Money and the Mind: the Economics of Translation in Goethe’s *Faust*

Marc Shell

\[ \text{Gellt est verbum Diaboli, per quod omnia in mundo creat, sicut Deus per verum verbum creat.} \]

\[ \text{Martin Luther}^1 \]

Goethe’s *Faust* is informed by a series of contracts in which one party leaves a deposit with another. In Part One, for example, Faust deposits his soul in order to transfer to himself special powers, and in Part Two the Emperor deposits his subterranean estate in an attempt to save the Empire from ruin. Faust’s contract with Mephistopheles elucidates an attempt to translate linguistically the “Word” of the biblical *Grundtext* into action, and the Emperor’s contract elucidates an attempt to translate, by the medium of paper money, *Grundbesitz* into gold. In *Faust*, as we shall see, translational contracts connect the intellectual possession of an idea, which concerns language, with the propertal possession of a commodity like gold, which concerns economics. The way in which linguistic and economic translation are identified with and opposed to each other in *Faust* suggests an economy significant to the study of literature and philosophical dialectic in general.

I. Translation

When he first appears on stage, Faust is intellectually and financially bankrupt (364, 374).² He would overcome this dual dilemma

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by mining the meaning of verbal and pictorial symbols. He seems to say: "In order to make mine the hidden treasures of the symbolic world and of myself, I must give myself over to magic." His first attempt to interpret or translate to himself the meaning of a Zeichen (427, 434) results in his learning that he is not a god (439). His second attempt results in his learning that he is not an Übermensch (490). Faust, who believed himself to be the image of God (516) is like (gleichen) only the spirit he can conceive (begreifen 512). Who is Faust like?

Before Faust and we learn the answer to this question, Faust's search is interrupted, ironically, by his famulus Wagner. Wagner has overheard Faust's monologues (as have we). He believes mistakenly that Faust was merely reciting an antique play (as Faust appears to some modern readers), and assures Faust that such recitation is profitable (524). Faust agrees with Wagner's apprehension that his words were playful, but only because they cannot yield active results (556). He wonders whether it is ever necessary to juggle words (553). Wagner believes that language is the Mittel by which to translate (übertragen) to oneself the Quelle that all men seek (562); Faust distrusts bibliolatrous researches because they obscure the meaning he seeks. For Faust one's eigene Seele is the holy source. He pities Wagner for his fruitless philological search to acquire intellectual Schatz and alludes to Heraclitus' fragment about those who seek to translate to themselves or mine gold and cannot discover it (604, cf. 6766).²

Throughout Faust, as we shall see, the general problem of acquisition is expressed in terms of translation. In all the Indo-European and in many other languages, as it happens, "translation" refers to linguistic, economic, spiritual, psychological and other kinds of transferences. In the linguistic sciences, for example, "translation" refers to intra- and inter-linguistic translation, or to metaphorization and translation between two languages; and in the economic and legal sciences, it refers to protoperal translation.³

² Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Faust, ed. by Erich Trunz (Hamburg, 1967). The numbers in parentheses refer to verses.
⁴ Translatio, as Quintilian (Institutio Oratorio 8.6.3-7) notes, is the Latin version of the Greek metaphorà (cf. J. L. Vives, Ratione 1 [in Opera, 1555, 1, p. 85]). Translatio refers to intra-, and inter-linguistic translation and also to protoperal transfer (Encyclopedic Dictionary of Roman Law [Philadelphia, 1953]; and the Appendix to Justin's Code [1949], s.v. "translatio"). Compare the English translation (cf. tralation), the French
An exemplary problem of translation in Faust concerns the inheritance of intellectual property from previous generations. On the one hand, Faust seems to have wanted to carry on the medical tradition bequeathed to him by his father. "Was du ererbt von deinen Vätern hast, / Erwirb es, um es zu besitzen" (682-83). On the other hand, Faust now knows the difficulties of acquiring knowledge and he knows that his father did not practice true medicine. On Easter Day, when the people sing the praises of Faust the doctor's son (1007), for example, he insists that he served his father only as a steward who distributed a dangerous Gift (1053). He argues that the people should praise only the divine Father and / or Son, who made a pact with the people on the first Easter day. Wagner is unable to understand Faust's dissatisfaction with himself. "Tut nicht ein braver Mann genug, / Die Kunst, die man ihm übertrug, / Gewissenhaft und pünktlich auszuüben?" (1057-59). Wagner cannot understand that Faust, in his dissatisfaction, is living up to the standards that God expects from him. In the Prologue to Faust, God the Father insists that Faust, who refuses merely to carry on the medical knowledge of his father, is not so much the "Doktor" (which is what Mephistopheles calls him) as "Mein Knecht" (941, 299).

Although the servant of God, Faust needs the devil or at least a devilish agent. "Outside the gates" of the human city, Faust recognizes that he is a mere Mensch (940), but soon wishes to become or to form an alliance with a sub- or non-human Unmensch. He wishes for a Zaubermantel, "Und trüg’ er mich in fremde Länder!" (1122-23). Almost immediately there appears on stage an inhuman being, a poodle, which will soon become by means of an act of linguistic translation an agent of translation in general.

Wagner believes that when one opens up ein würdig Pergamen the very heavens will descend on one (1108-09). Faust, however, does not share Wagner's kind of reverence for the written word. He seeks to translate (übertragen) into his own medium the alien source that is the heilige Original or sacred Grundtext (1220-23). Martin Luther, the Protestant contemporary of the historical Faustus, translated the apostle John's sentence about the universal origin, "En archē en ho logos," as "Im Anfang war das Wort" (cf. 1224).

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*translation*, the German Übertragung (cf. Übersetzung), the Italian translatio (cf. metafora, translatore, and transferimento), and the Spanish traslatio (cf. traslado and traslación). In the non-Indo-European Hebrew, ha-a-va-rah means intralinguistic translation (metaphor) and transfer of property.
Faust protests, however, that he cannot treasure das Wort so much as ho logos (1226, cf. 1216). (Perhaps, too, he holds that in the beginning there was something other than ho logos.) He translates (übersetzen 1227) John’s logos into his own discourse as Tat (1237). “In mining the meaning from words,” Faust seems to say, “I must change it in order to make it mine.” With a Feder (1231), a leitmotif and prompting Triebfeder to the action of the drama,5 Faust writes out his translation. His active translation of the bible somehow prompts the transformation of a poodle into the Unmensch Mephistopheles.

Faust, who has just completed a linguistic translation, now concludes a legal transfer or Pakt (1414). Unlike the other spirits with whom Faust communicated, Mephistopheles likes and is like Faust (1646). Faust and Mephistopheles conclude a Bündnis (1741) apparently different from Jesus’s Bunde of the first Easter Day (748), the mere symbol of which frightens Mephistopheles (1300-2). Mephistopheles proposes that he serve Faust in return for which Faust shall do das gleiche for him when they meet in the beyond (1658-9). Faust counter-proposes a bet and states the terms: “Werd’ ich zum Augenblicke sagen: / Verweile doch! du bist so schön! / Dann magst du mich in Fesseln schlagen . . .” (1699-1701). By this wager, which brings to earth the bet in heaven between God and Mephistopheles (315-17), Faust makes a hypothec or hypothetical deposit of his soul in return for a still undefined power and Mephistopheles gambles that he can give Faust the (Rousseauian) rest for which, as it seems to Mephistopheles, Faust yearns.6 The plot (hypothesis) of Faust contains many such conditional deposits—hypothetical hypotheses—that seem to move the plot forward. Its moving force is the prompter (hypothesized) Mephistopheles, who enables Faust to progress by a kind of spiritual or intellectual hypothesisation.

Before he begins to serve Faust, Mephistopheles demands that their oral agreement be written down (1714-5). Faust mocks Mephistopheles’ Wagnerian demand, and uses the language of the mint to criticize written documents. “Allein ein Pergament, beschrieben und beprägt, / Ist ein Gespenst, vor dem sich alle scheuen” (1726-27). Faust distrusts parchment inscribed and sealed

5 On Triebfeder, see note 106 below.
like paper money and coins. Mephistopheles, however, is insistent. Although he does not care what kind of paper is used (Pergament, Papier or Blättchen), he demands that Faust sign (unterzeichnen) in blood (1731-37). To humor the vampyrlic devil, Faust writes his signature in blood. The signed pact is a "letter of hypothecation" which, like the bond between Shylock and Antonio in Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice, grounds the subsequent action of the drama. To Mephistopheles, as we shall see, the writing certifying the hypothetical hypothecation of Faust's soul seems to be a credit note which, frequently during the drama (e.g., 6576, 11613), he brandishes as a deed entitled to the soul of Faust.

Having secured the "deed," Mephistopheles begins to attempt to secure Faust's soul. Playing on Faust's own conceit, that he is shrewder than other men (366), he tries to convince him to look at the world shrewdly (1816-17) enough to understand or receive the power that Mephistopheles claims that he would transfer to him. Faust, he says, could be as strong as six horses by appropriating these beasts to his proper human self:

Wenn ich sechs Hengste zahlen kann,
Sind ihre Kräfte nicht die meine?
Ich renne zu und bin ein rechter Mann,
Als hätt' ich vierundzwanzig Beine.

(1824-27)

What 24 modifies suggests what the devil has to offer. The numeral does not modify the number of years during which Faust will enjoy his new powers, as it did in earlier Faust tales. Nor does it modify a definite amount of money as it did in earlier Faust tales. (Faust, in any case, has already expressed his lack of interest in receiving

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7 The Mephistopheles in "The Legend of Theophilus from the Nativity of Our Lady" (in The Sources of the Faust Tradition, ed. P. M. Palmer and R. P. Moore [New York, 1966], see esp. p. 76) is one of the first to insist that the contract be signed in blood (and, incidentally, that it be sealed or stamped with a ring). In Goethe's Faust, Mephistopheles is a kind of vampire or Fledermäus who seeks blood. (Cf. 5479, 7789, 9979, 7981, 8823 and stage direction at 5298). On the relationship between blood, the circulatory medium of the individual body in which the soul is often said to reside, and money, the economic medium of the body politic, see note 21 below.

8 Michael Greener (A Dictionary of Commerce [Middlesex, 1971], p. 170) defines "letter of hypothecation" in the following way. "Shippers may borrow from a bank, using the goods they are shipping as security. Until repaid, the banker has a lien on the goods, as they are listed in the bill of lading. The lien, which of course is not a possessory lien, is conveyed by a 'letter of hypothecation.'" On economic form in The Merchant of Venice, see Marc Shell, "The Wether and the Ewe: Verbal Usury in The Merchant of Venice," Kenyon Review, new series (Fall, 1979).
sums of money [1599, 1679], which his counterparts in some earlier Faust tales accept.) It is Goethe’s innovation that in his Faust 24 modifies the number of horses’ legs—the superhuman and beastly horsepower—which Mephistopheles can somehow transform into Faust’s property. (Similarly, the numeral 7 later modifies Mephistopheles’ seven-league boots [10067].) Goethe’s Faust does not speculate here about the means of transferring to himself the horsepower that Mephistopheles offers. We shall see, however, that it is the appropriative power of money itself for which Faust bargains.

The pact scene does not end with Mephistopheles’ beastly injunction that Faust disdain reason and science and refuse to speculate. Just after Mephistopheles’ famous statement about Faust’s going over (sich übergeben 1866) to the devil, Goethe shows how Mephistopheles would damn Faust by showing how he damns his foil, the Student who interrupts Faust’s conversation with Mephistopheles. Pretending to be Faust, Mephistopheles tries to damn the Student by confusing his understanding of the relation of words to things or to concepts. His method is to disjoin words and things (1952-53), to urge the Student to attend only to the written word. He praises the “possessibility” of written knowledge,

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10 Among the powerful “horses” that Mephistopheles supplies in Faust are the Zauberpferde (Faust, “Trüber Tag,” p. 138, 1.37) that Faust and Mephistopheles ride past the gallows where Gretchen is to be executed (4998-4404). Cf. Chiron (the Centaur) in Part Two, Act II.

11 Dialecticians, who interpret Mephistopheles as the spirit of negation, are often attracted to or repelled by Mephistopheles’ injunction to Faust to disdain speculative reason: “einen Kern, der spekuliert, / Ist wie ein Tier, auf dürre Heide / Von einem bösen Geist im Kreis herumgeführt, / Und rings umher liegt schöne grüne Weide” (1830-33). Friedrich Engels (Deutscher Sozialismus in Versen und Prosa (in Karl Marx/Friedrich Engels, Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe, ed. D. B. Ryazanov and W. Adoratsky [Moscow, 1927-35], I, 6, p. 236), for example, notes that in these lines the devil argues for speculation. (Hereafter this edition of Marx/Engels will be referred to as MEGA.) Equally controversial is the monologue that Mephistopheles speaks between Faust’s exit and the student’s entrance: see, for example, Hegel’s treatment of Faust 1851-52 and 1966-67, discussed in Section VIII below.
which, as the Student notes, one can carry (tragen) about in black and white (1966). The gate to the temple of Certainty is to hold "fast" to the words of the master (1990-2). No need, as it seems, to work to understand concepts. At first the Student is loath to accept Mephistopheles' advice, and argues that there must be a Begriff for each Wort (1993). But Mephistopheles argues that even where Begriffe fail the proper Wort can be found (1995 f.). The Student is duped by Mephistopheles' arguments that one should credit or believe in (glauben) mere words (1999) and that nothing, not even an Jota, can be robbed or misappropriated (rauben) from a word. A word, like an intellectual possession, is secure from robbery. (At the end of Faust there is some suggestion that Mephistopheles, who believes in the power of the note he has asked Faust to sign, himself believes that nothing can be taken from the written word.) Mephistopheles neglected to sign his agreement with Faust, and he is pleased to sign the notebook of Faust's foil, the Student who came to see Faust with money and fresh blood (2045). Slightly altering the words of Eve to the serpent, he makes his Zeichen (2046). When next we see this foil to Faust, he is an easily damned Baccalauraeus (6790-91).

