

HERDER AS FAUST.

BY GÜNTHER JACOBY.

[In a former number of *The Open Court* (December, 1912) we published a brief review of Dr. Günther Jacoby's book *Herder als Faust*. As an indication of the care and detail with which Dr. Jacoby has worked out his thesis we here offer a free and somewhat condensed translation of a few passages representative of his position and the comparisons he has drawn. The two paragraphs from Goethe's Autobiography are quoted from Oxenford's translation, and the many quotations from Faust are taken from Bayard Taylor with one or two slight changes when the more literal rendering of a term seemed necessary to bring out Dr. Jacoby's emphasis of identity between expressions of Herder and Goethe.—Ed.]

FAUST is only one instance of the far-reaching influence of Herder upon Goethe, but it is an instance in a remarkable sense, for there is no other work of Goethe's which has Herder himself as the subject and in which the evidence of Herder's influence can be more easily traced step by step. We may regard Faust as the combination of the most varied influences of Herder upon Goethe at the beginning of the seventies of the eighteenth century, but it is noteworthy that under the constructive power of Goethe's imagination these influences attained a depth and beauty which they did not possess in Herder himself.

That Goethe could after all represent the experiences of Herder more beautifully and more profoundly than Herder himself, is indeed wonderful and can be perfectly understood only when we realize how powerfully Herder's influence affected and stirred Goethe's inmost being just at the time when he was starting upon Faust; and how just at this time Goethe strove to imitate and recast in himself the nature of Herder. In Faust Goethe has represented the figure of Herder as the prototype of the truest and noblest humanity. He did not have in mind the pettiness of Herder with his many errors and weaknesses, but rather what was great and superhuman in him, the image of the saint and priest which had developed

for Goethe out of his peculiar, even unique, relation to Herder at the time of their first meeting in Strassburg and in the years immediately following. Faust is not the Herder whom we know from the traditional biographies of the nineteenth century, but he represents the picture of Herder which the young Goethe had drawn for himself from direct contact with him and in the spirit of the highest veneration. (Pages 3-4.)

In spite of opposed views based upon the fact that Goethe is known to have utilized many sources in his masterpiece, the present book maintains that Herder is Goethe's Faust and, what is more, the Faust of the first part up to the scene in Auerbach's cellar.

Let the reader for a moment restrain his inclination to reject the theory *a priori*, and observe that there is an essential difference between my statement, "Herder is Faust," and that Herder material is contained in Faust. To say that Herder material is contained in Faust means that words and thoughts of Herder's are taken over into the drama of Faust. On the other hand to say that Herder is Faust means that not only words and thoughts but Faust's external and internal experiences are those of Herder. Only by the fact that Herder is Faust as a man does the large number of positive agreements become intelligible. (3-5.)

Goethe himself writes of the days they spent together in Strassburg:

"Since his conversations were at all times important, whether he asked, answered, or communicated his opinions in any other manner, he could not but advance me daily, nay, hourly, to new views. At Leipsic I had accustomed myself to a narrow and circumscribed existence, and my general knowledge of German literature could not be extended by my situation in Frankfort; nay, those mystico-religious chemical occupations had led me into obscure regions, and what had been passing for some years back in the wide literary world had, for the most part, remained unknown to me. Now I was at once made acquainted by Herder with the new aspiration and all the tendencies which it seemed to be taking. . . . What an agitation there must have been in such a mind, what a fermentation there must have been in such a nature, can neither be conceived nor described. But great was certainly the concealed effort, as will be easily admitted when one reflects for how many years afterwards, and how much, he has accomplished and produced."

From such expressions we can well understand that at the time of the Strassburg acquaintance of the two poets Herder exerted a

powerful influence on the figure of Faust which was then just taking form. (19.)

We will be able to estimate in detail the different points in which Herder's influence is shown in Faust by an extensive comparison of that drama with Herder's writings in the sixties and seventies. But Goethe himself furnishes an important piece of evidence for their variety when he tells us that at that time in Strassburg all Herder's later works existed in him potentially as a germ, for no one knew better than Goethe that the later activities of Herder were in no wise limited to literature and its history. Goethe writes:

"As to the fulness of those few weeks during which we lived together, I can well say, that all which Herder has since gradually produced was then announced in the germ, and that I thereby fell into the fortunate condition that I could complete, attach to something higher, and expand all that I had hitherto thought, learned, and made my own."

In preparation for his essay on the origin of language Herder busied himself with naturalistic and philosophical questions. For a long time he had been interested in the questions of philosophy especially with reference to scientific theory. This is the first point in which the comparison of Faust with the writings of Herder can give satisfactory results. (22.)

Goethe's unrestricted love and devoted veneration for Herder, his consciousness of Herder's intellectual superiority and the recognition of the educative blessing which had fallen upon him through their acquaintance, is the fundamental tone noticeable in all his letters to Herder after the latter's departure from Strassburg: "Continue to be fond of me," he writes in the summer of 1771, "and it will always be only an *officium*, not a *beneficium*; for you feel how fond I am of you." And yet more intimately and more touchingly he writes in the same manner: "I shall not let you go, I shall not let you. Jacob struggled with the angel of the Lord, and must I injure myself in doing so?" Yes, veneration to the highest degree; he does not know whether he can transform a marveling admiration as one of the worshipers of Herder's exalted figure into the intimate appreciative communion of a friend on an equality with him; "whether I can soar above the worship of the idol which Plato painted and gilded and to which Xenophon offered incense to the true religion in which instead of a saint a great man appeared, whom I can press to my bosom in an ecstasy of love, and cry, 'My friend and my brother!' And to dare to say that confidently to a great man! Might I for one day and one night be Alcibiades and then I

fain would die." Continuing directly: "A few days ago I embraced you with a full heart as if I saw you once again and heard your voice." (29-30.)

