

Goethe's *Urfaust* and the Enlightenment:
Gottsched, Welling and the "Turn to Magic"

By

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Abstract

The *Urfaust*, composed in the early 1770s, is the first draft of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's (1749-1832) masterpiece, *Faust, Teil I* (1808). While this early draft is relatively unexamined in its own right, an examination of this work in the context of its original creation offers insights into Goethe's creative processes at the time in relation to the Enlightenment poetic debates of the eighteenth century, through which literary critics, such as J.C. Gottsched (1700-1766) attempted to define the rules by which poetic construction should operate. In examining the *Urfaust*, one can see how Goethe's poetic aims transcended those of the Enlightenment debate, going far beyond the Enlightenment critics of Gottsched, such as J.J. Bodmer (1698-1783) and J.J. Breitinger (1701-1776) in making the case for additional room for the fantastic in poetic construction.

Goethe's criticism of the limits of the Enlightenment to know and explain reality via reason and language leads him to a different approach to the mythological, one based on the primacy of image to language in approximating nature, in which the poet is free to construct a new mythology based on the manipulation of images into a new narrative. In Georg von Welling's (1652-1727) cabalistic work he finds a cosmogony rich with images, images that he borrows and transforms in creating his own new Faust mythology. In Welling, Goethe finds the counterpole to Gottsched, whose image-rich language provides Goethe with inspiration to respond to the poetic debates of the Enlightenment poetically, as opposed to discursively, through his approach to constructing a mythology.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Scope of Project

Composed in the early 1770s, the *Urfaust* is the first draft of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's (1749-1832) *Faust, Teil I* (1808), arguably the most read and studied work in the German literary canon. In spite of its role as the foundation to this later masterpiece, the *Urfaust*, discovered by Erich Schmidt in 1887, remains relatively unexamined as a work in its own right. Perhaps this is due to the fact that Goethe had not chosen to publish it in that form, as opposed to many other works from his *Sturm und Drang* period. Due to *Faust I*'s tremendous success in the decades preceding this discovery, there had already been seven decades of well-established Faust research and reception prior to this discovery.

There are several scholars who have published important work on the *Urfaust*, yet their work does not focus upon the work in relation to the thesis of this dissertation. Included among these scholars are Ulrich Gaier, Ernst Grumach and Werner Keller. Gaier has provided the most thorough critical annotated edition of the *Urfaust: Goethes Faust-Dichtungen Band I Urfaust* (1989). Grumach addresses the *Urfaust* specifically in his edited volume, *Beiträge zur Goetheforschung* (1959). In the first part of his "Faustiana" chapter, called "Zum Urfaust," he addresses the *Urfaust* in terms of documenting the dating of its production (268-275). Keller's "Goethes Urfaust – historisch betrachtet," first published in 1994 and again most recently in *Schriften der Goethe-Gesellschaft* 69 (2009) addresses the origins of the "Erdegeist" concept used in the

work, drawing on the influence of Renaissance magicians such as Agrippa and Paracelsus.

Several studies specifically regarding or related to the *Urfaust* published in the late 1960s also merit mention here. Eudo Mason's *Goethe's Faust. Its Genesis and Purport* (1967), treats the *Urfaust* as part of his overall study of the development of *Faust I*. Valter Nollendorfs' *Der Streit um den Urfaust* (1967) provides an excellent overview of the discovery and publication of the text in the late nineteenth century, and builds on Grumach's research regarding the influences within the text itself. Helgard Reich's *Die Entstehung der ersten fünf Szenen des Goetheschen 'Urfaust'* (1968) provides analysis of the development of five scenes of the work, doing specific text analysis to look for origins of the work. In addition, Rolf Christian Zimmermann's *Das Weltbild des Jungen Goethe*, first published in 1969, addresses the theory of the influences of hermeticism upon the young Goethe, a theme that is certainly relevant to the production of the *Urfaust*, and one that does tie into this study, even if not specifically in concert with the parameters or the ultimate views of this dissertation.

My dissertation seeks to address the *Urfaust* anew from the perspective of the debate in recent decades among Goethe scholars who are seeking to define Goethe's relationship to the Enlightenment. In doing so, the intention is not merely to show that the *Urfaust* can be viewed as a key to understanding Goethe's relationship to the Enlightenment, but also to situate the *Urfaust*, as a work, in the poetic debates of the Enlightenment, in order to explore Goethe's response to those debates in their original context. This is of extreme importance to Goethe scholarship, given that Goethe's work related to Faust has long been received within a tradition that relates to the finished work

in the early nineteenth century, and situates Goethe's position vis-à-vis the Enlightenment within a teleological view of the development of German literature popularized by thinkers such as Schelling and Hegel at that time.

1.2 The Reception of Goethe's *Faust* in Relation to the Enlightenment

The most recent authoritative and monumental study of the history of Faust reception by Rüdiger Scholz (2011) is quite persuasive in its thorough examination of how Schelling and Hegel influenced later understanding of *Faust*. The scope of Scholz' work reinforces the claim of this dissertation that the *Urfaust* as a work in its own right has been relatively under-examined, not merely by virtue of the demonstration of the influence of Schelling-Hegel on the reception of Faust in general, but also by virtue of the fact that in this wide-ranging study of the history of Faust reception, the *Urfaust* itself gets little attention. In the first volume of the Scholz study, within a section entitled "Der idealistische Ansatz," Scholz establishes how the philosophical approaches to Goethe taken by both Schelling and Hegel in Jena at the beginning of the nineteenth century inform the understanding of Goethe's *Faust* by succeeding generations of *Faust* scholars over the next two centuries. The approach of these scholars to Goethe/*Faust* is shown as the basis for the genre classification of Faust, the philosophical and teleological approach to Faust within the history of ideas, and the elevation of Goethe to national genius that ensued.

Schelling treats *Faust* as one of the central mythological poems of modernity -- indeed, it is to Schelling that the original genre classification of *Faust* as "Gedicht" as opposed to "Drama" is owed (Scholz 56, 66). This, one must note, is the *Faust* of the

1790 fragment, given that Schelling's comments are made in the 1798-1803 timeframe (Scholz 56). Schelling's view of modern myth in general (a category that he applies to the works of Dante, Cervantes, Shakespeare and Goethe) informs his view of Faust as being part of the teleological process of ending the opposition between "Gattung" (the world of the ancients is the world of "Gattungen") and the individual (the world of the modern is the world of the "Individuen"), in which history and time are sublated in the eternal Being of the Absolute. The Faust-myth is, then, for Schelling, not a pure myth of the absolute, but a historical myth of the German people, related through the historical subject of Goethe. The genre classification of poetry stems from the hierarchy of genre classifications within Schelling's philosophy, in which poetry is the highest form of art, most near to philosophy, as the most ideal and infinite form of art (58).

In Hegel's philosophy the opposition between "*Gattung und Individuum*" is also emphasized, and while his own comments address the Faust work as a whole less specifically than those of Schelling, he does make reference to lines from *Faust* involving the Erdgeist and Mephisto in his 1807 *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, without actually naming Goethe or the Faust itself (59-60). Scholz points out the thematic consistencies in Hegel's treatment of the relationship of the individual to itself, to "Gattung" and to "Substanz" in Hegel's work, as well as his philosophical examination of pairs of opposites (including, among others, Natur und Geist), as being consistent with the views articulated dramatically in Faust. This has led many scholars to view the works as somehow complementary of each other. Scholz: "Dadurch scheint, ähnlich wie bei Schellings Kunstphilosophie, Goethes *Faust* eine Veranschaulichung der abstrakten philosophischen Ideen Hegels oder, umgekehrt, die philosophische Argumentation eine

Deutung der Ideen des *Faust*-Dramas" (62).

Without his commenting on the accuracy of such characterizations -- for as Scholz points out, he is merely explaining the interpretations in context (63-4) -- Scholz provides a good description of how the dialectical thinking of idealistic philosophers informed the reception of Faust, and indeed, in the history of genre classification, led to the eventual description of Faust as "Weltbibel" in 1842 (65). Not only that, but the teleological understanding of Faust by Schelling and Hegel also informs the popular understanding of Goethe's work as ending the Enlightenment ("Mit Schellings und Hegels Positionen der Auslegung wird die Geschichte der Aufklärung gekappt" 66). The author of this dissertation would also like to thank Professor Wynfried Kriegleder of the University of Vienna, with whom he privately discussed the notion of Goethe/*Faust* reception in light of this sort of teleological view of literary history, in connection with the Gervinus' influence upon the predominant view of German literary history stemming from the 1840s until the present. These discussions in April of 2012 were quite helpful in preparing the author for understanding the work that Scholz presented. Additional recent scholarship concerning this discussion of the development of the prevailing view of German literary history is found in Jürgen Fohrmann's *Das Project der deutschen Literaturgeschichte* (1989).

1.3 Goethe's Relationship to the Enlightenment via *Faust*

In light of this traditional view of Goethe and *Faust*, it is most interesting to note that in the past thirty years, the consensus among scholars concerning Goethe's relationship to the Enlightenment has begun to splinter. The dominant viewpoint of the

twentieth century, that Goethe should be viewed as an “Überwinder der Aufklärung,” reinforced by such important figures in Goethe scholarship as Friedrich Gundolf (1880-1931), has been challenged from a number of angles that are themselves not all of one accord. In Gundolf’s *Goethe*, originally published in 1930 and then reprinted in 1963 by the Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft in Darmstadt, the *Faust*-work is addressed in terms very much aligned with the view of the view of Goethe as one seeking to overthrow the Enlightenment, opening its treatment of the work, as it does, with the following passage concerning the Titanist view of the work: “Nun war noch ein Sinnbild seines titanischen Urerlebnisses übrig: der Faust: von allen das gemäßeste, d.h. dasjenige was sich von vornherein weitaus am meisten mit seiner eignen Seele, seiner Lage, seinem Bestreben, seinen Gefühlen und Zuständen decken könnte. Um aus Faust herauszureden, um sich in Faust hineinzubilden, [...] (129).” Furthermore, Gundolf describes *Faust* in terms that evoke fundamental opposition to Kantian philosophy:

“Aber nicht nur der Titanismus an sich war mit dem Faustsymbol auszudrücken, [...]. [...] Form oder Zeichen dieses Lebenshungers, der nicht nur die negative Seite des schöpferischen titanischen Expansionstriebes ist sondern eine eigne Funktion des Goethischen Lebens, ist zunächst das Leiden an der Existenz schlechthin, nicht nur an bestimmten zeitlichen Formen der Existenz: das transzendente Gefühl des Ungenügens welches hervorgeht aus dem Widerstreit zwischen der räumlichen und zeitlichen Beschränktheit unsrer irdischen Lebensformen mit dem unendlichen Lebensgehalt der Welt .. [sic] die Unmöglichkeit sein Ich als Form zum All zu erweitern“ (131).

In more recent times, however, some have even attempted to portray Goethe as a

champion of the Enlightenment, in a radical departure from the previous consensus, while others have attempted to find within Goethe elements of awareness of, sympathy for, or influence from Enlightenment thought. Goethe's *Faust* has been cited by various scholars of differing viewpoints on this question as a text that is of great importance in shedding light on Goethe's relationship to this influential intellectual movement of his time. Gottfried Willems (1990) cites *Faust* in his argument that the Enlightenment is to be found on virtually every page of Goethe's work (Willems 23). Gerhard Schulz (1988) uses *Faust* to challenge the dominant view of Gundolf (and of H. A. Korff, Schulz's mentor) regarding the alleged anti-Enlightenment viewpoint of Goethe: *Faust* is, for him, a work that shows some internal affinities to the view of the individual articulated by Enlightened thinkers such as Kant (Schulz 183). More recently, Helmut Koopmann (2008) has argued that *Faust* shows a definite tension between Goethe and the Enlightenment, arguing among other points, that already in the "Prolog im Himmel" there is an unmistakable nod toward the Enlightenment in the words of Mephistopheles regarding man as "der kleine Gott der Welt," taking its view of man, as it were, from the theodicy of Leibniz (Koopmann 161). At the same time, like Schulz, Koopmann sees in the use of Renaissance motifs in *Faust* by Goethe a subtle critique of the Enlightenment (Koopmann 167, Schulz 183-189). Indeed, both Schulz and Koopmann argue in such a way as to support the more general conclusions regarding Goethe and the Enlightenment offered by Rudolf Vierhaus, who argues that Goethe's relationship to the Enlightenment defies easy categorization (Vierhaus 1985 11). Vierhaus' approach centers less on specific works, such as *Faust*, than it does on Goethe's direct engagement of Enlightenment themes and thinkers, and clears the way for scholars such as Schulz and

Koopmann to argue that Goethe's relationship to the Enlightenment was somewhat ambiguous, in that his approach to these themes and thinkers cannot be categorized monolithically under the rubric of a strictly defined relationship to the Enlightenment: the hostility in Goethe's response to the Enlightenment poetics of Gottsched and Sulzer, is not found in his engagement with the thought of Kant, for example (Vierhaus 1996-1999 86).

1.4 Goethe and the Enlightenment: an Examination of *Urfaust*

An important aspect of the current study that sets itself apart from those mentioned above is the attempt to view this question from within the context of the *Urfaust* itself. The reason for doing so will become clear in the exploration of the poetic debates of the eighteenth century, debates which were leading up to and contemporaneous with the work on the *Urfaust*, and give one the context in which to view the *Urfaust* itself as a vehicle for Goethe to respond to those debates in his own poetic fashion. This is also significant from the standpoint of attempting to re-examine Goethe with respect to his relationship with the Enlightenment by viewing the *Urfaust* in its original context, and not that of the work that eventually resulted from it, decades later, and which served as the basis for the reception by *Faust* scholars in the ensuing centuries. If one is to further the recently renewed debates on Goethe's relationship to the Enlightenment, on which nearly all of the above cited scholars agree that *Faust* is of signal importance, it would behoove one to re-examine the development of the work in its earliest form from this standpoint as well. This dissertation seeks to fill this void in the debate.

1.5 Method

The approach to this work seeks to situate understanding of the *Urfaust* in respect of both 1) the poetic debates of the time, which are relevant to both the form and content of the work itself, and also 2) to how Goethe's known use of the Renaissance neoplatonist/hermeticist tradition informs his response to those debates by means of his approach to myth in the work. The history of *Faust* reception has been predominantly centered not on this first draft, but on the finished work of 1808. This approach, however, of necessity overlooks the fact that many of the most relevant questions for the understanding of the meaning and impetus behind the work are to be found in analysis of Goethe's activities and influences from this earlier period. Whereas Schelling and Hegel may have had fascinating insights of the relevance of the final work to its historical moment, the cost to scholarship of the teleological view of literary history, in which the finished *Faust I* towers above the literary landscape that follows for decades and even centuries, the context in which Goethe began his work decades before is often ignored, and even in some instances, has scarcely been examined closely, in spite of the mountain of scholarship related to the seminal final work.

1.5.1 The *Urfaust*: Response to Enlightenment Debates on Poetics

Goethe's work will be placed in the context of the Enlightenment poetic debates of the eighteenth century, with special attention being paid to figures such as Gottsched, Bodmer, Breitinger and Sulzer. The use of "magic" as a theme or topic of dramatic construction by Goethe represents not only a direct contradiction of poetic principles laid

out by Gottsched, but also is done in a way that transcends even the arguments against Gottsched by his Enlightenment opponents. This dissertation will demonstrate that Goethe's *Urfaust* includes a dramatic, as opposed to discursive, response to the poetic debates in question, and will do so by arguing for a previously undiscovered use of genre in the play itself, that of the *commedia dell'arte*. This is significant not only from the standpoint of Goethe's engagement with this specific genre as a means of response to the Enlightenment debates of his time, but it also forms the basis for his known and documented engagement with this same genre later in his career. This early use of *commedia dell'arte* by Goethe, when taken together with the poetic definition of poetry offered in the "Luzifer-Mythos" described in Goethe's *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, show that the *Urfaust* was more than simply a result of a philosophical attempt to solve challenges posed by Enlightenment thought, but also an early attempt by Goethe to redefine the nature of *Gattungen*, an effort whose fruition was not to be in explicit definitions, such as in an Enlightenment approach, but was to be realized from within the poetic work itself.

1.5.2 The *Urfaust* as an Example of Goethe's Approach to Myth-making

The second major aspect of this study is focused upon the approach to myth-making that Goethe uses in his construction of the *Urfaust*. The need to overcome limits, a prominent theme in the *Urfaust* itself, was also a driving force for Goethe in his development of a new myth-making approach. Once again, Goethe's approach is at once informed by, and also demonstrates a need to transcend the limits placed upon myth-making by the Enlightenment. In this section, I will begin with an exposition of early views of the Enlightenment with respect to myth, namely by examining the idea of myth

as error (as developed from Fontenelle to Gottsched). In this regard, there are several points of discussion that can be developed that have great thematic relevance to the *Urfaust*: 1) the idea of myth as errant imagination; 2) a discussion of the weak spot of Enlightenment tradition regarding the Unknown; and finally 3) an explanation of how the discussion of myth helps one to see the crux of the debate between Gottsched and Bodmer-Breitinger. With respect to the last of these three points, a dichotomy emerges within Enlightenment thought with respect to myth-making: either reason is used to reduce the sphere of the imagination to that which is deemed natural according to abstract, reasoned truths (Gottsched), or reason allows a space for the imagination to play within mythology, being able to distinguish between fact and fiction, which ideally would allow for an expansion of the freedom of the imagination in concert with the development of reason (Bodmer). What the two views hold in common is that either the restriction or the freedom of the imagination is tied directly to the premise that reason, and reason alone, is the arbiter of truth. It is merely a question of whether one takes the “errors” of mythology as a direct threat to reason (Gottsched) or not (Bodmer), that determines one’s position regarding mythology. One aspect of eighteenth century German Enlightenment thought that becomes clear in this regard is the acceptance (and indeed, the assumption) of eternal truth that is derived through logic and reason. That such is 1) knowable, and 2) forms the limits of the imagination, are challenged directly by the premises of Goethe’s *Urfaust*, in which the eternal truth is beyond the grasp of the scholar and reason itself is seen as limited, and indeed, limiting, in this regard. It seems only natural, then, that Goethe’s responses to Enlightenment debate would come couched in mythology as opposed to discursive thought.)

1.5.3 Enlightenment Myth-making with Respect to the Faust Theme

The existence of a *Faust* fragment by Lessing provides a concrete example that one can use in contrast to Goethe's *Urfaust*, which has been done to varying degrees by Petsch (1911), Guthke (1960), Baron (1982) and Henning (1989) among others. Lessing's Faust fragment shows the limits of reasoned truth, raising the question of how to relate reason and moral truth. The relationship of reason and knowledge to the question of good and evil is shown to be ultimately unresolved in his discussion of the various devils with whom Faust speaks. Lessing's contribution to the understanding of Goethe's efforts is to show the potential of the Faust theme as a challenge to Gottsched's poetics, while at the same time showing how this potential is limited within certain constraints of Enlightenment thought.

1.5.3.1 Goethe's reading of Georg von Welling

In his autobiographical work *Dichtung und Wahrheit* Goethe makes explicit reference to the importance of Georg von Welling's *Opus Mago-Cabbalisticum et Theosophicum* during his youthful convalescence in Frankfurt in the early 1770s. Among the esoteric, mystical and Pietist works consulted during this time and mentioned years later in Goethe's autobiography, Welling's work stands out by its mention as a work with which the young Goethe had struggled to understand, but with which he had been apparently fascinated. Goethe's engagement with this work, contemporaneous to his early conception of the Faust legend in the *Urfaust*, has been noted by scholars, but the extent of its influence has been largely ignored or overlooked, or has been the subject of

speculation concerning purported mystical and esoteric leanings of Goethe in that period or throughout his life. This work seeks to fill in the gaps of information left by the former, without engaging in the speculation of the latter, by means of examining Goethe's use of Welling within the context of the Enlightenment poetic debates regarding the appropriateness of myth as a vehicle for dramatic construction, and in terms of the very approach to construction of myth itself.

1.5.3.2 Goethe's Common Sources with Welling and "Totalization"

Goethe's interest in Welling must be taken in the context of his other readings from the period of his Frankfurt convalescence with the von Klettenberg circle, and in doing so, one will see that many of the most significant influences upon Welling were also being read by the young Goethe at the same time: notably the Renaissance alchemist Paracelsus and the Pietist theologian Gottfried Arnold. Due to these common influences, Goethe's approach to myth-making combines with the Faust material in a unique manner, and can be contrasted with the approach of Lessing, for example, who also opposed Gottsched's prohibition of the use of the Faust theme, and who had himself tried to construct his own Faust myth within the parameters of Enlightenment thinking. The use of the term "totalization" here refers to the scope of Faustian knowledge, which is meant to be transcendent and all-encompassing.

The intellectual development of this totalization idea within the *Urfaust* shares with Welling various traces, such as the influences of Pietists (most specifically Gottfried Arnold), heresy, Paracelsus/Agrippa/Trithemius, and Neoplatonism, all of which set up Goethe's unique viewpoint and, ultimately, form his lasting approach to the

Enlightenment. The significance of this investigation is that it seeks to grasp the manner in which Goethe developed his method of getting beyond the problem in Lessing's approach. One aspect of this development is certainly Goethe's questioning of the legitimacy of morality as a limiting factor to the question of knowledge, but this aspect is grounded in a deeper understanding of history, and namely, in the distortion of history by the Church and its persecution of heretics, which had the effect of dismissing the Renaissance magician as heretical. Faust's totalization of knowledge in the *Urfaust*, is therefore, a "heretical" act. In contrast to Lessing, the process of "totalization" used by Goethe builds awareness of the limits of the Enlightenment into his myth. Indeed, there is a sense that he is, in fact, building a mythology around the limits of knowledge and reason in order to transcend them. In order to do so, Goethe reaches back to pre-Enlightenment sources of knowledge for inspiration.

Goethe himself writes in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* that he was influenced at the time of his early work on Faust by the work of Gottfried Arnold (1666-1714), whose *Kirchen- und Ketzergeschichte* he praises in a passage that expressly connects this interest to his desire to construct his own religion. Using Goethe's own words from *Dichtung und Wahrheit* as a roadmap, I will attempt to reconstruct the intellectual development underlying Goethe's totalization from a concrete basis in his studies of the "heretical" figures mentioned in Arnold's work to the dramatic representation of neoplatonism present in the *Urfaust*.

In this chapter I will attempt to establish a timeline for the development of the totalization idea, by looking at the specific "heretical" sources that Goethe would have been consulting at the same time that he discovered a method to get beyond the

Wissensdrang paradox that Lessing encountered.

1.5.3.3 Revisiting the “Luzifer-Mythos” in the Context of Welling

By establishing the sequence in the timeline of Goethe’s “totalization” approach to the Faust theme, one can better understand the importance of Welling to Goethe, not merely as a source for material, but also in terms of how, exactly, that material is appropriated and used by Goethe. Welling’s own use of a “Luzifer-Mythos” differs markedly from Goethe’s later adoption of a similar concept: whereas for the former, such a construct is offered as the basis for a cosmogony, for the latter, the creation of such is a conscious act of myth-making, indeed, even an attempt at establishing a morphology of mythical construction itself. This shows that Goethe is not merely overcoming Enlightenment limits, whether in the form of transcending debates between Gottsched and his Swiss opponents, or in resolving the problems in the limited approach to the Faust theme that resulted from Lessing’s Enlightenment viewpoint – it also represents Goethe’s incorporation of the Enlightenment view of myth into his treatment of pre-Enlightenment sources, in that ideas such as the “Luzifer-Mythos” are clearly viewed as constructs as opposed to statements of truth about the nature of reality.

1.5.3.4 Goethe’s Overall Use of Welling in the *Urfaust*

In this section, I will begin by noting that Goethe uses Welling in a way different to that recognized by the differing camps of scholars, who argue either for a limited influence (limited to Macrcosm/Erdgeist, etc.), such as Schöne, Trunz, Sauder, Nisbet, or for the more mystical approach (tying Goethe to one or another esoteric tradition via

Welling by way of Doctor Metz), such as Zimmermann, Gray, Grumach.

The key concept tying everything together here is that the extensive use of Welling, which I argue need not be *mystical* in nature (that is, inherently linked to the furtherance or adherence to any particular esoteric tradition or cosmogonic system), and inscrutable to Enlightenment thought -- but rather *mythological* in nature – for use in building a mythic construct that attempts to transcend the limits that he sees in Enlightenment thought.

The mystical view seems to imply that Goethe is hiding his arguments in myth, whereas the mythological view allows one to see that Goethe uses myth to transcend the limits of rational Enlightenment debate (very much in line with the concerns expressed openly in the *Urfaust*).