It is not so easy to damn Faust. In Part One Goethe begins to explain Faust's eventual salvation in terms of Faust's intuition for nameless Begriffe. Faust, for example, conceives (greifen) a feeling of love for which he knows no name or word (3059 ff.); he seems to believe in the ineffability of the divine symbol (1307). Mephistopheles tries to take advantage of Faust's intuition of the ineffable by arguing that Faust's feeling for Gretchen is mere animal desire, and Gretchen herself is displeased that Faust does not name the divine. Through the drama, however, Faust continues to stand by the ineffability of feelings and concepts. Words, he argues, bring a false sense of certainty. Faust's refusal to be

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12 Elsewhere too Mephistopheles uses words to subvert the minds of men: "Falsch Gebild und Wort / Verändern Sinn und Ort! / Seid hier und dort!" (2915 ff.).

13 Faust also has no name for the feeling for divinity (3452-56). Cf. Johann Gottlieb Fichte's discussion and quotation of Faust's doctrine that "Gefühl ist alles" (3456) in Ueber den Grund Unseres Glaubens an eine göttliche Weltregierung (1798) (in Fichte, Sämtliche Werke, ed. J. H. Fichte [Berlin, 1945; rpr. Berlin, 1965], vol. 5, esp. pp. 188-189). Gretchen notes that, although Faust's unwillingness or inability to name God is like that of her priest, it differs in a way which may be used by devilish forces (3467). Indeed, the same Faust who wanted to learn the name of the devil (1331 f.) and can or will not name God often seems to value too highly the words of Gretchen herself (e.g., 3879-80).
misled by the crediting of signs-without-meaning is a characteristic that enables him, though allied with a horsepowerful Unmensch, to become a complete Mensch.

II. Money and Language

The episodes in Goethe’s Faust in which Faust translates the bible, Faust and Mephistopheles conclude their contract, and Mephistopheles teaches linguistics to the Student introduce the reader or spectator to a puzzling relationship that will become more important later in the drama: the connection between problems of linguistic translation, with which these episodes in Part One are concerned, and problems of monetary and propertal translation, with which Part Two will be concerned. In the eighteenth century the link between money and language had been the subject of systematic studies by such thinkers as A. R. J. Turgot and A. Rivarol. In the nineteenth century Karl Marx presented this socially and politically significant problem through a series of focused meditations on the early scenes of Goethe’s Faust, meditations that provide a tentative interpretative access to the economics of translation.

In an essay of 1844 about the power of money in bourgeois society, Marx attempts to define the power that Mephistopheles pretends to bestow on Faust by writing for his Faust (not Goethe’s more skeptical protagonist) a monologue about the power of devil.

Was durch das Geld für mich ist, was ich zahlen, d.h., was das Geld kaufen kann, das bin ich, der Besitzer des Geldes selbst. So groß die Kraft des Geldes, so groß ist meine Kraft. Die Eigenschaften des Geldes sind meine—seines Besitzers—Eigenschaften und Wesenkräfte. Das, was ich bin und vermag, ist also keineswegs durch meine Individualität bestimmt. . . . Ich—meiner Individualität nach—bin lahm, aber das Geld verschafft mir 24 Füße; ich bin also nicht lahm. . . . Ich, der durch das Geld alles, wonach ein menschliches Herz sich sehnt, vermag, besitze ich nicht alle menschlichen Vermögen? Verwandelt also mein Geld nicht alle meine Unvermögen in ihr Gegenteil?15

14 On Turgot’s linguistics and economics, see Marc Shell, The Economy of Literature (Baltimore, 1978), esp. pp. 4, 64, 120 and 145. On Rivarol, see notes 22 and 91 below.

15 Karl Marx, Ökonomisch-philosophische Manskripte aus dem Jahre 1844, in Karl Marx/Friedrich Engels, Werke, herausgegeben vom Institut für Marxismus-Leninismus beim ZK der SED (Berlin, 1956-68), Ergänzungsband, Erster Teil, pp. 564-65. Hereafter this edition of Marx/Engels will be referred to as MEW.
In Mephistopheles' speech in Goethe's Faust (1820 ff.), there is some indication that the power he offers to man is like that of money or propertal translation. Goethe's novel use of 24 suggests that the power that Mephistopheles offers to Faust is generally associable with the power to appropriate, and there are many metaphors to suggest that coined money and paper money are part and parcel of what Mephistopheles offers to Faust.

The power to appropriate and alienate which Marx attributes to money is crucial to his own (and perhaps Goethe's) understanding of the scene in which Faust translates *ho logos* as *Tat*. For example, Marx integrates the sentence from *John*, which Goethe's Faust translates, into his humoristic novel *Scorpio und Felix*, which he wrote before 1837, and he incorporates it into his narration of the genesis of the money form in the first volume of *Das Kapital* (1867). For barterers, writes Marx in *Kapital*, there was no commodity which acted as a universal equivalent; for them, commodities confronted each other not as exchange-values but only as use-values. In order to trade in such an economy, commodity owners thought like Faust:

Im Anfang war die Tat. Sie haben daher schon gehandelt, bevor sie gedacht haben. Die Gesetze der Warenwelt betätigen sich im Naturinstinkt der Warenbesitzer. Sie können ihre Waren nur als Werte und darum nur als Waren aufeinander beziehen, indem sie dieselben gegensätzlich auf irgendeine andre Ware als allgemeines Äquivalent beziehen. Das ergab die Analyse der Ware. Aber nur die gesellschaftliche Tat kann eine bestimmte Ware zum allgemeinen Äquivalent machen.\(^{17}\)

The social act to which Marx refers is, practically, the *Beprägung* of coins, and, theoretically, the assumption by one commodity of the power to measure or purchase all others. Marx suggests that Faust's translation of *Wort* into *Tat* depends on some intermediating third term or universal equivalent. It depends on a homogenizing or one-dimensional agent. Minting in the theoretical sense, argues Marx, signifies that social action whereby all other commodities set


apart the particular commodity in which they all represent their values. "Dadurch wird die Naturalform dieser Ware gesellschaftlich gültige Äquivalentsform." Mephistopheles, who seems able to do all things, is such an "equivalizer." (He even uses his stamp to homogenize the souls of the damned [11662].) Marx quotes The Revelation of John, the seals of which Faust mentions (576), to explain the devil's power.

ill unum consilium habent et virtutem et potestatem suam bestiae tradunt. Et ne quis possit emere aut vendere, nisi qui habet characterem aut nomen bestiae, aut numerum nominus ejus.  

According to Marx the power of money is power of the beast, the translational power that Mephistopheles uses against and offers to Faust.

Failure to comprehend the relationship between money and language, and the relationship between monetary or linguistic tokens and commodities or concepts, leads to damnable and damning errors. Confusing a token with its commodity or concept can easily destroy our "natural" understanding of the polar opposition and dependency between token and thing. In Kapital Marx thus associates Pierre Proudhon's utopian desire to abolish the polar opposition or antagonism between money and commodities, and consequently (since money exists only by virtue of this antagonism) to abolish money itself, with Mephistopheles' linguistic doctrine which disassociates words and concepts. He quotes Mephistopheles' devilish advice to the Student to illustrate Proudhon's faulty mode of argument: "Mit Worten läßt sich trefflich streiten, / Mit Worten ein System bereiten . . . ." (197-98). In his essay of 1880 about Adolph Wagner's philological interpretation of the problem of value, Marx quotes the same lines to mock the errors that Adolph Wagner, like Goethe's Wagner, makes about language and about the language of economics.  

18 Marx, Kapital (MEW XXIII. 101). "They have but a single purpose among them and will translate power and authority to the beast. And no one was allowed to buy or sell unless he bore this beast's mark either name or number" (Revelations 17.13 and 13.17; italics mine). Note the polar ("dialectical") opposition of 17.13 and 13.17. Modern protestant preachers believe that these lines refer to the advent of credit cards before the apocalypse. Cf. Marshall McLuhan's discussion of "Media as Translators" and of "Money: The Poor Man's Credit Card" (McLuhan, Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man [New York, 1966], pp. 56-61, 131-144).


20 Adolph Wagner's name makes him the butt of witty comparisons with Goethe's philologist "Wagner," and Marx sometimes calls Adolph Wagner the "famulus" of
Despite his own comparison of linguistic with propertal translation, Marx argues that most analogies from language to money are as incorrect as those from blood (the circulatory medium of the individual human body) to money (the circulatory medium of the body politic). For example, in 1857-58 Marx argues in the Grundrisse der Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie that


There is no easy analogy between money and language because language does not transform ideas in such a way as to homogenize them and prices are separate from commodities. Nevertheless, Marx allows an analogy based on alienation:

Ideen, die aus ihrer Muttersprache erst in eine fremde Sprache überetzt werden müssen, um zu kursieren, um austauschbar zu werden, bieten schon mehr Analogie; die Analogie liegt dann aber nicht in der Sprache, sondern in ihrer Fremdheit. 21

Rivarol had argued in his essay on translation that “les mots sont comme les monnaies: ils ont une valeur propre avant d’exprimer tous les genres de valeur.” 22 Goethe, who was a numismatist influenced by such eighteenth century theories of money, 23 argued in

the contemporary “scientist” of language, Meyer. Marx, in his Critical Notes on the Treatise on Political Economy of Adolph Wagner (MEW XIX, 355-83), argues that contemporary philology needs change as much as does contemporary economics.

21 Karl Marx, Grundrisse der Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie (Rohentwurf) (Moscow, 1939), p. 80. Concerning the analogies from money to blood (the food of vampires) and from money to language—analogies that Marx came across in reading Goethe’s Faust—see John Law’s arguments that “money is the blood of the State and must circulate” and that “credit is to business what the brain is to the human body” (quoted by Frederick C. Green, “John Law,” in Green, Eighteenth Century Studies [New York, 1964], p. 7); A. R. J. Turgot, Réflexions sur la formation et la distribution des richesses (1766) (in Œuvres, ed. E. Daire [Paris, 1844], vol. 1, p. 45); François Quesnay, Essai physique sur l’économie animale and Tableau économique; and the remarks on the physiocrats in Marx, Das Kapital, vol. 2, in MEW XXIV. 343.


23 On Goethe’s interest in coins and numismatic terminology see Venezianische Epigramme 56 and Anhang zu Benvenuto Cellini (Section VII: “Münzen und Medaillen.” On Goethe’s numismatics and his lost essay Münzbelustigungen, see Ber-
1821 that linguistic translation must be understood in terms of monetary alienation.²⁴ And in his Faust, Mephistopheles is the agent of generalizable translation into the apparently alien or "improper."

Marx’s interpretations of Faust’s translation of logos, of the power conferred by Mephistopheles, and of the linguistic tricks by which Mephistopheles damns the student, help, when taken together, to define the movement of Faust. For example, what the Student in Part One praises as the easy possessibility and portability of written knowledge (1966) becomes in Part Two Mephistopheles’ own praise of the possessibility and portability of the monetary value of paper money (6104). Indeed, the relationship between linguistic and monetary translation is suggested throughout Faust, in which Mephistopheles seeks not only the soul of the individual Faust in Part One but also the body politic of which Faust would be master in Part Two.

III. The Courting of Gold

Part One began with the bankruptcy of an individual who lacked money. Part Two begins with an Empire that is verpfändet (4874). In Part Two, as we shall see, the Emperor makes a social bond that recapitulates at the political level the bond that Faust made with Mephistopheles.

Mephistopheles insinuates himself into the court of the economically pressed Empire and immediately redirects the courtiers’ attention from thesaurical to fiduciary problems. He argues, for example, that the Emperor can pay off his creditors (Gläubiger) merely by being believed. “Mangelte Vertrauen, / Wo Majestät un-

²⁴ In a letter to H. Voss (22.7.1821) Goethe wrote: “Wie hoch haben wir daher den Übersetzer als Vermittler zu verehren, der uns jene Schätze herüber in unsere täglichen Umgebungen bringt, wo wir vor ihnen nicht als fremden seltsamen Ausgeburt erstauzen, sondern sie als Hausmannskost benutzen und genießen.” See too Goethe, “Übersetzungen” (in Noten und Abhandlungen zu bessarem Verständnis des West-östlichen Divans) in which Goethe considers Luther’s translation of the biblical Original or Grundtext; he suggests that, as Walter Benjamin later rephrases it (in “The Task of the Translator: an Introduction to the Translation of Baudelaire’s Tableaux parisiens,” in Illuminations [New York, 1968]), “the interlinear version of the scriptures is the prototype or ideal of all translation;” and he considers translation in terms of Fremdheit. On the treatment of translation in the Noten see also Ewald A. Boucke, Wort und Bedeutung in Goethes Sprache (Berlin, 1901), esp. pp. 287-89.
weigerlich gebeut?” (4878-79). Mephistopheles insinuates that the lack of Geld, not of treasure, is the problem plaguing the Empire (4890). If one could mine the minds of men for credit then one would not need to mine the earth for the thesaurial commodity gold. Mephistopheles sometimes pretends to be interested in mining, in bringing what is deep under the ground up to the light of day (4892); he seems to be a social vampire that would bleed the veins of the mountains and discover gold gemünzt and ungemünzt (4894), both medium of exchange and commodity. In fact, however, his interest is only in the medium.

