

## PREFACE

Dostoevskij's relationship to Schiller has frequently been discussed, but never examined in a full-scale study. Such a study is justified by the intrinsic interest of the subject, as well as by the fact that the nature and extent of Schiller's influence upon Dostoevskij's fiction are still debatable issues. Critics such as Dmitrij Čiževskij and Kurt Wais, whose investigations belong to the more extensive ones, assume that the influence was, indeed, very profound and bear this out in their respective interpretations.<sup>1</sup> However, both deal mainly with Schiller's impact upon Dostoevskij in terms of one novel, *The Brothers Karamazov*. While this is clearly the work on which Schiller left the strongest imprint, the culmination of his influence was preceded by a long and complex history. In order fully to understand the wide range of Schillerian motifs in Dostoevskij's last novel, it is necessary to know something about the earlier stages of this relationship.

Much work also remains to be done on *The Brothers Karamazov* in relation to Schiller. While Meier-Graefe, Reizov,<sup>2</sup> and the above-mentioned critics have isolated most of the elements which are traceable to the German writer, they have largely neglected to show how these elements — themes, motifs, and philosophical ideas — function within the novelistic structure. Only a thorough analysis of their artistic elaboration can reveal the true significance of Schiller's contribution to the novel. This means that the subject to be discussed intersects with another one, namely, the compositional patterns of Dostoevskij's fiction. Much of the material in chapters three and four pertain, indirectly, to this aspect of his work. Being able to determine the provenience of a motif or a theme means little unless it is shown how the material bor-

<sup>1</sup> "Schiller und die 'Brüder Karamazov,'" *Zeitschrift für slavische Philologie* 6 (1929), 1-42, and "Schillers Wirkungsgeschichte im Ausland," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 29 (1955), 475-508.

<sup>2</sup> B. G. Reizov, "K istorii zamysla 'Brat'ev Karamazovyx,'" *Zven'ja* VI (M.-L., 1936), 545-573.

rowed has acquired resonance in the new aesthetic context. Therefore, genetic investigation and structural analysis complement one another in the examination of the proposed subject.

As already implied, considerable disagreement exists among the critics concerning the nature and extent of Dostoevskij's literary indebtedness to Schiller. This is due, first, to differences in critical approach and *Weltanschauung*, second, to the existence of alternative literary sources. To illustrate the former, Berdjajev claims that, after his Siberian exile, Dostoevskij "lost his youthful belief in Schillerism, by which name he designated the cult of the 'great and beautiful' — idealistic humanitarianism. In his experience Schillerism had not survived a single test. . . ."<sup>3</sup> Meier-Graefe contends, to the contrary, that Dostoevskij throughout his life held on to Schiller's "idealism . . . , and, correctly understood, this appears to me as one of his claims to glory."<sup>4</sup> Similarly, Kurt Wais concludes that the traces of Schiller in *The Brothers Karamazov* represent not a "dethronement" of Schiller's ideas, but rather a commentary on some aspects of them that Schiller had failed to develop.<sup>5</sup>

The second cause of critical disagreement hinges upon the extreme difficulty of pinning down a literary source, especially where several possible sources exist. A well-known example pertains to the literary prototypes of some major figures in *The Brothers Karamazov*, which Charles Passage finds in E. T. A. Hoffmann,<sup>6</sup> Čiževskij and others in Schiller. But even where alternative sources are excluded, it may — in the absence of a specific allusion — be virtually impossible to decide between coincidental resemblances, or such as are due to temperamental affinity, and actual borrowings. This fact, together with other difficulties inherent in this kind of investigation, argues caution. Therefore, in instances where "influence" cannot be conclusively proven, the perceived similarities will be discussed and the possibility of influence debated.

The present study is not intended as a complete and exhaustive treatment of the subject. For example, the first period of Dostoevskij's production, up to *The Insulted and the Injured*, is not examined in

<sup>3</sup> Nicholas Berdjajev, *Dostoevsky: An Interpretation*, trans. Donald Attwater (New York, 1934), 31.

<sup>4</sup> Julius Meier-Graefe, *Dostojewski, der Dichter* (Berlin, 1926), 519.

<sup>5</sup> Wais, 476. — For a similar judgment on a different basis, see V. Zenkovsky, *A History of Russian Philosophy I*, trans. George L. Kline (New York, 1953), 413.

<sup>6</sup> See *Dostoevski the Adapter: A Study in Dostoevski's Use of the Tales of Hoffman* (Chapel Hill, 1954), 168ff.

detail, though several of the early stories contain a great deal of relevant material. Furthermore, the relation between Schiller's and Dostoevskij's aesthetics and literary theory — a topic worthy of one or two chapters — is discussed only incidentally. What the book sets out to do is, first, to trace an outline of the changing literary relationship between Dostoevskij and Schiller and, second, to present an intensive analysis of the climax of this relationship as it manifests itself in Schiller's impact on *The Brothers Karamazov*.

