

Serbs who had taken part in the revolution and who had subsequently settled in Greece. The Regulation stated that they belonged by origin and birth to the "Hellenic races of Bulgarians and Serbs. . . ." Thus, Todorov and Traikov's excellent edition is not only an extremely useful source of historical material, it is also a valuable and welcome proof of the cooperation between the Balkan peoples and their common struggles.

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NEW DIRECTIONS IN LITERARY HISTORY. Edited by *Ralph Cohen*.  
Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974. viii, 263 pp. \$10.00.

Whether or not Edmund Wilson's "ordinary language of literature" exists, there exist ordinary difficulties in making words say what we mean. Experience slips from us, and the literature that has captured a portion of it is supplanted by a newer literature of new experience; then literary history itself becomes trammled in obsolete allegiances, or, as Robert Weimann says, in separating past significance from present meaning. The approach of Leavis and of Brooks, he says, "even though it satisfied current aesthetic assumptions, was not very helpful in establishing criteria by which a new approach to literary history might have prospered" (p. 51).

These thirteen essays—drawn from *New Literary History*, the most stimulating magazine in literary history today—and the introduction, written by thirteen professors and one novelist-teacher, make a first-rate summary of the present status of literary criticism. Their history is accurate and thorough; their proposals, responsible and challenging.

According to Geoffrey Hartman, the growth of historical consciousness has produced a synchronism of abstract, formal potentialities. "There are too many forms already: they now debouch into life directly, without the special mediation of masterworks" (p. 98). Art, like an adolescent, is marginal, located somewhere between self and society and exposed directly to spiritual powers: "If we reflect that marginality is dangerous not because it is empty but because the absence of conventional social structuring allows room for an irruption of energies society has not integrated, then we see how similar this state is to the 'chaos of forms' which art explores" (p. 102). In those terms, literary history would be the history of literary forms, which Michael Riffaterre says it is: "*Nachleben* studies . . . assign variations [in the popularity of a text] to competition from later works, to upheavals in literary taste or sociological conditions, and above all to the evolution of esthetics. . . . The most important factor is . . . the evolution of language" (p. 155).

The vitality—indeed, the charm—of Professor Cohen's book is that all his contributors are right, and all only partially agree. The book is a symposium in print. The conversation is engagingly intellectual.

Louis Mink, for example, sets linguistic and literary forms to one side in order to propose comprehension in modal terms: theoretical, categorical, and configurational. "Narratives . . . are not imperfect substitutes for more sophisticated forms. . . . The comprehension at which narratives aim is a primary act of mind. . . . Narrative qualities are transferred from art to life" (pp. 123–24). His extremely fine essay offers a philosophical base for understanding fictional complexity and simplicity without weakening either. "Stories answer questions," as he puts it (p. 124),

but the ways in which they do answer do not come from the questions. All the contributors to the volume (being intelligent people) in some way agree with this notion. Wolfgang Iser, in what he calls a phenomenological approach, examines interaction between text and reader, the building up of a "gestalt" of the text (p. 134), so that the text unfolds as a living event. On the one hand, we readers agree with that, although, on the other, we applaud Alastair Fowler's survey of the rise and decline of various, specific forms and Henryk Markiewicz's astute limning of the limits of literature, even though it comes to a sort of negative definition: "Verbal works are today considered part of literature when the represented world is fictional . . . , when, in relation to the requirements of ordinary linguistic communication, a 'superimposed ordering' is observed, and finally in virtue of figurativeness" (p. 197).

In the very next essay, Svetlana and Paul Alpers pry into differences between literary criticism and art criticism, come to emphasize the difference between verbal and pictorial images, yet finally urge that all critics "take on the role of either artist or perceiver and treat them as aspects of the same phenomenon, as the human dimensions implicit in a text or painting" (p. 219). Hans Robert Jauss, D. W. Robertson, Jr., Barbara Hernstein Smith, Francis R. Hart, George Garrett—what they say also requires and repays reading.

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DOSTOEVSKIJ AND SCHILLER. By *Alexandra H. Lyngstad*. Slavistic Printings and Reprintings, 303. The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1975. 126 pp. 36 Dglds.

The author attempts two complementary tasks: "to trace the nature and extent of Dostoevskij's literary debt to Schiller" and to present "the climax of this relationship as it manifests itself in Schiller's impact on *The Brothers Karamazov*." The first two chapters present material on Dostoevsky's lifelong interest in Schiller, his complex reevaluations of his youthful enthusiasm, and echoes of "Schillerian" themes in his earlier fiction. The third chapter, devoted to Schillerian themes and motifs found in *The Brothers Karamazov*, is largely an elaboration of Čiževsky's seminal essay—so far as *Die Räuber*, theodicy, patricide, and the "higher man" are concerned—and offers several corrections and additions, as well as interesting new developments of the "Hymn and its Permutations." The final and most rewarding chapter deals with the three brothers and (Schilleresque) related motifs, seen now as operational in the context of the novel, rather than as restatements of abstract notions.

The author is conscious of critical pitfalls in influence studies, but succumbs to them nevertheless. There are two generic drawbacks of such studies: first, a failure not so much to define "debt" or "influence" adequately, but to limit, in some reasonable way, the possible ramifications of this concept so that the subject is not exaggerated and distorted. Thus, far too much is referred to the ostensible prototype. Second, there is the failure to gauge adequately the significance of the metamorphoses which the original work undergoes. Much "influence" is necessarily speculative because we not only do not know exactly what Dostoevsky read in several instances, but we also do not know *how* he read it, that is, what affected him, how it affected him, and what his reflections may have been. The notions that