



Die Räuber

Friedrich Schiller

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Mit seinem 1781 erschienenen leidenschaftlichen Drama der Selbstzerstörung einer Familie machte Schiller bei der Uraufführung am Mannheimer Nationaltheater 1782 Sensation. Fortan galt er den Zeitgenossen als ein deutscher Shakespeare. Die Themen und Motive des Sturm-und-Drang-Stücks blieben für Schiller bis zu seinen letzten klassischen Werken verbindlich und haben bis heute nichts von ihrer Faszination verloren.

Die Räuber Details

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Kathrin says

Die Geschichte, ein Drama in Prosa, folgt den Brüdern Moor.

Die Geschichte beginnt als Franz, der jüngere Bruder, einen Brief seines älteren Bruders Karl fälscht, um ihn beim Vater in Verruf zu bringen und die Macht des Vaters zu erben. Karl wird darauf aus Verzweiflung, da er denkt die Liebe des Vaters verloren zu haben, zum Robin Hood-ähnlichen Räuber, der eine Bande von mehr oder weniger zwielichtigen Ausgestossenen der Gesellschaft anführt. Er lässt Amalia auf dem elterlichen Hof zurück, die ihm bis zum bitteren Ende treu ist. Sowohl Franz, der seine durch Intrigen gewonnene Macht missbraucht, als auch Karl, der versucht außerhalb des Gesetzes Gerechtigkeit zu schaffen scheitern schlussendlich. Der Konflikt zwischen Recht und Gerechtigkeit, die Ehre, Liebe, was es ist ein guter Mensch zu sein, werden behandelt auch wenn schlussendlich keine der Figuren, weder Pro- noch Antagonist, ein glückliches oder erfolgreiches Ende findet.

Kelly says

Melodrama on the level of Verdi's Il Trovatore, but as with Il Trovatore, it's hard to regret the experience. It has moments of raw, authentic spiritual anguish and moments that leave you wondering "How many times can this person die of grief?" I'm starting to understand why the 19th-century Russians had a love-hate relationship with Schiller's work. Russian novels are known for nothing if not an exploration of spiritual anguish, but even Dostoevsky tends to pull the rug out from under characters who take themselves too seriously. Perhaps Schiller does that in his more mature work. Hmm...time to update the reading list.

Czarny Pies says

Die Räuber, rightfully considered to be a masterpiece of the Sturm und Drang movement. First performed in 1782, it had a great impact on romantic writers in Germany, France and England for the next seventy-five years. Victor Hugo's Ernani and Adam Mickiewicz's Konrad Wallenrod are two of the most successful works to revisit the major themes of the Die Räuber which are the need to reconcile the apparent conflicts between personal or family loyalties and those of a country or nation.

Two operas Italian operas I briganti (Mercadante 1836) and I masnadieri (Verdi 1847) were also based on Die Räuber. It was not until 1869 when Offenbach's parody Les brigands was staged that Europe's authors finally decided that it was time to move on and look for new sources of inspiration.

Read this play. It will be a great help in understanding the thematic concerns of grand opera in the nineteenth century.

Christopher says

(Note: I did not read this in German, but I think that the needless anglicizing of "Karl" and "Franz" to "Charles" and "Francis" was "unnotig Scheibe eines Pferdes")

You can look up the details: German play. 1781. Influenced: Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, et. al. It's hard not to have run across Schiller and Die Rauber. But have you read it?

I had a little anxiety before beginning this one because it fell into the "works that I would like to say that I've read, but I'm afraid will be a little dated for my taste and prove me a Philistine". Like Pushkin's Eugene Onegin.

And my fears were partially realized and partially unfounded.

Realized: The language itself was not always interesting, did not often move me. There were some excellent sections, but I found much of it overly melodramatic. I admit that I am missing some critical context (in that I have almost no socio-cultural knowledge of 18th, let alone 16th century Germany, but in terms of the language itself, I felt that someone kept switching on the "one-off-avuncular-shakespeare-filter"). I also felt that some of what happened off-stage, in between scenes, could have been more interesting to see staged than say about a dozen pages of a supposed tyrant trying to convince a septuagenarian to commit a murder for him.

Unfounded: The ideas and questions still reverberate: What are the live options for someone long-denied justice? When one begins to operate outside of the conventional morality of society, is it possible to reintegrate oneself? What are the products of a corrupt society? How do our actions (and guilt) impact our notions of self?

3.25/5

Jan-Maat says

I wish I had first read this years ago when I was writing my undergraduate dissertation on The Brothers Karamazov. Dostoevsky explicitly has old man Karamazov refer to Dmitri and Ivan as the two sons from the play, a not entirely fair comparison but perhaps the novel is Dostoevsky's translation of the family dynamic and the rejection of society from Schiller's play into his own world vision.