The Chancellor argues correctly that Mephistopheles’ plan (4893) is inimical to Christianity and feudalism,25 but Mephistopheles counters with a credo of his own. “Was ihr nicht münzt, das, meint ihr, gelte nicht” (4922). Mephistopheles even offers a theoretical justification of his plan. Prompting, or speaking ventriloquistically through a dummy-like astrologer, he offers an alchemical comparison of gold and the sun as cornucopiae.26 Most of the courtiers praise Mephistopheles because he promises what everyone desires. They are interested not in the source of monetary wealth (4945-6), but only in becoming wealthy. The convinced Emperor grants to Mephistopheles the shadowy obscurity of the underground, and hopes that whatever is therein of value will come to the light of day (5031 ff.). (This hope, ironically, is like God’s statement, at the beginning of Faust, that a good man will eventually see the light.)

By whom or by what will the promised gold be discovered? In Part Two Mephistopheles suggests that the members of the court might take up a Hacke (5039) in order to mine the treasures of the earth, as he suggested in Part One that Faust might work (hacken) in the fields (2354) in order to regain youth. In Part Two the Emperor seems to accept, as in Part One Faust refused, the medium (Mittel) of work to raise a golden calf (2362-64, 5040-41). The desire (5048) of the Emperor for the things of which Mephistopheles has told him,


however, becomes so great that it must be restrained. Mephistopheles therefore diverts the Emperor's attention towards what will seem, like money, to satisfy his desire: the deceptive but credited products of magical art. In Part Two, as in Part One, the Mittel opposing work is magic.

Mephistopheles arranges for changes in a Mask that is to be played before the court. The Herold of this mask—a Prokophantasmist (4157)—suspects rightly that Gespenster (5501) are disrupting the show. He notes, for example, that Zoilo-Thersites (played by Mephistopheles) interrupts the goddess of Tätigkeiten (5449-5460). Although he claims to be able to "make the high low" and vice versa (5467), the Herold is unable to interpret—or mine the meaning of—certain allegorical figures that appear on stage: Knabe Wagenlenker, Plutus (played by Faust) and Der Abgemagerte (played by Mephistopheles). Knabe Lenker introduces Plutus (Wealth) to the courtiers as the answer for gold (5571), and in a riddling poem he calls himself Poetry and describes his relationship to Plutus:

Bin die Verschwendung, bin die Poesie;  
Bin der Poet, der sich vollendet,  
Wenn er sein eigenst Gut verschwendet.  
Auch ich bin unermesslich reich  
Und schätze mich dem Plutus gleich,  
Beleb' und schmück' ihm Tanz und Schmaus,  
Das, was ihm fehlt, das teil' ich aus.

(5573-79)

In Faust, as in Pandora (meaning "all gifts") and Hermann und Dorothea ("Dorothea" meaning "gift of the gods") poetry is identified with cornucopian dispensation.27 This association is as old as Aristotle and Alcidamus, and was common among many eighteenth century thinkers, such as Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten.28 Goethe's Knabe Lenker seems to refer, moreover, to the Longinian theory in which sublimity or dispensation (hupos) is the

27 Cf. Faust 235. As Knabe Lenker is associated with poetry and dispensation, so Der Abgemagerte (5646-65), played by Mephistopheles, is associated with Avaritia (and Geiz [5665, 5767-82]). Cf. Faust, Paral. 1020.
28 Emil Staiger (Goethe, 3 vols. [Zurich, 1952-59], vol. 3, p. 287) suggests that the association of Dispensation and Poetry was common in the eighteenth century and cites Goethe's Maskenzug of 1798, Divan (III). Wilhelm Emrich (Die Symbolik von Faust II: Sinn und Vorformen [Berlin, 1943], esp. pp. 181 ff.) considers Faust's double-role as Plutus and Poet, and suggests that it is the idea of Würde which provides to Plutus and Poetry their common ground. Kuno Francke ("Mantegna's Triumph of Caesar in the Second Part of Faust," Studies and Notes in Philology and
polar opposite of orderly disposition (oikonomia). The effect of sublime language is irresistible transport, while the effect of disposition is persuasion. “Sublimity flashes forth at the right moment, scatters everything before it like a thunderbolt, and displays the power of the orator in all its plenitude.” The sublime precipitates a sense of production by the reader. “Our soul is naturally uplifted by the truly sublime; we receive it as a joyous offering; we are filled with delight and pride as if we had ourselves created what we heard.” Longinus’ polar opposition of economy to sublimity, moreover, implies a corresponding opposition of work or resistance to beauty. The audience, like the writer, may be inventive and skillful, and may work hard at understanding the events which it sees or reads. The audience, however, cannot control its reaction to the sublime. As in the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, the beautiful is that which can, indeed must, be comprehended without work. Longinus’ sublime is that which we feel (however erroneously) that we ourselves have created or produced effortlessly. It is that which Goethe depicts in many productions (cf. 235) and which, finally, Goethe shows to be uncreditable. Without work there is no production; without resistance there is no justifiable feeling of liberation from resistance. In Faust the opposition between disposition (Longinus’ “economy” or “body”) and dispensation (Longinus’ “sublime” or “soul”) creates a tension between creditable, real activity and uncreditable, unreal activity. As we shall see, figures such as Homunculus (a soul without a body), Knabe Lenker, (who calls himself Dispensation) and the poet Euphorion end in a sublime manner.

Knabe Lenker’s attempt to explain Dispensation’s relationship to Wealth is not successful. The courtiers do not understand his riddle about aesthetic and economic production, and they are enraged when Knabe Lenker’s apparently valuable gifts are metamorphosed into insects (5659, cf. 6594, 1516). The annoyed Herold exclaims: “Wie doch der Schelm so viel verheißt / Und nur verleihst, was golden gleißt!” (5604-5). But as Knabe Lenker argues, the

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Literature [Boston, 1912] argues that Goethe was influenced by Mantegna’s painting of Plutus which hung in Goethe’s drawing room.


Ibid., Section 1.

“If you take away the sublime, you will remove . . . the soul from the body.” Longinus, Section 11.
Herold fails to interpret properly the transformation (5609). Knabe Lenker must appeal to Plutus, who thus upholds the credentials of Poetry:

Bist Geist von meinem Geiste,
Du handelst stets nach meinem Sinn,
Bist reicher, als ich selber bin.
Ich schätze, deinen Dienst zu lohnen,
Den grünen Zweig vor allen meinen Kronen.
Ein wahres Wort verkünd' ich allen:
Mein lieber Sohn, an dir hab' ich Gefallen.

(5623-29)

Plutus calls Knabe Lenker his son, but the latter soon raises questions about this supposed kinship. The "father" and "son" differ along the same lines that defined the wager between Faust and Mephistopheles (the opposition between rest and activity). Knabe Lenker asks Plutus:

Soll er sich dir? soll er sich mir ergeben?
Die Deinen freilich können müßig ruhn,
Doch wer mir folgt, hat immer was zu tun.

(5702-04)

In Faust, Goethe thus considers the kinship between Wealth and Poetic Dispensation, as in Torquato Tasso he considers the implications of patronage in the arts, and as in Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre he considers the apparent opposition between Commerce and Poetry.

Plutus dismisses Knabe Lenker after the latter has brought the casket in the chariot to the appropriate area on stage. Like other

33 In Torquato Tasso the relationship of economics to poetry is explored in terms of patronage. In Pandora and Hermann und Dorothea this relationship is explored in terms of giving and receiving, possession and dispossession. Epimetheus, for example, passes his time trying to "fasten" again onto the disappeared figure of Pandora. In these and other works of Goethe (e.g., Wahlverwandschaften II.5 and Faust 857) we are reminded that those who cannot give cannot be free or happy.

34 In Goethe's Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre (Bk. 1, ch. 10), the relationship of economics to poetry is explored during an elaborate conversation about "Commerce" (or Plutus in his feudal or post-feudal role). In his "Der Jüngling am Scheideweg" the young poet Wilhelm personified Gewerbe as a shrivelled, wretched-looking sibyl. Werner, on the other hand, considers the goddess Commerce to be (like double-entry book-keeping) an essential agent of order and balance, and regards Wilhelm's theatrical "Befreiung Jerusalems" only as a potential box office hit. Wilhelm is interested in poetic dispensation. Werner extolls the monetary aspect of capitalism: "was wird es dir für ein Schauspiel sein, wenn du das Glück, das mutige Unternehmungen begleitet, vor deinen Augen den Menschen wirst gewährt sehen!"
caskets in the works of Goethe (Pandora, for example), the one carried by Knabe Lenker in Faust is full of dangers.\textsuperscript{35} The courtiers believe they see in it all things, including gemürzte Rollen and Dukaten that jump wie geprägt. They see the answer to all desire (5718 ff.). The Herold is disturbed that the audience takes the seeming for the real. He argues that what they see is mere artiger Schein (5733) that the contents of the casket are Goldschein. "Glaubt ihr, man geb’ euch Gold und Wert?" (5727).\textsuperscript{36} His warning goes unheeded.

The finale of the Mask is signalled by the arrival of Pan (played by the Emperor). Accompanying him are gnomes who mine, or bring to the light of day, gold, "damit man stehlen und kuppeln mag" (5857). Seeming to do the work required to satisfy desire, they would bleed the veins of the mountains for golden blood (5850 f.). Instead of actually digging, however, the gnomes flatter Pan as a potential source of all things (5905):

\begin{verbatim}
Nun entdecken wir hieneben
Eine Quelle wunderbar,
Die bequem verspricht zu geben,
Was kaum zu erreichen war.
\end{verbatim}

(5906-09)

The gnomes promise that the Emperor can introduce or himself become a cornucopian source of wealth. "Speak the word only" they implore Pan. One of the gnomes (later to be identified as the Chancellor) makes a plea for the Emperor to do something (later to be identified as certifying a credit note) that will profit all the world (5913). Whatever else the Emperor does, he is taken with and in by the Feuerquelle in the casket. His close approach to it precipitates an explosion that ends the Mask. This explosion becomes an important focus in the remaining scenes of Part Two, in which Mephistopheles will seem to establish a fiduciary economy that reveals the

\textsuperscript{35} The works of Goethe depict many caskets. (See Natürliche Tochter, Wahlverwandtschaften, Zauberflöte zweiter Teil, etc.) Note that the Küstchen (2731), which Gretchen mistook for a Pfand (2786) on a loan in her mother’s care, is a mere gift-horse (2828) which fails to ensnare her; cf. the second casket delivered to Gretchen (2875), the casket delivered to Helen by Lyceus, the caskets full of money of which Mephistopheles speaks (3666 f.), etc. Cf. Emrich, Symbolik, esp. 185 ff.

\textsuperscript{36} In many works of Goethe, the relationship of economics to poetry is explored in terms of aesthetic falseness and the counterfeitness of Scheingold. See, for example, the first paragraphs of Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre in which the Knabe (cf. Knabe Wagenlenker in Faust), named “Felix” (the Latin equivalent of “Faust,” which can mean “the happy one”), discusses Katzengold (cf. Katzengeister in Faust 2484).
secrets of nature. As Kenneth Burke suggests, the Mask is an allegorical exploration of the lack of aesthetic and economic funds.

In the following episode, generally called "Paper Money Scene," what was presented in the Schein of the Mask as plenty of Gold issues as Geldscheine. When the scene opens we learn that the creditors of the Emperor are somehow paid: the army is re-hired (verpflichtet), and there is fresh blood in the soldiers' ranks (6047). The Chancellor explains what has happened by reading aloud a text inscribed on a Blatt of paper.

Zu wissen sei es jedem, der's begehrt:
Der Zettel hier ist tausend Kronen wert.
Ihm liegt gesichert als gewisses Pfand,
Unzahl vergrabnen Guts im Kaiserland.
Nun ist gescrog, damit der reiche Schatz,
Sogleich gehoben diene zum Ersatz.

(6057-62)

During the Mask the Emperor set his Namenzug (6064) to this economic document with Federzügen (6070). The monetary bargain, which promises delivery of assigned underground treasure, is thus the foil to the unspoken contract between Mephistopheles and Faust, which seemed to promise delivery of a soul. As a Zaubermantel seemed to redeem Faust's situation in Part One, so the Zaubermantel (6157) of money seem to redeem the economy of the Empire in Part Two. They are vergilbte Blätter that, like the Blatt on which Faust wrote his pact, seem able to transform all that is bad into good. The numismatic Gedicht seems to become a Goldblatt.

Unlike the contract in Part One, this document—signed, sealed and promising delivery—is reproduced thousandsfold with a Stempel (6074). The wonderful technology brings to mind mech-
ical reproduction not only by the coin-maker’s anvil die but also by the printer’s press; Mephistopheles’ amazing Tausendkünstler recalls achievements like those of the medieval printer and moneylender Fust.\textsuperscript{42} Printing in Fust’s medieval world created a new kind of sign or Zeichen (4997) that conquered most creditors and believers (cf. 6079 ff.). “Hoc signo victor eris.”\textsuperscript{43} In this part of Faust the new and ideologically subversive mode of symbolization is linked with the historical advent of paper money.

IV. Paper Money and the Mind

Understanding the significance of paper money in Faust requires both consideration of historical and literary antecedents and also exploration of the theoretical problems of aesthetic and philosophical—as well as economic—inflation that the Paper Money Scene poses.

In the Paper Money Scene, Goethe imitates Marco Polo’s brilliant description of paper money in China, in which Polo tries to explain Chinese financial institutions (which his European audience did not believe to exist) in terms of alchemy and flight.\textsuperscript{44} Goethe himself disliked and distrusted paper money.\textsuperscript{45} In Faust Goethe recalls

\textsuperscript{42} Johann Fust (?-1466), often confused with “Faust” (even by his grandson, in a dedication to the Emperor Maximillian), was a printer accused of robbing Gutenberg of the fruits of his invention and of being a money-lender or banker.