In this sense, Goethe's "overcoming" of the Enlightenment might really be better understood as his attempt to transcend the limits imposed on thought by the Enlightenment, not as a way of invalidating or arguing against reason or for something mystical, but ultimately as a way of making clear the limits of rational thought to those who employ it; it could be said that, in this sense, he is establishing the limits of what can and cannot be claimed by rational thought, which, in itself, is not anti-Enlightenment, but very much what some Enlightenment philosophers themselves (most notably Kant) set out to do.

2 Goethe's Response to Enlightenment Debates on Poetics and the *Urfaust*

In eighteenth century Enlightenment Germany, debates concerning the rules for poetic construction were quite intense, perhaps none more so than that between J.C. Gottsched (1700-1766), the self-styled Horatian critic and arbiter of literary rules from Leipzig, and two of his chief antagonists, both from Switzerland, J.J. Bodmer (1698-1783), author, critic and the first German translator of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and J.J. Breitinger (1701-1776), author and philologist. These debates were especially pointed when considering the relationship of *das Wunderbare* and *das Warscheinliche*, and also the scope and role of the poet's *imagination* in poetic composition. Goethe's response to this debate will be shown to be fundamentally poetic, as opposed to discursive in nature, and this will be shown on two levels: first, the development of the idea of the "Luzifer-Mythos" that Goethe mentions in connection with this debate, when writing his autobiography *Dichtung und Wahrheit* years later, which shows a more abstract level informing Goethe's disagreement with the positions of not only Gottsched, but also Bodmer and Breitinger, and secondly, Goethe's use of the *commedia dell'arte* within the *Urfaust* as a concrete example of the fact that his desire to respond to this debate on a poetic, rather than discursive, level, factored directly into his composition of the *Urfaust*.

2.1 Gottsched and the Suitability of Magic for Dramatic Construction

Without recapitulating the entirety of Gottsched's poetics, it is perhaps first instructive and helpful for those seeking to find the tension between Goethe's approach and that of Gottsched to note that the core themes of the *Urfaust* had previously been utterly rejected by Gottsched as unsuitable for the theatre. Goethe's choice of the

dramatic form to address the philosophical issues present in the *Urfaust*, therefore, is an implicit challenge to Gottsched, whose poetics proscribe the possibility of such subject matter as proper material for dramatic consideration. In the fourth chapter of the first book of his *Versuch einer critischen Dichtkunst* (1730), entitled “Von den dreyen Gattungen der poetischen Nachahmung, und insonderheit von der Fabel,” Gottsched sets out to define the rules for “enlightened” dramatic construction, and proceeds to set forward a complex definition of when an “unbelievable” (“unglaublich”) story or plot is allowed, with one of his conditions being its plausibility (“Wahrscheinlichkeit”). The unbelievable is allowed only to the extent that the poet is able to make it plausible: Gottsched gives the example that one could not write a drama in a modern context in which talking trees and animals took part, given its implausibility to the modern viewer, but if one were to posit a mythical past in which such contingencies were possible, dramatic freedom would allow their portrayal (Gottsched 206-207). He directly follows this argument by differentiating between epic and dramatic fables, making explicit mention, among other things, of the unsuitability of tales of magic to the drama of the present, given their implausibility to the eye:

Denn die theatralischen Fabeln leiden nichts, als was wahrscheinlich ist, wie Horatius in seiner Dichtkunst sehr fleißig erinnert: hingegen die epischen können gar wohl auch unwahrscheinliche Fabeln von Thieren und leblosen Dingen brauchen. Tausend Dinge lassen sich gar wohl erzählen; aber den Augen läßt sich nichts vorstellen, als was glaublich ist. Die vormaligen Zeiten der Einfalt des menschlichen Geschlechts, haben so viel von Zaubereyen, und Wundergeschichten erzählet und geglaubt, und

auf die Nachwelt fortgepflanzt; daß es uns nicht schwer ist, zu glauben, daß durch eine übermenschliche Kraft, alles möglich ist, was nur nicht widersprechend ist. So wird des Homers redendes Pferd, nur durch die Kraft der Minerva möglich, oder glaublich, wenn man es in die alten Zeiten setzt. Wer aber entweder dasselbe, oder Bileams Eselinn auf die Schaubühne bringen, und sie dadurch gleichsam in unsre Zeiten versetzen wollte: Dem würde Horaz zurufen:

QUODCUMQUE OSTENDIS MIHI SIC, INCREDULUS ODI.
(Gottsched 207-8)

In this very same vein, Gottsched returns to the theme in the fifth chapter of the same book (“Von dem Wunderbaren in der Poesie”), in which he again mentions magic, and specifically lumps the Faust theme in with those “Alfanzereyen” that he deems unsuitable themes for dramatic construction:

Eben das kann von den Zaubereyen und bösen Geistern gesagt werden. Auch ein seichter Witz ist geschickt, einen Hexenmeister auf die Schaubühne zu stellen, der einen Zaubersegen nach dem andern hermurmel, einen astrologischen Ring mit Characteren verkauft, diesen unsichtbar, jenen unbeweglich, einen andern unkenntlich macht, ja wohl gar ein halb Dutzend junge Teufel herzubannet. Das Märchen von D. Fausten hat lange genug den Pöbel belustiget: Und man hat ziemlicher maßen aufgehört, solche Alfanzereyen gerne anzusehen. (Gottsched 240)

This, Gottsched continues, is directly related to the notion that the poet should not dramatise that which is not believable, condemning Italian and even French theatre for

being guilty of falling into this practice and citing Horace as his authority for why these themes were not worthy of the poet, and mentioning the absurdity of Andreas Gryphius' (1616-1664) 1663 absurdist comedy *Herr Peter Squenz*:

Daher muß denn ein Poet große Behutsamkeit gebrauchen, daß er nicht unglaubliche Dinge auf die Schaubühne bringe, vielweniger sichtbar vorstelle. Die italiänische Schaubühne, und das THEATRE DE LA FOIRE zu Paris wimmeln von solchen Hexereyen: ja auch das bessere französische Theater fängt schon an auf solche Alfanzereyen zu verfallen, wie man aus einigen neuern Stücken z.E. LE ROI DE COCAGNE, und L'ORACLE, erhellet. Horaz hat dieses auch längst verboten, wenn er will, daß man die Progne nicht in einen Vogel, den Cadmus nicht in eine Schlange verwandeln solle; imgleichen, daß niemand auf der Schaubühne einer Hexe das aufgefressene Kind lebendig wieder aus dem Leibe solle ziehen lassen. Das wäre eben so viel, als wenn ich Bileams Eselinn redend einführen, oder den Edelmann vor den Augen des Schauplatzes zum Schweine wollte werden laßen. Wer nicht weis, wie lächerlich dieses ist, der darf nur den Peter Squenz des Andreas Gryphius nachlesen, wo so gar die Wand und der Brunn, der Mond und der Leue, als redende Personen aufgeföhret werden. (Gottsched 240-241)

Gottsched finishes this passage by returning to the previously cited quotation from Horace, forming a tight connection between the previously cited argument and this later passage:

Da kann es denn wohl mit Recht heißen:

QUODCUNQUE OSTENDIS MIHI SIC, INCREDULUS ODI.

Denn es ist gewiß, daß dergleichen Dinge, die man bey einer bloßen Erzählung eben nicht für ungereimt gehalten haben würde, ganz und gar ungläublich herauskommen, wenn wir sie mit eigenen Augen ansehen, und also das Unmögliche, so darinn vorkömmt, in voller Deutlichkeit wahrnehmen können. (Gottsched 241)

Here Gottsched, in his desire to craft a poetics for the German theater based upon an Enlightened, pro-French neoclassicist point of view, disavows the long history of the Faust myth within German literature as an outdated superstition: most importantly for the argument of this thesis, Gottsched sets out to deny the very possibility of using this myth in any useful manner whatsoever in a modern, Enlightened context.

2.2 Anti-Gottschedian Influences: Bodmer and Breitinger

In response to Gottsched's inveighing against the possibility of the fantastic in drama in passages such as the previously cited ("Von dem Wunderbaren in der Poesie"), several important anti-Gottsched poetic critics emerged in decades prior to Goethe's work, upon whose criticism Goethe later drew. The most important of these for Goethe were the pair of professors from Zurich, Johann Jacob Bodmer (1698-1783), and Johann Jacob Breitinger (1701-1776). In his essay, "Der junge Goethe über den alten Bodmer" (1993), Klaus Hurlbusch notes that these two opponents of French neo-classicist poetics stood principally for a greater freedom of the imagination within the limits of reason and morality that Gottsched wanted to impose on German dramatists (Hurlbusch 369-370).

Both Bodmer and Breitinger drew upon the Leibnizian concept of possible worlds in articulating this freedom of the imagination, most likely through Christian Wolff's popularization of this idea (Zeller 132-136). Wolff explained Leibniz' concept "in a comparison with a novel that creates a possible world by arranging the plot in such a way that nothing improbable takes place": in such a creation the poet becomes like a God of a new world (Zeller 134). It is in this sense that both Bodmer and Breitinger value the imagination as the key faculty of the poet, and this imagination must, in their view, be liberated from the likes of Gottsched and his rules for poetic construction.

In the seventh book of the second part of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Goethe refers to "die Schweizer," whose criticisms of Gottsched he read in his student days in Leipzig:

Nun zur Kritik! und zwar vorerst zu den theoretischen Versuchen. Wir holen nicht zu weit aus, wenn wir sagen, daß damals das Ideelle sich aus der Welt in die Religion geflüchtet hatte, ja sogar in der Sittenlehre kaum zum Vorschein kam; von einem höchsten Prinzip der Kunst hatte niemand eine Ahnung. Man gab uns Gottscheds »Kritische Dichtkunst« in die Hände; sie war brauchbar und belehrend genug: denn sie überlieferte von allen Dichtungsarten eine historische Kenntnis, sowie vom Rhythmus und den verschiedenen Bewegungen desselben; das poetische Genie ward vorausgesetzt! Übrigens aber sollte der Dichter Kenntnisse haben, ja gelehrt sein, er sollte Geschmack besitzen, und was dergleichen mehr war. Man wies uns zuletzt auf Horazens »Dichtkunst«; wir staunten einzelne Goldsprüche dieses unschätzbaren Werks mit Ehrfurcht an, wußten aber

nicht im geringsten, was wir mit dem Ganzen machen, noch wie wir es nutzen sollten.

Die Schweizer traten auf als Gottscheds Antagonisten; sie mußten doch also etwas anderes tun, etwas Besseres leisten wollen: so hörten wir denn auch, daß sie wirklich vorzüglicher seien. Breitingers »Kritische Dichtkunst« ward vorgenommen. Hier gelangten wir nun in ein weiteres Feld, eigentlich aber nur in einen größeren Irrgarten, der desto ermüdender war, als ein tüchtiger Mann, dem wir vertrauten, uns darin herumtrieb.

Eine kurze Übersicht rechtfertigt diese Worte. (HA 9: 261-2)

To be sure, Goethe does not claim to have been deeply impressed by either Bodmer or Breitinger, but their mention in direct consequence of his mention of Gottsched's poetics in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* would suggest that their critiques of Gottsched remained with him in some sense many years after he read them. Indeed, the importance of these thinkers for an examination of Goethe's challenge to Gottsched in the *Urfaust* is further suggested by Goethe's remark in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, that seems on one hand dismissive of the Swiss professors yet at the same time a tacit acknowledgement of their importance to the development of his ideas when young:

Doch wir dürfen unsere Schweizertheorie nicht verlassen, ohne daß ihr von uns auch Gerechtigkeit widerfahre. Bodmer, so viel er sich auch bemüht, ist theoretisch und praktisch zeitlebens ein Kind geblieben. Breitinger war ein tüchtiger, gelehrter, einsichtsvoller Mann, dem, als er sich recht umsah, die sämtlichen Erfordernisse einer Dichtung nicht entgingen, ja, es läßt sich nachweisen, daß er die Mängel seiner Methode

dunkel fühlen mochte. Merkwürdig ist z.B. seine Frage: ob ein gewisses beschreibendes Gedicht von König auf das Lustlager Augusts des Zweiten wirklich ein Gedicht sei? so wie die Beantwortung derselben guten Sinn zeigt. Zu seiner völligen Rechtfertigung aber mag dienen, daß er, von einem falschen Punkte ausgehend, nach beinahe schon durchlaufenem Kreise, doch noch auf die Hauptsache stößt, und die Darstellung der Sitten, Charaktere, Leidenschaften, kurz, des inneren Menschen, auf den die Dichtkunst doch wohl vorzüglich angewiesen ist, am Ende seines Buchs gleichsam als Zugabe anzuraten sich genötigt findet.

In welche Verwirrung junge Geister durch solche ausgerenkte Maximen, halb verstandene Gesetze und zersplitterte Lehren sich versetzt fühlten, läßt sich wohl denken. Man hielt sich an Beispiele, und war auch da nicht gebessert; die ausländischen standen zu weit ab, so sehr wie die alten, und aus den besten inländischen blickte jedesmal eine entschiedene Individualität hervor, deren Tugenden man sich nicht anmaßen konnte, und in deren Fehler zu fallen man fürchten mußte. Für den, der etwas Produktives in sich fühlte, war es ein verzweiflungsvoller Zustand. (HA 9: 263-264, emphasis mine)

Given the caveats offered by Goethe in his dismissal of the Swiss critics, their consideration in his development of an anti-Gottsched position cannot be dismissed. In the following sections, a brief overview of Bodmer's and Breitinger's criticism of Gottsched will be given, in order to provide a basis for comparison with what can later be seen in Goethe's *Urfaust*.

2.2.1 Bodmer's *Von dem Wunderbaren in der Poesie*

Bodmer criticized the restriction of the imagination by French neo-classicists in his *Von dem Wunderbaren in der Poesie und dessen Verbindung mit dem Wahrscheinlichen, In einer Vertheidigung Johann Miltons Verlustes des Paradieses* (1740). Bodmer, a translator of Milton into German, saw in Milton's religious work an example of the fantastic that could inspire German poets, rather than as something that should be forbidden as outside of neo-classicist rules:

Ich habe diese Arbeit unternommen, so wohl meiner Hochachtung gegen diesen erhabenen Geist ein Genügen zu thun, und auch bey andern eine gleichmässige zu erwecken, als meine Lehren von dem Verwundersamen und dessen nothwendigen Verbindung mit dem Wahrscheinlichen, insonderheit in Absicht auf die unsichtbare Welt der Geister, auf eine angenehmere und lebhaftere Weise vorzutragen. Dieses vortreffliche Gedicht wird mir in der That die bequemsten Exempel lehren, die ich bey deutschen Poeten vergebens suchen würde, meine Lehrsätze zu erklären, und die Einwürffe, die gegen diese Exempel gemacht worden, werden meinem Wercke eine neue Gestalt und Art geben, die es beleben, und zugleich in sehr absonderliche Aeste ausbreiten wird. (Bodmer 3)

In the case of Bodmer, Milton's work shows the poetic approach to the divine, and any attempt to regulate poetic expression in such a way as to forbid expression of the fantastic ignores the fact that God's laws have nothing in common with laws composed by the human intellect:

Die Wesen von einem höhern Stand und einer vornehmern Natur als die menschliche ist, würcken auf eine ganz andere Weise und nach eigenen Gesetzen; was das vor Gesetze seyn, bleibet uns grösentheils verborgen, ausgenommen in so weit uns die Wercke selbst, die nach solchen Regeln verfertigt worden, einige dunkele Merckmahle und Spuren davon errathen lassen. Von dieser Art sind die Wercke Gottes insgesamt, unsere Kräfte fallen in der Erkenntniß derselben unendlich zu kurz. Die heilige Schrift selbst bezeuget von Gott, daß seine Wege nicht seyn, wie unsre Wege, und seine Gedancken nicht wie unsre Gedancken, in so weit, daß ofte vor Gott lauter Thorheit sey, was nach dem Dünckel des menschlichen Sinnes die größte Weißheit ist. (Bodmer 4-5)

Because God's laws and the laws of the human intellect are so far removed from one another, poetic works in which the realm of the divine is portrayed are not to be judged by human laws, but by their own internal laws (Bodmer 6). Bodmer sees Milton's characterization of the French as a confirmation that their thinkers are too far removed from the fantastic, that their imagination is too restricted:

Wenn ich insbesondere bedencke, wie schwer es den Franzosen vor andern Nationen fällt, sich ihrer Gewohnheiten und Lebens-Arten zu entschlagen, und in die Sitten fremder, vornehmlich alter Völcker zu schicken, so befremdet es mich destoweniger, daß diejenigen, welche von dem verlohrenen Paradies am schlimmsten geurtheilet haben, Franzosen gewesen sind. Wie schwer muß es Leuten von dieser wohlgesitteten, zierlichen und modischen Nation ankommen, sich in die Gewohnheiten

anderer Arten Geschöpfe, voraus solcher zu richten, die von der menschlichen Art so ungemein weit abweichen, als die guten und bösen Engel, die Sünde, der Tod, die Geister in dem Chaos! (Bodmer 11)

Bodmer is then the first important German critic to oppose French neo-classicism in the wake of Gottsched's writings, and he does so by means of a defense of the imagination against Gottschedian rules.

2.2.2 Breitinger's *Critische Dichtkunst*: Das Wunderbare und das Warscheinliche

Breitinger's *Critische Dichtkunst* (1740) also extolled the importance of freeing the imagination of the poet. In its seventh section, "Von dem Wunderbaren und dem Wahrscheinlichen," Breitinger carefully sets about defining the fantastic ("das Wunderbare") and its relation to the plausible/probable ("das Warscheinliche") and to the truth.

With respect to the fantastic, its apparent falseness is only an appearance, because its reality is contingent upon its possibility (here referring to the earlier cited Leibnizian sense of possible worlds):

Ich begreiffe demnach unter dem Nahmen des Wunderbaren alles, was von einem andern widerwärtigen Bildniß oder vor wahr angenommenen Satze ausgeschlossen wird; was uns, dem ersten Anscheine nach, unsren gewöhnlichen Begriffen von dem Wesen der Dinge, von den Kräften, Gesetzen und dem Laufe der Natur, und allen vormahls erkannten Wahrheiten in dem Licht zu stehen, und dieselben zu bestreiten düncket. Folglich hat das Wunderbare für den Verstand immer einen *Schein der*

Falschheit; weil es mit den angenommenen Sätzen desselben in einem offenbaren Widerspruch zu stehen scheint: *Alleine dieses ist nur ein Schein, und zwar ein unbetrüglicher Schein der Falschheit; das Wunderbare muß immer auf die würckliche oder die mögliche Wahrheit gegründet seyn, wenn es von der Lügen unterschieden seyn und uns ergetzen soll.* Denn wofern der Widerspruch zwischen einer Vorstellung und unsren Gedancken eigentlich und begründet wäre, so könnte eine solche keine Verwunderung in uns gebähren, eben so wenig, als eine offenbare Lüge oder die Erzählung von lediglich unmöglichen und unglaublichen Dingen den Geist des Menschen rühren und belustigen kan; und falls das Wunderbare aller Wahrheit beraubet seyn würde, so wäre der gröbste Lügner der beste Poet, und die Poesie wäre eine verderbliche Kunst. (Breitinger 135-6, emphasis mine)

Here, in attacking Gottsched, Breitinger seems aware of the attacks to which he himself might be subjected, namely, that a non-mimetic conception of poetry is a poetry of lies, an untenable conclusion for a moral theologian. He sees poetic truth, however, not in terms of the knowledge displayed or recognizable mimesis, but in the feeling of wonder engendered by the work. In this sense, the fantastic is not held in opposition to the plausible, as in the case of Gottsched, but rather, is viewed as a sort of a yet-to-be-recognized plausible, which the poet attempts to make visible by means of this feeling of wonder:

Das Wunderbare ist demnach nichts anders, als ein vermunnetes Wahrscheinliches. Der Mensch wird nur durch dasjenige gerühret, was er

gläubt; darum muß ihm ein Poet nur solche Sachen vorlegen, die er glauben kan, welche zum wenigsten den Schein der Wahrheit haben. Der Mensch verwundert sich nur über dasjenige, was er vor etwas ausserordentliches hält; darum muß der Poet ihm nur solche Sachen vorlegen, die ausser der Ordnung des gemeinen Laufes sind; und diese beyden Grund-Regeln, die einander so sehr entgegen zu laufen scheinen, mit einander zu vergleichen, muß er dem Wunderbaren die Farbe der Wahrheit anstreichen, und das Wahrscheinliche in die Farbe des Wunderbaren einkleiden. (Breitinger 136-137)

With such a maneuver, Breitinger allows for a redefinition of the plausible, so that he is able to posit internally consistent potential worlds as plausible, shifting the emphasis from Gottsched's recognition of nature in mimetic terms to a poetic license that encompasses both the plausible and the fantastic merely as actual and potential aspects of the substratum of all possible worlds. In this sense, the Gottschedian view of *Nachahmung der Natur* as the foundation for a rule-based poetics is overturned, at least in any recognizable form, given that nature itself becomes redefined as a God-given potentiality, the actualization of which depends upon the poet:

Weil aber die gegenwärtige Einrichtung der Welt der würcklichen Dinge nicht schlechterdings nothwendig ist, so hätte der Schöpfer bey andern Absichten Wesen von einer gantz andern Natur erschaffen, selbige in eine andere Ordnung zusammen verbinden, und innen gantz andere Gesetze vorschreiben können: Da nun die Poesie eine Nachahmung der Schöpfung und der Natur nicht nur in dem Würcklichen, sondern auch in dem

Möglichen ist, so muß ihre Dichtung, die eine Art der Schöpfung ist, ihre Wahrscheinlichkeit entweder in der Übereinstimmung mit den gegenwärtiger Zeit eingeführten Gesetzen und dem Laufe der Natur gründen, oder in den Kräften der Natur, welche sie bey andern Absichten nach unsern Begriffen hätte ausüben können. (Breitinger 139-140)

By means of this redefinition, Breitinger is able to rescue much of the subject matter condemned as unfit for dramatic construction by Gottsched. Nevertheless, he is careful to defend himself against the possible charge that by doing so, he is elevating superstition and untruth to the level of knowledge, a defense that he builds by employing a contrast between the method of the magician/sorcerer and that of the poet.

2.2.3 The Poet versus the Magician

This differentiation is done in two steps. First, there is careful restriction of what Breitinger means by the fantastic, vis-a-vis tales of magic, etc., and how they can play upon the ignorance of the masses:

Es sind auch die Urtheile der Menschen von dem Wunderbaren und Wahrscheinlichen sehr ungleich und unterschiedlich: Alles dasjenige, was für die Gelehrten wahrscheinlich ist, ist es gleichermaassen für das gemeine Volck, aber nicht alles das, was für die Unwissenden wahrscheinlich ist, ist es auch allemahl für die belesenen Leute. Die Verwunderung und die Leichtgläubigkeit sind Töchter der Unwissenheit. Daher ließt der rohe und unwissende Pöbel gemeinlich die abentheurlichsten Erzehlungen von Hexen, Zauberern, weisen Frauen,

Gespenstern, und die Romanen von den irrenden Rittern, mit dem größten Ergetzen, welches nicht geschehen könnte, wenn dieselben ihm ungläublich und unwahrscheinlich vorkämen; wo man die Kräfte der Natur nicht kennet, und nicht fähig ist, die weise Verknüpfung der Umstände unter einander, und mit den Absichten einzusehen, da ist man nicht geschickt, das Unwahrscheinliche zu entdecken: Hingegen je genauer einer die Gesetze und Kräfte der Natur und das Wesen der Dinge kennet, desto besser wird es ihm gelingen, das Wahrscheinliche genau und richtig zu bestimmen, und desto mehr Fertigkeit wird er in Unterscheidung des Abentheurlichen von dem Wunderbaren zeigen. (Breitinger 142)

In so emphasizing the knowledge as the key for differentiating truth from falsity, Breitinger relies not upon a correspondence theory of truth, as in Gottsched's poetics, but upon distinguishing between the attempts of the "adventurous" ("Abentheurlichen") to prey upon the ignorant and the attempts of "fantastic" to use the miraculous to tease out possible truth from what might otherwise be deemed impossible.