Goethe's letters to Herder are so very valuable to us in this connection because they not only reflect Goethe's friendship for Herder, but they bear witness that this friendship was so *innig*, so rooted in the very depths of his whole existence, that his own being and the growth of his mind at this time can only be understood in terms of his friendship for Herder.

It may be said that this fact is of such fundamental significance for our understanding of Goethe and Herder's relation to Faust, that it can not be presented impressively enough. Only from this fact can we properly understand that in the first part of Faust Goethe has erected a memorial to Herder.

The second letter of the summer of 1771 is one of the most important evidences of the kind of relation between them. At this time it is not Goethe who is the great man of the two, but Herder. Nevertheless Goethe knowing himself to be the lesser of the two friends struggles for his own valuation, for a modest radiance in the same sunlight as Herder. He writes to Herder: "Apollo Belvidere, why show yourself to us in your nudity so that we must be ashamed of our own! A Spanish costume and make-up! Herder, Herder stay to me what you are to me. If I am destined to be your planet I will be so willingly and faithfully. A friendly moon to the earth. But feel sure that I would rather be Mercury, the last, the smallest among seven who revolve with you about the same sun, than to be the first among five revolving around Saturn."

And a very similar spirit is shown in the conclusion of that letter in which Goethe thinks of Herder as a saint and himself as Alcibiades. Here Goethe writes: "And now, right reverend priest, do not forget in the service of the altar the discipline of thy acolytes whose imagination naturally covets thy priestly vestments, but whose power in the position of *adjunctus* and verger unfortunately does not for the most part come up to the *non plus ultra*. Let my conclusion be the conclusion of Socrates as Plato gives it in his Apology: 'And if they pretend to be something when they are really nothing, then reprove them for not caring about that for which they ought to care, and thinking they are something when they are really nothing. And if you do this I will have received justice at your hands.'"

It is remarkable that Herder seems to have occupied a very similar priestly position previously in his youth at Riga. He relates

that there he was "adored by my friends and a number of youths who considered me their Christ." (32-33.)

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In Strassburg Herder was filled with a Faustlike impulse to get away from the student's cell out into the active struggle and life of the world.

For proof of this assertion I will cite a passage from the diary of Herder's travels which seems to me remarkable because he not only appears as the Faust of the first part, but at the same time foreshadows the Faust of the second part. Surfeited with fruitless knowledge the Faust of the first part rushes through a life of love and pleasure, the Faust of the second part pushes forward to efficient political and industrial activity. Surfeited with fruitless knowledge Herder yearns for the joys of life and the pleasures of the world, for efficient activity in politics and industry. The whole diary is full of this.

In one passage Herder writes, "Livonia, thou province of barbarism and luxury, of uncertainty, of limited taste, of freedom and of slavery, how much might be done in thee! Might be done to put an end to barbarism, to uproot ignorance, to disseminate civilization and freedom, to become a second Zwingli, Calvin and Luther of this province! Can I do this? Have I the aptitude, the opportunity and talents for it? What must I do to accomplish this? What must I destroy? I still ask. I must give up useless criticism and dead researches; must raise myself above controversies and the rewards of books, must consecrate myself to the service and development of the living world, must win the confidence of the administration, the government and court, must travel through France, England, Italy and Germany to this end—arouse in myself noble ideals and great purposes, adjust myself to my age and acquire the spirit of law-giving, of commerce and of police, dare to look into everything from the points of view of politics, government and finance, not lay myself open to new attacks and to rectify former ones as soon and as well as possible, to meditate day and night upon becoming this genius of Livonia, to learn to know it dead or alive, to conceive and to undertake every practical thing in order to accustom myself to prevail upon the world, the nobility and the people to be on my side—noble youth! Does all this slumber in thee?" The longing for foreign lands is like Faust:

"Yea, if a magic mantle once were mine,
To waft me o'er the world at pleasure,
I would not for the costliest stores of treasure—
Not for a monarch's robe—the gift resign."

The motive of this wish is the same in both Goethe's *Faust* and Herder, namely the longing to leave the study to fare forth "to new and varied being."

All of Herder's ideal slumbered in Goethe's *Faust*; yes, to carry this out, is the motive of the entire tragedy, especially its second part. Like Herder, *Faust* is led from fruitless science to active life among the people and for the state; he rises above rewards of books, useless criticisms and dead researches, etc. He becomes the genius of a coastland as Herder of the Russian coastland Livonia. In a word, Goethe's *Faust* fulfils the great task which Herder had set for his own life at the time when he came in contact with Goethe at Strassburg.