\textsuperscript{43} Constantine the Great (288-337 A.D.), son of Helena and husand of Fausta, saw a vision of the flaming cross with the legend en tou toi nika (By this conquer) just before the Battle of the Milvian Bridge (312 A.D.), a vision that is said to have led to his conversion to Christianity. The legend soon appeared, as HOC SIGNO VICTOR ERIS (You will be victorious through this sign), impressed into designed coins, including Vetrano’s issue of about 350 A.D., in which Victory crowns the Emperor.

\textsuperscript{44} Marco Polo writes that “the great Kaan causes sheets to be spent for money. The great lord has the alchemy perfectly.” He notes that one of the advantages of paper money is that “it is lighter than anything else to carry by road” (cf. Mephistopheles’ speech in Faust) and that it answers all desires. In the states other than China visited by Polo we know of the early existence of block-printing and money, and of the existence of that inflation which often ensues after the issuance of paper monies (The Book of Ser Marco Polo, ed. and trans. with notes by Colonel Sir Henry Yule [London, 1929], esp. pp. 429 ff.).

the disastrous European monetary experiments, including the notes de confiance of John Law, the land-secured assignats issued during the French Revolution, and the Austrian redemption notes (called "Scheingeld"), and he takes into consideration Shakespeare's account of how Richard II, more "Landlord of England" than its king, issued "blank charters" and "rotten parchment bonds."

The theoretical relationship between literary and monetary theory was explored by several European and American writers during the first part of the nineteenth century, but only Goethe seriously considered the connection between economic symbolization in paper money and aesthetic symbolization in poetry. In Faust this connection involves the inflation that follows from the Emperor's allowing the papers to pass for gold.

Und meinen Leuten gilt's für gutes Gold?
Dem Heer, dem Hofe gnügt's zu vollem Sold?
So sehr mich's wundert, muß ich's gelten lassen.

(6083-85)


For Goethe's attitude towards the assignats see Campagne in Frankreich (e.g., just before 14 October).

Alexander Del Mar (Money and Civilization: or, A History of the Monetary Laws and Systems of Various States Since the Dark Ages, and Their Influence upon Civilization [1867; repub. New York, 1969], p. 330) discusses the "'redemption' or 'anticipation' notes [that] were issued by the Austrian Government [in 1810] . . . . The name of these notes was derived from the expectation that they would be redeemed in coins from the proceeds of certain anticipated revenues." After "the resumption law of 1825 or 1826" these notes came to be called "'Wiener Währung' or 'Vienna currency'" and also "'Scheingeld'" (p. 335).

William Shakespeare, Richard II, I.i.113, 1.iv.48, II.i.64.

Thomas L. Peacock (Paper Money Lyrics [1837]) argues against the introduction of paper currency in England and explores some of the implications of the comparison between literary poems and the "money-men's" "promises to pay." An anonymously authored book entitled Ein Blick in die Geschichte der Zettelbanken in Europa und auf die Errichtung einer Nationalbank in Bayern (1822) includes a poetical prayer that the land be saved from the "Papierpest" (quoted and discussed by A. Pick, Papiergeld [Braunschweig, 1967], pp. 129-130). On the relationship between paper money and literature in the United States, see Marc Shell, "The Gold Bug," Genre (Spring, 1980).
His own Marshall reassures the astonished Emperor by describing the widespread circulation of the "flying monies" or "kites."\(^{51}\)

Unmöglich wär's, die Flüchtigen einzufassen;  
Mit Blitzeswink zerstreute sich's im Lauf.  
Die Wechselbänke stehen sperrig auf:  
Man honoriert daselbst ein jedes Blatt  
Durch Gold und Silber, freilich mit Rabatt.

(6086-90)

Though the Emperor seems not to notice, the Marshall's words imply that inflation is already affecting the economy of the empire. Just as verbal inflation affected the high-flown verbiage of the damnable Student, so the money-in-flight will be disastrous on the social level. The Emperor might have been better counselled by Thomas Gresham, the English contemporary of both Faust and Fust, who explored the general problem of inflation. If the amount of gold is unmeasurable (unzählig) in the same way that Knabe Lenker's gifts are supposed to be, then the inflationary discount must increase ad infinitum. All monies, including crowns, will become worthless, as will the crown itself.

Mephistopheles, who had argued earlier in Part Two that belief was all that the court needed to obtain golden wealth, now makes an alliance between aesthetic and monetary symbolization. Through the medium of the dummy-like Faust he suggests that the Kaiserland is a poetical reserve and that the treasure in the land is, like the fantastical goods parcelled out by Poetic Dispensation (Kanbe Lenker), infinite and unquantifiable (5576). Faust himself compares mining with imagining:

Das Übermaß der Schätze, das, erstarrt,  
In deinen Landen tief im Boden harrt,  
Lieg ungenutzt. Der weiteste Gedanke  
Ist solchen Reichtums kümmerlichste Schranke . . .

(6111-14)

\(^{51}\) "Kite" is the commercial slang for "exchange bill" (Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "kite," 3; hereafter this dictionary will be referred to as OED). On the financial institution called "flying money" (fei-ch'ien) in China (c. 750), see Lien-sheng Yang, Money and Credit in China: A Short History (Cambridge, Mass., 1952), p. 52, and Yang, "Das Geld und seine Bezeichnungen in der chinesischen Geschichte," Saeclum (1957), VIII.4, p. 335. Goethe probably knew about the monetary institutions of China from Jean-Baptiste du Halde (Auszählliche Beschreibung des chinesischen Reiches) as well as from Marco Polo.
Thought cannot measure buried wealth; the winged bills fly higher than fantasy can imagine:

Die Phantasie, in ihrem höchsten Flug,
Sie strengt sich an und tut sich nie genug.
Doch fassen Geister, würdig, tief zu schauen,
Zum Grenzenlosen grenzenlos Vertrauen.

(6115-18)

To this advocacy of credit, Mephistopheles adds reminders of the ability of paper money to take the place of gold, and to help one to know exactly what he has (6119-20), just as writing, which he praised in Part One, helps one to know what he knows. Mephistopheles and Faust thus formulate a false and inflationary economics of thought. The inadequacy of that economics is later revealed in a flight of fantasy by Euphorion, the son of Faust and Helen, and akin to Knabe Wagenlenker.\(^52\) In Act I, however, only the fool (whose role in the foolish court Mephistopheles until now has usurped) openly questions the insubstantiality of the paper money notes. He asks that he might be allowed to translate (as Johann Peter Eckermann suggests)\(^53\) the papers given to him by the Emperor for real estate (Grundbesitz 6171), what Kant calls Substanz. As the fool suspects, it will turn out that the Pfand which is the banknote is an idealist Pfänderspiel (5194).

The Paper Money Scene is part of a critique of that idealist philosophy which operates without material guarantees or substantial securities. As early as 1844 Wilhelm von Schütz considered the philosophical significance of Goethe’s description of money in terms of German idealism.

Es ist dem Scheingeld gegangen, wie es der Scheinphilosophie—Phänomenologie—gehet. Dies alles ist unvergleichlich dargestellt, bleibt aber hinter dem was nun folgt als geniale Verknüpfung des Realen mit dem Idealen, oder besser ihrer beiderseitigen Gegenüberstellung. Der Göthe’sche Grundgedanke ist hier: daß Idealismus Papiergeld, und Papiergeld Idealismus sei; eine Ansicht die, ehe Faust’s zweiter Theil erschienen, mehrmals zur Sprache gebracht worden.\(^54\)

\(^52\) Faust’s appeal to such flights, of course, is ironic. At the beginning of Part One, he bade farewell to his previous existence in which his Phantasie had risen mit kühnem Flug (640 ff.). On the kinship between Euphorion and Knabe Lenker, see note 81 below.

\(^53\) Eckermann, Gespräche 20.12.1829.

Von Schütz thus connected Hegelian phenomenology (or logic of appearances) with paper money as it is presented in Goethe's Faust.

In Faust the tension between promise and delivery, or between the right to delivery of a commodity and the right to the commodity itself, is presented as an almost dialectical opposition between the "ideal" and the "real." What seems to guarantee a promise—Faust's conditional one to deliver his soul, for example, and the Emperor's monied one to deliver underground treasure—is a creditable deposit, sumbolon or hypothec. As Kant argues in a discussion of money and contractual transference of ownership (translatio/Übertragung), some contracts require an immediate cash transfer in order to conjoin purchase and sale and hence to serve as a secure guarantee. In other contracts, alienation of property (Veräußerung) depends on an exchange of a cautionary pledge or of collateral.55 Money that changes hands in cash transfer should not be confused with caution money: caution money is not part of the purchase price. (The role of caution money in guaranteeing exchange does not differ in kind from that of a ring broken into two parts for the purpose of later identification of the buyer by the seller and vice versa.) In Faust Mephistopheles hopes that paper money—which is insubstantial in the sense that real estate is substantial—will entirely replace both cash transfer and real collateral. His conceptual conflation of monetary sumbola with their linguistic counterparts tends towards a devilishly insidious confusion between monetary hypothec in economic transactions and dialectical hypotheses in idealist philosophy.

In Faust, moreover the word of the Emperor on the banknote seems to substantiate credit and exchange just as the word of God in some English idealist philosophies substantiates the credibility of human discourse.56 In Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung (1819) Arthur Schopenhauer considers idealism and realism in similarly monetary terms:


56 In English idealism monetary theory often plays this role. Jean-Joseph Goux (Économie et symbolique [Paris, 1973], p. 197) says about the idealist Berkeley what is true of Mephistopheles in Faust, that he disassociates symbol from what is supposed to be symbolized. "La philosophie de Berkeley est l'expression extrême, unilatérale, de cette négation de la nature et de la matière qui se réalise dans la circulation signante et monétaire développée. Si elle exprime sur le plan de la conceptualisation philosophique la forclusion de la référence matérielle (négation pure et simple de l'existence de la matière), elle s'exclame dans le même geste; 'Ce compte en banque ne s'est-il pas révélé meilleur qu'une mine d'or à Amsterdam?'" (Cf. Goux, p. 184).
Solchem Eifer gemäß wollte [Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi], indem er die Außenwelt zur Glaubenssache herabsetzte, nur das Pfortchen für den Glauben überhaupt eröffnen und den Kredit vorbereiten für Das, was nachher wirklich auf Kredit an den Mann gebracht werden sollte: wie wenn man, um Papiergeld einzuführen, sich darauf berufen wollte, daß der Werth der klingenden Münze doch auch nur auf dem Stempel beruhe, den der Staat darauf gesetzt hat. Jacobi, in seinem Philosophen über die auf Glauben angenommene Realität der Außenwelt, ist ganz genau der von Kant . . . getadelte "transcendentale Realist, der den empirischen Idealisten spielt."\(^{57}\)

In *Faust*, Mephistopheles teaches a monetary as well as linguistic immaterialism. The *Absolut* in many German idealist philosophies—one of which the damnable Student, who disdains empirical knowledge (6756-67), has adopted as his own—is associated by Mephistopheles not only with a lack of *Substanz* but also with an absence of monetary *solvency* or of *solida* (Roman gold coins) (6736).\(^{58}\)

Paper money is more to Mephistopheles' liking than coin because *solid* metal, during its historical "metamorphosis" from commodity (a lump of gold) to coin (the commodity impressed with the stamp of the state) to paper money (the mere impression) undergoes and participates in culturally and philosophically subversive changes. A coin is obviously both commodity and symbol. The widespread use of coinage may precipitate some conceptual misunderstanding of the relationship between symbol and commodity, but it will hardly deceive its users into believing that symbol and commodity are entirely separable. Paper money, on the other hand, does appear to be a symbol entirely disassociated from the commodity that it symbolizes.

A theory of coin and paper money that treats them both as kinds of inscriptions may shed light on the difference between their modes of symbolization. On the one hand, it is clear that a coin is a composition of a numismatic inscription and a metallic ingot into which the inscription is impressed and to which the inscription


\(^{58}\) The student comments on Mephistopheles' *doppeltsinnige Worte* (6739) which connect the meanings of *absolut* (including "bald" and "penniless") with those of *resolut* (including "bald"). On the absolute currency of the *solidus* (its metallic purity and weight matched or were adequate to the claims made for it by its inscriptions), see the discussion of the Byzantine *nomisma* (bezant) in R. S. Lopez, "The Dollar of the Middle Ages," *Journal of Economic History* (1951), vol. XI, no. 3, pp. 209-34.
refers as a valuable commodity. On the other hand, it is unclear whether paper money should be conceived as a composition of an inscription (6057-62) and an inscribed paper (Zettel), whose reference to an untold, unmined and perhaps non-existent commodity is ultimately irrelevant to its validity; or whether it should be conceived as a composition of an inscription, an inscribed thing, and a commodity for which the inscription and the inscribed thing, taken together, are an Ersatz. Thus the paper money in Faust raises questions crucial to understanding not only symbolization but also the epigram, which Gotthold Ephraim Lessing and Johann Gottfried von Herder define as a genre in which the inscription and the inscribed thing are to be thought of as two theoretically inseparable parts of the same whole.\footnote{G. E. Lessing (Zerstreute Anmerkungen über das Epigramm [Berlin, 1771]) argues that with the epigram the inscribed writing (here the six-line poem) refers to and is not to be thought of apart from that into which it is properly inscribed (here the leaf of paper). Cf. Johann Gottfried Herder, Anmerkungen über das griechische Epigram, in Herders Sammlliche Werke, ed. B. Suphan (Berlin, 1888), vol. 15, pp. 337-92.}

Karl Marx attempts to analyze the ideological tendency of paper money to disassociate symbol from commodity in a narration of the genesis of the money form, a narration that shows the influence of Goethe’s Faust. Gold, personified as the hero of a series of historical episodes in Kapital, transforms itself first into a minted coin and then into printed paper-money. As paper money it seems to use only its exchange value as a means of purchase and to have lost its commodity value. Referring, in Zur Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie (1859), to Chamisso’s Peter Schlemihl, an analogue to Goethe’s Faust, Marx reflects ironically on this development of gold into paper money. “Das Gold hat nicht wie Peter Schlemihl seinen Schatten [for money] verkauft, sondern kauft mit seinem Schatten.”\footnote{Karl Marx, Zur Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie (MEW XIII.95). Adelbert von Chamisso (orig. Louis C. A. de Chamisso) tells (Peter Schlemihls Wunderbare Geschichte [1814]) the story of a man who sells his shadow for gold. We note Chamisso’s suggestion that a shadow stands in the same relation to gold as does soul to reputation, and his topical association of soul with shadow (umbra). Marx (Kritik, MEW XIII.94) writes that, from the point of view of personified commodities the situation looks like this: “Den Waren gegenüber stellt das Wertzeichen die Realität ihres Preises vor, ist signum pretii und Zeichen ihres Werts nur, weil ihr Wert ausgedrückt ist in ihrem Preise.”} Similarly Marx reminds us of the topsy-turvy, and hence Mephistophelean or apparently negative, qualities of paper money. Paper money, he argues, upsets our notions of symbolization. “In der Zirkulation der Wertzeichen erscheinen alle Gesetze der wirklich Geldzirkulation umgekehrt und auf den Kopf gestellt.
Während das Gold zirkuliert, weil es Wert hat, hat das Papier Wert, weil es zirkuliert.”