This leads Breitinger to address explicitly how the poet's use of the fantastic is to be understood in contrast to the magician's more adventurous pursuit:

Von dieser besondern Art der poetischen Vorstellungen, in welchen das Wunderbare mit dem Wahrscheinlichen künstlich verbunden ist, entsteht die bezaubernde Kraft der Dicht-Kunst. Die Zauberer täuschen uns auf eine angenehme Weise durch den geborgten Schein der Wahrheit und Würcklichkeit; der Poet hintergeht uns hingegen auf eine noch unschuldigere Weise zum Behuf der Wahrheit durch einen

angenommenen Schein der Falschheit: Es ist aber das menschliche Gemüthe so beschaffen, daß es beydemahl in Verwunderung gesetzt wird, es sey, daß wir die Unmöglichkeit dessen erkennen, was wir dem ersten Anscheine nach für wahr und möglich gehalten hatten, oder daß wir die Wahrheit und Möglichkeit dessen einsehen, was wir zuvor für falsch und unmöglich angesehen hatten. (Breitinger 142-143)

Thus, although both the poet and the magician relate to truth in a way that goes beyond the simple correspondence theory of nature, in its appearances, and truth, in the Enlightened manner championed by Gottsched, for Breitinger the essential difference is that the poet does so with an innocent aim of finding truth where it would not otherwise be sought, whereas the magician is merely a manipulator of appearances.

The poet has, therefore, for Breitinger, an important role in knowledge that goes beyond that which is allowed by reason and the sciences. The pursuit of the fantastic is nothing less than the pursuit of its source, and this Breitinger sees as fundamentally theological in its scope:

Wenn wir denn ferner aus der Welt dieser phantastischen Wesen, die alleine in dem Gehirne der Poeten erzeuget, und von dem Wahne der Menschen ernehret werden, in die unsichtbare Welt der Geister hinüber gehen, so eröffnet sich uns eine neue Quelle des Wunderbaren. Denn da die Götter und Geister in allen Religionen vor Wesen von einer andern und höhern Natur, als die menschliche ist, angesehen und geglaubet worden, da sie an sich uncörperlich und unsichtbar sind, da ihre Macht, ihre Wissenschaft und andere Vollkommenheiten alle menschlichen Begriffe

weit übersteigen, so müssen die poetischen Vorstellungen aus der Welt der Geister in dem höchsten Grade wunderbar seyn. Die Geheimniß-Lehren und Wunderwercke haben in allen Theologien dem Scheine nach und in Vergleichung mit den Begriffen der menschlichen Vernunft etwas widersinnisches; und was die wahre Theologie insbesondere angehet, so gründet sich das Wunderbare in derselben auf den göttlichen Ausspruch: Meine Wege sind nicht wie eure Wege, und meine Gedancken sind nicht wie eure Gedancken. (Breitinger 154-155)

In conclusion, Breitinger's poetics serve to save the realm of the fantastic from Gottsched's Enlightened purge of the same, in the hopes of keeping theological aims within the purview of poetic construction. The fact that Breitinger shares Gottsched's distaste for magicians is coincidental with his larger aims: whereas Gottsched opposes all forms of the fantastic as unnatural and, therefore, unfit for mimesis, Breitinger sees "magic" as an inauthentic form of pursuing the fantastic, in that it seeks not to unveil the miraculous but to befuddle its spectator by means of superstition.

2.3 Goethe's "Luzifer-Mythos"

Goethe's choice of the Faust theme serves a more radical critique of Gottsched than that offered by Bodmer and Breitinger, and this is apparent when one considers how and why this theme was adapted in dramatic form to advance a philosophical argument. The *Urfaust*, then, as a drama, can be seen as a turning point in poetic theory. Goethe indicates that his motives in writing the *Urfaust* involved the creation of a new myth, the so-called "Luzifer-Mythos." The use of drama to create mythology not only is a direct

challenge to Gottsched, but also, in this case, is fundamentally different from the perspective of Bodmer and Breitinger, because Goethe was not pursuing the miraculous in support of an orthodox theological position, but in order to undermine orthodoxy. This is consistent with Goethe's reported failed dissertation, which sought to undermine ecclesiastical authority (Boerner 36). In *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Goethe in the context of retroactively explaining his thoughts at the time that he was writing the *Urfaust*, speaks of Lucifer as a necessary being for the continuation of the divine process of creation:

Ich mochte mir wohl eine Gottheit vorstellen, die sich von Ewigkeit her selbst produziert; da sich aber Produktion nicht ohne Mannigfaltigkeit denken läßt, so mußte sie sich notwendig sogleich als ein Zweites erscheinen, welches wir unter dem Namen des Sohns anerkennen; diese beiden mußten nun den Akt des Hervorbringens fortsetzen, und erschienen sich selbst wieder im Dritten, welches nun ebenso bestehend lebendig und ewig als das Ganze war. Hiermit war jedoch der Kreis der Gottheit geschlossen, und es wäre ihnen selbst nicht möglich gewesen, abermals ein ihnen völlig Gleiches hervorzubringen. Da jedoch der Produktionstrieb immer fortging, so erschufen sie ein Viertes, das aber schon in sich einen Widerspruch hegte, indem es, wie sie, unbedingt und doch zugleich in ihnen enthalten und durch sie begrenzt sein sollte. Dieses war nun Luzifer, welchem von nun an die ganze Schöpfungskraft übertragen war, und von dem alles übrige Sein ausgehen sollte. (HA 9:351)

In this conception of Lucifer as the source through which God effects creation, Goethe means to create not merely a bridging figure between the infinite Godhead and creation but also a source of matter through a process of “concentration” (“Konzentration”):

Aus dieser Konzentration der ganzen Schöpfung, denn sie war von Luzifer ausgegangen und mußte ihm folgen, entsprang nun alles das, was wir unter der Gestalt der Materie gewahr werden, was wir uns als schwer, fest und finster vorstellen, welches aber, indem es, wenn auch nicht unmittelbar, doch durch Filiation vom göttlichen Wesen her stammt, ebenso unbedingt mächtig und ewig ist als der Vater und die Großeltern. Da nun das ganze Unheil, wenn wir es so nennen dürfen, bloß durch die einseitige Richtung Luzifers entstand; so fehlte freilich dieser Schöpfung die bessere Hälfte: denn alles, was durch Konzentration gewonnen wird, besaß sie, aber es fehlte ihr alles, was durch Expansion allein bewirkt werden kann; und so hätte die sämtliche Schöpfung durch immerwährende Konzentration sich selbst aufreiben, sich mit ihrem Vater Luzifer vernichten und alle ihre Ansprüche an eine gleiche Ewigkeit mit der Gottheit verlieren können. (HA 9:351-352)

In this conception of matter as concentrated, and thus, limited and cut off from the Godhead, Goethe mythologizes a connection between the Godhead and man to be based upon an expansion of the former to meet the latter, and the imitation of Lucifer by the latter in trying to re-establish the relationship of creation to the Godhead that had been lost:

Diesem Zustand sahen die Elohim eine Weile zu, und sie hatten die Wahl, jene Äonen abzuwarten, in welchen das Feld wieder rein geworden und ihnen Raum zu einer neuen Schöpfung geblieben wäre, oder ob sie in das Gegenwärtige eingreifen und dem Mangel nach ihrer Unendlichkeit zu Hülfe kommen wollten. Sie erwählten nun das letztere, und supplierten durch ihren bloßen Willen in einem Augenblick den ganzen Mangel, den der Erfolg von Luzifers Beginnen an sich trug. Sie gaben dem unendlichen Sein die Fähigkeit, sich auszudehnen, sich gegen sie zu bewegen; der eigentliche Puls des Lebens war wieder hergestellt, und Luzifer selbst konnte sich dieser Einwirkung nicht entziehen. Dieses ist die Epoche, wo dasjenige hervortrat, was wir als Licht kennen, und wo dasjenige begann, was wir mit dem Worte Schöpfung zu bezeichnen pflegen. So sehr sich auch nun diese durch die immer fortwirkende Lebenskraft der Elohim stufenweise vermannigfaltigte; so fehlte es doch noch an einem Wesen, welches die ursprüngliche Verbindung mit der Gottheit wieder herzustellen geschickt wäre, und so wurde der Mensch hervorgebracht, der in allem der Gottheit ähnlich, ja gleich sein sollte, sich aber freilich dadurch abermals in dem Falle Luzifers befand, zugleich unbedingt und beschränkt zu sein, und da dieser Widerspruch durch alle Kategorien des Daseins sich an ihm manifestieren und ein vollkommenes Bewußtsein sowie ein entschiedener Wille seine Zustände begleiten sollte; so war vorauszusehen, daß er zugleich das Vollkommenste und Unvollkommenste, das glücklichste und unglücklichste Geschöpf werden

müsse. Es währte nicht lange, so spielte er auch völlig die Rolle des
Luzifer. (HA 9:352)

The human being thus plays the role of Lucifer in relating to the Godhead, in providing a locus for the struggle between expansion and contraction, between becoming (“Werden”) and being (“Sein”), in a process that Goethe attempts to universalize as common to all religions, as he concludes the eighth chapter of the second part of *Dichtung und*

Wahrheit:

Die Absonderung vom Wohltäter ist der eigentliche Undank, und so ward jener Abfall zum zweitenmal eminent, obgleich die ganze Schöpfung nichts ist und nichts war, als ein Abfallen und Zurückkehren zum Ursprünglichen.

Man sieht leicht, wie hier die Erlösung nicht allein von Ewigkeit her beschlossen, sondern als ewig notwendig gedacht wird, ja daß sie durch die ganze Zeit des Werdens und Seins sich immer wieder erneuern muß. Nichts ist in diesem Sinne natürlicher, als daß die Gottheit selbst die Gestalt des Menschen annimmt, die sie sich zu einer Hülle schon vorbereitet hatte, und daß sie die Schicksale desselben auf kurze Zeit teilt, um durch diese Verähnlichung das Erfreuliche zu erhöhen und das Schmerzliche zu mildern. Die Geschichte aller Religionen und Philosophien lehrt uns, daß diese große, den Menschen unentbehrliche Wahrheit von verschiedenen Nationen in verschiedenen Zeiten auf mancherlei Weise, ja in seltsamen Fabeln und Bildern der Beschränktheit gemäß überliefert worden; genug, wenn nur anerkannt wird, daß wir uns

in einem Zustande befinden, der, wenn er uns auch niederzuziehen und zu drücken scheint, dennoch Gelegenheit gibt, ja zur Pflicht macht, uns zu erheben und die Absichten der Gottheit dadurch zu erfüllen, daß wir, indem wir von einer Seite uns zu verselbsten genötiget sind, von der andern in regelmäßigen Pulsen uns zu entselbstigen nicht versäumen. (HA 9: 352-3)

By identifying the universal aspects of the mythical in all religious traditions, Goethe is making a truth claim based not on the imitation of the natural (as in Gottschedian poetics), but also seems to be breaking free of the theological baggage of Bodmer and Breitinger, not merely because of this universal approach denies primacy to one religion (e.g. Christianity) over others, but because it brings the religious and the fantastic into the realm of archetypal forms inherent to human thought: the “Luzifer-Mythos” is not an attempt of a poet to imagine God’s laws that surpass the human intellect, but is instead a focus upon the archetypes used in religious myth-making as an illumination of the human intellect itself. The attempt to draw out abstract universal conclusions about religion as a human phenomenon is, in itself, an argument that owes much to the reasoned approach of the Enlightenment, and opposes Gottsched not from an irrational basis, but from a dispute over knowledge itself: the fantastic myth is viewed not in opposition to knowledge, but as a source from which more universal conclusions might be drawn, by establishing a morphology of the fantastic.

When one takes Breitinger’s distinction between the poet and the magician into this context, Goethe’s comparatively radical critique of Gottsched becomes more apparent. Breitinger’s poet was meant to employ the fantastic in imagining worlds

beyond the reach of the human intellect, pursuing the miraculous in an effort to show divine truth, and stood in opposition to the magician, the latter being viewed as an adventurous figure of superstition and falsehood. Goethe, rather than offer a poetic theory in which myths are accepted or rejected along the lines of the debate between Gottsched and his Swiss critics, instead offers a poetic vision, a metaphor. In doing so, he replaces the traditional division between the divine and the human with a picture of the human being at the center of a struggle between the concentrated powers of the intellect, in imitation of Lucifer, and the feeling or compulsion to expand toward the Godhead. Therefore, the need for other possible worlds to encompass the divine or the fantastic is no longer necessary, for the human being is a microcosm of the universe including all of those possibilities.

Whereas Gottsched's poetics excludes the fantastic, and Bodmer and Breitinger defend its otherworldly possibility, Goethe's "Luzifer-Mythos" looks to the universal aspects of the fantastic in past traditions and other cultures, and attempts to give poetic expression to this numinous aspect of human thought, and indeed, as a human category of being. By doing this, he poetically presents an integrated whole in place of the dichotomies of previous poetics. Gottsched's mimetic approach prized the plausible over the fantastic, while Bodmer and Breitinger were forced to allow for other possible worlds to account for the fantastic. Rather than give an intellectual poetics, Goethe's poetic vision presents a unity of the intellectual (the Luciferian contraction) with the imaginative (the expansion toward the Godhead), a unity concretized within the human being as a microcosm of all creation.

That Goethe links this poetic metaphor, this myth, to the time in which he worked upon the *Urfaust*, gives one a basis for understanding why he chose to advance a philosophical argument by poetic means. Goethe's poetic metaphor reflects a sharp break not only from Gottsched, but also from Bodmer and Breitinger. Whereas his predecessors all used rational argument and non-poetic means to discuss the possibilities of the fantastic and the poetic, Goethe avoids falling into that dichotomy, and defines the poetic by the poetic. It is this approach that he takes in constructing the *Urfaust*.

2.4 Goethe's Non-discursive Response to the Debates

Another means of exploring the tension between Enlightenment poetics, especially Gottsched's poetics, and Goethe's *Urfaust* is the possibility that Goethe drew upon the Italian Renaissance theatrical *commedia dell'arte* in his choice of characters, types of text and scenarios within the play. The term *commedia dell'arte* is a rather broad category used for a group of theatrical forms which arose in the Italian Renaissance during the latter half of the sixteenth century (Fischer-Lichte 130). Indeed, if one were to attempt to define the genre, given its loose organization around commercial, as opposed to poetic, principles, one might say that the genre's basis was more rhetorical than poetic in nature, and that such rhetoric was not aimed at exerting a positive moral influence, in classical Horatian terms, but rather at merely pleasing the audience.

It is important to note that the argument here is not to suggest that the *commedia dell'arte* represents the only concrete elements used in a non-discursive response to Enlightenment debates. Goethe mentions his childhood fascination with the *Puppenspiele* of the mid-eighteenth century at several points early in *Dichtung und*

Wahrheit, passages that certainly bear relevance to his theatrical interest in the Faust theme (see here Goethe's description of his exposure to puppet plays by his grandmother, HA 9:15, and his description of his continued interest in staging puppet plays as a child, HA 9:48-51). The *commedia dell'arte* is, however, a previously unexamined element in Goethe's *Urfaust* that, if anything, due to the thoroughgoing number of correspondences present, shows that Goethe's opposition to Gottsched was depicted in a clever and persistent manner through dramatic elements themselves, as opposed to discursive argument.

2.4.1 Gottsched as the Chief Enlightenment Critic of *commedia dell'arte*

In Walter Hinck's monumental study of the *commedia dell'arte* he comments upon the rhetorical function of the genre as follows: "Nicht Originalität, sondern Variation des Bekannten gilt als Kunst. So teilt die Commedia dell'arte langhin ein Gesetz der Rhetorik: vorgegebene Themen in bereitgestellten Formen zur äußersten Wirkung zu führen" (Hinck 6). Given the lack of emphasis within the genre on moral-didactic aims or to poetic principles such as "Wahrscheinlichkeit," neither of which were essential for (or perhaps more accurately, consistent with) the possibility of commercial success sought by the performances, it is easy to see that a critic such as Gottsched would have viewed such performances with disdain, written and performed as they were, for the "Pöbel." Hinck names Gottsched as the most outspoken enemy of the genre in all of German dramatic criticism:

Für uns im Vordergrund zu stehen hat die Frage, welche Wirkungsmöglichkeit das Gottschedsche System noch dem Théâtre italien und damit der Commedia dell'arte beläßt.

Einem ersten Überblick stellt sich ein scheinbar eindeutiger Sachverhalt dar: eine bissige Polemik gegen die italienische Bühne durchzieht leitmotivartig Gottscheds Erörterungen zur Lustspieltheorie und wird an Intensität nur noch erreicht von der Polemik gegen das „ungereimteste Werk“ des menschlichen Verstandes, die Oper. Noch nie und nie wieder hat die Commedia dell'arte in Deutschland einen so beredten Feind gefunden wie Gottsched. (Hinck 168-169)

Indeed, in returning to an earlier cited passage from Gottsched, one notes the particular scorn he shows for Italian theater in the context of his dismissal of the Faust theme, along with magic in drama, as “Alfanzereyen”:

Das Märchen von D. Fausten hat lange genug den Pöbel belustiget: Und man hat ziemlicher maßen aufgehört, solche Alfanzereyen gerne anzusehen. Daher muß denn ein Poet große Behutsamkeit gebrauchen, daß er nicht unglaubliche Dinge auf die Schaubühne bringe, vielweniger sichtbar vorstelle. Die italiänische Schaubühne, und das THEATRE DE LA FOIRE zu Paris wimmeln von solchen Hexereyen: ja auch das bessere französische Theater fängt schon an auf solche Alfanzereyen zu verfallen, wie man aus einigen neuern Stücken z.E. LE ROI DE COCAGNE, und L'ORACLE, erhellet. (Gottsched 241)

Hinck mentions this quote, along with numerous others from Gottsched's *Versuch einer Critischen Dichtkunst*, as well as Gottsched's later *Critischen Beyträgen* (1734/5), in giving an exhaustive demonstration of how Gottsched's opposition to Italian theatre, and specifically the *commedia dell'arte*, was based on many factors, including his notion of *Wahrscheinlichkeit*, his insistence upon moral principle even in comedy and satire, his understanding of the *Ständeklausel* as he derived it from Opitz, his strong opposition to the use of masks to represent character types (and the use of "types" in general for characters), and his stipulation of a teachable moral lesson as essential to the *Fabel*, etc. (Hinck 169-180).

Gottsched is credited by scholars with having played a demonstrative role in the downfall of the *commedia dell'arte* genre, and even as the first important German critic of the form. Wolfgang Krömer (1976) describes this role as follows:

Drei Phasen des Kampfes gegen das Stegreiftheater sind erkennbar: Gottsched greift es im Namen der Wahrscheinlichkeit und des moralischen Nutzens an und verurteilt seine Typen und seine Zannikomik, ohne jedoch selbst abgerundete Charaktere geben zu können und ohne das Spektakuläre auszuschließen; Gellert strebt das rührende Lustspiel an und wendet sich somit gegen die moralische Indifferenz der *Commedia dell'arte*, will nicht den Schaden unverbesserlicher Typen verlachen lassen, sondern für die zu Charakteren gewordenen Personen interessieren; zuletzt reagiert der Realismus des 19. Jahrhunderts mit seiner Wirklichkeitstreue und -illusion auf die Typenhaftigkeit und die Phantastik des Stegreiftheaters. (Krömer 88-89)

Whether Gottsched can be credited specifically with bringing about the downfall of the form is debatable, but the demise of the genre is generally seen as being a consequence of the Enlightenment. Fischer-Lichte notes in this regard:

The extremely topical critique on the poor standard of the troupes is, therefore, to be viewed with some scepticism, as is Gottsched's critique of the 'decadence' of the German wandering troupe. The reason for the decline of the *commedia dell'arte* is much more likely to be found in the fact that, during the Enlightenment, it lost the specific function which had guaranteed its vitality and popularity since its beginnings more than one hundred years before. By the middle of the eighteenth century it had outlived itself. (Fischer-Lichte 130)

Nevertheless Gottsched remains to this day the figure most associated with antagonism to the genre, and the fact that spirited defenses of the genre against his critique and that of Gellert persisted through the middle of the eighteenth century, from figures such as J.C. Krüger and even Lessing, indicate its importance in the debates on *Gattungstheorie* in the period (Krömer 89).

2.4.2 Goethe and the *Commedia dell'arte* : Acknowledged and Inferred Influence

In seeking to establish the likelihood of Goethe's use of *commedia dell'arte* in the development of the *Urfaust*, it is important first to note that Goethe's later use of the genre has been well-documented with respect to Wilhelm Meisters Theatralische Sendung (1786) and Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre (1795), and that this use was connected to long-running debates in the eighteenth century on guidelines for the German theater

(Holland 20). The first important thing to note here is that Goethe, at least in the years following his *Sturm und Drang* period, made explicit reference to the *commedia dell'arte* genre in reflecting back on the debates about theater that spanned the eighteenth century. So one can establish that his disagreement with Gottsched, at least by that time, would have included a disagreement about the relative merit of this genre.

While it is with these works that Goethe's interest in the genre of *commedia dell'arte* becomes explicit, the question of a possible interest at the time of the writing of the *Urfaust* can be inferred by looking at Goethe's early comedic works, which were contemporaneous to his drafting of the *Urfaust*. Here Walter Hinck's work provides important clues to bolster this thesis, although he himself does not mention the *Urfaust*. First, Hinck notes that the eruption of interest in Shakespeare during the *Sturm und Drang* was primarily limited to its application to drama through tragedy, as opposed to comedy (Hinck 358-9). While Hinck's study shows a pervasive Italian influence upon Goethe's comedic writing throughout the 1770s, it is his reference to Wolfgang Kayser's work on connecting Goethe's comedy "Die Mitschuldigen" (1769) to the *commedia dell'arte* tradition that is relevant to this study, because it would indicate a possible familiarity with and inclination toward that genre prior to the work on the *Urfaust* (Hinck 360). Hinck himself notes that the piece calls to mind the *commedia dell'arte* in respect to two of its facets: the burlesque and farcical character of the piece, and the principal of moral indifference in the treatment of crimes such as theft and attempted adultery, with moral neutrality being a characteristic of the *commedia dell'arte* that persisted in Goethe's comedic works for his entire career (Hinck 359).

2.4.3 *Commedia dell'arte* and the *Urfaust*

At first glance, the proposed investigation of a relationship of the *commedia dell'arte* to the *Urfaust* might seem dubious, if for no other reason than the fact that this work is a tragedy. But several convergent factors provide ample reason to consider it: 1) the fact that the use of the *commedia dell'arte* was opposed by Enlightenment dramatists, especially Gottsched; 2) the fact that Goethe was likely influenced by this form in the time immediately preceding his work on the *Urfaust*, and that he apparently considered it then as a worthy form of drama. Is it possible that Goethe borrowed elements from this Italian comedic style from the Renaissance, a style derided by his antagonist Gottsched, in formulating a tragedy that used dramatic material held in equal disdain within Gottsched's poetics?

The first important point to consider in answering this question is that one should not equate the term "*commedia dell'arte*" with a dramatic genre such as comedy. Fischer-Lichte explains that the term, historically considered, covers a broad scope of theatrical forms:

The term *commedia dell'arte* does not embrace one, wholly specific theatre form; instead, it represents a much more general term for very different theatre forms. The troupes offered their performances at court, in private and public rooms and in the market square. They performed fixed, written texts and improvisations; their repertoire included comedies, pastorals, tragedies, interludes (in amateur performances by the Academy or at court) and later even melodrama. (Fischer-Lichte 130-131)

Therefore, the *commedia dell'arte* is not to be understood as incompatible with tragedy. Hinck's study specifically focuses upon *commedia dell'arte* in connection with the German Lustspiel, so it is entirely understandable that he would not address the *Urfaust* even when discussing Goethe's connection to this theatrical tradition. However, if one looks at many of the commonly accepted stock characteristics of the *commedia dell'arte*, a case can be made that such a connection exists. In doing so, the following characteristics of the *commedia dell'arte* bear examination for their possible inclusion in the *Urfaust*: the stock character role-types of the form, the types of text generally included within the form, and the typical structural elements of the form. Fischer-Lichte and Krömer each give definitions of the characteristics that provide a good basis for this analysis. Clearly, the *Urfaust* does not conform perfectly to the types, but the amount of overlap between the general tendencies of the *commedia dell'arte* and the roles, texts, and structural elements of the *Urfaust* is enough to suggest that Goethe's awareness of the theatrical form found its way into the work.