Let us consider that Goethe's *Faust* originated in Strassburg under the first powerful impression of Herder's figure. Was there to be no connection between the general conception of Herder's plans for life and the general conception of the plan of the drama *Faust* which originated just at this time? Is the correspondence which actually exists between these two conceptions to be laid to chance? Must they be accidental, even though Herder and Goethe at that time were in most intimate daily intercourse? It would be a most remarkable chance hard to understand from a scientific point of view.

It is true, to be sure, and must not be overlooked, that many details of the second part of *Faust* which we might refer to Herder on the basis of the confessions contained in the diary of his travels are originally contained in the old *Faust* legend and so might have been derived from this latter source and even in some particulars were certainly derived from the old legend. Nevertheless it may be said that this hardly touches the mooted Herder question in *Faust*. All connections of *Faust* with the old folktale relate merely to details and externalities. In the comparison of *Faust* with Herder, however, we do not deal with these but with the entire outline of the drama and with the profundity of its human and philosophical content.

This profundity was not contained in the tales of the old *Faust* legend. The theme of the drama intimately experienced and magnificently portrayed—that man does not find in the business of scholarship the satisfaction that he seeks, that he runs in vain against the limits of his humanity, that he finds compensation in the enjoyment of the world and in busy activity as the counselor of a state and the benefactor of its people—this theme was not outlined in the externalities of the *Faust* legend. It belonged to Goethe, and Goethe

experienced it as a poetical symbol of Herder, the man whom he revered with a passionate enthusiasm and who just at that time was experiencing the same profound and magnificent theme in his own life. Herder's plan for his future became for Goethe the plan of his drama of Faust.

Indeed if during their life together at Strassburg, Herder revealed to his younger friend—as is very probable—the impulses of his inner life, then we may also assume that Goethe has utilized this self-communication of Herder for the general outline of his plan of Faust. It would be obstinacy to try to explain the actual correspondence of the two conceptions in this case in any different way. But this means that for the general conception of the drama, Faust himself is none other than Herder. (52-55.)

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The entire first part of the drama of Faust is pervaded by a peculiarly medieval Gothic tone, mysterious and full of presentiment, exalted and profound. It is the tone which Herder expressly calls his fundamental tone. It sounds like a depiction of Faust in large outlines when Herder writes of himself in the diary of his travels: "A feeling for sublimity is the crisis of my soul; to this is directed my love, my hate, my admiration, my dream of happiness and unhappiness, my resolve to live in the world, my expression, my style, my deportment, my physiognomy, my conversation, my occupation,—everything, including even my taste for speculation and for the seriousness of philosophy, of thought, including my dread of physiological discoveries and of new thoughts of the human soul, my half-intelligible, half melancholy style, my perspective—everything. My life is a passage through Gothic arches, or at least through an avenue of green shade. The outlook is always lofty and reverent; the entrance was a sort of dread; but it will be a very different kind of confusion when the path suddenly broadens out and I find myself in the open." (62.)

To conclude Herder's Faust-like descriptions of himself, one more feature will be recalled which unexpectedly comes into the present connection with the diary and once more discloses Goethe's Faust to be his friend Herder. This feature, like the fondness for fairy tales, spirits and witches, begins back in Herder's youth and also in Faust's youth. It is by the recollection of his youth that Faust is drawn away from the goblet of poison:

"And yet, from childhood up familiar with the note,
To life it now renews the old allegiance.
Once heavenly love sent down a burning kiss

Upon my brow, in Sabbath silence holy;
 And, filled with mystic presage, chimed the church-bell slowly,
 And prayer dissolved me in a fervent bliss.
 A sweet uncomprehended yearning
 Drove forth my feet through woods and meadows free,
 And while a thousand tears were burning,
 I felt a world arise for me...."

It is remarkable that Herder, too, whose childhood was saturated with the spirit of ecclesiastical piety, made just this influence of his religious education responsible for his disposition at a later time; and it is almost more remarkable that like Faust he also lets the memory of those lonely walks in Mohrungen follow directly upon the religious impressions of his childhood—these walks which in other passages he describes exactly as Goethe's Faust describes his.

Of his feeling of harmony with the sublime, Herder writes: "Hence my early inclination for the clerical profession to which of course the local prejudice of my youth contributed greatly, but likewise also without doubt the impression of church and altar, chancel and pastoral eloquence, the official duties and deference for the clergy. Hence my first series of occupations, the dreams of my youth with regard to an aquatic world, my favorite pursuits in the garden, my solitary walks."

"The local prejudices of my youth"! Most significant for the meaning of the religious local prejudices of Herder in comparison with the childhood memories of Faust are the accounts given by Ludwig von Baczko of Herder's early youth. He writes: "The devout and gentle nature of his parents made an early impression on the lamented Herder.... His parents often found comfort in the Bible and hymn-book, recommending both earnestly to their son; many a touching and comforting passage from hymns, many a Biblical verse, were early impressed upon the vivid memory of the boy which was retentive and quick to grasp. Thus was aroused Herder's religious feeling, his attachment for simple songs and his frequent reading of the Bible."

Remarkably enough, it is exactly the religious songs and the reading of the Bible which in Faust are the indication of the Christian piety rooted in him also in childhood. This is not true only of Herder's favorite Easter song to which he has more than once given poetical treatment and which in Goethe restrains the despairing Faust from the last most fatal step:

"Why, here in dust, entice me with thy spell,
 Ye gentle, powerful sounds of heaven?...."

