During the past several decades it has become virtually impossible to review a single Western critical work on Lermontov without finding numerous references to the great debt he owes to English literature, more specifically to Byron. The same works have a tendency to pay only minimum lip service to any influence which German literature may have had on Lermontov's development as an artist; in fact, many fail even to mention it. A search for German material on this subject was also, contrary to my expectations, quite fruitless since German criticism seems to have been primarily concerned with Lermontov's reception in Germany. Yet, Lermontov's ardent interest in German literature was of much greater significance and of longer duration than is popularly believed.

Lermontov's initial acquaintance with the German language came quite early. After the death of his mother when he was only three years old he was, in fact, raised by a German governess by the name of Christine Römer. He himself, in a commentary dated 1830, attributed his lack of knowledge of Russian folklore to the fact that he had been fed only German by his nanny. But she was not solely responsible for his Germanophile orientation. Although most critics consider Pushkin to have been the greatest single Russian influence on Lermontov's formative years, they completely overlook the profound importance of his older contemporary, the superb poet V. A. Zhukovskii, during this early period. Zhukovskii had by then attained a reputation not only as the great popularizer of Schiller in Russia, but also as the translator into Russian of numerous works by other German writers including Goethe, Kotzebue, Matthison, Klopstock, Uhland, Hebel, Körner, Bürger, de la Motte-Fouqué, Halm, Rückert, Chamisso and the Brothers Grimm. Indeed, several German poems which Lermontov was to translate later, he had already seen in Zhukovskii's translation and had thus been motivated to read them in the original.

In 1828, at the age of fourteen, Lermontov made his first attempts at writing poetry. These primitive efforts, in the judgment of most reviewers, exhibited little originality or talent. One important contemporary critic insisted that the first work of merit composed by the budding poet was his translation of Schiller's "Handschuh."
In fact during this period Schiller seems to have constituted the single, most obvious influence on his development as a poet. This may be attributed not only to his ability to read him in the original, or to the German poet’s great renown during this time. Soviet critics in part ascribe this affinity to the fact that both manifested an iconoclastic, youthful fervor which was tempered by a degree of cynicism and irony; and both started writing during the reigns of tyrants, Karl Eugen and Nicholas I respectively, which forced them into a non-conformist attitude. Be that as it may, Schiller was the first and only foreign writer whom Lermontov studied seriously during the initial phase of his literary development. The following seven poems by Schiller were all translated by him in 1829:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schiller Poem</th>
<th>Lermontov Translation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Perchatka&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Der Handschuh&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Ballada&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Der Taucher&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Tri Ved’my&quot;</td>
<td>From Act 1, Scene 4 of Macbeth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Ditia v Liul’ke&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Das Kind in der Wiege&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;K’&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;An ++&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;K Nine&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;An Emma&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Vstrecha&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Die Begegnung&quot;</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

One must keep in mind that Lermontov was only fifteen years old when he accomplished these translations and that it would not be fair to weigh their literary merit on the same scale as Schiller’s originals. Some comparison may however be made in style and content which could shed some light on Lermontov’s artistic maturation.

His first translation, "Perchatka,” is a relatively juvenile attempt to follow Schiller’s alternating amphibrachic and iambic metre with a minimum of inventiveness. He even adheres to the pattern of the lines, lengthening and shortening them in accordance with the original. The second stanza is a good illustration:

```
Und wie er winkt mit dem Finger,
Auf tut sich der zweite Zwinger,
Und hinein mit bedächtigem Schritt
Ein Löwe tritt
Und sieht sich stumm
Rings um,
Mit langem Gähnen
Und schüttelt die Mähnen
Und streckt die Glieder
Und legt sich nieder.
```

```
Vot tsarskomu znaku vnimaiut,
Skripuchuu dver’ otvoriaiut,--
I lev vykhodit steponoi
Tiazholoi stopoi,
I molcha vdrug
Gliadit vokrug;
Zevaia lenivo,
Triaset zhëltoi grivoi
I, vsekh obozrev,
Lozhitsia lev.
```

Clearly Lermontov’s translation occasionally stumbles and becomes forced because of his attempt to be faithful to the tonic flavor of the original. An entire segment of the German poem composed of eleven lines is omitted by Lermontov, possibly because it contains lexical and tonic elements too difficult for him to have translated effectively, but also because the passage may be left out without altering the story-line of the poem: A royal arena containing assorted wild animals is being observed by assorted nobility. A beautiful young lady throws her glove among the beasts