To many economists exchange value appears to be an imagined ideal entity that possesses (as does price) no reality in commodities. In their confused understanding, Marx writes, “erhält der Tauschwert der Waren im Preis nur ideelle, im Geld nur vorgestellte, symbolische Existenz.” Marx notes that “der Staat, der in dem Münzpreis einem bestimmten Goldgewicht nur einen Taufnamen gab, und in der Münzung nur seinen Stempel auf das Gold drückte, scheint jetzt [in the printing of paper money] durch die Magie seines Stempels Papier in Gold verwandeln.” Paper money, however, is actually the token of coined money. The irony is that “bei dem nur gedachten Geld alles von seiner materiellen Substanz und bei der sinnlich vorhandenen Münze alles von einem idealen Zahlenverhältnis abhängt.” This ideal or nominal relation is what the persuasiveness of Mephistopheles’ linguistics depends on. Credit money, the extreme form of paper money, divorces the “name” entirely from what it is supposed to represent and seems to allow an “idealistic” transcendence (perhaps even a conceptual annihilation) of commodities. As the Student is confused about the relationship between words and concepts (1868-2048), so economists such as Adolph Wagner are confused, in their studies of the German Zettelbank, about the relationship between paper money and commodities.

61 Marx, *Kritik* (MEW XIII.100).
62 Marx, *Kritik* (MEW XIII.95).
63 Marx, *Kritik* (MEW XIII.98).
64 Marx, *Kritik* (MEW XIII.100).
65 On the relationship between the idealization and the naming of money, see Marx, *Kritik* (MEW XIII. 93-94).
66 Cf. Marx, *Kapital* (MEW XXIII.141). The money depicted in *Faust II* is a kind of Kreditgeld which, as Marx writes in the *Kritik* (MEW XIII.95) “gehört einer höhere Sphäre des gesellschaftlichen Produktionsprozesses [than does paper money] an und wird durch ganz andere Gesetze geregelt. Symbolisches Papiergeld ist in der Tat durchaus nicht verschieden von der subsidiären Metallmünze, nur in weiterer Zirkulationssphäre wirkend.”
68 On the associations that Marx makes between Goethe’s student and economists such as Proudhon and Adolph Wagner, see above notes. Among Adolph H. G. Wagner’s influential writings about paper money are *Die russische Papierwährung* (Riga, 1868), *Staatspapiergeld, Reichs-Kassenscheine und Banknoten* (Berlin, 1874), Sys-
Confusions in this economics of language continue to influence current thought about thought. Problems like those that arise from Goethe’s description of the “Wiener Währung” (“Viennese Currency,” another name for Austrian “Scheingeld”) inform interpretations of philosophical Bewährung and Geltung. For example, Ludwig Wittgenstein, working from David Hume’s theory that language and money are both conventions-without-promise and from German theories of economics and metaphysics, suggests that thought is a kind of validity, that it has the same relation to a sentence that Geltung (the agency that lends paper money its worth) has to unmonied paper. In Zettel Wittgenstein writes that thought is (like) what distinguishes a piece of paper money from any other Zettel (cf. 6058):

Man könnte sagen: in allen Fällen meint man mit “Gedanke” das Lebende am Satz. Das, ohne welches er tot, eine bloße Lautfolge oder Folge geschriebener Figuren ist.

...

Oder wenn wir von einem Etwas sprächen, welches das Papiergeld von bloßen bedruckten Zetteln unterscheidet und ihm seine Bedeutung, sein Leben gibt?

Is it etiquette—politic custom or political economy—that gives a printed paper its epigrammatically numismatic validity and that transforms it into current ticket? Is this what transforms pieces of

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69 David Hume writes that “languages [are] gradually established by human conventions, without any promise” and that “in like manner do gold and silver become the common measures of exchange and are esteemed sufficient payment for what is of a hundred times their value” (“Of the Origin of Justice and Property,” David Hume’s Political Essays [New York, 1953], p. 33). The anti-Hobbesian Hume compares language and money to “a [political] convention entered into by all the members of the society” (p. 32) which is similarly “not of the nature of a promise” (p. 32); this is the “convention concerning abstinence from the possessions of others” (p. 33) from which “arise[s] immediately the ideas of justice and injustice themselves” (p. 33).

70 On Geltung in Loetze, Heidegger and others, see Marc Shell, “‘What is Truth?’: Lessing’s Numismatics and Heidegger’s Alchemy,” MLN 92 (1977), pp. 549-570.

paper into Mephistopheles' winged bills or into literary flights of fantasy like Faust? Focusing on the relationship between paper money and coin, Faust comes to believe that numismatic validity, which is proposed by a coin (as its own inscription) is derived from the coin itself (as ingot), yet in the end he discards this belief when he comes to consider paper money and inflation.

Paper money in Faust, then, is not to be confused with coin. (Lukács believes that there is such a confusion in Faust.²²) Paper money, a token of exchange value, appears more deceptively than does coin to represent the value of the commodity directly. Paper appears to be not a token of gold (which it is) but rather a token of exchange value. This value appears to exist only in the commodity and to be expressed by the price. Paper money thus doubly enforces the illusion that exchange value has an independent existence. It is this doubleness that informs Mephistopheles' shadowy "purchase" of the soul of Faust.

V. The Courting of Helen

At a magic mirror before which he stands in Part One, Faust sees the image (Bild) of a beautiful woman (2429-30, 2436, 2600). Images, like words, may be deceptive. Mephistopheles, who remarks that "Gewöhnlich glaubt der Mensch, wenn er nur Worte hört" (2565), hopes that Faust will soon be deceived into seeing a beautiful Helen (in general) in every woman (in particular) (2603-4). The heart of Faust, indeed, is soon stamped (geprägt) by the image of Gretchen. (Similarly, the people of the court are stamped [5720] by the sight of the things in the casket.) Mephistopheles, hoping to use the Zauberbild (4190) to his own ends, decides to mediate between Faust and the woman he believes that Faust seeks. Mephistopheles, encouraging Kupplerwesen (3030, cf. 4856 ff.), argues that the value of a woman's love is measurable by gold (3156, 3314) just as he argued that love (the feeling that for Faust was ineffable) measures up to a word. If Mephistopheles could convince Faust of this theory

²² Lukács (Goethe and His Time, p. 184) is correct that paper money in Faust is related to the downfall of feudalism, but is wrong that Goethe does not distinguish between coin and credit monies. Stuart Atkins (Goethe's Faust: A Literary Analysis [Cambridge, Mass., 1958], p. 148) is probably wrong to argue that the paper money of which Goethe writes in Part Two may be that of antiquity. The peculiar power that Goethe describes is modern. There were no banknotes in ancient Greece; but see A.-N. Bernardakis, Le Papiermonnaie dans l'antiquité (Extrait du Journal des Économistes [15 mars 1874]).
of measurement or payment (as he convinced the Student of his linguistic theory), then the love of Gretchen would no longer seem to Faust to be immeasurable by words.

The problem of translation is thus linked with that of prostitution. Mephistopheles, whose metamorphosis from poodle to devil accompanied Faust’s linguistic translation of Wort to Tat, plays the intermediary. Goethe often remarks that linguistic translation is itself a kind of pimping coupling:

Übersetzer sind als geschäftige Kuppler anzusehen, die uns eine halbverschleierte Schöne als höchst liebenswürdig anpreisen: sie erregen eine unwiderstehliche Neigung nach dem Original.

Part One of Faust, then, depicts Mephistopheles’ attempt to convince Faust that Gretchen is a whore (which is what Valentine calls her [3750, cf. 3767]) and that Faust and he are an inseparable duo: “Ich bin der Werber, und du [Faust] bist der Freier” (4071). When Marx calls money “der Kuppler zwischen dem Bedürfnis und dem Gegenstand” he is thinking in part of Mephistopheles.

The motif of pimping continues into Part Two. During the Mask, for example, Mephistopheles, who plays the role of Geiz (Avarice) breaks through a redeemable security or hypothecary pledge of order (Ordnung Unterpfand 5761) erected by Plutus, and delivers a propagandistic speech in favor of paper money, which is supposed to represent—even to produce—gold. He promises the members of the court the golden treasures of the bowels of the earth and the sexually satisfying treasures of an erotic find (cf. 4977 ff.).


54 In associating love with prostitution, Mephistopheles imitates Satan who, in a deleted section of Faust (Paral. 52), sings these words to one who seeks the “life of deepest nature”: “Euch gibt es zwei Dinge / So herrlich und gross: / Das glänzende Gold / Und der weibliche Schoss.”


56 In its association of money with feces Freudian psychoanalysis makes little theoretical distinction between coin and paper money. Hence Ernest Jones (“Anal-Erotic Character Traits,” in Papers on Psychoanalysis [Boston, 1961], p. 426n) does not distinguish conceptually between Fores’ caricature entitled “The Rival Gardeners” (which depicts a wheelbarrow filled with coins and labelled “Manure from Italy and Switzerland” beside figures of Napoleon and George III) and George Cruikshank’s caricature entitled “The Blessings of Paper Money” (which depicts a figure of Napoleon withdrawing a large pan filled with gold coins from underneath John Bull, who is being dosed with paper money). Yet “The Blessings of Paper Money,” which was published in 1811 (Scourge and satirist; or Literary, theatrical and miscellaneous magazine [London, 1 August, 1811], vol. 2, p. 87) and its historical context
fashions the “gold” contained in the casket into a phallus, the quintessential symbol of desire (5780). Gold, like sexual desire, is omnimorphous; it can be metamorphosed or translated into anything. The phallus, like money, is architectonic. “Denn dies Metal Läßt sich in alles wandeln” (5782).

In his praise of paper monies, moreover, Mephistopheles associates banknotes with love letters. Seeming to recall his praise of written knowledge delivered to the Student in Part One, he suggests that both letters and monies are mediators between whore and client:

Man wird sich nicht mit Börs’ und Beutel plagen,  
Ein Blättchen ist im Busen leicht zu tragen,  
Mit Liebesbrieflein paart’s bequem sich hier.

...  
Die Majestät verzeih, wenn ins Kleine  
Das hohe Werk ich zu erniedern scheine.

(6103-6110)

The *hohe Werk* to which Mephistopheles here refers is the printing of paper money in Part Two. The other productions called *Werke* in *Faust* are the creation of the world (to which reference is made in the Prologue in Heaven) and the creation of Helen herself in Part Two. Throughout Part Two we ponder the status of Hellenic beauty. Is she a mere prostitute (as Mephistopheles and Valentine wrongly assume Gretchen to be), a mere ghost (like paper money), or somehow real?

In Part Two Helen appears twice, first as a mere ghost and then, apparently, in reality. These appearances recapitulate the Gretchen and paper money episodes.

Helen’s first appearance follows the Emperor’s request that Faust bring forth (as in a Mask) Paris and Helen, the *Musterbilder* (6185) of Man and Woman. In the Mask, as we have seen, Faust and Mephistopheles produced the *Schein* of *Gold*. (The Emperor was encouraged to think of Faust as a Scheherezade who could produce a thousand and one aesthetic *Scheine* [cf. 5993, 6002]. What was presented in the Mask as plenty of gold was represented

in the Paper Money Scene as the cornucopia of thousands of monetary \textit{Geldscheine}.\) The Emperor’s present request for ideals makes Faust remark: “Erst haben wir ihn reich gemacht, \textit{/ Nun sollen wir ihn ämulieren}” (6191-92). The production of aesthetic “ideals,” he suggests, is part of the same structure as that of monetary “wealth.” Mephistopheles, however insists that to produce Helen (a love \textit{Schatz}, 6313, 6323, etc.) is not so easy as to produce paper money. Helen, he insists, is not “so leicht hervorzurufen \textit{/ Wie das Papiergespenst der Gulden}” (6197-98). Mephistopheles pretends that the machines of the devil are not able to pass (\textit{gellen}) for heroines (6202), but proposes nevertheless to translate Helen from Greece to Germany if Faust visits the \textit{Mütter} (6216) who, like the \textit{Mères} of John Law’s paper money system, seem to confer rights of subscription.\textsuperscript{77} Faust, who remarked, “Für jedes Mittel willst du neuen Lohn” (6206), agrees to the contract.