And yet, from childhood up familiar with the note,
To life it now renews the old allegiance."

But it is also true of Faust's Christian piety with reference to the Bible:

"We pine and thirst for revelation,
Which nowhere worthier is, more nobly sent,
Than here, in our New Testament.
I feel impelled its meaning to determine."

It is not an accident that Faust consults the Gospel of John. This again is a favorite subject of Herder, upon which he was working at the time of the inception of Faust.

On the other hand, the solitary walks of the boy. For them also Baczko writes of the boy Herder that he "gradually developed each of his splendid aptitudes for the beautiful, the good and the noble, took exceptional pleasure in arranging for a solitary walk around the Mohrung Lake and in the neighboring woods in the company of some cherished book." But even at that time the boy had betrayed "a tendency toward seriousness and melancholy."

In accord with this, Herder frequently tells us himself that he loved to imagine "a new world" in that lake and from his seriousness and childish melancholy we can understand the "thousands of hot tears" which may have been shed upon those solitary rambles. Faust is Herder when he recalls such solitary rambles in his childhood:

"A sweet, uncomprehended yearning,
Drove forth my feet through woods and meadows free,
And while a thousand tears were burning,
I felt a world arise for me."

These solitary rambles are extensively described by Herder in another passage and very much after the manner of Faust. "I began to think at an early age," he writes of his childhood years; "I early tore myself away from human society and saw a new world suspended in the water and went out in order to speak in solitude with the spring flowers and to enjoy myself in the creation of great plans, and for hours at a time I talked to myself. Time seemed short to me; I played, I read, I gathered flowers, simply in order to give myself up to my thoughts. What was great, inscrutable, difficult, attracted me. Easy things usually were given up as having too little attraction to hold me." That was the same world that Goethe's Faust felt arise in his childish heart under thousands of hot tears. (64-69.)

One remark about the words the Earth-spirit addressed to Faust in the scene known as the night excursion:

"Thus at Time's humming loom 'tis my hand prepares
The garment of life which the Deity wears!"

In Herder's poems also we repeatedly find the thought that the world is the "garment of life" of Deity, and together with this is the thought of a web in the garment. We find this in a small poem by Herder entitled "The World is God's Garment." The same thought appears more extended in another poem in which man is weaving diligently in his corner at the veil of Penelope-Minerva as it gorgeously gleams among boundless millions of stars; and finally in his poems on the creation with a surprising echo of the words of the Earth-spirit in Faust: "O splendor of God, thou beautiful robe of the earth, thou delicate garment in which everything is woven in aspiration for the higher life." Goethe's Earth-spirit prepares Deity's garment of life, the delicate garment of earth in which everything is woven in aspiration for the higher life. Herder's fundamental thought and expression are obviously related closely to the words of the Earth-spirit in Faust.

The relationship becomes more clear, however, when we go back to Herder's source of this mode of thought, to that ancient Oriental world in which Herder at the time of his stay in Strassburg was so diligently interested. He writes in the *Alttesten Urkunde* with regard to the Egyptian divinities Ptah and Neith that both names denote "one and the same thing, governor of the world, creator of the universe. . . . the former breathes and creates; the latter weaves—what? The beautiful old, oft-misunderstood, picture of all mysteries, the great veil of nature, the splendid luminous form of all creatures. How fabrics, colors, and figures unite and move, break off and stop. How nature, the invisible mother, there weaves and rips, destroys and works, tapestry and veil, and a miraculous scene in which we gaze only at colors and do not understand nor decipher the plan or purpose. Here we see that primeval Penelope, the artist Minerva at Sais; her inscription is now plain enough;

"I am the all!
What was! What is! What is to be!
No mortal hath lifted my veil!
The sun was my child!"

This passage is very important in order to understand the appearance of the Earth-spirit in Faust. It closely resembles the Earth-spirit in being the governor of the world, the world creator, who

weaves the veil of nature. And as in Faust it is a "changing web" over "birth and grave"; Neith too "weaves and rips, destroys and makes again." Finally as Faust does not comprehend the Earth-spirit, so man can not understand or decipher the plan or purpose of Neith. "No mortal hath lifted my veil"!

Strikingly enough Faust makes use of exactly the same figurative expression of the same thought:

"Mysterious even in open day,
Nature retains her veil despite our clamors."

This is a fundamental thought not only of the first act of the play but also of its entire construction. In view of the Earth-spirit Faust stands before the veiled image of Sais, but Ptah and Neith are none other than the Egyptian god Thoth and the sign of the god Thoth is the sign of the macrocosm in the book of Nostradamus. (81-83.)

Finally in close connection with the night excursion in Faust we have Herder's poem "The Human Soul." Here just like Faust Herder relates how he had examined into many things upon the earth and many doors had opened to him, but how, still unsatisfied, he had longed to see behind the external drama of the world its true essence, its soul, divinity. Precisely this is the introduction and occasion for the appearance of the Earth-spirit in Faust:

"And thus the bitter task forego
Of saying things I do not know—
That I may detect the inmost force
Which binds the world and guides its course;
Its germs, productive powers explore
And rummage in empty words no more."