Books are invariably in more complex relationships with each other, and I felt if the Karamazovs were looking back at the Moors that they in turn were modelled on Shakespeare's Edmund and Edgar from King Lear.

The other thought that occurred to me was that Max Weber would have liked this - the ersatz brotherhood of the Robber-band as a purely male endeavour which becomes an alternative counter society but one from the first caught up in ideas of violence: *Stelle mich vor ein Heer Kerls wie ich, und aus Deutschland soll eine Republik werden gegen die Rom und Sparta Nonnenkloester sein sollen* (p.23), not sure quite why one would

want to model one's republic on Rome or Sparta, indeed so much violence that the love sub plot becomes impossible (view spoiler) rather than allowing a return to a heterosexual model of sociability.

The play - perhaps confirmation bias had the feel of a young writer and promised the melodrama and moustache twirling of popular theatre which then lay in the future.

Vishy says

‘The Robbers’ by Friedrich Schiller was first published in 1781. Is it the earliest German book that I have ever read? Possibly. I first got to know about it when I read the book ‘German Literature : A Very Short Introduction’ by Nicholas Boyle. This is what Boyle says about Schiller’s play :

“a rebellious schoolboy in Stuttgart, Friedrich Schiller, began drafting the definitive treatment of the theme, his first play, ‘The Robbers’, which took the reading public by storm on its publication in 1781, and reduced its audience to sobs and swoons when it was first performed the following year.”

“A modern, international audience can still be gripped by the story of Karl and his band, a prescient analysis of the logic of self-righteous terrorism in a moral void. The huge success of the play in Germany in its own time and subsequently was no doubt due to the ferocity with which it dramatized the conflict between the two value systems available to the middle class in its struggle against princely rule – self-interested materialism or university-educated idealism – while it left prudently unassailed the structure of power itself.”

“...Schiller focused, with the penetrating clarity of a born dramatist, on the political and moral fault-lines in his contemporary society. With ‘The Robbers’ an independent modern German literary tradition begins.”

How can you resist a description like that? Since I read that, I have wanted to read ‘The Robbers’. I managed to squeeze it in yesterday, on the last day of this year’s German Literature Month. Here is what I think.

‘The Robbers’ is about two brothers Karl and Franz. Karl is the eldest son and so is the natural heir to his father’s estates. Their father loves Karl. Everyone does. Karl is also engaged to a beautiful woman called Amalia. Franz resents this. He resents everything that Karl has, but which he desires. He covets his father’s name and estates. He wants to win the hand of Amalia. So, he plots against Karl. Karl himself seems to aid that venture. While he is away from home, he gets into debt and runs away from the law. Franz uses that and convinces his father to disinherit Karl. Karl has plans of coming back home and hopes that his father will forgive him for his indiscretions. But when he receives the letter from his brother Franz stating that his father has disinherited him, he is hurt and angry. And before he knows what he is doing, he joins with his companions and starts a band of robbers and becomes a fugitive who is hunted by the law. Franz meanwhile continues with his nefarious plots – he wants his father, the elderly Count, to die, so that he can take over the estates, but the Count, even though feeble, has a sound constitution. Using psychological threats and false news that his son Karl has died in a battle, Franz upsets the Count immeasurably that the Count dies in a shock. Franz takes over his father’s name and estates. The household staff serves him loyally. However, his plans to win Amalia come to naught. Amalia spurns his advances and decides to be faithful to her supposedly dead fiancé Karl. Meanwhile, Karl, as the head of his band of robbers, has adventures that robbers have. He saves one of his band members from near certain death and while saving him, burns down the whole town. Karl, though he is a robber, is noble. He doesn’t want any money for himself and helps poor people in need. He is a robber – he kills, he burns – but he is also kind. One day he hears some news about Amalia and

comes to his father's castle in disguise. There he discovers the truth about how Franz was responsible for his father's death and how Franz usurped his rightful inheritance. Karl is wild with anger.

What happens next? Does Karl exact revenge? What happens to Franz? Does he reach the end that is reserved for all villains? Do Karl and Amalia get married? What happens to the band of robbers? The answers to these questions form the rest of the story.

