poi come *Bildungsroman* o *roman d'apprentissage*. La *Commedia*, appunto, come 'storia di una ricerca di valori autentici,' per la ricostruzione della totalità etica frantumata, ad opera di un protagonista che si pone in maniera problematica e antagonistica di fronte alla degradazione del mondo" (29).

Russo articulates and develops this critical position within the context of the writings on Dante and, more generally, on the theory of the novel, by such scholars as Battaglia, Bakhtin, Lukács, Goldmann, and Girard. His readings of *Inferno* 22, *Purgatorio* 23, and *Paradiso* 19 in the second part of the book aim, therefore, to bring into focus the linguistic, stylistic, and narrative elements of Dante's poem which relate it most to the novel, and, in particular, the poem's "plurilinguismo" and its "enciclopedismo di tematiche disparate e di diverse forme espressive" (95). In this light, it is clear that the phrase "romanzo teologico" of the title should be understood literally and not in the Crocean sense which is explicitly rejected.

Bibliography of works cited in the notes. Index of names.

LB

Jeffrey T. Schnapp. *The Transfiguration of History at the Center of Dante's Paradise*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1986. Pp. 268.

Schnapp proposes to "show the full extent to which the central cantos of *Paradiso* may be regarded as Dante's Christian response to the dilemma of *Inferno* 4." In this effort, he presents a detailed discussion of the Virgilian conception of history as seen in *Aeneid* 6, its relation to Florentine history, and the cross of lights in cantos 14–18, which he interprets as the symbol of Dante's Christian solution to the limitations of the classical world.

In Chapter 1, the author sets out the dialectic between history and eternity, a recurring theme in his book. Drawing parallels among *Aeneid* 6, Cicero's *Republic* (Book 6) and the *Paradiso*, he notes that in each a father tries to convince a son to undertake an epic task in order to escape from cyclical history. Chapter 2 concentrates on the figure of Mars as the negative and controlling force of classical history, the god who condemns cities such as Rome to an unending cycle of ascension, corruption, fall, and regeneration. Relating Dante's Florence to Virgil's Rome, Chapter 3 argues that the cross is the means by which the cyclic pattern of history may be transcended. Appropriately, therefore, Cacciaguida utters his imperatives to Dante in *Paradiso* 17 from the cross of light, a figure of Christ who significantly replaces the sun with his own light in the heaven of Mars. Virgil's tragedy—and the limitations of the ancients—was that they could not recognize Christ as the means to another history, one which would solve "the dilemma of history under the destabilizing rule of Mars," not through deification, but transfiguration, i.e. eschatology.

Schnapp's final chapter supports his interpretation with an analysis of the apsidal mosaics in Sant'Appollinare in Classe (accompanied by 22 black and white plates). Calling them a "unique fusion of the iconography of the Exaltation of the Cross and of Christ's Transfiguration," he suggests that they may have been the inspiration not only for the idea of Dante's cross of light, but also for his placement of it in the structure of the *Paradiso* and, by extension, its significance as a symbol of the transfiguration which will occur at the apocalypse.

Extensive bibliography of primary and secondary sources. Index to passages cited from Dante's works. Subject index.

LD

J. F. Took. *L'Eterno Piacer*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984. Pp. xii + 128.

In an effort to discover a "Dantean philosophy of beauty," Took considers Dante's general aesthetics, the aesthetics of art in Dante, and his conception of literary beauty, with particular emphasis on the relationship of the moral and aesthetic in his works and the aesthetic of allegory. He elucidates his discussion of Dante's general aesthetics by further subdividing his study into five moments of aesthetic experience: the formal and metaphysical (the objective) properties of beauty, and the psychological, moral, and affective aspects which categorize the subjective experience of beauty.

According to Took, aesthetics is about "the nature and origin of beauty in the sensible world" and a conscious aesthetic informs the work of Dante and other medieval writers. His objective is to analyse an extensive number of passages in Dante's works, with a view to uncovering Dante's appreciation of proportion, his "theology of beauty," and his psychology of beauty (in which he suggests that "symmetry satisfies a yearning in the mind, a connatural affinity for harmony"). Methodologically, the author claims his book is historical and philosophical rather than literary-critical in conception, since "it sets out to define the *rationes* of beauty in Dante in the light of such principles as would have been familiar to a poet and philosopher of his day" (ix). In other words, it is a comparative study of medieval ideas about beauty, with Dante as the principal figure of interest.

Extensive annotation. Select bibliography. Analytical index.

FB