In this way Herder too is unsatisfied merely to know the external drama in the world, only the garment of God: "I fain would see deeper, would learn the abyss of his power, souls. More than worlds! The glory of divinity which called them into life. . . . To him the heavens sang the fullness of the harmony of nature, and unsatiated he stood, dreamed, and silently he breathed only in thee—in thee, O Soul." The mood is closely related to that of Faust between his glimpse of the sign of the macrocosm and the appearance of the Earth-spirit. Before the sign of Nostradamus, Faust also sang:

"When I the starry courses know
And nature's wise instruction seek."

He too in gazing at the heavens recognized

“How each the whole its substance gives,
Each in the other works and lives.”

But like Herder he too is unsatisfied by this mere drama before the eyes and wishes “to see deeper, to learn the abyss, the souls,” and enter into direct psychical contact with divinity.

“How grand a show! But, ah! a show alone.
Thee, boundless nature, how make thee my own?
Where you, ye breasts? Founts of all being, shining,
Whereon hang heaven’s and earth’s desire,
Whereto our withered hearts aspire.”

In Herder in the same mood, in the submersion of self, of the soul, a *Gotteswink*, a beckoning of God reaches the thinker. From the depths of the grave he is enveloped in a holy shadow. He sees not the face of the image itself; he hears a voice and is seized by terror and a sense of his own smallness in the presence of the divine command. The similarity to the appearance of the Earth-spirit in Goethe’s *Faust* is so unmistakable in this poem that we can scarcely call it accidental. Like *Faust* Herder despairs that by his knowledge he is kept at the surface of things and cannot enter into their depths, can not behold the abyss of divine power, the souls. Like *Faust* before the sign of Nostradamus he is not satisfied even with the view of the heavenly harmony of nature; like *Faust* he desires to see deeper, to know more than worlds—the glory of divinity which called them into life; and like *Faust* he stands in mystic self-submersion unsatiated. As in Goethe’s *Faust* “God’s beckoning” then seizes upon him and “dread” surrounds him; think of the mood of *Faust* before the sign of the Earth-spirit. The Earth-spirit of *Faust* appears to him. Like *Faust* he can not bear its face and with *Faust* must experience a feeling of shame that he is not called to lift the veil of the Deity behind which creative life is bringing to pass the creation of the most sacred things. A more convincing agreement could hardly be conceived. Up to the appearance of the Earth-spirit *Faust* is none other than Herder. (94-97.)

The Earth-spirit speaks words which were originally intended for the World-spirit. This is most clearly obvious from related passages in Herder. In sight of the Earth-spirit *Faust* stands before the veiled image of Minerva at Sais, and the Earth-spirit who is at work upon the Deity’s garment of life is none other than his “weav-

ing and ripping, destroying and working" Penelope-Minerva herself, none other than Ptah and Neith who weave the great veil of nature. But the inscription of the artist Minerva at Sais does not read, "I am the Earth-spirit," but:

"The all am I!
What was, what is, what is to be!
No mortal hath lifted my veil!"

And like her also is the spirit who flings at the despairing Faust the words,

"Thou'rt like the spirit which thou comprehendest,
Not me!"

not the Earth-spirit but like the spirit of the image at Sais, the spirit of the All, the god Thoth whom Faust before the sign of the macrocosm is about to summon and for whom Minerva, Ptah and Neith are only different expressions. The words about making the garment of Deity and also the rejection of Faust were originally coined for the World-spirit instead of being intended for the Earth-spirit in the present connection. (151-152.)

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In exactly Herder's sense Faust reproaches his assistant Wagner with the affectation of untenable grammatical niceties which arise when meaning and expression become separated:

"Yea, your discourses with their glittering show
Where ye for men twist shredded thought like paper,
Are unrefreshing as the winds that blow
The rustling leaves through chill autumnal vapor."

These words remind us of Herder not only in thought but in the language used. Indeed it is most remarkable in this connection that the unusual expression "twisted shreds" (*Schnitzel-Kräuseln*) is one of Herder's favorite phrases. Thus Herder in his "Literary Fragments" speaks of the "twisted play of fancy" (*Kräuselspiel der Phantasie*). Thus also he speaks in his "Provincial Papers to Preachers" (*Provinzial-Blätter an Prediger*), of the "twisted carvings" (*gekräuselten Schnitzwerke*) of dogmas, and in his "Earliest Records" of the "twisted chat of our eloquent philosophers" as if he intended to contribute a companion picture to the "twisted shreds" of Wagner's eloquence.

Most noteworthy in our connection, it seems to me, because important not only for linguistic similarity, is the following passage in Herder's account of Schlözer's "Universal History." This intro-

duction, Herder writes, is "a fine twisted skein entwined with many new writings, and therefore as sparkling but also as uncertain and weak as if wound out of another texture where it properly belonged." What Herder says here of Schlözer's treatment of history Faust says of Wagner's rhetoric. For the "twisted skein" that is so "sparkling" and the "twisted shreds" that are so "glittering," have much more in common than merely the similarity in sound. Both are sparkling and glittering because both are false, a twisted skein of others' writings, a misuse of others' words. (180-182.)

Faust likewise reproaches Wagner with the other comparison, that the "twisted" tinkling of words is as unpleasant as the winds that blow the rustling leaves through chill autumnal vapor. . . . It is noteworthy that Herder also in the seventies utilizes the comparison of dry autumn leaves in a similar connection. In his essay on "*Philosophie und Schwärmerci*" he says that the old masters "fondle their old once-classical style so thoughtlessly; what poor word-fanatics they are! Apothecaries of old fallen autumn leaves who do not see the forest bursting into bud and leaf"! (187.)