2.4.3.1 Stock Character Types in the *Commedia dell'arte* and the *Urfaust*

Of the three categories, perhaps the least evident in its influence from the *commedia dell'arte* would be the role of stock character types in the *Urfaust*, given that the specific Italian character types and specific Italian dialects common to that theatrical form that do not, of course, appear in the *Urfaust*. Upon reflection, however, the relevance of stock character types as set forth in the *commedia dell'arte* may be seen as relevant, if one sees how Goethe may have adapted the role of masks and dialects to a non-Italian context. Fischer-Lichte points out that the *commedia dell'arte*

characteristically used a limited set of roles, far fewer than the roles other forms of theatre, with the most basic roles described as follows:

The basic stock of roles consisted of four masks, two elderly men, the Venetian merchant, Pantalone, and the Bolognese lawyer, Dottore, two zanni, or servants, from the region near Bergamo, Arlecchino and Brighella, and at least one or two couples, innamorati (young lovers), the Spanish Capitano – the braggart soldier – and a maid. Whilst the masked figures made use of local dialect, the lovers spoke pure Tuscan. The masked figures were not only distinguished by their dialect and silk or leather half-masks, but also by a typified and characteristic costume which informed the spectator as to the identity of the role as soon as the actor first appeared. The lovers, on the other hand, wore costly contemporary clothes. (Fischer-Lichte 131)

Here one notes the inclusion of masters and servants, and of the young lovers, both of which are quite relevant to the limited character-roles in the *Urfaust*. Of the few other minor characters, one finds that there is indeed a soldier (Valentin) and a maid (Marthe). Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, while there is no provision for the use of masks made by Goethe in the stage directions, a variation on this is found in the ability of Mephisto to change his appearance and that of Faust. (One mention of changing appearances in the stage directions does occur when Mephisto dons a cloak and a wig to speak to the student, but this is not so much a variation on the theme of masks as it is a veiled attack on Gottsched.) In the case of Mephisto assuming the identity of Faust in the scene with the student, this is not so much for the purpose of *becoming Faust*, but rather

as a means of providing a caricature of the scholar, of playing to a *character type*. In the case of changing Faust's appearance, this "masking" distinguishes between Faust's character as a lover to Margrethe/Gretchen and Faust as the "Dottore." Note that the name change of Margrethe to Gretchen reflects a sort of dual identity for the other lover, who wears a different name rather than a mask.

Goethe's use of "masks" varies from the tradition of the *commedia dell'arte* in another important respect. In the *commedia dell'arte*, the *innamorati* (lovers) were not masked (Krömer 30). It is in Faust's role as lover that he is "masked" for Gretchen, who, in turn, wears her new name as a sort of mask of her own identity. Another possible variation upon the *commedia dell'arte* can be seen in the representation of the lovers' speech. While the traditional form, as noted previously in Fischer-Lichte, used a different dialect in the speech of the lovers, one sees instead of a different dialect in the *Garten* scene that Faust's speech changes when he makes his declaration of love, in a manner that falls out of meter, as noted by Schöne, in the passage beginning with "Ja, mein Kind...":

Jetzt, nach dem Blumenorakel, das zu Margarethes Liebeserklärung wird,
fallen Fausts erregte Sätze aus der metrischen Ordnung und klanglichen
Bindung der (überwiegend im Madrigalvers gehaltenen) Szene heraus in
eine rhythmisch unregelte und ungereimte Prosa. Fünf heftige Akzente
muß deren letzte 7silbige Zeile (1043) tragen. (Schöne II: 880)

The change in meter here is clearly connected with the love declaration, whether it is indicative of the influence of the *commedia dell'arte* and its difference in dialect for the lovers is a matter that cannot be proven, but could be suggested given the wider context.

2.4.3.2 Text types generally within the *commedia dell'arte* and the *Urfaust*

The texts within the *commedia dell'arte* generally fall within four categories: 1) *tirate*, 2) *dialoghi amorosi*, 3) *bravure* and 4) *lazzi* and *burle*. Fischer-Lichte defines each of these text types rather succinctly:

1 *tirate*, a long complaint, accusation, eulogy or description which was sometimes directed to another role-type on the stage, such as when the old man gives his son advice, or when the maid turns to one of the suitors, or which is spoken as a thoughtful, reflective and argumentative monologue;

2 *dialoghi amorosi*, a rhetorically brilliant exchange of feeling between lovers who find themselves in a certain situation; rejection, confession, or apology, often taken from the love poetry of the time or from the *commedia erudita* and Renaissance tragedy;

3 *bravure*, masterful, rhetoric boasting by the Capitano, often an element of his dialogue with the servant, but more often carried out as part of a monologue;

4 *lazzi and burle*, the witty play on words and movements, mostly used by the zanni when they interrupt the scene with comic action. (Fischer-Lichte 130-131)

There do seem to be correspondences within the *Urfaust* to these types. Notably, the *Urfaust* could be said to open with a *tirate*-type monologue, as Faust delivers a long, thoughtful complaint in the *Nacht* scene. The dialogues between Faust and Gretchen, such as the exchange in the *Marthens Garden* scene, are indeed rhetorical in nature, as

they find themselves in a theological discussion as a means of trying to justify their relationship.

The appearance of *bravure*, which are connected specifically to the master-servant relationship, can be found in the boasting of Mephisto toward Faust and toward the Student, and in Mephisto's brief monologues, such as that following his meeting with the Student. Mephisto, as the bragging character in the play, would correlate to the Capitano of the *commedia dell'arte*: while the Capitano's boasts are hollow, due to his intrinsic cowardice, the boasts of Mephisto are also somewhat hollow, in that his accomplishments are all based upon deception (for this aspect of the Capitano, see Krömer 40). Indeed, one common element in the Capitano type, failure in romance, seems to have been transposed to Faust via Mephisto, again in spite of the boasting and promises of success.

The *lazzi-burle* element can be seen in the *Auerbachs Keller* scene, where Mephisto brings Faust into an encounter with drunken revelers at the pub. This scene type is described by Krömer as “[...] z.T. scherzhafte Dialoge, z.T. kleine, häufig obszöne oder grobianische Szenen” (Krömer 43).

2.4.3.3 Structural Elements within the *Commedia dell'arte* and the *Urfaust*

Perhaps the most relevant aspect of the *commedia dell'arte* that can be seen in the *Urfaust* is the use of various structural elements, that is to say, relationships in the character constellation of the work. A set of fixed structural elements played a large role in the theatre of *commedia dell'arte*, which was, after all, often improvisational theatre. The fixed set of roles were important in allowing the improvisational troupes to perform a

large amount of scenarios, adapting the roles accordingly in various permutations (Fischer-Lichte 132). Within this large number of scenarios, one finds a small number of archetypal patterns, and these are instructive in the consideration of possible influence of the genre upon Goethe's *Urfaust*.

The three most common structural elements in *commedia dell'arte*, as identified by Fischer-Lichte, are particularly useful in looking at the *Urfaust*. First, there is the opposition between young and old:

Time and again, the old men seek to hinder marriage between two young lovers – whether out of greed, or because they themselves have an eye on the lady in question. This raises a further concretisation of the general opposition between old and young: an old character intends to marry a young girl who does not return his love, or he is already married to a young girl who takes on a young lover. (Fischer-Lichte 132)

Here, one finds two variations upon this theme in the *Urfaust*. First, Faust is actually an older man pursuing a younger woman, who only returns his love when she is under the illusion that he is someone other than who he is, the younger “Heinrich.” Secondly, there is also the fact that Mephisto's deceptions ultimately serve to thwart the possibility for love and happiness between Faust and Gretchen.

Secondly, there is widespread use of the master-servant relationship:

The intrigues of the servants are often directed against their masters – whether these are the two older figures or the innamorati. Or else such intrigues are employed for their own private interests. In any case, the master-servant relationship is changed, modified, if not turned upside-

down in various ways through the intrigues of the servants. (Fischer-Lichte 132)

Here the fact that the Faust-Mephisto relationship is based upon a bet, rather than the traditional Faustian devil pact, plays directly into the ambiguity of the master-servant relationship of the *commedia dell'arte*. Mephisto “serves” Faust in helping him to obtain his moment of happiness, and in practical terms, to win Gretchen. But this is clearly not a straightforward form of “help,” as Faust and Gretchen are undermined by his methods, which lead to the poisoning death of Gretchen’s mother, the death of Valentin, Gretchen’s act of infanticide, etc. If Faust is the master whose will Mephisto serves, then he is clearly undermined.

Finally, there is the trajectory of the relationship between the two lovers: “The path to finding each other leads through a maze of disguises, deceptions and masking, through magic (in the pastoral) and even madness. It is only after the lovers have passed through a sequence of such transformations that the ‘right’ partners are united and a marriage can take place” (Fischer-Lichte 132). Here the significant variation on the theme is that the love affair is ultimately doomed to failure, but the other aspects are all present in abundance, with the disguises, deceptions and masking of both Faust and Mephisto toward Gretchen, and the madness of Gretchen as a result of these intrigues.

2.4.3.4 *Commedia dell'arte* and *Faust I/II*

Another recent study has taken up the topic of the *commedia dell'arte* in *Faust I/II*. Whereas Dieter Borchmeyer’s “Faust beyond Tragedy: Hidden Comedy, Covert Opera” (2011) treats the elements of the *Faust* works in their final form, convincingly

arguing for a use of *commedia dell'arte* elements and themes present, its focus is decidedly on the developments in Faust after the *Urfaust*, with the *Sturm und Drang* period receiving less attention, mentioned mainly in the following passage:

“The Faust drama’s comedic counterpointing has of course precedents in the often droll sixteenth-century Faust book and in the burlesque scenes of its dramatic adaptations, above all those of the puppet theatre, which was Goethe’s first inspiration for Faust. In his ‘Sturm und Drang’ years he engaged intensively with the over-the-top comic theatre of the sixteenth century and composed his farces based on their model – such were *Jahrmarktsfest zu Plundersweilen* (Fair at Plunderweilen), *Ein Fastnachtsspiel vom Pater Brey* (A Carnival Play about Pater Brey) or his obscene fragment, *Hanswursts Hochzeit* (Hanswurst’s Wedding). They stand in clear opposition to courtly aristocratic norms of decency. But it was not only in comedy – where, according to the traditional rules of the separation of styles, creatureliness still held a more or less constricted right to express itself – but also in tragedy (*Götz von Berlichingen*) that Goethe programmatically flouted the model of sixteenth-century drama in defiance of the rules of decency and style.” (Borchmeyer 215-216)

The context of the other works cited helps to support the contention of the use of *commedia dell'arte* in the period of the *Urfaust*, and while Borchmeyer’s focus is primarily on elements not included in the *Urfaust* but in later drafts, he points toward the *Sturm und Drang* period of Goethe’s work as the likely beginning of this interest. This is helpful in showing the presence of a thoroughgoing, albeit relatively unrecognized

previous use of *commedia dell'arte* in the *Urfaust*, and furthermore, this in the context of “breaking the rules” of Enlightenment poetics.

3 Goethe's Approach to Myth-Making in the *Urfaust*

Goethe's "Luzifer-Mythos," as well as his development of the concrete use of *commedia dell'arte* in the *Urfaust*, each drew upon and grew out of his response to the poetic debates of Enlightenment literary theorists in the eighteenth century. The actual relationship of myth and mythology to Goethe's development of the *Urfaust* ultimately forms a rejoinder to the Enlightenment attempt to define the limits of poetry by means of reason. In this respect, Goethe's approach should be seen as a holistic yoking together of poetry and reason, rather than a rejection of reason in favor of poetry.

Goethe's approach to myth-making consciously takes the point of limit as perhaps its most defining characteristic: myth, for Goethe, is able to transcend the limits of our reason-based knowledge. In this respect, the *Urfaust*, in which the limits of reason-based knowledge themselves are a chief focus of criticism, might be said to be not merely a myth, but part of Goethe's implicit argument for mythology, with a fundamentally archetypal sort of mythic holism being put forth to argue poetically, rather than discursively, against Enlightenment critics of myth and mythology. Goethe's approach once again expands the debate of his time, in that views on myth within Enlightenment poetics, whether generally positive or negative, were predicated upon the idea of reason alone being the arbiter of truth.

Gottsched received and further developed the Enlightenment view of myth as "error" from French Enlightenment sources. While this view ran counter to the limited acceptance of myth by figures such as Bodmer, Goethe's approach in the *Urfaust* itself breaks these accepted parameters of debate, and similarly to his "Luzifer-Mythos,"

represents an example of a poetic, rather than discursive response, in which Goethe forms his own mythology.

3.1 The Relation of Mythology Poetic Debates of the Enlightenment

Could the impetus for Goethe's use of mythology in the *Urfaust* have been more than a question of form itself (in the sense of choosing the poetic over the discursive approach), and, in fact, represent a rejection of Enlightenment views of mythology altogether? It would seem that the rational, scientific basis of Enlightenment thinkers for the rejection of mythology goes hand in hand not merely with the development of the *Urfaust* as a mythology, but also with the themes of that mythology itself.

In looking, therefore, at the poetic debates regarding mythology and their role in the development of Goethe's *Urfaust*, the following questions deserve consideration: 1) What constituted the basis of Enlightenment objections to "mythology" in principle? 2) How did these objections help illuminate the relationship between reason and the imagination for Enlightenment literary critics? 3) How does the opposition of Gottsched's view to that of Bodmer/Breitinger on this point show the limits of Enlightenment thinking with respect to its priority given to reason? 4) How does Goethe's view of mythology fundamentally differ from that of Enlightenment critics with respect to their views on the relationship between reason and imagination? 5) How does Goethe's view in this respect differ in its relationship to the Unknown and to the limits of knowledge? 6) How do Goethe's views on mythology fundamentally inform the *Urfaust* thematically?

Most fittingly, Goethe's poetic response to the Enlightenment gains its weight by virtue of the attempts of Enlightenment literary critics, such as Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle (1657-1757) and J.C. Gottsched, to fuse together literature and science (*Literaturwissenschaft und Naturwissenschaft*). Indeed, one might say that rather than use science as a microscope for the examination of literature, in the manner of those whom Goethe criticizes, Goethe reverses the view, and uses literature (in the form of mythology) to show the limits of this eminently rational worldview.

In carrying out a discussion of the role of mythology in Goethe's *Urfaust*, it is first important to establish how the literary critics of the Enlightenment framed a view of mythological thinking from the perspective of theory, as a means of demonstrating that against which Goethe is reacting. The debate on mythology was such a central motif within the discussion of Enlightenment poetics, and this helps to account for why Goethe's lifelong interest in mythology was already quite well-developed by the early 1770s. Goethe's conception of mythology formed not only a direct challenge to the Enlightenment literary critics through his use of themes within the *Urfaust*, but also through his manipulation of received dramatic imagery, e.g., as shown earlier by Renaissance theatre through the *commedia dell'arte*, and as will be later discussed with his use of neoplatonic and alchemical cosmogony (especially via Welling) in such a way as to make his own response to those critics not discursive in nature, but one based on images.

3.2 Critique of Mythology within Enlightenment Thought: Fontenelle

Perhaps the most important and influential figure in early Enlightenment thought on the question of the value of mythology is Fontenelle, whose influence on Gottsched is known and documented (Krauss 1963, Poser 1979, Bürger 1983). For Fontenelle, the subject of myth, as any other, should be pursued first on the basis of reason, and in his work *De l'origine des fables* (1691-1699 , 1724), the original development of myth is explained as having its origin in the ignorance of past primitive peoples, who used familiar models from their lives to explain the wonders of nature:

Il faut prendre garde que ces idées, qui peuvent être appelées les systèmes de ces temps-là, étaient toujours copiées d'après les choses les plus connues. On avait vu souvent verser de l'eau de dedans une cruche: on imaginait donc fort bien comment un dieu versait celle d'une rivière; et par la facilité même qu'on avait à l'imaginer, on était tout à fait porté à le croire. Ainsi, pour rendre raison des tonnerres et des foudres, on se représentait volontiers un dieu de figure humaine lançant sur nous des flèches de feu: idées manifestement prises sur des objets très familiers. (Fontenelle 15)

This use of the familiar to build metaphors for the explanation of the Unknown, is, for Fontenelle, however “natural” in the sense that it seems rather an obvious occurrence among various primitive people and also in other forms among later people whose transposition of personal experience onto the Unknown within nature continued, fundamentally unscientific in that it proceeds from a non-objective, non-experimental point of view. This folly of the “poor savages” must be avoided today:

Cette philosophie des premiers siècles roulait sur un principe si naturel qu'encore aujourd'hui notre philosophie n'en a point d'autre; c'est-à-dire que nous expliquons les choses inconnues de la nature par celles que nous avons devant les yeux, et que nous transportons à la physique les idées que l'expérience nous fournit. Nous avons découvert par l'usage, et non pas deviné, ce que peuvent les poids, les ressorts, les leviers; nous ne faisons agir la nature que par des leviers, des poids et des ressorts. Ces pauvres sauvages, qui ont les premiers habité le monde, ou ne connaissaient point ces choses-là, ou n'y avaient fait aucune attention. Ils n'expliquaient donc les effets de la nature que par des choses, plus grossières et plus palpables, qu'ils connaissaient. Qu'avons-nous fait les uns et les autres? Nous nous sommes toujours représenté l'inconnu sous la figure de ce qui nous était connu, mais heureusement il y a tous les sujets du monde de croire que l'inconnu ne peut pas ne point ressembler à ce qui nous est connu présentement. (Fontenelle 15-17)

Here it is important to stress that Fontenelle's description assumes the folly of trying to approach the Unknown by means of myth: myth is here regarded as being fundamentally in error, just as one might approach a scientific hypothesis. Its origin is likewise placed outside of the modern, scientific worldview, into the realm of "poor savages." This is important, not merely from the standpoint of excluding myth from the arena of rational, scientific debate, but also from the standpoint of establishing a basis for the connection of literature with science, an Enlightenment ideal that eventually became more clearly articulated in the work of the man who first translated Fontenelle into German, J. C.

Gottsched. Poser points to the question raised by Enlightenment thinkers regarding the origin of myth itself. In doing so he raises the descriptions of myth alongside the descriptions of fable in various philosophical lexicons of the eighteenth century, such as Johann Georg Walch's *Philosophisches Lexicon* (Leipzig, 1773), the so-called "Zedlerisches Lexicon" (formally known as the *Großes verständiges Universal-Lexicon aller Wissenschaften und Künste* (Halle-Leipzig 1732-1754) and also the *Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers* (1751-1780) by Diderot and d'Alembert (with the definitions written in this last case by de Jaucourt) (Poser 132). Poser notes in Enlightenment *Gattungstheorie* the tendency to group myths and fables together as being poetic in nature, as opposed to didactic or historical:

[...] in der Aufklärung finden wir auch eine umfangreiche Literatur, die sich mit den Mythen auseinandersetzt. Dabei werden unter Mythen und Fabeln (fabula) im engeren Sinne die sog. *poetische Fabeln* im Gegensatz zu philosophischen (wie Parmenides' Lehrgedicht) oder historischen (wie die Legenden über Pythagoras) verstanden, also Götter-, Halbgötter und Heldenerzählungen heidnischer Völker [...]. (Poser 132)

In this context, Poser identifies two main areas of discussion regarding myth within Enlightenment poetics: (1) the discussion surrounding how myths arise, and (2) the question of whether new myths, such as Milton's *Paradise Lost*, were to be allowed at all (Poser 132-133). While Poser's study is concerned more with the former question, as opposed to this study's interest in the latter, his investigation into the treatment of the former question yields important insight into the larger question of the Enlightenment treatment of myth, which can help form the basis for an understanding of Goethe's use of

mythology in the *Urfaust*. In looking at the former question cited by Poser, one finds that in looking at the source of fables and myths, the tendency of Enlightenment thinkers was to categorize its origins in “error,” mentioned with respect to Fontenelle above. One sees this with consistency in the lexical sources cited by Poser, and his explicit citation of the Zedler lexicon’s explanation is instructive in how broadly this category of “error” was understood (Poser 133).

3.2.1 Myth as an Error of the Imagination

Furthermore, Fontenelle goes on to point out that the mythic approach has its failing precisely in the realm of human imagination to conceive the powers of nature that are unknown to man by means other than an anthropomorphized construct:

De cette philosophie grossière, qui régna nécessairement dans les premiers siècles, sont nés les dieux et les déesses. Il est assez curieux de voir comment l'imagination humaine a enfanté les fausses divinités. Les hommes voyaient bien des choses qu'ils n'eussent pas pu faire: lancer les foudres, exciter les vents, agiter les flots de la mer; tout cela était beaucoup au-dessus de leur pouvoir. Ils imaginèrent des êtres plus puissants qu'eux, et capables de produire ces grands effets. Il fallait bien que ces êtres-là fussent faits comme des hommes. Quelle autre figure eussent-ils pu avoir? Du moment qu'ils sont de figure humaine, l'imagination leur attribue naturellement tout ce qui est humain; les voilà hommes en toutes manières à cela près qu'ils sont toujours un peu plus puissants que des hommes. (Fontenelle 17-18)

It is, according to this view, a shortcoming specifically of *the imagination* that one is unable to formulate an accurate understanding of nature. Thus myth, for strict Enlightenment thinkers along the lines of Fontenelle, is, like religion, not merely false by virtue of the *results* of the metaphors generated by means of its reductive approach to the Unknown, but also more fundamentally it is methodologically false and unscientific by means of its basis in the imagination as opposed to direct study of nature.

3.2.2 The Continuance of the Error of Myth through the Artistic Tradition

The “rational” view of myth as being born from error leads Fontenelle to warn of the danger of spreading error as myths become incorporated into the artistic tradition, in terms that might best be described as a logician’s warning that faulty premises will lead to faulty conclusions:

Outre tous ces principes particuliers de la naissance des fables, il y en a eu deux autres plus généraux qui les ont extrêmement favorisées. Le premier est le droit que l'on a d'inventer des choses pareilles à celles qui sont reçues ou de les pousser plus loin par des conséquences. Quelque événement extraordinaire aura fait croire qu'un dieu avait été amoureux d'une femme; aussitôt toutes les histoires ne seront pleines que de dieux amoureux. Vous croyez bien l'un; pourquoi ne croirez-vous pas l'autre? Si les dieux ont des enfants, ils les aiment, ils emploient toute leur puissance pour eux dans les occasions; et voilà une source inépuisable de prodiges qu'on ne pourra traiter d'absurdes. (Fontenelle 26)

To this he appends a warning that tradition itself can take the form of blind adherence to error, which, when coupled with the former principle, leads to the extension of such error into infinity (Fontenelle 27-28). The error of myth becomes, for Fontenelle, passed on as accepted culture and tradition, in a way that allows for them to continue outside of the original context of their creation, and this one sees in the arts. Hans Blumenberg describes this aspect of Fontenelle's thought in terms of the myths becoming "indispensable" to the culture by means of art:

In his discussion of myth Fontenelle expressed the Enlightenment's amazement at the fact that the myths of the Greeks had still not disappeared from the world. Religion and reason had, it is true, weaned people from them, but poetry and painting had given them the means by which to survive. They had been able to make themselves indispensable to these arts. (Blumenberg 109)

In this manner, one can see that in the "rational" view of Enlightenment thinkers such as Fontenelle, mythology is nothing more than error in its original and then a form of institutionalized error in its continued poetic and artistic tradition.

3.3 Enlightenment Critique of Myth in Relation to its Approach to the Unknown

With the scientific and logical approach to the Unknown outlined by Fontenelle, it becomes clearer why the issue of the imagination and its relationship to poetic construction was such a burning issue for the literary critics of the German Enlightenment, and also why the crux of their debate centered around the use of the imagination in poetic construction, and specifically, in approaching the Unknown.

Nevertheless, the strident views of thinkers such as Fontenelle held within them the seeds of later skeptical criticism of the Enlightenment's optimistic position with regard to the development of and progress within knowledge. Peter Bürger frames this issue well in his description of the long-term effects of Fontenelle's scientific reductionist view of the Unknown:

Für Fontenelle sind die Mythen handgreifliche, lächerliche Irrtümer (des faussetés manifestes et ridicules), denen keinerlei Wahrheitsgehalt zukommt, die jedoch als Dokumente der Geschichte des menschlichen Geistes von Interesse sind. Als phantastische Erklärung von Naturphänomen werde an ihnen das Prinzip jeglicher Erklärung erkennbar: die Reduktion des Unbekannten auf Bekanntes. Auch die wissenschaftliche Erklärung erfasse nicht die Sache selbst, sondern biete nur ein adäquateres Modell zu deren Erkenntnis. Der Wissenschaftsoptimismus der Frühaufklärung ist skeptisch gebrochen und damit human. (Bürger 41)

While Bürger's characterization of the inability of the scientific approach of the Enlightenment to get to the thing itself (*die Sache selbst*) is not explicitly a reference to the Kantian description of the noumenon (which would be rather *das Ding an sich*), it is an observation made, of course, with the understanding of the eventual Kantian critique of metaphysics that formed later Enlightenment thought, and corroborates the skepticism, even within Enlightenment circles, of the epistemological models adopted in the early Enlightenment. It is also instructive for understanding the challenges facing early Enlightenment thinkers with respect to the treatment of myth, in a manner that arguably

exceeds that outlined by Bürger, and which is related to the core themes of the Goethean Faust myth: myth, as it were, could be defined by those early Enlightenment thinkers as the reduction of the Unknown to the Known, or alternately, as in the case of Goethe's approach to the Faust myth in the *Urfaust*, could be rendered as the depiction of the Unknowable, or, at the very least, a depiction of the limits of the Knowable. Goethe, in his *Urfaust*, seems to have already understood the flaw in the early Enlightenment approach as outlined by Bürger. The lamentation of the Faust character in the *Nacht* scene speaks to this loss of scientific optimism, and specifically not in terms of what is Unknown versus that which belongs to the category of the Known, but of *the ability to know anything itself* with the sort of confidence that the Enlightenment proclaims, "daß wir nichts wissen können."