There were many things that I liked about 'The Robbers'. The first thing I liked was the way the characters of Karl and Franz were portrayed. Karl, though he is the noble hero, is also a robber. Schiller doesn't shy away from portraying that part of Karl's personality. Karl robs people, kills them, burns houses and towns. Schiller doesn't condone that. So, we see two sides of Karl – the noble kind side and the ruthless robber side. Karl is not a traditional, hero, but a complex character. Franz, the villain, is quite complex too. He is an atheist and a materialist. Though I didn't like him much – it is hard to like a villain – I loved many of the lines that he spoke. They were insightful and profound. My favourite lines were a soliloquy by him :

Francis (soliloquy) : *"...he is thy father! He gave thee life, thou art his flesh and blood – and therefore he must be sacred to thee! Again a most inconsequential deduction! I should like to know why he begot me; certainly not out of love for me – for I must first have existed."*

"Could he know me before I had being, or did he think of me during my begetting? Or did he wish for me at the moment? Did he know what I should be? If so I would not advise him to acknowledge it or I should pay him off for his feat. Am I to be thankful to him that I am a man? As little as I should have had a right to blame him if he had made me a woman. Can I acknowledge an affection which is not based on any personal regard? Could personal regard be present before the existence of its object? In what, then consists the sacredness of paternity?"

"Is it in the act itself out of which existence arose? As though this were aught else than an animal process to appease animal desires. Or does it lie, perhaps, in the result of this act, which is nothing more after all than one of iron necessity, and which men would gladly dispense with, were it not at the cost of flesh and blood? Do I then owe him thanks for his affection? Why, what is it but a piece of vanity, the besetting sin of the artist who admires his own works, however hideous they may be? Look you, this is the whole juggle wrapped up in a mystic veil to work on our fears. And, shall I, too be fooled like an infant?"

It made me remember those famous lines from 'Paradise Lost' which Mary Shelley quotes in the first pages of 'Frankenstein' – *"Did I request thee maker, from my clay, to mould me man? Did I solicit thee from darkness to promote me?"*

Franz was a villain, but he was also intelligent, smart and philosophical, like the best of them are.

The next passage is probably spoiler-ish, and so if you are planning to read the play, please be sufficiently forewarned.

One more thing I liked about the story was the internal conflict that Karl undergoes towards the end of the story, when he has to choose between his band of robbers who have sworn loyalty to him and his sweetheart Amalia. I have seen this scene in countless movies, but I think Schiller probably was the first to write this scene. So three cheers to him.

There were two surprises at the end of the story. One of them was unexpected but in a nice way. The second one was also unexpected but it was not-so-nice and I felt that it was not required. It just had shock value and

I was upset with Schiller for doing that.

The ending of the story is interesting – not the regular good-guys-win-and-the-bad-guys-die kind of ending, but one which is more complex than that.

One word on the translation. One of the things I hated about the translation I read was that Karl was called ‘Charles’ and Franz was called ‘Francis’. Really? Is that angification of characters’ names really necessary? What were you thinking, my dear Mr.Translator??

I enjoyed reading ‘The Robbers’. I am happy that I have finally been able to read one of the great landmark plays of German literature. By that born dramatist of penetrating clarity, Friedrich Schiller :) I would like to read some of his poems and his essays on aesthetics some day.

I will leave you with one of my favourite passages from the play. This one is spoken by Karl to Schwarz, one of his robber companions.

Karl (to Schwarz) : “*Why should man prosper in that which he has in common with the ant, while he fails in that which places him on a level with the gods. Or is this the aim and limit of his destiny?*”

“Brother, I have looked at men, their insect cares and their giant projects, - their god-like plans and mouse-like occupations, their intensely eager race after happiness - one trusting to the fleetness of his horse, - another to the nose of his ass, - a third to his own legs; this checkered lottery of life, in which so many stake their innocence and their leaven to snatch a prize, and, - blanks are all they draw - for they find, too late, that there was no prize in the wheel. It is a drama, brother, enough to bring tears into your eyes, while it shakes your side with laughter.”

Have you read Schiller’s ‘The Robbers’? What do you think about it?

Lia says

ACT I : everybody lies

ACT II : everybody cries

ACT III : everybody fights

ACT IV : everybody panics

ACT V : everybody dies

gotta love German literature

Draganf says

Pisci su uglavnom najsmeliji u po?etku svog stvaranja, a kako sazrevaju, stavovi poprimaju jasnije oblike, stil se postepeno upotpunjava, a smelost da se suprotstavi ve?ini, opštem mišljenju ili ustaljenom na?inu pisanja polako jenjava. Kao što se Crnjanski u mladosti izražava veoma slobodno i jedinstveno (dok u poznim godinama piše „blaže“), ili Sartr, tako i Šiler stvara na samom po?etku književne karijere jednu veliku i jedinstvenu dramu, „Razbojnici“. Mladost svakog ?oveka, tako i pisca, krasiti entuzijazmom,

smeloš?u i slobodom izražavanja, dok starost znanjem, iskustvom i strpljenjem, tako da se dela ve?ine pisaca mogu podeliti na ta dva dela. Šilerova drama, „Razbojnici“, pripadaju prvoj skupini, tako da je karakterišu gorepomenute osobine. U drami se mogu prona?i skoro neprimetni nedostaci koji nastaju baš usled mladala?kog nestrpljenja, me?utim, to ni u koliko ne umanjuje vrednost ovog dela.