Herder's theory of the intrusion of false standards of judgment in history was in his mind closely connected with the theory he held on the nature of speech; namely that productions of the mind are nothing without the mind which produced them. The spirit is like phlogiston, like the flame in fuel which becomes a heap of ashes when the flame is extinguished. It is like the sap in the leaves which if deprived of sap would rustle in the autumnal vapor. A strange spirit can not kindle the ash-heap anew; a strange spirit can not put new life into the dry leaves. Borrowed phrases are lifeless in the mouth of the speaker who recites them by rote.

The same is true of history. In reality history would have its original life only for the man who could revivify the spirit of the times; so much the less for the one who reads into all nations and periods the ideals of his own time. To such a one history must become a dead thing like Schlözer's Universal History according to Herder's judgment or the patched-up speeches of the so-called elocutionary artists according to the judgment of Faust.

"So oftentimes, you miserably mar it!
At the first glance who sees it runs away.
A garbage barrel and a lumber garret."

In the falsification of history "garbage barrel and lumber garret" play the same part as "twisted shreds" in the false use of speech. It is especially noteworthy that here too not only the subject matter

but even the figure and expression of Faust is foreshadowed in Herder. He was fond of comparing the results of the dry and lifeless knowledge of the schools with a garbage heap. By this comparison he meant to give expression to the idea that the once living productions of the spirit would lose all intrinsic value as soon as they were separated by the scientific traffic of the schools from their original life-giving source. The science of the schools separates spirit from the productions of spirit, changes a living thing into a corpse and what is valuable into refuse. In so doing the object of its study becomes a heap of offal, a garbage barrel instead of a living plant.

The most notable resemblance to the garbage barrel in Faust may be found in a letter of Goethe himself to Herder in which the writer makes use of what seems to be originally a comparison of Herder's own. It is probable that Herder received the suggestion for the comparison of false history with a heap of refuse and true history with a living plant from Hamann [known as "the Magus of the North"], while Goethe apparently acquired the comparison through Herder. In May, 1775, Goethe writes with regard to Herder's "Commentaries on the New Testament" and the "Letters of Two Brothers of Jesus": "I have received your books and have regaled myself with them. God knows it is a sentimental world! a living garbage heap. So, thanks! thanks! . . . Your way of sweeping—and not sifting gold out of the garbage, but instead, of transpaligenesizing the garbage into a living plant—sends me to my knees with my whole heart!" Herder is fond of comparing the true course of history to a living plant, the deforming of history to a garbage pile. So Goethe in his letter wishes to turn Herder's own manner of speech back upon himself as he also does in Faust's answer to Wagner.

In the same sense in which he compared the wrong sort of history to a garbage barrel Faust compares it also to a lumber garret. This comparison also I find again in Herder, and essentially in exactly the same connection. The passage stands in the tenth collection of his "Letters on the Advancement of Humanity," not published, it is true, until 1797. There Herder writes: "Every nation must be observed alone in its own position with all that it is and has; arbitrary selections and discardings of separate features and customs do not make history. In such collections we enter into a charnel house, into the nations' store-room and wardrobe; but not into living creation, into those great gardens in which nations have grown like plants and to which they belong."

That the comparison of the wrong sort of history with a wardrobe is not found in Herder until 1797 need not disturb us. It happens very frequently that Herder revived phrases of his youth in his old age. It is therefore very possible that he used this term in talking orally with Goethe in Strassburg. It is even very probable, since this sort of comparison originated in Herder from Hamann who played a large part in Herder's intercourse with Goethe in Strassburg. At any rate we can unhesitatingly bring Herder's "Letters on the Advancement of Humanity" into our consideration of Faust. For the passage cited in Herder does not make the impression of a quotation from Faust, whereas on the other hand the short term in Faust does make the impression of alluding to certain views further developed elsewhere by Herder.

In confirmation of this view let us recall a noteworthy passage from the second collection of the Literary Fragments. It is especially remarkable because in the same connection it contains on the one hand the theory of "the spirit of you all" and on the other hand the words of Faust "garbage barrel" and "lumber garret." Herder writes of the art critic who is learned in the schools, who looks upon the past through the glasses of his own conceptual world: "Instead of becoming a Pygmalion of his author, he knocks off his head as did Claudius of the Roman statues and replaces it with his own."

"What you the spirit of all ages call
Is nothing but the spirit of you all,
Wherein the ages are reflected."

"Like a second Pluto he keeps guard over ancient inherited rubbish and venerable refuse of literature." . . . "With the spectacles of a compendium or the spy-glass of a system in his hand, he now comes closer to this truth and now removes farther from that one in order to keep constantly in view the shadow play of his favorite concepts." (199-205.)

* * *

When Faust comes into his room alone followed by the poodle after his walk on Easter day he has an impulse to open the Bible. He opens it at the Gospel of John:

"I feel impelled its meaning to determine—
With honest feeling once for all,
The hallowèd original
To change to my beloved German."