If, indeed, as Bürger suggests, the reductionist approach to myth seen in the Enlightenment bears relationship to the eventual skepticism toward Enlightenment optimism regarding knowledge, Goethe's approach to myth-making in the *Urfaust* becomes more than merely a dramatic response to the Enlightenment poetic debates with respect to the content and form of dramatic construction, but also, a fundamental challenge to the reductionism of Enlightenment thought itself, done so on the question of its approach to the Unknown by means of asserting the role of myth/mythology as having a role not encompassed within the scientific approach to knowledge, literature and art. The question one might ask here is whether Goethe is merely approaching the same idea from two different sides (Fontenelle saying that myth was born from ignorance, and Goethe arguing that myth is necessary for describing that of which man is ignorant), or of whether Goethe is arguing for something altogether more holistic in the approach to

myth, defining it not from the standpoint of the absence of knowledge, but from the standpoint of the limits of knowledge itself (that is, not merely in terms of categories of Known and Unknown, but, as is suggested in the above-cited line from the *Nacht* scene, of the Knowable and the Unknowable). Upon examining Goethe's comments regarding myth, one will see that it is not mere chance that Goethe found myth a proper choice for his response to Gottsched and others, nor is myth merely a vehicle for Goethe to evade discursive thought: in the nature of myth itself, one already has the ontological basis for the criticism of Enlightenment optimism and discursive thinking.

For an interesting examination of the debate between Gottsched and Bodmer as it relates to the question of what is allowed of the poet's imagination within this reductionist paradigm, see Poser's analysis of the dispute between them on the question of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, which was viewed as having too much poetic license by Gottsched, and allowable by Bodmer (Poser 141-142). In a rather peculiar interpretation of the connection between the didactic function and the truth or probability of fable, Gottsched contrasts Milton with Homer, arguing that the latter's depictions of gods and heroes meet the criteria of "wahre Geschichte" whereas the former's *Paradise Lost* does not, in that the heroes of Homer are noble, and the hero of Milton is the devil (Gottsched, 1. Teil, 1. Hauptstück, §30 and 2. Teil, 1. Abschnitt, 4. Hauptstück, §1-6, as cited in Poser 141). Here the probability of truth/nature relies upon a recognizable moral order, as opposed to a strictly materialist observation of nature.

Bodmer, on the other hand, as recounted and quoted by Poser, argued for the freedom of the poet to use the imagination in such a way that the poetic license of the imagination was seen as safe and justified within a the moral order of monotheistic

Christendom, thereby allowing a poet such as Milton the use of mythology, given that the moral shortcomings of the polytheistic past were clear to rational thinkers.

Gottsched's response to Bodmer is to be understood on the basis of the dictates of reason: Homer is allowed to make use of those mythological aspects that are denied to Milton, on the basis of the cultural knowledge of his time. Here one might separate out two aspects of Gottsched's argument: there seems to be, for him, an objective truth accessible to reason, and the imagination is bound to whatever knowledge has been made available to that point by means of the objective truth discovered through this reason. Plausibility in poetic/dramatic construction, therefore, seems to be ever more constrained by the advance of knowledge, meaning that Homer was allowed more than Milton due to the time in which he wrote, as seen in this paraphrase of Gottsched by Poser:

Dies war von Gottsched im Grundsatz verneint worden, denn allzu oft hat „Homerus sich versehen und die Wahrscheinlichkeit nicht recht beobachtet“; doch weil zu Homers Zeiten „die Lehre von Gott noch in dicken Finsternissen gesteckt hat“, konnte „damals dem Volke sehr wahrscheinlich klingen, was uns heute zu Tage sehr unwahrscheinlich vorkömmt.“ (Poser 142, see Gottsched Critische Dichtkunst, 1. Teil, 6. Hauptstück, § 5 and 6)

The issue at stake in this debate is the role of the imagination versus the role of reason in guiding the poet. Poser's citation of Bodmer's continued defense of Milton points out that Bodmer does not see imagination as a the threat to reason that is supposed in Gottsched's work:

Bodmer dagegen betont das Recht der Phantasie, die „Früchte der Einbildungs-Kraft und des Witzes“ in die Dichtung einzubringen und mythologische Fabeln dann zuzulassen, wenn man sie „vor das anführet, was sie sind, nemlich vor ein Hirngespinst“, das nicht für wahr gehalten werden darf: „Wer sich daran [d.i. an der Fabel] ärgert, zeigt ein ehrliches Gemüth und einen guten Verstand“ -- nur zeigt er, daß er nichts von Dichtung versteht. Was Bodmer hier gegen Gottsched verteidigt, ist nichts anderes als das Anrecht der Phantasie auf eine führende Rolle in der Dichtung. Der Dichter ist vor allem ein Schöpfer, und seine Schöpfung, die Poesie, ist mit Vernunftkategorien letztlich nicht erfaßbar. (Poser 142)

With this one seemingly comes to the crux of the argument between Gottsched and Bodmer regarding mythology: either reason is used to reduce the sphere of the imagination to that which is deemed natural according to abstract, reasoned truths (Gottsched), or reason allows a space for the imagination to play within mythology, being able to distinguish between fact and fiction, which ideally would allow for an expansion of the freedom of the imagination in concert with the development of reason (Bodmer). What the two views hold in common is that either the restriction or the freedom of the imagination is tied directly to the premise that reason, and reason alone, is the arbiter of truth. It is merely a question of whether one takes the “errors” of mythology as a direct threat to reason (Gottsched) or not (Bodmer), that determines one’s position regarding mythology. One aspect of eighteenth century German Enlightenment thought that becomes clear in this regard is the acceptance (and indeed, the assumption) of eternal truth that is derived through logic and reason. That such is 1) knowable, and 2) forms the

limits of the imagination, are challenged directly by the premises of Goethe's *Urfaust*, in which the eternal truth is beyond the grasp of the scholar and reason itself is seen as limited, and indeed, limiting, in this regard. It seems only natural, then, that Goethe's argument would come couched in mythology as opposed to discursive thought.

3.4 Goethe's *Urfaust* and the Use of Myth in Response to the Enlightenment

In treating the mythological aspect of the *Urfaust* as a response to the poetic debates of the Enlightenment, one must consider the general understanding of mythology that Goethe had as showing the limits of reason and knowledge, a viewpoint that was informed by both Hamann and Herder, and the development of a new mythology within the *Urfaust* itself. This viewpoint, when examined along with Goethe's distinction between *Mythos* and *Mythologie*, will help one to understand how and why a figure like the *Erdgeist* could have been developed in the *Urfaust*.

3.4.1 The Limits of Reason and Knowledge

Goethe develops his idea of a "Luzifer-Mythos" in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, as discussed previously. Goethe relates this myth in the context of discussing the definition of "*Nachahmung*" in the poetic debates of the eighteenth century and of placing the creative/imaginative role of the poet in parallel to that of Luzifer, in contrast to the creator role of poet and its parallel to God in Bodmer/Breitinger. This is noteworthy on its face, for the simple matter that it places the *Urfaust* in the context of the poetic debates on mythology, by positing a mythic response as a valid response to the discursive arguments of the literary critics of the time. Goethe would not be drawn into a

conceptual debate on poetics, but instead uses a dramatically constructed myth, and in this way, attempts to show the limits of knowledge and thinking within the Enlightenment; one sees this more clearly when looking at Goethe's comment made to Riemer on 10 May 1806, nearing the time of the publication of *Faust, Teil I.*, in which his perspective on mythology with respect to the Enlightenment is made explicit:

Es ist lächerlich, wenn die Philister sich der größern Verständigkeit und Aufklärung ihres Zeitalters rühmen und die frühern barbarisch nennen. Der Verstand ist so alt, wie die Welt, auch das Kind hat Verstand: aber er wird nicht in jedem Zeitalter auf gleiche Weise und auf einerlei Gegenstände angewendet. Unser Zeitalter wendet seinen ganzen Verstand auf Moral und Selbstbetrachtung; daher er in der Kunst und wo er sonst noch thätig sein und mitwirken muß, fast gänzlich mangelt. Die Phantasie wirkte in frühern Jahrhunderten ausschließend und vor, und die übrigen Seelenkräfte dienten ihr; jetzt ist es umgekehrt, sie dient den andern und erlahmt in diesem Dienst. Die frühern Jahrhunderte hatten ihre Ideen in Anschauungen der Phantasie; unseres bringt sie in Begriffe. Die großen Ansichten des Lebens waren damals in Gestalten, in Götter gebracht; heutzutage bringt man sie in Begriffe. Dort war die Produktionskraft größer, heute die Zerstörungskraft, oder die Scheidekunst. (Goethes Gespräche 27-28)

This passage is also cited in Walter Killy's "Der Begriff des Mythos bei Goethe und Hölderlin," along with Killy's comment, clearly establishing the relevance of the earlier context of the *Urfaust*: "Was hier gesagt ist, hat schon den Jüngling beschäftigt, ehe er

zur Universität ging, es besteht kein Anlaß, die Erinnerung zu bezweifeln, die Goethe an das letzte Frankfurter Frühjahr hatte und in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* erzählt” (Killy 212). There are very few direct quotes from Goethe regarding mythology as such, and Killy’s research collects the most relevant among them. The quotes in this section and in those that immediately follow (sections 3.4.2 and 3.4.3) are cited by Killy, and Killy’s research here must be acknowledged as having first pointed the author of this dissertation toward these references: it is in the additional context and analysis of said quotes, related specifically to the *Urfaust*, that this dissertation strives for originality.

One sees in this quote several interesting arguments that relate not only to the poetic debates, but that relate those poetic arguments to the ideas at work in the *Urfaust* and later *Faust* work. The apparent attack on the prejudiced view of Enlightenment thought in favor of reason is a nuanced one: despite the rhetorical ferocity of its opening (“die Philister”) and again in its final word (“Scheidkunst”), the gist of the argument is seen not in the disparagement of reason, for as Goethe notes, reason “ist so alt, wie die Welt,” but from the *point of view* that places reason ahead of the imagination in art, with the result being that the destructive, not productive powers, are used. One need only think of the opening “Nacht” monologue from the *Urfaust* to see in the return to magic the same idea, namely, that something has been lost from the imagination in the unbalanced pursuit of knowledge (and art) via reason. The statement in this comment to Riemer, “Die Phantasie wirkte in frühern Jahrhunderten ausschließend und vor, und die übrigen Seelenkräfte dienten ihr; jetzt ist es umgekehrt, sie dient den andern und erlahmt in diesem Dienst,” evokes the feeling evident in Faust’s character when he seeks to

invigorate his soul and, indeed, his knowledge, holistically via a turn to the magic of older times:

Dafür ist mir auch all Freud entrissen,
Bild mir nicht ein, was Rechts zu wissen,
Bild mir nicht ein, ich könnt was lehren,
Die Menschen zu bessern und zu bekehren;
Auch hab ich weder Gut noch Geld,
Noch Ehr und Herrlichkeit der Welt.
Es möcht kein Hund so länger leben!
Drum hab ich mich der Magie ergeben,
Ob mir durch Geistes Kraft und Mund /
Nicht manch Geheimnis werde kund. (HA 3:367-8)

This marks not a mythological representation of the mythological point of view itself: Faust turns to the view of the world of “Gestalten” und “Götter” that presents the Unknown via the imagination *creatively* and *holistically*, as opposed to the limiting view of the rational Enlightenment, in which reason presents a boundary between what can be imagined. The Unknown can only be represented as an absence of knowledge when one thinks in rational concepts (*Begriffe*).

3.4.2 The Unknown

Indeed, one already sees in Goethe’s comments regarding his youthful disagreements with a friend in Frankfurt in 1766 that Goethe’s interest in poetry, religion and philosophy was a unified one:

Unsere wichtigste Differenz war jedoch diese, daß ich behauptete, eine abgesonderte Philosophie sei nicht nötig, indem sie schon in der Religion und Poesie vollkommen enthalten sei. Dieses wollte er nun keinesweges gelten lassen, sondern suchte mir vielmehr zu beweisen, daß erst diese durch jene begründet werden müßten; welches ich hartnäckig leugnete, und im Fortgange unserer Unterhaltung bei jedem Schritt Argumente für meine Meinung fand. Denn da in der Poesie ein gewisser Glaube an das Unmögliche, in der Religion ein ebensolcher Glaube an das Unergründliche stattfinden muß, so schienen mir die Philosophen in einer sehr üblen Lage zu sein, die auf ihrem Felde beides beweisen und erklären wollten; wie sich denn auch aus der Geschichte der Philosophie sehr geschwind dartun ließ, daß immer einer einen andern Grund suchte als der andre, und der Skeptiker zuletzt alles für grund- und bodenlos ansprach. Eben diese Geschichte der Philosophie jedoch, die mein Freund mit mir zu treiben sich genötigt sah, weil ich dem dogmatischen Vortrag gar nichts abgewinnen konnte, unterhielt mich sehr, aber nur in dem Sinne, daß mir eine Lehre, eine Meinung so gut wie die andre vorkam, insofern ich nämlich in dieselbe einzudringen fähig war. An den ältesten Männern und Schulen gefiel mir am besten, daß Poesie, Religion und Philosophie ganz in eins zusammenfielen, und ich behauptete jene meine erste Meinung nur um desto lebhafter, als mir das Buch Hiob, das Hohe Lied und die Sprüchwörter Salomonis ebenso gut als die Orphischen und Hesiodischen Gesänge dafür ein gültiges Zeugnis abzulegen schienen. (HA 9: 221)

Killy notes the latter part of this quote in his 1984 article “Der Begriff des Mythos bei Goethe und Hölderlin” (212). Here I cite the quote in its greater context, in order to emphasize a larger point than that raised by Killy (who uses the part of the second paragraph to emphasize that Goethe had already been interested in mythology before leaving Frankfurt). This reflection by Goethe on his Frankfurt time shows an openness and receptivity to mythology that predates even his encounters with Herder. Most interestingly, the approach outlined here (admittedly by a much older Goethe) shows an inclination not only toward a holistic view of knowledge in which poetry, philosophy and religion were not separate categories, but also in which said knowledge could be approached without an axiomatic basis, but rather, through some sort of hermeneutic circle in which mythological texts were given the same sense of validity as strictly rational philosophy as a means of approaching truth.

Walther Killy notes the similarity between Goethe’s basic interest in mythology as a seventeen-year-old reflected in the above passage and in the more mature reflection of the twenty-eight-year-old Goethe in his review of text of a Spontini opera, in which ancient Athens was depicted:

Der Gegenstand ist aus der heroischen Griechenzeit sehr glücklich gewählt; denn die Vortheile solcher Sujets sind sehr groß, indem sie bedeutende Zustände darbieten, edle große Bildung .. sodann auch eine gränzenlose Mythologie an die Hand geben zu dichterischer Ausbildung den Gegenstand blos aus dem Gesichtspunct reiner Menschlichkeit zu betrachten ... jener einfache Begriff muß herrschend im Bilde wohnen; [...]

(Goethe WA I, 42-2, S.95, cited in Killy 212-213)

Here I have also used the given quote in a wider form than that used by Killy, due to the different emphasis in my work. I have at this point only located this larger quote in a transcription from the Goethe-Wörterbuch at the University of Trier's website. From this passage it is clear that the appeal of Greek mythology to Goethe lay, in part, in its holistic and unlimited approach to poetry, an approach that was, in his view, close to nature itself. In this view, one might see the relationship of mythology to nature not as error, in the view of Fontenelle and Gottsched, but as an approach to the unlimited itself by means of the image of reality. Here, the image precedes and is closer to nature than the concept. The abstraction of reason, therefore, used by Fontenelle, for example, to criticize mythology as an errant view of nature, is, in Goethe's view, necessarily further removed from the nature it purports to understand.

In this respect, the young Goethe of the 1770s owes both Johann Georg Hamann (1730-1788) and J. G. Herder (1744-1803) for the development of such views. The Pietist Lutheran Hamann's "Aesthetica in Nuce: Eine Rhapsodie in kabbalistischer Prose" (1762) had already attacked Enlightenment aesthetic principles by means of a Christian "cabbalistic" prose appeal that leaned on the sort of interdisciplinary set of influences that appealed to Goethe: the title page cites the Book of Judges, The Book of Job, and Horace. This essay was part of his work *Kreuzzüge des Philologen*, compiled between 1758 and 1763. Here it is worth noting the mythological connection of Job to Faust, given that the young Goethe mentioned his interest in Job in the above-mentioned quote regarding his youthful discussion in Frankfurt. In this short essay, Hamann extols the importance of the image and its primacy over language, and of poetry as the "Muttersprache des menschlichen Geschlechts" (Hamann 197). For Hamann, the

primacy of poetry as man's mode of relating to the world comes from its relationship to images and pictures -- and the primacy of image and picture for containing all truth is demonstrated by the mythical creation story of Genesis, in which the quintessential characteristic of man is that he is to have been created by God in his own image and likeness:

Sinne und Leidenschaften reden und verstehen nichts als Bilder. In Bildern besteht der ganze Schatz menschlicher Erkenntniß und Glückseligkeit. Der erste Ausbruch der Schöpfung, und der erste Eindruck ihres Geschichtschreibers; -- die erste Erscheinung und der erste Genuß der Natur vereinigen sich in dem Worte: Es werde Licht! hiemit fängt sich die Empfindung von der Gegenwart der Dinge an. Endlich krönte GOTT die sinnliche Offenbarung seiner Herrlichkeit durch das Meisterstück des Menschen. Er schuf den Menschen in Göttlicher Gestalt; -- zum Bilde GOTTes schuf er ihn. Dieser Rathschluß des Urhebers löst die verwickeltesten Knoten der menschlichen Natur und ihrer Bestimmung auf. Blinde Heyden haben die Unsichtbarkeit erkannt, die der Mensch mit GOTT gemein hat. Die verhüllte Figur des Leibes, das Antlitz des Hauptes, und das Äußerste der Arme sind das sichtbare Schema, in dem wir einher gehn; doch eigentlich nichts als ein Zeigefinger des verborgenen Menschen in uns; --

Exemplumque DEI quisque est in imagine parua. (Hamann 197-198)

In Hamann's case, the appeal of the creator is not merely a religious argument, it is a statement about the act of creation itself, and one that can be read in light of the

insistence of Bodmer/Breitinger and others that the act of literary creation is parallel to the creator role played by God. In this case, however, reason (or even language itself, as an abstraction) is not primary to the image.

3.4.3 Image and the Distinction between *Mythos* and *Mythologie*: 1777 Diaries

This idea of the primacy of image is something that Goethe explored in a more nuanced manner than Hamann, in a way described by Killy, who cites a passage from Goethe's 1777 diaries:

Von Anfang an hat Goethe, von Herder angeleitet, den Mythos auch historisch genommen: „Da Mythos erfunden wird, werden die Bilder durch die Sachen groß, wenns Mythologie wird werden die Sachen durch die Bilder groß.“ Dieser im Tagebuch von 1777 unvermittelt festgehaltene Satz statuiert eine ganze mythologische Theorie. „Da Mythos erfunden wird“: in den uranfänglichen Zeiten der Mythogenese ging es darum schier unfaßliche Erscheinungen, überwältigende Erfahrungen, von denen der Mensch sich bedrängt sah, mit begreifender Imagination in Bildern faßlich und benennbar zu machen. Solche Bilder bewahrten Kraft und Macht der Phänomene [...].

Wenn's Mythologie wird: das heißt, wenn der gefundene Mythos in den Zusammenhang der Bilderwelt tritt, welche ihn mit anderen Mythen erfindungsreich verbindet. Dann werden die Sachen, derart zu Sprache und Anschauung gebracht, groß, weil sie poetisch sinnvoll, begreiflich und benennbar sind. (Killy 210-211)

The diary entry in question is from 5 April 1777 and reads in full: “*agathê tychê* gegründet! = Da *Mythos* erfunden wird, werden die bilder durch die Sachen gros, wenns Mythologie wird werden die Sachen durch die Bilder gros” (WA III:1 37). This passage is particularly interesting in light of the discussion of myth presented earlier in the work of Fontenelle. By contrasting Goethe’s position with that of Fontenelle on this point, one might see not only how he differs from the popular Enlightenment viewpoint regarding mythology, but also how his conscious working of the question of mythology on two levels engages with and is perhaps informed by the Enlightenment, unlike the Counter-Enlightenment position of Hamann. Goethe distinguishes from myth in the sense of mythos (as in the creation phase), in which the Unknown is approximated by means of mythic imagination, which builds up those images of the imagination (the view that leads Fontenelle and other Enlightenment thinkers to brand myth as error) and myth in the sense of mythology, in which the images are used to build the narrative object of discussion. This sort of distinction, it seems, recognizes the hermeneutic circle in the use of mythology as a means of approximating nature: archetypes formed in the development of mythos as a means of understanding nature by giving meaning to the form and content of nature are then later used in the construction of mythology as a means of giving form and content back to the imagination of the poet. In this sense, the poet can make use of archetypes without misunderstanding them as error, but in the full awareness that they represent forms that resemble nature -- in this way giving “natural” form to their poetic content. Such ideas are also quite consonant with Karl Philip Moritz’ work *Götterlehre oder mythologische Dichtungen der Alten* (1791). Moritz had had extensive

conversations on this subject with Goethe during his Italian travels in the 1786-1788 period (Killy 210).

3.4.4 The Unknown: *Mythos, Mythologie* and *Erdgeist*

In looking at this distinction between mythos and mythology, one sees Goethe's *Erdgeist* as a prime example of such taking place within the *Urfaust*, in a way that shows more than simply the life of the magician, but also the mythic connection to nature through the image of the *Erdgeist*. Faust's summoning of the *Erdgeist* begins with the viewing of the image, and is followed by his awakened feeling of oneness with nature:

Er schlägt unwillig das Buch um und erblickt das Zeichen des Erdgeistes.

Wie anders würkt dies Zeichen auf mich ein!

Du, Geist der Erde, bist mir näher;

Schon fühl ich meine Kräfte höher,

Schon glüh ich wie vom neuen Wein.

Ich fühle Mut, mich in die Welt zu wagen,

All Erden Weh und all ihr Glück zu tragen,

Mit Stürmen mich herumzuschlagen /

Und in des Schiffbruchs Knirschen nicht zu zagen.

Es wölkt sich über mir –

Der Mond verbirgt sein Licht!

Die Lampe schwindet!