The production of Helen does not require extra magic. Even the Herold notes that the room is already inhabited by \textit{Geister} (6376-9). An astrologer (played by Faust) introduces the playlet, but he is interrupted by Mephistopheles, who rises from the prompter’s box and reminds us that prompting is the \textit{Teufels RedeKunst} (6400). Mephistopheles presents an Aristotelian theory of probability and possibility, and, arguing ventriloquistically through the astrologer, suggests that the tension between probability and possibility is resolvable by credit.\textsuperscript{78} “Mit Augen schaut nun, was ihr kühn begehrts, \textit{/ Unmöglich ist’s, drum eben glaubenswert}” (6419-20). If one were to restrain reason with a magical word, then daring \textit{Phantasei} could make the impossible appear probable (6415-20).

In the following playlet, Helen in particular is supposed to be credited as the Beautiful in general. The allegory is a kind of cornucopian dispensation. \textit{“In reicher Spende läßt [der kühne Magier], voll Vertrauen, \textit{/ Was jeder wünscht, das Wunderwürdige schauen}”} (6436-38). As it turns out, Faust is more taken by the

\textsuperscript{77} The significance of these \textit{Mütter in Faust} has been considered from many points of view. To my knowledge, however, no one has studied their relationship to the “mères” (“rights to subscribe,” literally “mothers”) issued by John Law. “[John Law] required subscribers to his new issues [of shares and/or paper money] to be holders of a certain number of old shares, and . . . there was always a headlong rush to obtain the shares of the old series, called ‘mothers’ (\textit{mères}), in order to be able to subscribe to the new, called ‘daughters’ (\textit{filles})” (Elgin Groseclose, \textit{Money and Man: A Survey of Monetary Experience} [Norman, Oklahoma, 1976], p. 130). On John Law and his paper money experiment, see also notes 21 and 46 above.

\textsuperscript{78} On Goethe’s theory of probability and possibility in art, see the “Vorspiel auf dem Theater,” and \textit{Über Wahrheit und Wahrscheinlichkeit der Kunstwerke} (1798).
image of Helen than other members of the court. To him she seems a blessed *Gerwinn* (6489): *der Schönheit Quelle* (6488). The image he saw in the magic mirror, he says, was a mere *Schaumbild* of Hellenic *Schönheit* (6497).

Faust is so enraptured that Mephistopheles must prompt him to keep to his part (6501). He reminds Faust that Paris, whose seizure of Helen Faust would now repeat, is a mere *Gespenst*; that Faust himself is the author of the *Fratzengeisterspiel* entitled “[Der] Raub der Helena” (6546-48). The German Faust, however, still would appropriate to himself the Greek Helen. Like the Emperor at the end of the Mask, he oversteps the bounds of art, and, holding the key brought from the Mütter, would appropriate Helen to himself:

> Was Raub! Bin ich für nichts an dieser Stelle!  
> Ist dieser Schlüssel nicht in meiner Hand!  
> Er führte mich, durch Graus und Wog’ und Welle  
> Der Einsamkeiten, her zum festen Strand.  
> Hier fass’ ich Fuß! Hier sind es Wirklichkeiten...  

(6549-53)

The German Faust would rob from the Trojans the Greek Helen and thus hold fast to reality. He ignores arguments, like that of the Stranger in Goethe’s *Der Sammler und die Seinigen*, that such *Schönheit* is mere *Schein*. Like the Emperor at the end of the Mask, Faust grabs for the ideal as though it were real. “Der Raub der Helena” ends, as does the Mask, in explosion.

Faust, however, does not cease to attempt to appropriate or translate Helen to himself. Act II (Classical Walpurgisnacht) depicts his dreamlike search for her, and Act III (the Helena Act) depicts its apparent success. In Act III Goethe makes what is impossible appear probable to Faust and to us (who replace the courtly audience in Act I). The German man acquires the Greek woman; the German devil Mephistopheles travels with him from the soil of his native Germany to that of Greece, to which he is alien, and is translated (*übertragen* 8013) into the Greek Phorkyas; and Helen, speaking German in Greek syntax, is united with Faust in a kind of matrimony. Their child is Euphorion.

Faust and Helen are blissfully unaware of threats to their union, which they credit as *Schatz, Hochgewinn, Besitz* and *Pfand*. Helen sings of the union between herself, Faust and Euphorion as a *Bund*

79 See Goethe, *Der Sammler und die Seinigen*, “Fünfter Brief.”
80 Cf. *Pandora*, in which Pandora speaks German with Greek syntax.
between *köstlich drei*; Faust sings of their being bound together (9705); and the chorus sings to their *Verein* (9710, 9736). The apparent unity of the German and the Greek, however, falls apart. Its product and sign, Euphorion, is too much the outburst of divine spirit which, as Longinus noted, is difficult to bring under control. Prefigured in the Mask as Knabe Wagenlenker (*Verschwendung*), he is as little at home in Germanic Greece as was Knabe in the Mask. His end, like that of the child of Faust and Gretchen in Part One, is swift. Euphorion flies too high (9821), as does paper money, and, like Homunculus, ends in the sea. The *Bund* between Helen and Faust is shattered. *Heilige* poetry, it turns out, is illusive and inflationary. Whatever necessity impelled Euphorion to break the lawful but dreamy *Bund* (9883), his leavetaking precipitates that of Helen herself.

Helen may represent "reality" in *Faust* (as Lukács suggests). Once Helen learns to speak German, however, Mephistopheles has some control over her. Mephistopheles, as Goethe says, is a director of the Hellenic *Gespenster* in Act III. He can stop the action (see stage directions between 8929-30 and between 8936-37), and he knows that Helen is a ghost as "petrified" (8930) as the golden treasure in the underground to which Faust elsewhere refers (6111). Goethe himself writes of Byron, on whom Euphorion is modelled, that he is "much money and no authority." Like the *Schein* of the Mask in which gold appears to be discovered, Helen is a paper model.

VI. **Fist-law (Faustrecht)**

*Faust* Part Two, as Hegel might note, depicts allegorically the downfall of a society typified by feudal dueling and the rise of a society typified by modern warring. The political allegory begins

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81 Eckermann (*Gespräche* 20.12.1829) reports that Goethe said that Euphorion and Knabe Wagenlenker are *Gespenster* of each other.

82 Lukács (*Goethe*, p. 187) calls "real" the second raising of Helen.

83 Cf. Lukács (p. 189) and Goethe's review of Byron's Faustian *Manfred*.

84 In *the Phänomenologie des Geistes* (in G. W. F. Hegel, *Werke* in zwanzig Bänden [Frankfurt am Main, 1970], III. 271-72), Hegel notes the extreme individualism of Faust's struggle in Part One, and suggests that Faust holds that being alone as true reality which is the reality of individual consciousness. In *the Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften*, III, zus. 432 (*Werke* X.222) Hegel deals directly with the transition from the situation of feudal duel (e.g., that between Faust and Mephistopheles and that between God and Mephistopheles) to that of modern politics. "Seine eigentliche weltgeschichtliche Stelle hat der Zweikampf in Feudal-
with the spiritual duel between Faust and Mephistopheles in Part One, and occupies many acts of Part Two. War informs Faust Part Two from "Der Raub der Helena" to the politically significant conflations of concepts such as Raub and Kontribution (robery and contribution) or Täuschung and Tausch (deceit and exchange).

In Classical Walpurgisnacht (Act II), a Hellenic version of the Germanic Walpurgisnacht of Part One, insectiform animals and pygmies mine golden treasure from an island mountain that seismic forces have raised above sea level. The Greif (griffon), a political tyrant, supervises the mining and guarding of the treasure, and, like Faust, grasps (greifen) as Faust tries to fasten onto, "Mädchen, Kronen, Gold" (7102). The Greif speaks of gold in Blättchen (7582) as Mephistopheles spoke of paper money (6104). He implores his pygmy miners not to allow their enemies to rob (rauben) them, and encourages them to swarm "Nur mit dem Gold herein!" (7600). Similarly, he expounds a theory of etymology or digging for verbal sources (7094 ff.) but, as Chiron (a guide through classical antiquity) tells Faust, who is seeking the Hellenic ideal of woman, it is erroneous to seek literal sources. Helen's age, for example, Chiron compares to a fact that philologists would unearth but that is unimportant to Helen's timeless Gestalt that poets alone can bring to Schau (7429).

Two philosophers, Anaxagoras and Thales, watch the geo-

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85 This mining episode in Part Two has a counterpart in the works of Mammon in Part One. The latter too is described in terms of Schatz (3664), Quelle (3923), Fest (3932), etc.

86 Thales was famous for his knowledge of physics (especially astronomy) and for his ability to use contracts (especially the pact or symbol). At one point in Classical Walpurgisnacht his follower, the chrysaloid Homunculus, suggests that philosophers break their Köpfe in trying to explain what seem to be mere Töpfe. Thales tries to explain how nonsensical (if aesthetically necessary) symbols, like the "Cabiri," can come to be more highly prized than even the golden fleece (8215). In explaining intellectual evaluation he resorts to a monetary metaphor: "Der Rost macht erst die Münze wetter" (8224). The value of a commodity, explains Thales, derives not so much from its intrinsic worth as from suppositions about its patina, age, etc.
graphic and political events on the island mountain. Anaxagoras makes an offer to the chrysaloid Homunculus: “Kannst du zur Herrschaft dich gewöhnen, / So laß ich dich als König krönen” (7879-80). Thales urges Homunculus (a foil to Faust) to reject the devilish offer. Thales’ advice is prudent, for the island-mountain is destroyed in the same night as its birth. This destruction suggests to the spectator a possible end to a Faustian attempt to make all things one’s own property and to establish over it the kind of Herrschaft which Hegel calls Faustrecht.87

At the beginning of Act IV we know that Faust wants Herrschaft, which he associates with his Eigentum (10187).88 “Herrschaft gewinn’ ich, Eigentum! / Die Tat ist alles, nichts der Ruhm” (10187-88). Mephistopheles does not understand the human desire that impels Faust, and offers him “die Reiche der Welt und ihre Herrlichkeiten” (10131). Jesus refused the same offer in Matthew 4, and Homunculus refused Anaxagoras’ similar offer in Classical Walpurgisnacht. Here Faust, who in Part One expressed his disinterest in amounts of wealth, eschews the devil’s offer. Faust would neither dig in the earth nor raise earthen islands from the sea. He would appropriate to himself a new shore between the land and the sea. He wishes to harness the force of the sea itself. “Da wagt mein Geist, sich selbst zu überfliegen; / Hier möchten ich kämpfen, dies möchte ich besiegen” (10220-21). In formulating this plan for subduing the ocean and making new real estate, Faust recalls the terms of the original wager with Mephistopheles. “Das ist mein Wunsch,” he says, “den wage zu befördern!” (10233).

Mephistopheles too assuredly concludes that the expedition of Faust’s command will be easy for him (10236). From the conditions of war he believes he can win shore rights for Faust. As it happens, the Kaiser is warring against a Gegenkaiser.89 Mephistopheles and Faust plan to form an alliance with the Emperor. They do so, however, only in order to gain land rights, seize booty and otherwise gain their own ends. (In this sense, they are allies of the Gegenkaiser against whom they seem to struggle. The Emperor,

87 See note 84. “Fist-law” is the English translation of Faustrecht (OED, s.v. “fist,” 4).


89 Goethe (in, e.g., Aus meinem Leben, Dichtung und Wahrheit, Pt. 1, Bk. 1) discusses Charles the Great, Charles IV, Maximilian (“the last Kaiser”), and Gunther von Scharzburg as Counter-emperors and Emperors.
then, has a relation to Faust and Mephistopheles like that of Faust to Mephistopheles. Faust pities the Emperor as Mephistopheles pities Faust [297], and Mephistopheles himself suggests that Faust and the Emperor are akin to each other [10244].) Faust, who earlier conspired with Mephistopheles in the showing of false wealth (10245) and in the subsequent conflation of government and pleasure (10251) knows that the victory that he and Mephistopheles plan to promise the Emperor is Trug, Zauberblendwerk or hohler Schein (10300).

When the besieged Emperor appears on stage, he expresses fear that he acted wrongly in making paper money (10422), and again describes his experience at the end of the Mask. In the casket, he says, he saw a mirror-like Oelje that revealed to him a Counter-Emperor. Somehow his own breast was sealed. “Selbstständig fühlt’ ich meine Brust besiegelt / Als ich mich dort im Feuerreich bespiegelt” (10417-18). In the forms in which they are used, Spiegel and Siegel rhyme with each other, and with Geld. (In the description of the sealing of Faust’s breast by the image of Helen in Part One there were similar associations of Spiegel with Siegel; and, indeed, the sound “gelt” occurs frequently in Faust [e.g., 4878].) A mirror, which produces a counterfeit image, is as much an agent of personal alienation, or translation out of oneself, as is money. The mirror, and the seal described by the Emperor who now faces a Counter-emperor, reveal to us, as did the Paper Money Scene, the material, spiritual, and aesthetic results of the Emperor’s signing promissory, symbolic notes.

Faust, appearing in court as a necromancer supposedly obligated (verpflichten 10447) to the Emperor, promises to supply military weapons and personnel. The church berates such means, and the Emperor himself wonders to whom he himself will be obligated (verpflichten 10603) for such help. The General accuses the king of making an alliance (vereinigen 10693) with devilish forces, but even he gives up command of the situation. Mephistopheles believes that he is now in control. To Faust’s “Was ist zu tun?” he gives an answer which Faust hardly believes; “Es ist getan” (10710).