Here too our assumption is verified that Faust is none other than Herder, for just at the time when Faust was being written

Herder himself was interested in the writings of John. Like Faust he was translating John, and was setting forth his translation and exposition of the Gospel of John in those "Commentaries on the New Testament" to which we have already had occasion to refer in connection with Faust's first midnight monologue. This is the writing of which Goethe wrote in May, 1775, that its exposition was a quickened garbage heap which had been transpalingenesized into a living plant.

If in this point too Faust is Herder, the fact that he translated the Biblical text "with honest feeling," has a particular meaning, for at the time when he was making his comments on the Gospel of John, Herder was convinced that the specialists in New Testament theology often inserted intellectual insincerities into their interpretations of the Bible. It was against this alleged or actual scholastic insincerity that Herder's writings on the New Testament during the seventies contended. He himself speaks in detail about his relation to the specialists and turns to the unprejudiced reader as to an "honest inquirer" who is not contented to stop at the quibbling of the mode of speech but "hastens on to the sap, to the sense, to the truth."

Faust too tried to be an "honest inquirer." He too passed beyond the externalities of linguistic use to the sap, to the sense, to the truth of the written word. This is what it means when he goes at the translation with honest "feeling." Here too the feeling stands as the fountain-head of the inner life in contrast to the dry sense and dead reflections contained in the externalities. Here too feeling is the door of revelation through which the right interpretation must come.

We recall Herder's words that "nobody but a priest of God" can write history; that "only on the heights of revelation" can there be "vision." Faust translates the Gospel of John as a priest of God upon the heights of revelation. In this interpretation he is "by the Spirit truly taught"; "a warning is suggested"; "the Spirit aids" him. Faust's feeling with regard to the Gospel of John is another instrument of his union with Deity as in the first acts of the drama it was the instrument of his union with the spirit world. Faust translates:

"T is written: 'In the beginning was the *Word*.'
 Here am I balked: who, now, can help afford?
 The *Word*?—impossible so high to rate it;
 And otherwise must I translate it,
 If by the Spirit I am truly taught.
 Then thus: 'In the beginning was the *Thought*.'
 This first line let me weigh completely,

Lest my impatient pen proceed too fleetly.
 Is it the *Thought* which works, creates, indeed?
 'In the beginning was the *Power*,' I read.
 Yet, as I write, a warning is suggested,
 That I the sense may not have fairly tested.
 The Spirit aids me: now I see the light!
 'In the beginning was the *Act*,' I write."

As we see Faust struggling with the translation of the "Word" in the beginning of the Gospel of John so at the time of the inception of Faust we see Herder having trouble with the same Word. He devotes to it an extensive consideration from the point of view of the history of religion and philosophy and then proceeds to an attempt to render the Johannine Logos into German, which reflects the similar action of Faust.

"Word!" Thus Herder begins, and we can clearly see in him also the same deadlock as that of Faust striving after a more appropriate expression. "But the German word does not say what is contained in the original concept; if I could only find an expression which would express the concept and its expression, the original concept and its first operation, idea and reproduction, thought and word in the purest, highest, most spiritual way. . . . in and through Deity and by it and in its depth. . . . is the word, thought, image, idea of God; . . . eternally effective, creative, thought, will, image, primeval power, plan of God (merely human imperfect words. . . .) all for this one being, essential, personal, supremely perfect."

Thus Faust's very difficulties at translation are found in the first manuscript form given by Herder to his "Commentaries on the New Testament." And in the printed edition of these commentaries we can still see the effort at a proper translation where the Word of John is "the image of God in the human soul, thought, word, will, deed, love. . . . Nothing is more effective, more inspiring than this Word. It is the will, the prototype of that which is to be, power, deed. . . . It is this Word in our soul that restrains us, bears us on and stimulates us."

In this passage may also be noted a relation between Goethe's Faust and Herder's writings which we have previously mentioned. What in Faust is indicated by a few words not always quite intelligible in themselves is clearly established and carried out in detail in Herder's writings. This is also true of our passage as a whole, but as a special instance we may turn our attention to the lines:

"Is it the *Thought* which works, creates, indeed?
 'In the beginning was the *Power*,' I read."

The translation of the Johannine *Logos* as work, creation, power, is probably intelligible enough to the educated reader, yet its insertion will seem to every unprejudiced person comparatively uncalled for in the present connection of our Faust passage. In Herder the connection is more obvious, but he discusses not only the "Word" and its popular conception in the beginning of the Gospel of John, but the *Logos* as a philosophical and religious concept in general. Of this indeed Herder could say without danger of misinterpretation that it is creative and eternally efficacious.

* * *

Faust's poodle becomes disclosed as Mephistopheles, and now the question is to define the nature of Mephistopheles. It has long been observed that in this definition an interpretation of evil and good plays a part which vividly recalls the religion of Zoroaster. This observation is not without foundation, but indeed Goethe was not obliged to go first to Jacob Böhme for his Parsi doctrine of the conflict between light and darkness. He drew it from a much nearer source, from Herder's Commentary on the Gospel of John in which is found the manifold translation of the *Logos* which has just been quoted. The complete title of Herder's work reads, "Commentaries on the New Testament from a Recently Discovered Oriental Source." This Oriental source is none other than the Avesta which was made newly accessible to the world by Anquetil du Perron in the year 1771. From Herder's commentaries based on the Avesta Goethe derived the details of Mephistopheles's character.