Es dampft! Es zucken rote Strahlen

Mir um das Haupt. Es weht /

Ein Schauer vom Gewölb herab Und faßt mich an.
Ich fühls, du schwebst um mich,
Erflehter Geist!
Enthülle dich!
Ha! wie's in meinem Herzen reißt!
Zu neuen Gefühlen /
All meine Sinne sich erwählen!
Ich fühle ganz mein Herz dir hingegeben!
Du mußt, du mußt! Und kostet' es mein Leben. (HA 3:370-1)

In this viewing of the sign/image/sigil of the *Erdgeist*, one sees not only that the sign of the *Erdgeist* gives a form to that content and feeling/connection to nature, through which the Faust character is able to summon this connection, but also that the mythological characteristic of the image is represented. Not only this, but this use of the *Erdgeist* by Goethe also marks the use of an existing “mythological” archetype itself from the cosmogonies of both Paracelsus and Giordano Bruno, among others. Werner Keller explains the novelty in Goethe’s approach here, and while he does not emphasize the connection to mythology, Goethe’s use of the archetype as described by Keller is consonant with the theory of mythology described in his diary from 1777:

Wir fragen: Wem wendet sich der Mensch der beginnenden Neuzeit zu, wenn er sich anschickt, das Innerste der Welt zu erkunden und ihm das Bild als Abbild – in vermaledeiter Buchform – nicht genügt? Er konzentriert sich aufs Irdische. Magische Mittel erzwingen die Selbstexplikation des Ergeists, der sprachfähigen spirituellen Kraft, die

das Dasein in seiner Polarität reguliert und über die Lebensganzheit von Werden und Vergehen gebietet, deren Identität sich im Gegensatz ununterbrochenen Gebärens und Sterbens manifestiert. Der Erdgeist, der als Name schon bei Paracelsus (*archeus terrae*) und Giordano Bruno (*anima terrae*) erscheint, doch erst durch Goethe seine anschauliche Ausdeutung findet, repräsentiert die lebendig tätige Natur, die “wirkt,” ohne an ein Ende, und “schafft,” ohne an ein Ziel gelangen zu wollen. Verwandlung und Glut bilden die Attribute des polar strukturierten einheitlichen Seins, das als Zeitlichkeit erfahren wird. Der Prozeßcharakter der Natur, deren immanente Dynamik, ist damit entdeckt, und der vergänglichliche, zur Wandlung genötigte Mensch erfährt im Nu der ungreifbaren, entschwindenden Gegenwart, daß er als zeitliches Wesen immer mit der Zukunft zu tun hat, die er aber nur als Vergangenheit ganz verstehen kann. (Keller 317)

Here Keller’s description of the sign as representing the “Prozeßcharakter” of nature is important in helping one to understand the power of the sign as opposed to the abstract concept: the sign is meant to encompass a totality, and in this way is prior to the abstractions that come from such a totality. The second part of Goethe’s diary dictum comes into mind: “wenns Mythologie wird werden die Sachen durch die Bilder gros.” In the context of the complete diary quote, Goethe’s approach in the *Urfaust* is not one of *Mythos*, but of *Mythologie*, in that he uses existing archetypes to invoke nature, as opposed to founding archetypes based on the study of nature. In doing so, he evokes not

only nature as an abstract concept, in the manner of Fontenelle or Gottsched, but as a totality, including the aspects of the Unknown in nature.

4 Lessing's 17. *Literaturbrief* and the Faust Motif

It is important here to note that Goethe was not the first to object to Gottsched's positions on dramatic construction, not merely with respect to their theoretical basis, but also with respect to the specific value of the Faust material itself for dramatic construction. In his "17. *Literaturbrief*" (1759) G.E. Lessing (1729-1781) challenges Gottsched's assumptions about the need to follow a French neoclassicist model, and sees precisely in the Faust legend material relevant for creating drama after the model of Shakespeare (Lessing 5:70-73, Guthke 141-149, Baron 105, Henning 79-90). Lessing himself attempted to develop a drama incorporating the Faust theme, and did so precisely in the context of mounting a challenge to Gottsched's poetics, which helps to establish the fact that a conceptual link between poetic arguments against Gottsched and for the "turn to magic" is not mere happenstance, but seems, indeed, to have been something "in the air" of the times themselves. Lessing's disdain for Gottsched is as open and pointed as was Goethe's, made clear in the letter's opening:

»Niemand, sagen die Verfasser der Bibliothek, wird leugnen, daß die deutsche Schaubühne einen großen Teil ihrer ersten Verbesserung dem Herrn Professor Gottsched zu danken habe.«

Ich bin dieser Niemand; ich leugne es gerade zu. Es wäre zu wünschen, daß sich Herr Gottsched niemals mit dem Theater vermengt hätte. Seine vermeinten Verbesserungen betreten entweder entbehrliche Kleinigkeiten, oder sind wahre Verschlimmerungen. (Lessing 5:70)

In the course of the letter, Lessing raises the Faust theme as an example of the sort of native material available for German dramatists who might be able to challenge the

French neoclassical model in a manner similar to Shakespeare among the English (Lessing 5:72-73). Indeed, he includes at the end of this letter a scene on the Faust theme that he had already composed, called “Faust und die sieben Geister” (while included at the end of the same letter, it is to be found, along with other fragments of Lessing’s aborted Faust manuscript not included in this letter, in Lessing 2:487-491). What is relevant here to the question of the *Urfaust* as a philosophical argument is the way that Lessing, too, attempts in this Faust fragment to put forward a case for German drama, in opposition to the rules of Gottsched, by using the Faust material: this is, as it were, an Enlightenment attempt to use the Faust material while keeping a reason-based approach to morality and the question of good and evil.

4.1 Lessing’s Devils and the Question of Moral Epistemology

In Lessing’s “Faust und die sieben Geister” scene, however, the problems posed for Enlightenment thinking with respect to knowledge of morality becomes apparent in his attempt to define the devils with whom his Faust character speaks. Faust speaks with seven spirits from hell, questioning them in such a way as to differentiate between them with respect to the attribute of their speed (“Und welcher von euch ist der schnellste?”) (Lessing 2:487). The devils respond by giving metaphorical descriptions of their speed, each one outdoing his predecessor. The seventh and fastest devil describes his own speed as “Nicht mehr und nicht weniger als der Übergang vom Guten zum Bösen.” (Lessing 2:489). When one compares this devil to the fifth devil, who for example, is “So schnell wie die Gedanken des Menschen,” and notes that Lessing’s Faust sees not only that the seventh devil is faster, but also remarks that the fifth devil is not necessarily fast, based

on the given description (“Aber nicht immer sind die Gedanken des Menschen schnell. Nicht da, wenn Wahrheit und Tugend sie auffordern.”), one sees a tension underlying Lessing’s description of knowledge with respect to thought: knowledge itself, especially on the important matters of truth and virtue is almost indescribably slow in comparison to the movement from good to evil. The relationship between good and evil, then, is something that seems to operate in a sphere that surpasses human knowledge by implication: one might pass from good to evil more quickly than one might acquire knowledge. This presumably would include the knowledge of good and evil itself, meaning that the passage from good to evil exists in a blind spot even for the self-aware thinker possessed of reason.

It is, in fact, the difficulty in defining clearly the pursuit of knowledge within a framework of good and evil that poses a sort of aporia preventing Lessing from completing his Faust project. Guthke describes the issue at hand quite succinctly in terms of the paradox posed for Lessing in taking up the Faust motif:

Die eigentliche Paradoxie in Lessings Griff nach der Faustsage scheint vielmehr die zu sein, daß für Lessing der Drang nach Wissen und Erkenntnis eben nicht eine strafbare Sünde sein oder zu Sünde verführen konnte, wie das in der Fausttradition der Fall war. Darin war er Kind seiner Zeit. (Guthke 143)

This, rather than the use of entities from the spirit world, was the challenge to Lessing’s Enlightenment view posed by integrating the Faust tradition into a dramatic form within the confines of Enlightenment thought, even an Enlightenment perspective expanded from that offered by Gottsched.

4.2 Lessing's Theodicy Problem

Indeed, for Lessing, as an Enlightenment thinker, the thirst for knowledge was not inherently bad, but was, rather a God-given attribute of man, leading to, as Guthke points out, a problem with theodicy in Lessing's account (Guthke 146). This argument can be traced back to the work of Robert Petsch, who explains in great detail the tension between an Enlightenment attitude toward reason and theodicy inherent in Lessing's attempt to work with the Faust theme:

Und wenn Lessing auch kein Renaissancemensch war, wenn er auch nichts von dem in sich verspürte, was wir seit den Tagen des Sturmes und Dranges eine Faustische Natur nennen, so mußte es doch seinem scharfen Auge als ein innerer Widerspruch erscheinen, daß jemand aus lauter Liebe zur Wahrheit endgiltig (sic) verloren gehen sollte; wie aber der Mensch aus lauter Vernunftstreben schließlich die Herrschaft seiner Vernunft über seine Leidenschaften einbüßt und aus einem exaltierten Gehirnmenschen zum Sinnesmenschen wird, mußte seinen experimentierenden psychologischen Tiefsinn erst recht anlocken. Die Lösung dieses Problems lag freilich nicht auf dem Wege der reinen Vernunft, sondern der Weltanschauung; indem er den Stoff unter den Gesichtspunkt der Werte rückte, die seinem Innenleben Richtung gaben, begann das Ganze zu dem lebensvollen Bilde einer tragischen Handlung aufzuquellen. Hier aber hat Lessing wie kaum ein anderer im 18.Jh. die letzten Gewißheiten Leibnizens in sich aufgenommen und nacherlebt. (Petsch 11-12)

Returning to the contrast between the fifth and seventh devils in the above-cited scene, the attempt to address this apparent conflict between human reason and morality for Lessing becomes more evident. In his recognition of the superior “speed” of the seventh devil, Lessing’s Faust, while motivated by a desire for knowledge, implicitly acknowledges that human reason, while not morally “bad” in its pursuit of truth, is “slower” than temptation to evil on the moral level. What is essential here with respect to this dissertation is the problem evident with respect to the Enlightenment and the Faust motif shown in Lessing’s attempt, for it is in recognizing this difficulty that one may come to see Goethe’s originality in dealing with this tension in the *Urfaust*. The question of truth, which operates in Lessing’s work on two incompatible levels (that of the truth of reason and moral truth) faces an unbridgeable chasm, one that prevented Lessing from finding a philosophically coherent dramatic resolution.

4.3 Goethe’s Avoidance of Lessing’s Paradox

The Wagner figure helps one to understand Goethe’s relationship to the Enlightenment not merely as a caricature of Gottsched, but also in the fact that it is by means of the Faust-Wagner dialogue that one sees how Goethe surpasses the Enlightenment problematic seen in Lessing’s aborted Faust project. Wagner accepts the limits of knowledge imposed on man by virtue of his mortality, seeing knowledge progressing incrementally through reason:

WAGNER. Ach Gott, die Kunst ist lang

Und kurz ist unser Leben!

Mir wird bei meinem kritischen Bestreben

Doch oft um Kopf und Busen bang.
Wie schwer sind nicht die Mittel zu erwerben,
Durch die man zu den Quellen steigt!
Und eh man nur den halben Weg erreicht,
Muß wohl ein armer Teufel sterben. (HA 3:372-3 lines 205-212)

Goethe's Faust figure in the *Urfaust*, unlike Lessing's, neither accepts nor recognizes as legitimate the apparent limits on the speed of man's ability to acquire knowledge, for he wants a totalizing knowledge (here I adopt the term "totalization" as a term describing the total striving of Goethe's Faust as described by Petsch 1911 and Guthke 1960), and is not content with the process of gaining knowledge within the apparent limits of Enlightenment man as a finite creature, and in this desire he rejects the Enlightenment view of Wagner with respect to learning and its relation to progress. Guthke remarks on the difference between Lessing's Faust and the Faust of the *Urfaust* with respect to *Wissensdrang*:

Die ganz verschiedene Voraussetzung, der andere Ansatz, erhellt ja schon daraus, daß Lessing das faustische Streben durchaus noch als Wissensdrang auffaßt, noch nicht als Goethesche totale Streben, das bereits im *Urfaust* wirksam ist. Schon in den jeweiligen Beschwörungsszenen kommt das zum Ausdruck: Goethes Magier zitiert den Erdgeist, Lessings Doktor den Schatten des Aristoteles. (Guthke 143)

Indeed, Faust's direct response to Wagner calls into question the use of previous knowledge (in the form of books or the written word) as the basis for making any progress in knowledge at all:

FAUST. Das Pergament, ist das der heilige Bronnen,

Woraus ein Trunk den Durst auf ewig stillt?

Erquickung hast du nicht gewonnen,

Wenn sie dir nicht aus eigener Seele quillt.

[...]

Mein Freund, die Zeiten der Vergangenheit

Sind uns ein Buch mit sieben Siegeln.

Was ihr den Geist der Zeiten heißt,

Das ist im Grund der Herren eigener Geist,

In dem die Zeiten sich bespiegeln.

Da ist's denn wahrlich oft ein Jammer!

Man läuft euch bei dem ersten Blick davon.

Ein Kehrriechtfaß und eine Rumpelkammer,

Und höchstens eine Haupt- und Staatsaktion

Mit trefflichen pragmatischen Maximen,

Wie sie den Puppen wohl im Munde ziemen. (HA 3:373 lines 213-216,
222-232)

The question of truth, which operates in Lessing's work on two incompatible levels, that of the truth of reason and moral truth, is integrated in Goethe's totalizing approach: pure reason is not viewed in idealized form, in conflict with morality, but as an impossibility for the limited human being, an impossibility that requires a transcendent experience of such a nature that traditional moral categories themselves become blurred. By shifting the question to this sort of transcendence, Goethe's *Urfaust* displays an awareness of the

limits inherent in an approach such as Lessing's. Whether Goethe himself was aware of Lessing's own Faust project is not relevant, the point here is merely to emphasize the originality in Goethe's approach to the Faust question with respect to these Enlightenment tensions.

4.4 The Holistic Alternative to "Dead" Knowledge: Totalization

The response of Faust to Wagner on the question of knowledge not only illustrates the limits of the Enlightenment approach to reason, it also alludes to an alternative approach to knowledge hearkening back to the Renaissance, and implicitly connects the prejudices of Enlightenment thinkers such as Gottsched to the historical persecution of Renaissance scholars by means of using the word "Pöbel," a favorite term of Gottsched for dismissing those whose tastes differed from his own (see earlier citations for its explicit use in reference to Gottsched's rejection of the Faust theme itself):

WAGNER. Allein die Welt! Des Menschen Herz und Geist!

Möcht jeglicher doch was davon erkennen.

FAUST. Ja, was man so erkennen heißt!

Wer darf das Kind beim rechten Namen nennen?

Die wenigen, die was davon erkannt,

Die töricht g'nug ihr volles Herz nicht wahrten,

Dem Pöbel ihr Gefühl, ihr Schauen offenbarten,

Hat man von je gekreuzigt und verbrannt. – (HA 3: 373 lines 233-242)

This reference can be better understood if one examines the very Renaissance sources that Goethe himself admits having consulted during the time in which he began thinking about the Faust theme and eventually working on his *Urfaust* draft, when he was convalescing in Frankfurt as the 1760s passed into the 1770s.

The contrast of Lessing's failed and aborted attempt with Goethe's eventual turn to magic in the *Urfaust* is also instructive in considering how Goethe's approach differed from one based firmly within Enlightenment principles. In addition, it shows the modern reader that Gottsched himself represented a certain polarity within Enlightenment thought itself, against which other Enlightenment thinkers such as Lessing wrote and theorized. The failure of Lessing, however, to provide a successful "turn to magic" as a counterpole within the Enlightenment underscores the limitations of this approach (in which the status of reason above all else is axiomatic), and helps one to understand why Goethe would have needed to search for a counterpole to Gottsched outside of the Enlightenment.

5 Goethe's Frankfurt Convalescence and the von Klettenberg Circle

Much is known about Goethe's life in the period of his convalescence (1768-1770) in Frankfurt, principally by means of his own retracing of his intellectual development in this period recounted later in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*. This autobiographical history, has often been overlooked in studies of this time in relation to the question of how much *Urfaust* itself, considered as a work in its own right, reflects the coming together of important influences on the young Goethe that profoundly shaped his relationship with the Enlightenment. The Goethe that one finds in Frankfurt is newly arrived following his experiences with Gottsched in Leipzig, having already been immersed in the debates regarding poetics among Enlightenment thinkers. In the Frankfurt circle surrounding Susanna Katharina von Klettenberg (1723-1774), he encounters an entirely different sort of knowledge, from a wisdom tradition not taught in the university or propounded by Enlightenment thinkers, but, in fact, deemed beyond the bounds of the scientific approach to knowledge.

The beginning of Goethe's interaction with von Klettenberg, who was a friend of his mother, after his return to Frankfurt from Leipzig due to illness, is generally dated to the autumn of 1768 (Dohm 111ff., Witte 22). In *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Goethe's first mention of her comes in the eighth book, when he explains that von Klettenberg later served as the basis for "die schöne Seele" in the "Bekenntnisse einer schönen Seele" in the sixth book of his work, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795-6):

Meine Mutter, von Natur sehr lebhaft und heiter, brachte unter diesen Umständen sehr langweilige Tage zu. Die kleine Haushaltung war bald besorgt. Das Gemüt der guten, innerlich niemals unbeschäftigten Frau

wollte auch einiges Interesse finden, und das nächste begegnete ihr in der Religion, das sie um so lieber ergriff, als ihre vorzüglichsten Freundinnen gebildete und herzliche Gottesverehrerinnen waren. Unter diesen stand Fräulein von Klettenberg obenan. Es ist dieselbe, aus deren Unterhaltungen und Briefen die »Bekenntnisse der schönen Seele« entstanden sind, die man in »Wilhelm Meister« eingeschaltet findet. Sie war zart gebaut, von mittlerer Größe; ein herzliches natürliches Betragen war durch Welt- und Hofart noch gefälliger geworden. Ihr sehr netter Anzug erinnerte an die Kleidung Herrnhutischer Frauen. Heiterkeit und Gemütsruhe verließen sie niemals. Sie betrachtete ihre Krankheit als einen notwendigen Bestandteil ihres vorübergehenden irdischen Seins; sie litt mit der größten Geduld, und in schmerzlosen Intervallen war sie lebhaft und gesprächig. Ihre liebste, ja vielleicht einzige Unterhaltung waren die sittlichen Erfahrungen, die der Mensch, der sich beobachtet, an sich selbst machen kann; woran sich denn die religiösen Gesinnungen anschlossen, die auf eine sehr anmutige, ja geniale Weise bei ihr als natürlich und übernatürlich in Betracht kamen. Mehr bedarf es kaum, um jene ausführliche, in ihre Seele verfaßte Schilderung den Freunden solcher Darstellungen wieder ins Gedächtnis zu rufen. (HA 9:338 line 31-339 line 18, as noted and explained in Dohm 111)

Goethe goes on to describe von Klettenberg in contrast to others in the Klettenberg circle, whom he describes as “dreary” (eintönig), “indem sie sich an eine gewisse Terminologie hielten, die man mit jener der späteren Empfindsamen wohl verglichen hätte,” in terms

which call to mind the emptiness of words proclaimed in the *Urfaust*, and indeed, he explains von Klettenberg's interest in him in a manner that almost seems to provide the very same sort of opposing characterization to himself that he uses in characterizing the Faustian *Streben* in the *Urfaust*:

Fräulein von Klettenberg führte ihren Weg zwischen beiden Extremen durch, und schien sich mit einiger Selbstgefälligkeit in dem Bilde des Grafen Zinzendorf zu spiegeln, dessen Gesinnungen und Wirkungen Zeugnis einer höheren Geburt und eines vornehmeren Standes ablegten. Nun fand sie an mir, was sie bedurfte, ein junges, lebhaftes, *auch nach einem unbekanntem Heile strebendes Wesen, das, ob es sich gleich nicht für außerordentlich sündhaft halten konnte, sich doch in keine behaglichen Zustand befand, und weder an Leib noch Seele ganz gesund war*. Sie freute sich an dem, was mir die Natur gegeben, sowie an manchem, was ich mir erworben hatte. (emphasis added; HA 9: 339 line 31 – 340 line 4)

To be clear, this itself is not proof that the personal relationship with von Klettenberg *per se* provided any sort of basis for the character development within the *Urfaust*; it is, rather, taken in the context of Goethe's description of the relationship, and of himself, many years after the fact, suggestive that he later associated – at least in this description – the themes present in the *Urfaust*, vis-à-vis the contrast between stale words and the search for truth through a concerted striving of the soul, with that which formed the bond between himself and von Klettenberg. Indeed, the description of himself through Klettenberg's eyes is interesting, given that it implies that this person viewed him

holistically as an individual, as one whose physical and spiritual conditions were interrelated, and also as an individual whose pursuit of a higher truth was connected with “streben,” a theme that is quite pertinent to the Faustian theme. Goethe’s reflection upon his relationship with von Klettenberg many years after the fact suggests that, at least in his own autobiographical narrative, his self-development and understanding in this period was connected with the themes that he later developed in *Faust*, themes that he began to explore at that very time in the *Urfaust*.

This, of course, is not mere conjecture, given the spiritual pursuit in which he was engaged with von Klettenberg at the time, as will be described later via the historical figure of Dr. Metz, involved reading the very texts, such as that of Welling, which probably provided the basis for the mythological component of the *Urfaust*. It must also be added that, in the passage which immediately follows from the former, however, Goethe points to the same restlessness and striving and notes that von Klettenberg and the others in the circle regarded his lack of religious conviction as the cause of this, and therefore, spoke to him at times as though he were a foolish young boy (HA 9:340 lines 4 - 24). This context is important, so that one does not take the parallels too far or read into them more than what is present in the account given.

5.1 Influences on Goethe during the von Klettenberg Period

Goethe’s time in the von Klettenberg circle needs to be examined from the standpoint of the context it provided for the mixing of influences that relate to the cosmogonic-mythological component informing the *Urfaust*, that, when taken into combination with the poetic influences related to the Enlightenment debates about genre

and dramatic construction, formed a unique response to the Enlightenment by means of the dramatic vehicle constructed by Goethe.

What, precisely, did Goethe gain from his time in the von Klettenberg circle? For clues to this, one might examine the letter that he sent to Frau von Klettenberg on 26 August 1770, after he had finished his stay in Frankfurt and returned to his studies in Strasbourg. In this letter, he seems to distance himself from religion, implying that he finds the religious types in Strasbourg to be “von Herzen langweilig,” and that they do not know anything other than their religion. After all of this, he makes a brief reference to chemistry (“Chymie”) as “still [being his] secret lover” (“noch immer meine heimlich Geliebte”), with this assurance seemingly meant to demonstrate that he is still very much the same person that she knew when he was in Frankfurt:

[...]Ubrigens ist mein Körper iust so gesund um eine mäßige, und nötige Arbeit zu tragen, und um mich bey Gelegenheit zu erinnern daß ich weder an Leib noch an Seele ein Riese binn. Mein Umgang mit denen frommen Leuten hier ist nicht gar starck, ich hatte mich im Anfange sehr starck an sie gewendet; aber es ist als wenn es nicht seyn sollte. *Sie sind so von Herzen langweilig wenn sie anfangen, daß es meine Lebhaftigkeit nicht aushalten konnte. Lauter Leute von mäsigem Verstande, die mit der ersten Religionsempfindung, auch den ersten vernünftigen Gedanken dachten, und nun meynen das wäre alles, weil sie sonst von nichts wissen; dabey so hällisch und meinem Graffen so feind, und so kirchlich und püncklich, daß – ich Ihnen eben nichts weiter zu sagen brauche.*

Es kömmt noch was dazu. Die Vorliebe für unsre eignen Empfindungen und Meynungen, die Eitelkeit eines jeden Nase dahin drehen zu wollen wohin unsre gewachsen ist; Fehler denen solche Leute die eine gute Sache haben mit der größten Sicherheit nachhängen. Wie oft habe ich ** die Sache seiner Grillen und die Sache Gottes vermischen hören wenn er seinen Vetter ausschalt. Ich hab den Mann gern wir sind gute Freunde; aber schon als Hausvater ist er zu streng, und Sie können sich denken was herauskommt wenn er die seiner Pflichten der Religion von seinen iungen rohen Leuten beobachtet haben will.

Eine andre Bekandtschaft, grad das Widerspiel von dieser, hat mir bisher nicht wenig genutzt. Ich soll durch alle Klassen gehn, so scheints gnädge Fräulen. Herr ** ein Ideal für Mosheimen oder Jerusalemen, ein Mann, der durch viel Erfahrung mit viel Verstand gegangen ist; der bey der Kälte des Bluts womit er von iehier die Welt betrachtet tat, gefunden zu haben glaubt: daß wir auf diese Welt gesetzt sind besonders um ihr nützlich zu seyn, daß wir uns dazu fähig machen können, wozu denn auch die Religion etwas hilfft; und daß der Brauchbaarste der beste ist. Und alles was draus folgt.

[...]

