as well as backward require a double rhyme at the beginning and the end; otherwise there would be no opening or closure at all. Similarly, the pilgrim undergoes a spiritual death and conversion without which he could not develop into the poet of the conclusion. The transcendent closure in paradise harks back to the language of the beginning and is necessary for the starting point, the poet's record of the pilgrim's bewilderment. In autobiography the beginning requires the end as a precondition.

The understandable choice of thematic rather than chronological order sets up a few methodological jolts. While the early chapters combine medieval philology with New Criticism, the later chapters employ structuralist and deconstructionist arguments. For example, in "Pilgrim in a Gyre" (1961) Freccero states that "we must assume the existence of a coherent pattern and abandon our hypothesis only when our resources, or those of the poem, are exhausted" (p. 71). The semiotic analysis of "Infernal Irony" (1983) follows abruptly. Older methods reappear in the next chapter, "The Neutral Angels" (1960). This somewhat disconcerting arrangement has the advantage of documenting how drastically literary scholarship has changed over the last three decades.

Roman Struc and J. C. Yardley, eds.

FRANZ KAFKA (1883-1983): HIS CRAFT AND THOUGHT

Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1986.

Pp. 157

Reviewed by Kurt J. Fickert

In his becomingly modest introduction to this selection of papers from those presented at the University of Calgary's centennial conference on Franz Kafka, Roman Struc characterizes them as conveying "imperfect insights" into the ambiguities of the Kafka canon, while affording at least "a more systematic perspective" (p. 1). The systematic aspect which relates

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

St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1986. Pp. 213,

\$32.50

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