The true nature of Mephistopheles’ “mighty men,” with whose aid the Emperor seems to win victory, is revealed allegorically (10329) when they rob the tent of the Counter-emperor. One seized

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90 At first the Emperor refuses to give to Mephistopheles the cross-shaped staff which symbolizes the leadership of the imperial army. Compare the unwilling sharing of the “sceptre” by Herold and Plutus in the Mask.
(greifen 10788) the goods of the Counter-emperor; another is overly verschwenderisch and loses his stolen Schätze (10816). To answer the followers of the Emperor, who accuse them of robbery, the "mighty men" use Mephistophelean logic: their booty, they say, is not illegal Raub but rather legal Kontribution (10828). As in Gresham's Law, the bad (Raub) drives out, or replaces with counterfeit near-synonyms, the good (Kontribution). "Changer le sens des mots d'une langue faite," writes Rivarol, "c'est altérer la valeur des monnaies dans un empire."\(^{91}\)

In the following scenes the feudal Empire is not robbed from the Emperor. Rather the Emperor himself, while in the tent of the apparently defeated Counter-emperor, contributes the Empire legally to those who seem to have helped him in battle.\(^{92}\) The treaties by which the Emperor parcels out various rights—including the right to mint money—depend, as does Faust's contract with Mephistopheles' and the Emperor's paper money, on signs and signatures.

Des Kaisers Wort ist groß und sichert jede Gift,
Doch zur Bekräftigung bedarf's der edlen Schrift,
Bedarf's der Signatur.

(10927-29, cf. 10966)

The Arch-Chancellor refers to a holy signature or seal

Dem Pergament alsbald vertrau ich wohlgemut,
Zum Glück dem Reich und uns, das wichtigste Statut;
Reinschrift und Sieglung soll die Kanzelei beschäftigen,
Mit heiliger Signatur wirst du's, der Herr, bekräftigen.

(10971-74)

In private conference, the Archbishop accuses the Emperor of being in Bunde with Satan (10982, cf. 10871). To redeem the sin of the Emperor, he argues, it is necessary to erect an ecclesiastical monument and belltower on the spot where the sin was perpetrated (11005). The Emperor is willing to sign the documents. "Ein förmlich Dokument, der Kirche das zu eignen, / Du legst es vor, ich will's mit Freuden unterzeichnen" (11021-22). The Archbishop

\(^{91}\) Rivarol, "Fragments et pensées littéraires, Sur le style," in Rivarol, p. 122. "To change the sense of the words of a made language, that is to alter the value of the monies in an empire."

\(^{92}\) For historical information about the act by which Faust seems to receive the feif, see 11035 ff.; Paral. 173, 178, 182, etc.; the Golden Bull of Oelenschlager (discussed by Goethe in Dich. und Wahr. I, 4) issued by Charles IV in 1356 and reprinted in an edition of 1766.
also demands "einiges Gold aus deinem Beuteschatz" (11028) and the tithes, quitrents and taxes from the "Reiches Strand" that the Emperor has granted to Faust. The land does not yet exist. The Archbishop, however, assumes that the church will eventually get everything that it demands and he cites scripture to his purpose (11039). At the end of Act IV we hardly know to whom belongs the real estate yet to be uncovered by Faust.

At the beginning of Act I, the Chancellor warned the Emperor that "Wenn alle schadigen, alle leiden, / Geht selbst die Majestät zu Raub" (4810-11). At the end of Act IV, the Emperor expresses his fear that this robbery or rape could well occur, as legitimate contribution, through the medium of signature: "So könnt' ich wohl zunächst das ganze Reich verschreiben" (11041). The Emperor, victim to the designs of the devil, fears that he has written off, or translated to others, the Empire that he once possessed.

VII. The Dead Pledge (Faustpfand)

At the beginning of Act V, Faust seems to have transformed the old shoreline into his own real estate. A plot of land tenured by two old peasants, however, mars his proper self or property (11151 ff., cf. 10187). He complains that "mein Hochbesitz, er ist nicht rein" (11156). Some things are nicht sein eigen (11241), and the richer he becomes the more he understands how much he lacks (11251-2).

Faust's goal is to translate all alien things into his property. In the "Zueignung" (meaning both "Dedication" and " Appropriation") to Faust however, we learn the ambiguity in all possession. "Was ich besitze, seh' ich wie im Weiten, / Und was verschwand, wird mir zu Wirklichkeiten" (31-2). In a maxim for translators who mediate between languages, Goethe suggests that a similar ambiguity obtains generally in translation.

Es gibt zwei Übersetzungs-maximen; die eine verlangt, daß der Autor einer fremden Nation zu uns herüber gebracht werde, dergestalt, daß wir ihn als den Unsirgen ansehen können; die andere hingegen macht an uns die Forderung, daß wir uns zu dem Fremden hinüber begeben und uns in seine Zustände, seine Sprachweise, seine Eigenheiten finden sol- len.93

In Faust Part Two the problem of interlinguistic translation be-

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comes a fundamental political problem of alienation and self-appropriation.

During the Mask in Act I, Knabe Lenker-Euphorion (Poetic Dispensation) claimed to be able to provide Plutus-Faust (Wealth) with what he lacked. In Act V, the devilish Mephistopheles provides Faust with the peasants' land, but he does so by arranging for their murder. Faust is displeased with the means (if not the end) of Mephistopheles' arrangement. "Wart ihr für meine Worte taub? / Tausch wollt' ich, wollte keinen Raub" (11370-71). Faust wanted Tausch (exchange); Mephistopheles translated this into his own discourse or way of acting as Täuschung (deceit). In Faust, exchange is the dependent on or polar opposite to deceit, just as contribution is the dependent on or polar opposite to robbery. This kind of dependency or opposition is what drives the plot of Faust, in which all position is counterbalanced by negation. One of Goethe's epigrams, "Totalität," expresses the impossibility of separating what we admire (a noble man like Faust, for example) from what we despise or pretend to despise (an ass like Mephistopheles). "Und wenn er keinen Hintern hat, / Wie mag der Edle sitzen?"94 A Mensch cannot progress without somehow allying himself with an Unmensch.95 Faust, then, may try to ignore the necessity of such an alliance, but Mephistopheles' agents can defend their murderous actions by referring to laws, like those of Gresham about language and those of Marx about capitalism, which seem to legitimate the conceptual exchanges of Kontribution for Raub and Täuschung for Tausch.

Faust can no longer derive pleasure from the accumulation of any things. Even the sight of merchant ships and of the caskets of booty which they carry (11163 ff.) does not delight him as it delights

94 Quoted by F. Engels in Die wahren Socialisten (MEGA, I, 6, pp. 73-116).
95 Faust had sought the Gleichnis of men among the spirits of the universe, but made an alliance with an Unmensch. Karl Marx (Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher, MEGA, I, 1[1], p. 607) seems to defend the criminal actions of Faust: "Der Mensch, der in der phantastischen Wirklichkeit des Himmels, wo er einen Übermenschen suchte, nur den Widerschein seiner selbst gefunden hat, wird nicht mehr geneigt sein, nur den Schein seiner selbst, nur den Unmensch zu finden, wo er seine wahre Wirklichkeit sucht und suchen muß" (cf. Faust 3349, 490). In Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie Marx argues similarly that German emancipation is achievable only by adopting the point of view according to which Man is the highest being for men. More than once, Faust wishes that Mephistopheles were remetamorphosed or re-translated into a dog (Faust, p. 137: "Trüber Tag, Feld," 11. 16 ff.), to which he compared himself (Faust, 376). According to Marx, however, Mephistopheles is the unwitting means of Faust's salvation, conferring on Faust the alienating and alien power of money, and the "radical chains of servitude" by the overcoming of which (according to Marx's dialectic of master and slave) the German proletariat can be emancipated (MEGA, I, 1, p. 620).
the Faust imagined by Oswald Spengler in his *Untergang des Abendlandes.* They serve only to remind him of what is behind, or what is the behind of, his merchant-mastership.

Finally blinded by *Sorge*, Faust must depend on a secret light within his individual self (1149ff., cf. 644). He believes that his imperial word is sufficient to handle a thousand hands. "Des Herrn Wort, es gibt allein Gewicht" (11502). But Faust is deceived. He imagines, for example, that servants of his are building a *paradiesisch Land* (11569) but, as one of the peasants earlier predicted, servants of Mephistopheles are actually building a *paradiesisch Bild* (11086). Once again the informing tension in Faust is the difference between the symbol and the thing: the *Wort* and the *Begriff*, the *Zettel* and the *Gold*, the *Bild* and the *Land*.

Faust's last monologue, perhaps, overcomes this difference. He

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96 This is how Spengler's Faust seems to praise the connection between Faustian money and the mind: "Das faustische Gelddenken 'erschließt' ganze Kontinente, die Wasserkraft riesenhafter Stromgebiete, die Muskelkraft der Bevölkerung weiter Landschaften, Kohlenlager, Urmärder, Naturgesetze und wandelt sie in finanzielle Energie um, die irgendwo in Gestalt der Preise, der Wahlen, der Budgets und Heere angesetzt wird, um Herrscherpläne zu verwirklichen. Immer neue Werte werden aus dem geschäftlich noch indifferenzen Weltbestand abgezogen 'des Goldes schlummernde Geister,' wie [Henrik Ibsen's dramatic character] John Gabriel Borkmann sagt; was die Dinge abgesehen davon noch sind, kommt wirtschaftlich nicht in Betracht." (Oswald Spengler, "Das Geld," in *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* [Munich, 1963], p. 1168.) Spengler's interpretation or misinterpretation of Faust informs the whole *Untergang*. In his "monetary economics of thought" Spengler argues, for example, that "das körperhafte Geld apollinischen Stils—die geprüfte Münze—steht dem faustisch-dynamischen Beziehungsgelder—der Buchung von Krediten—eben so fern wie die Polis dem Staate Karls V" (*Untergang*, p. 1156). Spengler associates Charles V with cheques based on credit which were invented by Frederick II (*Untergang*, p. 1173). (On double-entry bookkeeping, cf. Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre.*) Spengler argues that in the modern world (and in *Faust* as he reads it) "der Akt, durch welchen die Funktion schriftlich vollzogen wird [writing paper money]" is what is most significant (*Untergang*, p. 1175). He writes of this act: "sie ist Geld, faustisches Geld nämlich, das nicht geprügt, sondern als Wirkungszentrum gedacht wird aus einem Leben heraus, dessen innerer Rang den Gedanken zur Bedeutung einer Tatsache erhebt. Denken in Geld erzeugt Geld: das ist das Geheimnis der Weltwirtschaft" (*Untergang*, p. 1177). In considering the ideological significance of these influential arguments it is well to remember that in Spengler's thought "mind and money go together" and economic matters express a particular "state of soul" (Theodor W. Adorno, *Prisms* [London, 1967], p. 25). In Spengler's thought "economics becomes a 'form-world' like art, a sphere which is the pure expression of a soul that is as it is, a sphere which constitutes itself essentially independently of the need to reproduce life. It is no accident that in matters of economics Spengler remains a helpless dilettante. He speaks of the omnipotence of money in the same tone that a petty bourgeois agitator would use to rant about the international conspiracy on the stock market. He fails to see that in economics the decisive factor is not the medium of exchange but production." (Adorno, pp. 67-68).
imagines that servants are building a land where men will live
"nicht sicher zwar, doch tätig-frei" (11564). The construction and
maintenance of dikes ensure that the citizenry will work in ceaseless
activity. "Nur der verdient sich Freiheit wie das Leben, / Der täglich
sie erobern muß" (11575-6). He envisions in the future a free
people that, significantly, needs neither Herrschaft nor Herren Wort.
"Solch ein Gewimmel möchte ich sehn, / Auf freiem Grund mit
freiem Volke stehn" (11579-80). Faust seems to fulfill the terms of
the wager: "Zum Augenblicke dürft' ich sagen: / Verweile doch, du
bist so schön!"97 With this statement Faust dies.

Mephistopheles and his servants believe that Faust "mortgaged"
his soul in order to receive from them a loan of power that was "auf
kurze Zeit geborgt" (11610). Although he pities Faust, whom he
calls "der Arme," Mephistopheles fully believes that Faust will now
have to pay off his creditors or believers (11611). On this account
he takes the "blutgeschriebnen Titel" (11613) from his pocket and
waves it before the audience as if it were a mortuum vadium not on
visible real estate but on an invisible soul, as if it were a gage morte or
dead pledge.98

In most earlier versions of the Faust legend, Faust is carried off
to hell. (See, however, Lessing's Faust.) In the "Prologue" to
Goethe's drama, however, God foretold a new role for the devil
(who is the apparent marplot of the divine design) and hence a new
finale.

Von allen Geistern, die verneinen,
Ist mir der Schalk am wenigsten zur Last.
Des Menschen Tätigkeit kann allzuleicht erschlaffen,
Er liebt sich bald die unbedingte Ruh;
Drum geb' ich gern ihm den Gesellen zu,
Der reizt und wirkt und muß als Teufel schaffen.

(338-43)

Mephistopheles, the unwitting agent of God, loses the hypothecerated
soul for which he struggled throughout Faust. He is about to

97 Cf. "Hier möchte ich volle Stunden säumen" (2710), "Da ist's vorbei" (11600),
and "Es sei die Zeit für mich vorbei!" (1706).
98 Sir Edward Coke (The First Part of the Institutes of the Laws of England; or A
Commentary upon Littleton [1628], 205) writes: "It seemeth that the cause why it is
called mortgage is, for the Lessor will pay at the day limited such summe or not, & if
he doth not pay, then the Land which is put in pledge upon condition for the
payment of the money is taken from him forever and so dead to him upon condi-
tion, etc. And if he doth pay the money, then the pledge is dead as to the Tenant,
etc."
seal (besiegeln) the soul of Faust with his stamp (11662) when heavenly spirits "translate" to heaven\textsuperscript{99} the soul which he believed to be a Schatz that was verpfändet to him (11829-30).