Die Jurisprudenz fangt an mir sehr zu gefallen. So ists doch mit allem wie mit dem Merseburger Biere, das erstemal schauert man, und hat mans eine Woche getruncken, so kann mans nicht mehr laßen. *Und die Chymie ist noch immer meine heimlich Geliebte.*

Es ist doch immer noch der alte Geck! der (WA 1:246, emphasis added)

This letter is curious from the standpoint of the contrast of the final content with the bulk of the letter, and from both what is said and remains unsaid in this final contrasting paragraph. If some members in the von Klettenberg circle had somewhat condescendingly looked at Goethe's poor health as being a reflection of his lack of spiritual development (i.e. relationship to the Christian God), then this letter, with its pronouncement of his renewed vigor and physical vitality preceding his clear distancing of himself from the religious/pious circles in Strasbourg might be taken as mocking in tone, but this would be a rather superficial reading, given that it is clear not merely from the friendly terms of the letter but from its ending that Goethe wishes to assure von Klettenberg that, in spite of his criticism of the religious community, he remains "noch der alte Geck." Rather, it would seem that he expected her to understand this criticism, and that his prefatory comments related to his vitality seem more intended if anything as merely relating information to a friend, in order to juxtapose his state with those of the one-sided religious types. Boyle takes more or less this view, in describing this correspondence from Goethe to von Klettenberg as follows:

Back in Strasbourg, 'I live rather from one day to the next', Goethe wrote, 'and thank God, and sometimes too his Son, when I may, that I am in circumstances which seem to impose this on me.' There was now a growing distance from the central figure of the Christian religion. Goethe had at first eagerly sought out the Pietist community in Strasbourg, he told Susanna von Klettenberg at the end of August, but found them so narrow and unimaginative, so ecclesiastically minded and hostile to the Herrnhut

tendency, and also 'so profoundly boring when they once start, that my vivacity could not endure it'. Salzmann's rationalistic, even Voltairean, religion may also have been responsible for this alienation, and Goethe's last recorded Communion took place on 26 August. Almost seamlessly, however, the sacred enthusiasm passed over into the secular. A letter to Horn written at this time, but now lost, showed, we learn from Eckermann and from Goethe's later correspondence, 'a young man with an inkling of great things lying before him', 'but as yet no sign of a whence or a whither, an out or an in'. The vacancy left by religion in Goethe's emotional life was about to be filled, and overfilled, from other sources. He was just strong enough for the necessary academic work in moderation, he told Fräulein von Klettenberg, tactfully, if a little disingenuously, in view of his recent exertions. (Boyle 93)

While Boyle's commentary seems sensible and accurate in respect to Goethe's lack of enthusiasm for organized religion *per se* and his need to fill his own emotional life with other sources, it does not address the curious ending of the letter, in which the assurance given by Goethe that he is still the same person is immediately preceded by the statement "Und die Chymie ist noch immer meine heimlich Geliebte."

5.2 "Chymie" and the Holistic Synthesis and the Understanding of Knowledge

What might Goethe have meant by this reference, and how might it help us to connect his time with the von Klettenberg circle to the themes present in the development of the *Urfaust*? An important clue might be found in Goethe's own description of his

time in Strasbourg, which puts his letter to Frau von Klettenberg in context, not only by the timeframe, but also by virtue of its indication of interests that he was keeping secret from Herder at that time, interests that included Faust, and most pointedly, mystical and cabbalistic “Chemie,” which was, in Goethe’s own words, the most hidden of these secrets (“Am meisten aber verbarg ich vor Herdern meine mystisch-kabbalistische Chemie und was sich darauf bezog”):

Am sorgfältigsten verbarg ich ihm das Interesse an gewissen Gegenständen, die sich bei mir eingewurzelt hatten und sich nach und nach zu poetischen Gestalten ausbilden wollten. Es war Götz von Berlichingen und Faust. Die Lebensbeschreibung des erstern hatte mich im Innersten ergriffen. Die Gestalt eines rohen, wohlmeinenden Selbsthelfers in wilder anarchischer Zeit erregte meinen tiefsten Anteil. Die bedeutende Puppenspielfabel des andern klang und summtete gar vieltönig in mir wider. Auch ich hatte mich in allem Wissen umhergetrieben und war früh genug auf die Eitelkeit desselben hingewiesen worden. Ich hatte es auch im Leben auf allerlei Weise versucht, und war immer unbefriedigter und gequälter zurückgekommen. Nun trug ich diese Dinge, sowie manche andre, mit mir herum und ergetzte mich daran in einsamen Stunden, ohne jedoch etwas davon aufzuschreiben. *Am meisten aber verbarg ich vor Herdern meine mystisch-kabbalistische Chemie und was sich darauf bezog, ob ich mich gleich noch sehr gern heimlich beschäftigte, sie konsequenter auszubilden,*

als man sie mir überliefert hatte. (HA 9:413 line 31 - 414 line 11,
emphasis added)

Here one notes the explicit connection of interests that Goethe maintained at the time that he was first exploring the poetic figure of Faust, including what would appear to be a description of alchemy, *as it had been handed down or taught to him*. This reference, in combination with his veiled reference to “Chymie” in the letter to von Klettenberg, implies that it was at least somewhat due to his time in the von Klettenberg circle that he became aware of and interested in such subjects. Not only that, but this passage from *Dichtung und Wahrheit* makes clear that Goethe’s interest in poetic development of figures such as Götze and Faust was not merely part of the *Sturm und Drang* program of his youthful development of drama, but also related to areas of interest that he maintained and pursued separately from his programmatic study of that movement under the leadership of Herder.

If one returns to the description of von Klettenberg in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, one finds also that even if the von Klettenberg circle was essentially religious in nature, Goethe himself was connecting ideas formed in the circle with his literary pursuits and with the poetic debates of the time. In a much later passage from the initial description of Frau von Klettenberg and her circle, he draws an analogy between one of the leading figures of this group of Pietists, Moser, and the “Magus of the North,” Hamann (who had influenced Herder), in the sense that both men were deep thinkers, well-rounded in the knowledge of literature and the world, and with a feel for the secretive (“Geheimen”) and ineffable (“Unerforschliches”):

Da ich mich nun sowohl zu dem sibyllinischen Stil solcher Blätter als zu der Herausgabe derselben eigentlich durch Hamann hatte verleiten lassen, so scheint mir hier eine schickliche Stelle, dieses würdigen einflußreichen Mannes zu gedenken, der uns damals ein ebenso großes Geheimnis war, als er es immer dem Vaterlande geblieben ist. Seine »Sokratischen Denkwürdigkeiten« erregten Aufsehen, und waren solchen Personen besonders lieb, die sich mit dem blendenden Zeitgeiste nicht vertragen konnten. Man ahndete hier einen tiefdenkenden gründlichen Mann, der, mit der offenbaren Welt und Literatur genau bekannt, doch auch noch etwas Geheimes, Unerforschliches gelten ließ, und sich darüber auf eine ganz eigne Weise aussprach. Von denen, die damals die Literatur des Tags beherrschten, ward er freilich für einen abstrusen Schwärmer gehalten, eine aufstrebende Jugend aber ließ sich wohl von ihm anziehen. Sogar die Stillen im Lande, wie sie halb im Scherz, halb im Ernst genannt wurden, jene frommen Seelen, welche, ohne sich zu irgend einer Gesellschaft zu bekennen, eine unsichtbare Kirche bildeten, wendeten ihm ihre Aufmerksamkeit zu, und meiner Klettenberg, nicht weniger ihrem Freunde Moser war der »Magus aus Norden« eine willkommene Erscheinung. Man setzte sich um so mehr mit ihm in Verhältnis, als man erfahren hatte, daß er, von knappen häuslichen Umständen gepeinigt, sich dennoch diese schöne und hohe Sinnesweise zu erhalten verstand. Bei dem großen Einflusse des Präsidenten von Moser wäre es leicht gewesen,

einem so genügsamen Manne ein leidliches und bequemes Dasein zu verschaffen. Die Sache war auch eingeleitet, ja man hatte sich so weit schon verständigt und genähert, daß Hamann die weite Reise von Königsberg nach Darmstadt unternahm. Als aber der Präsident zufällig abwesend war, kehrte jener wunderliche Mann, aus welchem Anlaß weiß man nicht, sogleich wieder zurück; man blieb jedoch in einem freundlichen Briefverhältnis. Ich besitze noch zwei Schreiben des Königsbergers an seinen Gönner, die von der wundersamen Großheit und Innigkeit ihres Verfassers Zeugnis ablegen. Aber ein so gutes Verständnis sollte nicht lange dauern. Diese frommen Menschen hatten sich jenen auch nach ihrer Weise fromm gedacht, sie hatten ihn als den Magus aus Norden mit Ehrfurcht behandelt, und glaubten, daß er sich auch so fort in ehrwürdigem Betragen darstellen würde. Allein er hatte schon durch die »*Wolken, ein Nachspiel Sokratischer Denkwürdigkeiten*« einigen Anstoß gegeben, und da er nun gar die »*Kreuzzüge des Philologen*« herausgab, auf deren Titelblatt nicht allein das Ziegenprofil eines gehörnten Pans zu sehen war, sondern auch auf einer der ersten Seiten ein großer, in Holz geschnittener Hahn,[...] (HA 9: 512 line 20 – 513 line 29)

Importantly, Goethe draws a link between the literary world and the world of the Pietists, in the sense that he was able to understand figures such as Hamann and Moser from the standpoint of their ability to function in both worlds, whereas those who were one-sided in their devotion to one or other world would not appreciate the true greatness of either figure. This gives one a clue toward the holistic worldview that is present in the *Urfaust*

between the intellect/reason (*Kopf*) und feeling (*Herz*), and indicates how the time in the von Klettenberg circle may well have functioned for him: perhaps one can say, in Hegelian terms, that the “thesis” of his literary education, when presented with the “antithesis” of his Pietist studies, produced a “synthesis” of the holistic approach present in the *Urfaust*, a holism that similarly allowed him to appreciate figures such as Hamann and Moser who did not confine themselves to the limits prescribed by their chosen disciplines (and were therefore often un- or underappreciated by their own).

This holistic synthesis and understanding of knowledge, resulting from this period in Goethe’s development, is also pointed toward in Goethe’s remarks in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* regarding the difference in approaches between von Klettenberg and Lavater concerning the function of their belief, in which Goethe points out the difference between belief and knowledge, and ultimately describes knowledge in such a way to contrast with belief with respect to limits, and as being itself of a whole:

Der Streit zwischen Wissen und Glauben war noch nicht an der Tagesordnung, allein die beiden Worte und die Begriffe, die man damit verknüpft, kamen wohl auch gelegentlich vor, und die wahren Weltverächter behaupteten, eins sei so unzuverlässig als das andere. Daher beliebte es mir, mich zu gunsten beider zu erklären, ohne jedoch den Beifall meiner Freunde gewinnen zu können. Beim Glauben, sagte ich, komme alles darauf an, daß man glaube; was man glaube, sei völlig gleichgültig. Der Glaube sei ein großes Gefühl von Sicherheit für die Gegenwart und Zukunft, und diese Sicherheit entspringe aus dem Zutrauen auf ein übergroßes, übermächtiges und unerforschliches Wesen.

Auf die Unerschütterlichkeit dieses Zutrauens komme alles an; wie wir uns aber dieses Wesen denken, dies hänge von unsern übrigen Fähigkeiten, ja von den Umständen ab, und sei ganz gleichgültig. Der Glaube sei ein heiliges Gefäß, in welches ein jeder sein Gefühl, seinen Verstand, seine Einbildungskraft, so gut als er vermöge, zu opfern bereit stehe. Mit dem Wissen sei es gerade das Gegenteil; es komme gar nicht darauf an, daß man wisse, sondern was man wisse, wie gut und wie viel man wisse. Daher könne man über das Wissen streiten, weil es sich berichtigen, sich erweitern und verengern lasse. Das Wissen fange vom einzelnen an, sei endlos und gestaltlos, und könne niemals, höchstens nur träumerisch, zusammengefaßt werden, und bleibe also dem Glauben geradezu entgegengesetzt. (HA 10:23 lines 3-29)

Again, this holistic approach to knowledge appears to be something that Goethe appreciates upon reflecting on the religious debates he witnessed in the von Klettenberg circle. With respect to this characterization of knowledge, moving from the individual to the greater scale (microcosm to macrocosm), there were certainly influences from the readings that Goethe did while in Frankfurt that could account for this understanding as well.

5.3 Alchemy: Goethe's Introduction to the Work of Georg von Welling

Returning to the passages that introduced von Klettenberg in the narrative of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, there is a passage that follows in the immediate context, with reference to both Goethe's doctor and surgeon at the time, who were members of the

same von Klettenberg circle. This lengthy passage is of particular importance to this study, in that it shows a direct link between the ideas being circulated within the group and certain esoteric practices and texts, which could help one to understand, in the wider context, how Goethe synthesized his previous literary studies with the teachings of the von Klettenberg circle into a holistic, mythic approach in the *Urfaust*; in the first part of this passage, he describes the medical practices in terms sounding very much like alchemical pursuits:

Da ich mit der Geschwulst am Halse sehr geplagt war, indem Arzt und Chirurgus diese Exkreszenz erst vertreiben, hernach, wie sie sagten, zeitigen wollten, und sie zuletzt aufzuschneiden für gut befanden; so hatte ich eine geraume Zeit mehr an Unbequemlichkeit als an Schmerzen zu leiden, obgleich gegen das Ende der Heilung das immer fortdauernde Betupfen mit Höllenstein und andern ätzenden Dingen höchst verdrießliche Aussichten auf jeden neuen Tag geben mußte. Arzt und Chirurgus gehörten auch unter die abgesonderten Frommen, obgleich beide von höchst verschiedenem Naturell waren. Der Chirurgus, ein schlanker wohlgebildeter Mann von leichter und geschickter Hand, der, leider etwas hektisch, seinen Zustand mit wahrhaft christlicher Geduld ertrug, und sich in seinem Berufe durch sein Übel nicht irre machen ließ. Der Arzt, ein unerklärlicher, schlau blickender, freundlich sprechender, übrigens abstruser Mann, der sich in dem frommen Kreise ein ganz besonderes Zutrauen erworben hatte. Tätig und aufmerksam war er den Kranken tröstlich; *mehr aber als durch alles erweiterte er seine*

Kundschaft durch die Gabe, einige geheimnisvolle selbstbereitete Arzneien im Hintergrunde zu zeigen, von denen niemand sprechen durfte, weil bei uns den Ärzten die eigene Dispensation streng verboten war. Mit gewissen Pulvern, die irgend ein Digestiv sein mochten, tat er nicht so geheim; aber von jenem wichtigen Salze, das nur in den größten Gefahren angewendet werden durfte, war nur unter den Gläubigen die Rede, ob es gleich noch niemand gesehen, oder die Wirkung davon gespürt hatte. Um den Glauben an die Möglichkeit eines solchen Universalmittels zu erregen und zu stärken, hatte der Arzt seinen Patienten, wo er nur einige Empfänglichkeit fand, gewisse mystische chemisch-alchemische Bücher empfohlen, und zu verstehen gegeben, daß man durch eignes Studium derselben gar wohl dahin gelangen könne, jenes Kleinod sich selbst zu erwerben; welches um so notwendiger sei, als die Bereitung sich sowohl aus physischen als besonders aus moralischen Gründen nicht wohl überliefern lasse, ja daß man, um jenes große Werk einzusehen, hervorzubringen und zu benutzen, die Geheimnisse der Natur im Zusammenhang kennen müsse, weil es nichts Einzelnes sondern etwas Universelles sei, und auch wohl gar unter verschiedenen Formen und Gestalten hervorgebracht werden könne. (HA 9:340 line 25 -341 line 27)

In connection with these alchemical practices, there was a certain program of reading, and in this respect, the holistic approach is shown to be tied directly to the works of various alchemical authors listed by Goethe, with none receiving as much attention as Georg von Welling and his *Opus mago-cabbalisticum*, to which Goethe makes reference

to von Klettenberg herself as having “secretly” (“insgeheim”) studied, before he himself took it up:

Meine Freundin hatte auf diese lockenden Worte gehorcht. Das Heil des Körpers war zu nahe mit dem Heil der Seele verwandt; und könnte je eine größere Wohltat, eine größere Barmherzigkeit auch an andern ausgeübt werden, als wenn man sich ein Mittel zu eigen machte, wodurch so manches Leiden gestillt, so manche Gefahr abgelehnt werden könnte? Sie hatte schon insgeheim Wellings »Opus mago-cabbalisticum« studiert, wobei sie jedoch, weil der Autor das Licht, was er mitteilt, sogleich wieder selbst verfinstert und aufhebt, sich nach einem Freunde umsah, der ihr in diesem Wechsel von Licht und Finsternis Gesellschaft leistete. Es bedurfte nur einer geringen Anregung, um auch mir diese Krankheit zu inokulieren. Ich schaffte das Werk an, das, wie alle Schriften dieser Art, seinen Stammbaum in gerader Linie bis zur neuplatonischen Schule verfolgen konnte. Meine vorzüglichste Bemühung an diesem Buche war, die dunklen Hinweisungen, wo der Verfasser von einer Stelle auf die andere deutet und dadurch das, was er verbirgt, zu enthüllen verspricht, aufs genaueste zu bemerken und am Rande die Seitenzahlen solcher sich einander aufklären sollenden Stellen zu bezeichnen. Aber auch so blieb das Buch noch dunkel und unverständlich genug; außer daß man sich zuletzt in eine gewisse Terminologie hineinstudierte, und, indem man mit derselben nach eigenem Belieben gebarte, etwas, wo nicht zu verstehen, doch wenigstens zu sagen glaubte. Gedachtes Werk erwähnt seiner

Vorgänger mit vielen Ehren, und wir wurden daher angeregt, jene Quellen selbst aufzusuchen. Wir wendeten uns nun an die Werke des Theophrastus Paracelsus und Basilius Valentinus; nicht weniger an Helmont, Starkey und andere, deren mehr oder weniger auf Natur und Einbildung beruhende Lehren und Vorschriften wir einzusehen und zu befolgen suchten. Mir wollte besonders die »Aurea Catena Homeri« gefallen, wodurch die Natur, wenn auch vielleicht auf phantastische Weise, in einer schönen Verknüpfung dargestellt wird; und so verwendeten wir teils einzeln, teils zusammen viele Zeit an diese Seltsamkeiten, und brachten die Abende eines langen Winters, während dessen ich die Stube hüten mußte, sehr vergnügt zu, indem wir zu dreien, meine Mutter mit eingeschlossen, uns an diesen Geheimnissen mehr ergetzten, als die Offenbarung derselben hätte tun können. (HA 9: 341 line 27 – 342 line 29)

Here one sees, in the connection between the secret practices of medicine and heretical theology, a basis for Goethe's challenge toward both science and religion in the mythic form of Faust. Goethe's interest in Welling, in particular, has been underappreciated and not closely investigated in its own right. In this respect, one might argue that the most important overlooked or under examined aspect of Goethe's time in the von Klettenberg circle, even, was his reading of Welling.

6 Goethe's use of Welling's *Opus mago-cabbalisticum et theosophicum*

Goethe's approach to this poetic dispute through drama as opposed to rational argument, in which he manipulates the Faust myth far beyond its characterization by Gottsched, owes much to the influence from the "heretical" myth-makers that he was reading at the time that he composed the *Urfaust*. In *Dichtung und Wahrheit* Goethe makes reference to a number of authors that he read during his convalescence in Frankfurt, during which time he associated with the von Klettenberg circle. Among these authors, he specifically cites the work of one, Georg von Welling's *Opus mago-cabbalisticum et theosophicum* (1719, 1729, 1735). Welling's work was originally published in 1719, under the pseudonym Gregorius Anglus Sallwigt. A later, expanded edition appeared in 1735. According to records of Goethe's personal library, he owned a 1760 reprint of the 1735 version (Ruppert 465). Therefore, all quotes from Welling used in this dissertation, unless otherwise stated, will refer back to this edition, archived at archive.org. Also consulted in the course of this research was the 1729 version of the shorter, original text, which I accessed at the Newberry Library in Chicago, Illinois, the title of which is: *Tractatus mago-cabbalistico-chymicus et theosophicus von des Saltzes Uhrsung und Erzeugung, Natur und Nussen : wobey zugleich die Erzeugung derer Metallen, Mineralien und anderer Salien, aus dem Grunde der Natur bewiesen wird ... : alles, nach einem systemate magico Universi, nebst andern in Kupffer getrochenen Problematibus, denen Wahrheit liebenden, zur Einleitung in die allerheiligste Göttliche Geheimnisse, sammt vollständigen Register aufgesetzt / von einem emfigen Liebhaber der ewigen Wahrheit*. This latter text is helpful in that it provides an extensive register of the terms used and their correspondences, one that is far more detailed than the

corresponding register from the 1735 version. This is particularly helpful to the modern reader. In relation to the later text, it comprises the first section of the larger tripartite work, dealing with ‘salt,’ with the two newer sections relating to ‘sulfur’ and ‘mercury.’

Goethe mentions the holistic approach to his convalescence, one that connected the healing of the body with that of the soul, and how he was introduced by von Klettenberg (the “sie” in the following passage refers to her) to Welling:

Sie hatte schon insgeheim Wellings »Opus mago-cabbalisticum« studiert, wobei sie jedoch, weil der Autor das Licht, was er mitteilt, sogleich wieder selbst verfinstert und aufhebt, sich nach einem Freunde umsah, der ihr in diesem Wechsel von Licht und Finsternis Gesellschaft leistete. Es bedurfte nur einer geringen Anregung, um auch mir diese Krankheit zu inokulieren.” (HA 9:341)

In spite of its seeming importance to Goethe at the time, he mentions as well its incomprehensible nature, despite his repeated attempts to work with the text (cited earlier HA 9:342). The debate among scholars regarding the extent and the importance of this influence upon Goethe at this time has tended to follow several main lines of argument, which would appear to take their beginnings from either the first or the second citation above: either Welling’s text was a critical influence for Goethe, given that it was the only text cited by title and author from this period of recuperation in Frankfurt, or it was not, given that he seems to have been frustrated in his many vain attempts to understand it. Those taking the latter view with respect to the work’s direct influence might still argue, for instance, that the work had an influence in terms of stimulating Goethe’s creativity, such as in the case argued by Boyle; those inclined to see the Welling text as a vital

influence, or as an initiation of sorts into one or other alchemical, hermetic, neoplatonic or cabbalistic traditions, argue that it greatly influenced Goethe's work (to varying degrees), such as in Zimmermann and Gray.

With respect to the *Urfaust*, it is necessary to mediate between these two above camps. That is to say, literary creativity was the main effect of the exposure to Welling (in accordance with the view of Boyle), but at the same time, Goethe's interest in Welling was more than passing, and indeed, appears to have been coupled with the poetic approach that I have outlined. This is not merely evident in his own development of a "Luzifer-Mythos," but also in his use of specific terms and imagery for his own version of the Faust myth. It is not possible, however, to follow the lines of argument articulated by those who value Welling's influence on Goethe's thought and writing, but then proceed to locate Goethe within a specific hermetic tradition (à la Zimmermann), an alchemical tradition (à la Gray) or to use Welling as a skeleton key for understanding *Faust I* and *II* (à la Grumach). These attempts ultimately miss the point of Goethe's appropriation of Welling for his own creative purposes and poetic aims.

Furthermore, this mediating approach helps ultimately to clarify Goethe's own statements in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* regarding Welling, which appear contradictory if one adopts either of the aforementioned approaches: the "mainstream" approach generally seeks to minimize or ignore the importance of Welling, which seems odd given that Goethe went out of his way to name this work -- and only this work -- by title and author when discussing the works that he read while convalescing in the von Klettenberg circle; whereas the more esoterically-inclined researchers must account for the fact that Goethe also explicitly states that he found the work as a whole to be incomprehensible.

One is aware of the fact that using terms such as “mainstream” as opposed to “esoteric” could be construed by the reader as indicating a preference or prejudice in favor of one set of commentaries as opposed to the other. This is not the intention of the use of these terms in this study: the “mainstream” view here simply connotes the view of Welling in the most accepted general commentaries (such as the Hamburger-Ausgabe, Münchener-Ausgabe, Deutscher Klassiker Verlag commentary by Schöne), etc., as opposed to the more speculative studies focused on locating Goethe’s Faust within a particular esoteric or philosophical tradition, whether it be hermeticism, alchemy, cabbala, neoplatonism, etc. It should be kept in mind that this dissertation argues not in favor of either position, but in favor of a third position that mediates between the two. If Goethe’s inspiration from Welling can be located in his poetic attempts to create myth, as opposed to trying to fit it within a neoplatonic, hermetic or alchemical cosmogony, his interest at the time of the Klettenberg circle and his willingness decades later to mention Welling in that context in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* come into clearer focus.

6.1 The “Mainstream” Approach to Goethe’s *Urfaust*

Boyle has noted that von Klettenberg’s introduction of these works to Goethe was less an attempt to influence Goethe’s beliefs than to stimulate his literary creativity by means of heterodox ideas. He also hints that this may have a connection to Goethe’s taking up of the Faust myth itself (Boyle 76).

While this supposition is not unreasonable, given the context of Goethe’s having mentioned this work in a passage that describes his influences at the time leading up to his composition of the *Urfaust*, a more careful examination of this possibility is

worthwhile, both as means of understanding Goethe's approach to myth-making in the *Urfaust* and of outlining the possible provenance of some of the specific elements used within his reimagined Faust myth. The influence of Welling has, generally speaking, been reduced to a passing mention in most of important contemporary scholarship and commentary on Faust.