"With all you gentlemen, the name's a test,
Whereby the nature usually is expressed.
Clearly the latter it implies
In names like Beelzebub, Destroyer, Father of Lies.
Who art thou, then?"

"Part of that Power, not understood,
Which always wills the Bad, and always works the Good."

"What hidden sense in this enigma lies?"

"I am the Spirit that Denies!
And justly so: for all things, from the Void
Called forth, deserve to be destroyed:
'T were better, then, were naught created,—
Thus, all which you as Sin have rated,—
Destruction,—aught with Evil blent,—
That is my proper element."

Most strangely are we moved at the first glance by that remarkable train of thought by which Faust arrives at the name of

Mephistopheles. In the case of Deity feeling is everything and the word so much despised, but it is different with the powers of the underworld.

How Goethe reached this particular train of thought is shown by the original connection of the thought in Herder. The entire description of the nature of Mephistopheles is very obviously derived from him. In the corresponding passage in the "Commentaries on the New Testament" we read:

"It is an axiom of the new philology that the whole collection of Indian devil tales come only from Chaldea. If this is true then Chaldea is at least first of all the key to the language on this subject. . . . Let us bring forward a series of his names and predicates of which the long litanies of the Zendavesta are full: Adversary, Enemy, Sneak, Lord or King of Death, Slayer, Liar, Father of Sin. . . . the Evil One, the Villain, the Base One, Nesosch is his ordinary name."

We see that the unusual idea in Faust of reading the nature of Mephistopheles from his names referred originally to the characteristic language of the Chaldeans.

The same is true of the next words of Mephistopheles in which he exhibits his nature by his works, for Herder joins to each group of Chaldean devil names a series of descriptions which closely resemble the words of Mephistopheles. For instance he says with regard to the name "King of Death": "From the beginning he spread over all the elements, tried to poison and destroy all life, corrupted the first human beings, brought sin and death into the world, engendered illness and horrible vice.

Finally Mephistopheles calls himself

"Part of that power, not understood,
Which always wills the bad and always works the good."

Strangely enough this peculiar statement belongs also to the thought-cycle of Herder's writings. A genuine child of the 18th century, Herder thought that the victory of good over evil was apparent throughout the world. He was convinced that the power of evil in the world was destined to change into good. "According to an unalterable law of nature, evil itself must bring forth something good." Mephistopheles also is subject to this law.

Returning to Herder's writings on the Gospel of John we see that there as in Faust, Mephistopheles is "the spirit that denies" in spite of the undesired good result of his activity. All evil and sin in the world is his work, "is the generally accepted symbol of evil

and stands opposed to the light." In the description of his own nature Mephistopheles continues, emphasizing especially his antagonism to light:

"Part of the Part am I, once All, in primal night—
Part of the darkness which brought forth the light,
The haughty light, which now disputes the space,
And claims of Mother Night her ancient place."

These words portray the Avesta theory of the origin of the world upon which Herder based his comments on John. At earlier periods he had investigated similar modes of thought of other Oriental religions in connection with his work on the Old Testament, but he was particularly engaged with the Avesta at the time when he was in contact with Goethe at Strassburg.

We now return to Herder's commentaries on the Gospel of John which were influenced by the Avesta and in which the conflict described by Mephistopheles between darkness and light is most clearly evident. In the Avesta light contends with Mother Night for her old rank, for space. "The light shineth in darkness," writes Herder, "and the darkness comprehendeth it not, that is, did not receive it or was not able to withstand it. We see here the painting of present and past creation down to the noblest kinds of existence, all from one foundation. Light reflects only light. . . . In darkness, across a great ocean of undeveloped to that of developed powers, these higher rays of light were spread like stars from the dark curtain of night. Night is not part of them, it does not comprehend them, but neither can it swallow them up."

Similarly Herder writes in another passage: "The realm of light is forever in conflict with this night." And again: "Darkness (personifying Zoroaster) saw light as it was coming in brilliance and beauty, and hastened to pollute it, but fell back into his realm, the desert, and had no power against it. . . . Whatever light and life there is in the world, however dispersed it may be, however much it shines in the dark, and contends against darkness,—the good in the world must overcome evil, light darkness!"

Mephistopheles represents from his standpoint the reverse picture. According to his description darkness does not rush to pollute light, but *vice versa* light rushes towards darkness to purify it. It is not darkness that falls back in the face of light, but *vice versa* it is light that recoils from material bodies. And it is not light, Mephistopheles hopes, that will conquer in the end, but *vice versa*, darkness with its material world will overcome light.

“And yet, the struggle fails; since Light, howe'er it weaves,
Still, fettered, unto bodies cleaves:
It flows from bodies, bodies beautifies:
By bodies is its course impeded;
And so, but little time is needed,
I hope, ere, as the bodies die, it dies!” (235-237.)

[There are many more points mentioned by Dr. Jacoby such as the sterility of logic, of speculation, of analysis, that the spirit escapes while merely the parts remain. Further passages contribute to the condemnation of the use of words without meaning; and Herder makes comments similar to Goethe's on man's hankering after becoming like unto God. When Herder says: “All philosophy which begins with self and ends in self is of its cousin the serpent,” we are reminded of Mephistopheles's expression, “My cousin the serpent.”—ED.]