U ovom delu se prožimaju razna pitanja ?ovka iz osamnaestog veka; shvatanje prirode, društva, religije, morala, dok klju?nu ulogu igra odnos Karl – Stari Moor – Franc, tj. sin – otac – sin. U ovom slu?aju se taj porodi?ni odnos može uopštiti, tako da bismo dobili odnos dve razli?ite vrednosti unutar jedne države, ili pak sveta. Karl i Franc, iako bra?a, na svet gledaju suprotno. Karla je priroda nagradila lepim izgledom, hrabroš?u, smeloš?u, snagom, te on predstavlja klasi?nog gr?kog junaka, dok je Franc prilagodljiv, snalažljiv i nemilosrdan, pa uprkos mnogim nedostacima, uspeva stvari pokrenuti i okrenuti u svoju korist. On je pokreta? radnje. Njihov otac, stari Moor, predstavlja središte, objekat preko koga sinovi deluju me?usobno, tj. oca, vlast, pa ?ak i Boga. Na kraju svi glavni likovi stradaju, ali ipak drama nema sve karakteristike tragedije.

Ono što ovu dramu izdvaja od ostalih jeste savršena retorika. Monologe treba ?itati pažljivo, jer se u svakom krije jedan nov i originalan pogled na odre?en problem. Ova drama je nastala u osamnaestom veku, tako da je prili?no „neiskvarena“. Dok savremeni pisci pišu po ugledu na mnoštvo pre?ašnjih pisaca, ovde se primeti samo uticaj helenske i hebrejske književnosti. Radnja ove drame je poslužila Dimi kao osnova za roman „Grof Monte Kristo“, a tema koju razra?uje Šiler se produbljuje u delima Dostojevskog, Mana i mnogih drugih.

Najbolja drama koju sam ?itao (s tim što ih nema baš mnogo), a Šiler mi je za sada iznad Šekspira. Ocena 10/10.

Felix says

German Edition - German Review:

Ach ja, Schiller ist doch immer wieder herzerfrischend, zumindest wenn er noch ein wenig stürmt und drängt. Man merkt den Einfluss des englischen Schauerromans und es zwickt und zwackt noch etwas sowohl in der Handlungsführung als auch bei den Figuren, aber wen kümmert's? Mir jedenfalls hat's Spaß gemacht, mal wieder einen (hier ja eigentlich noch nicht) "Klassiker" zu lesen. Das Übergreifen des Sturm und Drangs in die zerrissene Diktion hat mich auf Dauer allerdings ein wenig genervt.

Ach ja, und das Ende ist natürlich echt unsäglich. Diese lapidare Hinmeuchelung von Amalia? Strapazierte...

Araceli.libros says

Esta obra fue... bastante genial.

Siempre digo que no me gusta el teatro, pero cada vez que leo una obra (muy de vez en cuando) me termina gustando, y mucho.

En "Los bandidos", es como si hubiera dos obras en una. Por un lado tenemos un especie de drama familiar (un hermano celoso y rencoroso, Franz, convence a su padre de desheredar a su hermano mayor, el más querido, el favorito: Karl. Más tarde le miente al decirle que, al verse abandonado y desterrado, este muere...

Y la culpa de ese hecho recae en el pobre viejo. Francis planea deshacerse de su hermano y su padre para convertirse en el único heredero, y de paso quedarse con la chica). Por el otro lado, seguimos las "aventuras" de los bandidos, un grupo de asesinos a los que Karl se alía en un arrebato de rabia al enterarse de que su padre lo ha abandonado. Pasan cosas, bla bla, y Karl luego recibe noticias de su amada, va a su castillo y se entera de los viles planes de su hermano...

Me gustó mucho. La obra tiene algo de telenovela, y tiene escenas que ya estamos acostumbrados a ver por todas lados... Pero algo me dice que Schiller fue de los primeros en idear este tipo de historias (se publicó en el año 1781), así que lo admiro por eso.