Mephistopheles hardly understands losing his large investment (11837), and indeed, many readers take his side. Some critics suggest that a gratuitous deus ex machina saves Faust. They suggest, in other words, that God is the mort-main of the mortgage, the security of which is the soul of Faust. This soul He redeems by raising it above the down-to-earth hypothecation in the pactual Pfand, so that it becomes an "englisches Unterpfand" (11984) from which Faust is born a heavenly angel. Other readers suggest that the power of woman (11964) is the mort-main of the mortgage, and that Gretchen plays the major role in saving Faust.\textsuperscript{100}

Mephistopheles' failure to comprehend his loss involves a misunderstanding of monetary and contractual translation which is similar to that of Shylock in Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice. (In an early version of Faust Part Two, indeed, Mephistopheles argues with God about the outcome of the bond [Pfand] much as Shylock might have disputed with lawyers in the Venetian court.)\textsuperscript{101} In a discussion of payment Karl Marx tries to show how a real distinction between sale and purchase can lead some personages, including Shylock as well as Mephistopheles, to misunderstand money and credit:

Verkäufer und Käufer werden Gläubiger und Schuldner. Wenn der Warenbesitzer als Hüter des Schatzes eher eine komische Figur [e.g., Avaritia] spielte, wird er nun schrecklich, indem er nicht sich selbst, sondern seinen Nächsten als Dasein einer bestimmten Geldsumme außfelt und nicht sich, sondern ihn zum Märtyrer des Tauschswerts macht. Aus einem Gläubigen wird er zum Gläubiger, aus der Religion fällt er in die Jurisprudenz. "I stay here on my bond!"\textsuperscript{102}

Mephistopheles has wrought a change in the court no less than that of Hans Sachs' alchemist,\textsuperscript{103} but he has victimized himself as well as the court. Like Shylock, he is hoisted on his own petard. The prompter is prompted into defeat. Mephistopheles, who through-

\textsuperscript{100} Note, however, that at one point Gretchen sang a song about money: "Nach Golde drängt/Am Golde hängt/Doch alles" (2804).
\textsuperscript{101} Goethe, Faust, Paral. 69, 70, 95, 96, 206, etc.
\textsuperscript{102} Marx, Kritik (MEW XIII.117), quoting Merchant of Venice, IV.i.117.
\textsuperscript{103} See note 26 above.
out the drama stood by, is, in the end, stood up by the bond. He it was who described to others the future “amortization” (6126) of credit money, but as it turns out, Mephistopheles can receive the mortgaged soul of Faust no more than the citizens of the Empire could amortize their money.

In the *Ethics* Aristotle defines money as “a guarantee of exchange in the future for something not given.”\(^{104}\) In the *Grundrisse* Marx shows how money can appear in the form of *Pfand* (collateral). Men place their faith (*Vertraun*) in this collateral because it is an objectified, mutual relation between their productive *Tätigkeit*. Every other collateral may serve the holder directly in the function of objectified exchange value. Money, however, serves him only as the “*Faustpfand* [dead pledge or mort-gage] der Gesellschaft,” aber solches Faustpfand ist es nur wegen seiner gesellschaftlichen (symbolischen) Eigenschaft; eine gesellschaftliche Eigenschaft kann es nur besitzen, weil die Individuen ihre eigne gesellschaftliche Beziehung als Gegenstand sich entfremdet haben.”\(^{105}\) As Faust turns out, Faust, who sought what Hegel calls *Faustrecht* is saved by Mephistopheles’s misunderstanding what Marx calls *Faustpfand*.

**VIII. The “Dialectical” Plot**

Goethe’s *Faust*, as we have seen, exposes apparent similarities among linguistic, propertal, sexual, spiritual and other kinds of translation. Translation is not only depicted by the plot of Faust as its content, but is also internalized in the plot as a formative participant in it. *Faust* conflates its content, such as the hypothecal contract depicted in the wager scene, with its form, such as the series of apparently dialectical hypotheses that allow Faust to progress and that he finally seems to overcome. In many languages the same word means both “intellectual supposition” and “economic deposition.” In Goethe’s drama as we have seen, Faust lays down his soul conditionally (hypothetically) as a deposit (hypothec) to Mephistopheles, the negative *Triebfeder*\(^{106}\) or prompter (*hypothètes*) of the action. The

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\(^{105}\) Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 78. Italics mine.

\(^{106}\) In German thought *Triebfeder* was associated both with money and with dialectic. Friedrich Ludwig Schröder (1744-1816), for example, writes “Geld ist die Triebfeder aller seiner handlungen” (*Die heimliche Heirath*, in Schröder, *Dramatische Werke*, hg. v. E. v. Bülow, mit einer einleitung v. Ludw. Tieck [Berlin, 1831], vol. 1, 1,2; Schröder’s work is a German version of George Colman and David Garrick, *The Clandestine Marriage* [1766], in which Lovewell says ‘Money (you will excuse my
conflation of spiritual deposition (on which the making of the wager depends) and economic deposition (on which the movement of the plot [hypothesis] depends) is the motor of progress in Faust.\textsuperscript{107}

As early as 1844, Wilhelm von Schütz noted that the Ersatz in the paper money contract depends on a hypothecal deposition. "Faust giebt den Roth, Papiergeld zu machen als Hypothenk aber den unterirdischen, durch Bergbau noch nicht heraufgeforderten Schatz einzusetzen.\textsuperscript{108} All the hypotheses of Faust are contracts of alienation which tend both to ensnare by hypothecation and to offer the means by which to transcend hypothecation. In both the intellectual and economic aspects of Faust, man progresses or acts by setting forth (depositing) something and then using it to translate himself over a spiritual or material barrier (and ultimately to transcend what was set forth). Throughout Faust, spiritual and material deposition are comprehended in a single vision, a vision often called dialectical.

Scholars adduce various kinds of evidence to show that Faust is dialectical in the Hegelian sense. They point out, for example, that in his Phänomenologie and Rechtsphilosophie Hegel adapts Mephistopheles' account of Faust's going over to the devil (Faust 1851-52, 1866-67),\textsuperscript{109} or that the section entitled "Die Lust und die Notwendigkeit" in the Phänomenologie begins with an explanation of the spiritual development of Faust in Part One.\textsuperscript{110} In fact, however, the Faust drama informs only a small part of the Phänomenologie, a part in which Hegel explores the inability of Faust to reach the goal set to him. Hegel argues generally that going over to the devil is not dialectical procedure, that the devil can never be the agent of dialectical negation. Dialectical negation, argues Hegel, depends on

frankness is the spring of all his actions" [Colman and Garrick, The Clandestine Marriage, London, 1785, I]). Triebfeder is a critical term in the philosophy of Immanuel Kant. See, for example, Kritik der reinen Vernunft, in Gesammelte Schriften, 23 vols., edited under the supervision of the Berlin Academy of Sciences (Berlin, 1902-55), vol. 3, pp. 45, 376, 395, 527, and 550.

\textsuperscript{107} On hypothesis and hypothecation in the dialectic of Plato, see Marc Shell, The Economy of Literature, Chapter One. Cf. the logical and legal meanings of “premise.”

\textsuperscript{108} von Schütz, p. 36. By 1836 explicitly hypothecal paper money, such as the ten guilder note issued by the Bayerischen Hypothenken- und Wechsel-Bank, was widespread throughout German states (A. Pick, p. 162).

\textsuperscript{109} Hegel, Phänomenologie (Werke II.1271); and Philosophie des Recurs (Werke VII.19).

a relationship between logical categories (such as true and false, or
good and evil) lacking in Goethe’s tale of man and the devil.

So schlimm zwar als der Teufel ist das Böse und Falsche nicht, denn als
dieser sind sie sogar zum besonderen Subjekte gemacht; als Falsches und
Böses sind sie nur Allgemeine, haben aber doch eigene Wesenheit
gegeneinander.\textsuperscript{111}

The particularity of Mephistopheles disallows dialectic. Mephistopheles is merely the comic spirit of a dueler who always denies.

Other aspects of \textit{Faust} suggest its undialectical qualities. The
protagonist, for example, goes directly to heaven without passing
through the hell from which came Mephistopheles, or, as Hegel
says, without “holding fast” unto the negative and death.\textsuperscript{112}
Moreover, opposition of Tat to Ruhe, which informs the terms of
the wager and the distinction between Poetry and Wealth, is un-
dialectical. In Kant and Hegel only the opposition of movement in
one direction to movement in another is or can become dialectical.
Mephistopheles, who encourages Faust to rest, can hardly be
Faust’s dialectically “other” part.

The most significant difference between Hegelian and Faustian
dialectics, however, concerns the means and ends of progress. Al-
though the hypothecation of a soul in \textit{Faust} and the hypothesis of a
Begriff in the \textit{Phänomenologie} seem identical, the Faustian Tat differs
fundamentally from that which motivates the \textit{Phänomenologie}. In
\textit{Faust}, on the one hand, the hypothecal bond is finally a useless item
to Mephistopheles, however much it has been useful to Faust. Only
the mistaken devil holds that the bond ought to be exchangeable
for the soul of Faust. The bond in \textit{Faust}, then, is not “cashed in” by
the devil, but is rather dismissed from \textit{Faust} (much as Malvolio’s
claim is dismissed from Shakespeare’s \textit{Twelfth Night}). In the
\textit{Phänomenologie}, on the other hand, the hypotheses that are the
counterparts to the hypothecal bonds in \textit{Faust} continue to be useful
after each Aufhebung of thesis and antithesis into synthesis. Each
hypothesis is “cashed in” for a synthesis that is both homogeneous
and heterogeneous with it. At the moment of being redeemed the
hypothesis has a value like that which Mephistopheles holds that his
bond should have but which in \textit{Faust} it lacks.

It may seem that this talk of cashing in bonds is too metaphorical
a way to distinguish between \textit{Faust} and the \textit{Phänomenologie}. Con-

\textsuperscript{111} Hegel, \textit{Phänomenologie} (\textit{Werke} 111.40).

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., (\textit{Werke} 111.36).
temporary criticism has it that *Aufhebung* (which I am translating as "cashing in") refers only to the cancellation or equation of opposite forces to a relative zero, as it does in Kant, or to the cancellation and transcendence (sublation) of opposites, as it does in Hegel. In its strictly mathematical sense, of course, *Aufhebung* does refer only to magnitudes that reduce each other to zero or that mutually annul or suppress each other, and therefore become indifferent to their equation. As scholars of eighteenth century commercial language have noticed, however, a cancelled (*aufgehobene*) note or bond still has positive value as a receipt or discharge from debt. This positive value of the negative bond is explicit in the philosophy of Kant and Hegel, in which the zero is at once negative and positive, and in which monetary examples and metaphors (such as *Aufhebung* itself) play necessary roles crucial to the progress of spirit.\(^\text{113}\)

In *Faust*, dialectical movement (if it exists at all) does not consist of forces that anyone, much less Faust or Mephistopheles, can cash in according to the ways of dialectic. The positive value of the negative bond is absent from *Faust*, in Part One of which, as Hegel notes, Faust is engaged merely in the search for individual *Lust*. The individual Faust, if not the masterless progeny that he foresees in his last monologue in Part Two, lacks the universal viewpoint of man and the absolute knowledge to which philosophical dialectic is supposed to offer access.

Faust, who contracted with a devilish behind, is left behind in the development of the spirit. It is as though the whole plot of *Faust*—the interest, as it were, on the principal that is the original wager between Mephistopheles and Faust—cannot pass logically or dialectically but only by divine mechanics beyond the narrow, albeit admirable, vision of the individual Faust and his counterpart Mephistopheles.

In an autobiographical note Goethe seems to have recognized the lack of qualitative difference between the original hypothesis of *Faust* and its final result. He describes his own life in terms of making, as did Faust, the most of a single hypothec. "Es geht mir damit wie einem, der in seiner Jugend sehr viel kleines Silber- und Kupfergeld hat, das er während dem Lauf seines Lebens immer bedeutender einwechselt, so daß er zuletzt seinen Jugendbesitz in

\(^{113}\) See Marc Shell, "The Cancelled Bond: Monetary Form and Dialectic in Kant and Hegel," *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, vol. VI, no. 2 (Summer, 1979).
reinen Goldstücken vor sich sieht."\textsuperscript{114} Gold counts more than silver and copper. As money rather than as metal, however, the \textit{Goldstücke} are homogeneous with the coins of smaller denomination from which they are changed. Goethe admits no qualitative distinction between the wealth of his youth (Part One) and that of his age (Part Two). The changings of age merely repeat in greater denominations those of youth. Part Two, like Part One, delivers to the attentive reader no satisfactory sublation of the series of interrelated hypotheses and hypotheses that inform the plot of \textit{Faust} and which it depicts.

Nor, perhaps, is \textit{Faust} supposed by Goethe to satisfy such a reader. His contemporary Hegel argued that literature can depict dialectical struggle in some stages, but cannot work through the contradictions of partly negative hypotheses and discover the truth. Some readers of \textit{Faust}, like the courtly spectators of the Mask, may be flattered enough to see in the masked ending of Goethe's work the pure gold—the true victory of Faustian Man—which they desired from the beginning. Others, like the fool at the end of the paper money scene, are wise enough to cash in \textit{Faust} for that genuine search for wisdom which led Goethe to write it.

\textit{State University of New York at Buffalo}