Otra cosa que me sorprendió fue la cantidad de maldiciones, sangre, inmoralidad, traición, burlas a la iglesia, atrocidades, y todo lo que se puedan imaginar que hay en esta obra, teniendo en cuenta la época en la que se escribió. Supongo que habrá causado un gran revuelo por aquellos tiempos.

Tenemos al hermano malvado, Franz (que es lo más inmoral del mundo) y al "bueno", al héroe, que es Karl. Pero Karl tampoco es un ángel. Sí, es noble, es un especie de Robin Hood, pero no le molesta mucho matar y robar para conseguir lo que quiere. Cada uno de los bandidos es un desastre de persona, y él lo sabe; pero son sus camaradas, así que les debe lealtad. En un par de ocasiones, Karl tiene que decidir entre la vida en el castillo con su amada, o la vida de forajido... Y bueno, no es una decisión muy fácil.

Lo que no me gustó fue el trato que se le da a la única mujer de la obra... Pero bueno, estamos hablando de siglo XVIII, mucho no se puede pedir.

La obra también tiene frases muy buenas, pero no se pueden apreciar demasiado debido a lo raro que suena la traducción al español. Qué lástima que no pueda leerla en alemán (algo que nunca va a pasar).

Rob says

(6/10) *The Robbers* reads like someone's -- Friedrich von Schiller's, if the cover's to be trusted -- attempt to make a German version of Shakespeare. There are eloquent philosophical speeches and sometimes ecstatic language, characters that swear eternal vengeance on each other, and a tragic ending in which everything ends up covered in blood. But it's a bit more abstract and a bit more grim than the Bard, and seems a bit more like one of his contemporaries, perhaps a classed-up version of one of John Webster's grand guignols.

Of course, it's incredibly unfair to compare Schiller (or anyone) to Shakespeare, but the influence is so obvious that it's hard not to. That comparison makes the play's flaws -- the thinness of its characters and its overtalkative nature -- stand out more. That's not to say it's all bad -- it's a pretty decent read on its own, and from what I understand a Big Deal in German literature. But it always feels a little incomplete, obscured by the shadow of its influences. Maybe Harold Bloom was onto something after all.

Christel says

Soll ich vor Furcht eines qualvollen Lebens sterben? Soll ich dem Elend den Sieg über mich einräumen?
Nein, ich will's dulden. Die Qual erlahme an meinem Stolz! Ich will's vollenden.

Besser kann man das Drama nicht zusammenfassen. Alte Schullektüre, überraschend wieder entdeckt. Immer

noch spannend!

Anna says

Das erste Drama, das Schiller veröffentlicht hat und für mich auch das erste Drama, das ich von ihm gelesen habe. Es hat mir sehr gut gefallen und vor allem das Ende fand ich wirklich stimmig. Ich habe etwas mehr Zeit gebraucht, das Buch zu lesen, denn man muss sich eben einmal an die Sprache gewöhnen, sich in die Zeit hineinversetzen, in der Schiller das Drama geschrieben hat und es ist vor allem hilfreich zu wissen, in welcher Situation sich Schiller befunden hat, als er "Die Räuber" geschrieben hat.

*** Pixelflocke * says**

Schillers Räuber als Hörspiel angesiedelt in unserer aktuellen Zeit - es war großartig!

Die Sprecher und die akustische Untermalung waren klasse (lediglich die Stimme von Mrs Daniels gefiel mir nicht ganz - sie klang einfach zu jung für so eine alte Rolle). An einigen Stellen musste ich auch echt schlucken, denn die Vergewaltigungen und Morde waren schon ziemlich krass inszeniert.

Hier hat einfach alles zusammengepasst: der Text der Neuinterpretation, die Sprecher und die musikalische Gestaltung. Ich hoffe Audible wird noch mehr Klassiker auf diese Art neu aufnehmen, dann bin ich sofort wieder mit dabei!

Jim Leckband says

"The Robbers" is a very strange play. Plays by their nature are very talky, but this one has long monologues without a lot of action at the start. There is more "drama" at the end. In his preface, Schiller acknowledges the dramatic problems of the play as he says he meant it as a dramatic prose piece rather than a full-blown stage play.

The other strangeness in this play is that Schiller up-ends our expectations, set by Shakespeare and other classic tragedians, of finding our initial assessments of the characters refuted; where innocence is rewarded and guilt is punished, the wicked are always stained and the good are always pure, and love wins in the end.

In "The Robbers", the innocent are killed, some of the guilty are rewarded, vengeance is deflected and love is finally shown as just a mistake. This is pretty nihilistic stuff, but it does make for page-turning reading because you definitely don't see it coming and I was surprised by how much Schiller defied expectations.