6.1.1 The Schöne Commentary

Schöne's commentary, for example, merely includes Welling in the list of esoteric, alchemical and Neoplatonist writers whose work Goethe consulted at the time, reiterating the names mentioned in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*. In his *Kommentare* regarding both *Faust I* and *Faust: Frühe Fassung*, Schöne refers to the passage naming Welling in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* in his notes regarding "Zeichen des Makrokosmus" reference in line 77 (Schöne commentary volume 214 and 836, respectively), merely naming Welling among those cited by Goethe in that passage. In his notes on the ensuing lines of the *Urfaust*, Schöne not only does not refer to Welling, but in his argument against what he takes to be the overvalued ("übergewertet") influence of Swedenborg by other commentators, maintains that the lines 89-93, beginning with "was der Weise spricht....," refer not to anyone specifically, but to a general neoplatonic and theosophic authority:

Doch die Einflüsse Swedenborgs [...] hat man wohl übergewertet.

Neuplatonische und theosophische Vorstellungen über die Geisterwelt sind Goethe aus vielerlei Quellen zugekommen, und als der Weise (identisch mit Nostradamus in 67?) wird hier offenbar kein bestimmter

ungenannter Autor vorgestellt, sondern eine überpersonale Autorität
imaginiert. (Schöne Kommentar 837, emphasis in original)

This seems a reasonable conclusion on Schöne's part, but it begs the question of why a Welling reference would not have gone amiss here, considering that in the previously referenced statement of Goethe's from *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, it was Welling who provided the entree into the neoplatonic and theosophic sources for Goethe (i.e. Welling's work having provided the impetus for him to seek other sources in the neoplatonic "Stammbaum").

6.1.2 Münchner-Ausgabe Commentary by Gerhard Sauder

Similarly, in the Münchner-Ausgabe commentary on Faust, edited by Gerhard Sauder, Welling is brought up in connection with the "Zeichen des Makrokosmus" line, here referencing the fact that the 1760 version of Welling's work could be found in Goethe's father's library (MA1.2: 752). As opposed to Schöne's general "overpersonal" authority, the Nostradamus reference in line 67 is mentioned by Sauder in connection with a number of specific thinkers from the alchemical/astrological tradition, among them van Helmont, Welling and Swedenborg (MA1.2:751). Additionally, the line from 132/3, in which the Erdgeist addresses Faust, "Du hast mich mächtig angezogen, / An meiner Sphäre lang gesogen" is mentioned in the Münchener-Ausgabe in connection with Welling: "nach Welling der Prozeß des 'steten Atemholens,' der Gestalten und Idee durch die Phantasie hervorbringt" (MA1.2:752).

6.1.3 The Trunz Commentary on *Dichtung und Wahrheit*

In the Trunz commentary found within the Hamburger-Ausgabe (volume 9) edition of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Welling is mentioned numerous times in pages 749-751, 756 and again from 760-764. These references fall into three major categories: 1) a discussion of whether Goethe had Welling's *Opus* in his personal library at the time of *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (749-751, 760), 2) a discussion of relevance of Welling's alchemical terms to those used by the young Goethe in describing the alchemical experiments of his youth (756), and 3) an overview of Welling's cosmogony (761-764). A possible connection to Faust and/or the *Urfaust* is not explored, although a reference to an illustration in Welling is made in connection with Goethe's thought, but this is more to show the exception than the rule, as it is clear that Trunz is writing here with respect to the older Goethe, who had, according to Trunz, long turned away from such things (Trunz commentary in HA 9:761).

6.1.4 Nisbet's "Mainstream" Approach to Welling

In looking, then, at Boyle, Schöne, Sauder and Trunz, one notes a conservative approach, in which Goethe's acknowledgement of Welling is taken more as a fact to be listed than a theme to be explored, although there seems not to be a consensus on how important Welling is, ranging from the most dismissive of Welling's importance (Schöne) to the most open to the possibility of influence (Boyle), with only Trunz actually bothering to outline Welling's specific cosmogony.

In Nisbet's work, one sees Boyle's openness with a nod toward Trunz's overview of Welling's cosmogony. For instance, Nisbet is quite open to the discussion of

neoplatonic influence on Goethe's thought in general, and in his brief but outstanding work from 1972, *Goethe and the Scientific Tradition*, he even begins with a discussion of the neoplatonic tradition before discussing the empirical and rationalistic traditions with respect to Goethe's thought. However, there is no mention of Welling here. Nisbet does, however, in other work, mention in passing Goethe's interest in Welling in connection with the construction of a "speculative cosmogony," but this is more a matter of direct reference to *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, and not a specific argument that he chooses to develop beyond the "orthodox" view of Welling's influence upon Goethe, mentioning Welling while discussing the archetype of Lucifer as a leitmotif in Goethe's work from the *Sturm und Drang* period:

It is plain from this and other similar utterances that Goethe was not an atheist – although he occasionally liked to style himself as such in order to shock the curious or those who tried to convert him. He simply refused to recognize any of the Christian churches, or indeed the Bible itself, as the ultimate authority in religious matters, and when he read Gottfried Arnold's *Kirchen- und Ketzergeschichte* (History of Churches and Heretics, 1699– 1700) during his Pietist phase in Frankfurt, he found himself in sympathy with numerous heretics (HA ix, 350). During his Storm and Stress period, this interest led to a series of plans for dramas and other literary works on such figures as Mohammed, Prometheus, Ahasverus – and, of course, Faust (cf. HA x, 45–8). The archetype of most of these figures was the fallen angel Lucifer, around whose rebellion against God the young Goethe constructed a speculative cosmogony (HA

ix, 351–3), influenced by various hermetic and alchemical works, such as Welling’s *Opus mago-cabbalisticum* (1735), which he read during his convalescence (HA ix, 341–2). (Nisbet 2002 220-221)

While Nisbet’s point appears undoubtedly accurate, it is also, perhaps, too concentrated. Lucifer the rebel angel serves as a good prototypical *Sturm und Drang* rebel, but from the wider standpoint of mythology and the Enlightenment, Goethe is standing Gottsched’s argument on its head. Whereas for Gottsched the Faust myth has lost its use due to its implausibility, in Goethe one sees the freeing effect of the Enlightenment in the face of an increasingly discredited Christian cosmogony. In the wake of the Enlightenment, one is free to re-imagine Lucifer as one would a stock character in a drama, as opposed to a in a world-defining cosmology. This playing with archetype is consistent with the re-imagining of character roles seen in Goethe’s re-appropriation of the stock character types in the *commedia dell’arte*. The Enlightenment has, effectively, disqualified the “truths” associated with past religious imagery, and Goethe seizes upon these images as nothing more than images, just as upon the “masks” of the *commedia dell’arte*, as a means of playing with meaning.

6.2 The Mystical versus the Mythological

There are, of course, a number of works that touch upon Goethe’s interest in Welling, some in great detail, but very few with reference to the *Urfaust*. Some authors attempt to outline Goethe’s own cosmogony via Welling, such as Rotemund (1954), or bring up Welling as part of a narrative of Goethe’s interest in magic, such as Wachsmuth (1943). Many of the more widely-read and referenced studies purporting to demonstrate

Welling's influence upon Goethe focus upon trying to demonstrate, in one way or another, how this influence fits within a specific mystical tradition.

6.2.1 Zimmermann's Work on Goethe and the Hermetic Tradition

One of the better known and scholarly referenced studies that touches upon Goethe's interest in Welling with respect to outlining a mystical approach to interpreting Goethe, is R.C. Zimmermann's monumental study, *Das Weltbild des Jungen Goethe* (1969), which treats the question of Goethe's interest in Welling in some detail, although mostly in terms that do not directly concern this dissertation, by focusing rather upon locating the influences upon the young Goethe as part of a decidedly Hermetic program of study. In particular, Zimmermann sees in the mention by Goethe of texts such as Welling's and also the "Aurea Catena Homeri" evidence of the direct influence of Rosicrucianism upon Goethe via his doctor Metz, who is assumed to have provided the texts in question to Klettenberg, and who is assumed to have been more a proponent and practitioner of Rosicrucianism than admitted by Goethe, ultimately connected to the circle around the Swabian Hermeticist Friedrich Christoph Oetinger. (see especially Zimmermann 180-2, also 196, 202). This dissertation is not meant as an endorsement or criticism of Zimmermann's work, the thrust of which is concerned with an altogether different issue. This work is rather focussed upon how Goethe used the influences involved in the formation of the *Urfaust* as a means of fashioning his own, original, take on the Faust myth, in a response to the poetic debates of the eighteenth century. In this respect, while I find Zimmermann's forensic analysis and attempt at tracing the Rosicrucian lineage of Goethe's involvement with and possible influence by Welling to

be, if somewhat speculative, provocatively interesting, my own examination of Goethe's appropriation of themes and elements from Welling will be decidedly less esoteric in nature, and, in contrast to scholarship in general on this question, will involve a much more text-immanent examination of passages from the wider Welling work itself.

6.2.2 Gray's Study on Goethe and Alchemy

Other scholars attempt to establish yet other mystical connections via Welling to Goethe's wider work in general. Of these, one of the most notable is Ronald Gray, whose work *Goethe, the Alchemist: A Study of Alchemical Symbolism in Goethe's Literary and Scientific Works* (1952) has the following stated purpose:

This book sets out to show that Goethe was profoundly influenced throughout his life by the religious and philosophical beliefs he derived from his early study of alchemy. Alchemy can be interpreted in many ways. [...] As Goethe knew it, it was primarily concerned with mysticism. In his hands, however, it underwent some transformation: the mystical aspect became less important, while he attempted to provide more logical, more scientific evidence of the symbolical truth of alchemy. (Gray ix)

Although Goethe transformed the mystical approach into something different, Gray's effort to project a wider and persistent esoteric viewpoint overlooks the ways in which Welling appears transformed in mythological terms in the *Urfaust*.

Gray, for instance, focuses upon Welling as being part of the wider tradition of alchemy from which Goethe was reading:

As far as precise titles are concerned, we are in fact restricted to the *Opus Mago-Cabbalisticum* and the *Aurea Catena Homeri*, together with a few chapters of Paracelsus mentioned by name in the Strasbourg notebook. It must be recalled however that the alchemists were not a set of philosophers each with his own system. All felt themselves part of a tradition, and while each might expound the common doctrine in an individual way there was general agreement as to the fundamental tenets. In all his wide reading Goethe can have found only an elaboration of the basic doctrines. (Gray 7-8)

While it is quite reasonable in many ways to assume this is the case, one sees in the assumptions made by Gray a certain point of view that prevents further study specifically of how there could be a singular influence of Welling upon Goethe in the composition of the *Urfaust*. If one is to look not at systems or mystical doctrines, but rather, at the specific use of images or motifs present in Goethe from any of these authors, it can (and will) be seen that there are specific references in Goethe's *Urfaust* that appear to have their origin in Welling's text, not as part of a transformed system, but as a borrowing of elements from that system for use in a mythological construct. Therefore, to focus upon Welling's system, as Gray does, is to miss the point of its immediate influence upon the young Goethe in his composition (see Gray 19-25, 43).

6.3 Welling and the *Erdgeist*

Without going into great detail, it should be noted that of those who have sought a direct textual connection between Welling and *Urfaust*, such a connection has been

essentially limited to a discussion of Lucifer and the *Erdgeist*. While this line of argument was opened by Ernst Grumach (1953), it was done in the wider context of a study of the development of the Faust plan of 1797. For a succinct, if dismissive treatment of Grumach's that the *Erdgeist* invocation scene can be seen as linked to Welling's cabalistic system, see Mason (1967 168-170, 272). Another modern work that seems to rely heavily upon Grumach with respect to the possible influence of Welling on Goethe is Nollendorfs (1967).

In recent years, there is one study by Sinziana Ravini (2008) that takes Welling's cosmology into account as a possible influence on Goethe from a mythological point of view, and indeed, even mentions its influence on the *Urfaust* in this connection. In the course of this work, there are three pages devoted specifically to the question of "Kosmologie im *Urfaust*" that bear direct relevance to this question. Ravini goes beyond previous scholarship by briefly exploring the question of how the conception of Goethe's *Erdgeist* in the *Urfaust* might be related to Welling's Luftgeister. Of note here is the following observation, "Der Erdgeist kann in „Tatensturm“, „Geburt und Grab“, „Erden Weh und Glück“ auf Wellings Luftgeister zurückgeführt worden" (Ravini 58). After quoting from Welling in support of this statement, Ravini offers the following observations:

In keiner von Goethes Quellen findet man diese unterschiedlichen Wesenszüge in einer Gestalt vereinigt. Wellings Luftgeister haben nicht eine so herausragende Rolle wie Goethes Erdgeist. Zumal sie sich ausschließlich in der Luft befinden. Demgegenüber kann sich der Erdgeist sowohl auf der Erde als auch in der Luft aufhalten. Dessen ungeachtet

darf man Welling als Quelle nicht vernachlässigen. Denn nicht nur einzelne Teile, sondern auch das ganze kosmologische System im *Urfaust* lassen sich ausgehend von Wellings Werk beleuchten. (Ravini 59)

The relevant quote from Welling that precedes this remark is the following:

Dann wahrhaftig ist die Luft die grosse Zeugemutter, worinnen empfangen und aufbehalten werden, alles Thun und Würcken der Menschen [...]. Liebe und Hass, je alle anderen Bewegungen der Seele, werden in uns also gehoren, und was noch mehr ist, so ist keine Zeugung der vernünftigen oder unvernünftigen, vegetabilischen, thierischen oder mineralischen Geschöpfen, so nicht in diesem grossen Welt-Geiste, der Luft, auch geistlicher Weise, wesentlich gezeugt werden. (Welling as quoted in Ravini 59; cf Welling 116f)

In spite of the far-reaching implications of Ravini's final assertion in this remark regarding the cosmological system in the *Urfaust*, Ravini admits that Goethe did not include a "Luciferszene" in the *Urfaust*, arguing in this respect that:

Die Kosmologie bleibt deswegen zum Teil verhüllt. Wenn Goethe *Faust* zur Zeit seiner alchemistischen Untersuchungen geschrieben hätte, wäre seine Auffassung ganz im Rahmen des wellingschen Weltbildes geblieben. Die Niederschrift entsteht jedoch später, nachdem Goethe bereits eine andere kosmologische Grundauffassung noch nicht vollständig entwickelt hat, als er den *Urfaust* verfasst. (Ravini 59)

This argument, when connected with the first mentioned above, is suggestive of the need for a more in-depth analysis of Welling's cosmogony, in order to see if further points of

correspondence and/or influence Welling on Goethe's *Urfaust*, do, indeed, exist. The idea that the Erdgeist could relate to Welling in such a way as to none of the other sources consulted by Goethe at the time is highly suggestive, although as Ravini notes, there is no Luciferszene *per se* in the *Urfaust*. Ravini's further point about the lack of a fully-developed cosmogony on Goethe's part at the time of the composition of the *Urfaust* is also a very salient one, and, it would seem, tends to support the idea of a mythical, rather than mystical, interpretation of the influence of Welling on Goethe.

6.4 Welling and Goethe's Myth-Making

Following a brief overview of Welling's cosmogony, this examination will proceed in two parts. First, it is relevant to analyze the Lucifer myth as it is constructed in Welling. Doing so is decidedly not to establish a one-to-one correspondence between Welling and Goethe's own "Luzifer-Mythos," and furthermore, *not* to pursue the line of argumentation of others such as Grumach, Ravini, et al with respect to showing a link between Welling's Lucifer myth and the *Erdgeist* but rather to show Welling as (possibly the chief) inspiration for Goethe on the issue of manipulating and creating myth. Second, various elements of Welling's text may serve as possible starting points for the treatment of similar elements in the *Urfaust*, showing the likelihood that Goethe's appropriation of Welling's approach to myth manipulation extended as well to his use of mythic elements found in Welling's cosmogony.

6.4.1 The Approach to Welling's Opus

A comprehensive analysis of Welling's work would be beyond the scope of this work. Perhaps the best work available at helping the reader to understand the basics of Welling's thought is Petra Jungmayr's *Georg von Welling (1655-1727): Studien zu Leben und Werk* (1990), which contains biographical data, an overview and description of the contents of the *Opus*, a description of Welling's view of chemistry and metallurgy, and also a section regarding the reception of his ideas. Goethe's reception of Welling is mentioned, but not analyzed, in the context of Goethe's remarks in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* in connection with his readings during his convalescence (Jungmayr 88, 92-94 and 116). The essential question is not whether Goethe was a follower of Welling, or whether his ideas in the *Urfaust* corresponded precisely with those of Welling. The point here is rather to show the context in which Welling's use of various terms and images is to be understood, so that one can ultimately better understand how it was that Goethe 1) borrowed aspects of Welling's cosmogony and 2) appropriated them for his own mythology.

6.4.2 The Structure of Welling's Work and his Challenge to Orthodoxy

Welling's work is separated into three main sections, with each section being based upon the discussion of one of the three alchemical primes as found in the work of Paracelsus, namely, salt, sulfur and mercury. The theosophical content of the work is succinctly described by Petra Jungmayr as follows: "Vereinfacht gesagt, beschreibt Welling den göttlichen, geistigen Anfang aller Dinge, ihr Absinken in einem materiellen, irdischen Zustand sowie schließlich ihre Rückkehr zum Ursprung" (Jungmayr 32).

Welling's explanation of Christian theology is unapologetically unorthodox, his invocation of the work of Gottfried Arnold helps explain the appeal that the work would have held in the Pietist circles in which Goethe found himself in the 1769 period. Indeed, Welling argues that a reader unfamiliar with Arnold's work would be unable to understand his own:

[...] dasselbe gleichnam ein Schlüssel unsers ganzen Wercks seyn möge. Wobey jedoch zu erinnern, daß dem Leser die Kirchen=Historie wohl bekannt seyn, oder die Kirchen= und Kerzer=Historie Gottfried Arnolds, it. dessen Abbildung der ersten Christen, oder andere dergleichen glaubwürdige Historien bey der Hand haben müsse, sonst ihm sehr vieles unverständlich vorkommen wird, indeme Weitläufigkeit zu vermeiden, wir hiervon wenig oder gar nichts angeführt haben, damit es nicht zugleich eine Kirchen=Historie geworden wäre, sich zu unserm Zweck nicht geschickt haben würde. (Welling 289)

Here it is worth recalling Goethe's enthusiasm for Arnold's work, as noted in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*:

Einen großen Einfluß erfuhr ich dabei von einem wichtigen Buche, das mir in die Hände geriet, es war Arnolds »Kirchen- und Ketzergeschichte«. Dieser Mann ist nicht ein bloß reflektierender Historiker, sondern zugleich fromm und fühlend. Seine Gesinnungen stimmten sehr zu den meinigen, und was mich an seinem Werk besonders ergetzte, war, daß ich von manchen Ketzern, die man mir bisher als toll oder gottlos vorgestellt hatte, einen vorteilhaftern Begriff erhielt. Der Geist des Widerspruchs und die

Lust zum Paradoxen steckt in uns allen. Ich studierte fleißig die verschiedenen Meinungen, und da ich oft genug hatte sagen hören, jeder Mensch habe am Ende doch seine eigene Religion, so kam mir nichts natürlicher vor, als daß ich mir auch meine eigene bilden könne, und dieses tat ich mit vieler Behaglichkeit. Der neue Platonismus lag zum Grunde; das Hermetische, Mystische, Kabbalistische gab auch seinen Beitrag her, und so erbaute ich mir eine Welt, die seltsam genug aussah. (HA 9: 350; lines 22-39).

Welling not only endorses the Pietist Arnold, but also takes aim at orthodox religious scholars in scathing terms in the passage that follows this endorsement:

[...] daran zweifelt kein wahrer Theologus. Daß aber von so viel treflichen Männern in ihren herausgegebenen Auslegungen über diese Heil. Offenbarung so schrecklich gefehlet worden, darüber hätte man sich billig zu verwundern, daferne man nicht eigentlich einsiehet, theils derselben Eifer, in ihrer eingebildeten Religion, theils ihre Vorurththeile, zum Theil auch, daß man sich in Eigendünckel selbst zu viel geheuchelt oder sonst die Eintheilung dieser herrlichen Offenbarung nicht recht betrachtet, und sonderlich auch, daß man in allen Secten, (Religionen, wie man sie nennet,) wegen der 1000. Jahre Apoc. XX. so widrige Meynungen heget, und diejenige, denen der Geist Gottes hierinnen einige Erleuchtung mitgetheilet, als böse Erzkezer (sic) bis auf diesen Tag vefolget hat, weiln diese Lehre den guten Leuten wider ihre regelmässige Religions=Formula zu straiten schiene. (Welling 289-290)

Welling's open challenge to the accepted interpretation of scripture, given at this point in the work, should not surprise the reader, given the highly unorthodox creation myth already espoused by Welling in the opening section, "Vom Salz," but here one reads not merely a pointed attack against accepted teachings, but also a defense of the rights of the "heretic" to defy the purveyors of existing cultural myths, one that calls to mind Faust's mention of these same persecuted heretics in his discussion with Wagner:

Wer darf das Kind beim rechten Namen nennen?

Die wenigen, die was davon erkannt,

Die töricht g'nug ihr volles Herz nicht wahrten,

Dem Pöbel ihr Gefühl, ihr Schauen offenbarten,

Hat man von je gekreuzigt und verbrannt. (HA 3:373; lines 236-240)

Welling's comment may also be read as a challenge to the reader, given the general style and tone of the book, described quite well by Jungmayr: "Seine Hinweise für den Leser, auch die Einteilung der Textmasse in Paragraphen und die häufige direkte Anrede des Lesers dürften die Ansicht entkräften, bei dem 'Opus' handle es sich um ein privates Andachtsbuch" (Jungmayr 33).

Indeed, at the start of the fifth chapter of his "Vom Mercurio" section, Welling makes it clear that he expects censure from the religious authorities (the orthodox "Ketzermacher"), and openly denounces them:

Nun schreiten wir im Namen GOTTES zu einer Sache, durch wir ohne Zweifel in die Censur der Hn. Orthodoxen verfallen warden. Dann weilen viele solcher gelehrten Herren in den Gedancken stehen, sie seyen allein berechtigt, und geschickt, von Theologischen Dingen zu lehren und

zuschreiben, und daß die Priester im Gesez (sic) nicht irren könnten; So packen die diejenige, so nicht aus ihrer Zuft sind, sogleich an, wann sie sich nur blicken lassen, von dergleichen Dingen zu handeln, und da wird dann alles von ihnen zum argsten durch gezogen, getadelt, gerichtet und geurtheilet, was sich nicht gar eben nach ihren Maaß=Stab messen lässet; Und wann sie auch wohl selbst nichts darinnen finden können, welches sie als irrig und böse erklären können, so ist es ihnen doch gemeiniglich schon genug, die Sache zu verwerffen, wann nur der Autor nicht aus ihrem Orden, und nicht gleich ihnen recht regelmäßig auf denen hohen Schulen die Kunst gelernet, und allda von der Theologia reden und schreiben zu dürfen, privilegirt worden ist. Alleine, weil aber doch sowohl Christus der HERR selbst als auch seine Jünger nicht aus dem Orden der Priester und Schriftgelehrten waren, und die wahren Lehrer und Jünger JESU Christi nicht sowohl auf den hohen Schulen der Welt, als in der Schule Christi und seines Heiligen Geistes gelehret werden müssen; So wird dann auch kein rechtschaffener erleuchteter Theologus die thörigte und recht abgöttliche Einbildung der orthodoxischen Ketzermacher billigen, und versehen wir uns auch vonsolchen ein vernünftiges und Christi Regeln gemässes Urtheil, der anderen Schmächen und Tadeln aber wird uns wenig bekümmern; Schreiten also zu unserm Vorhaben. (Welling 444)

This passage calls to mind not merely the limits on book-learning and knowledge spoken of by Faust to Wagner, but also the “leider auch Theologie” remark by Faust in the opening Nacht scene:

FAUST. Hab nun, ach, die Philosophie,
Medizin und Juristerei, /
Und leider auch die Theologie /
Durchaus studiert mit heißer Müh.
Da steh ich nun, ich armer Tor, /
Und bin so klug, als wie zuvor. (HA 3:367)

Furthermore, the disdainful view of the scholars of theology here is very much in line with the depiction of the scholar by Mephisto in *Faust*, whose advocacy of “logic” takes precedence over the “cross”:

MEPHISTOPHELES.
Ihr seid da auf der rechten Spur,
Doch müßt Ihr Euch nicht zerstreuen lassen.
Mein teurer Freund, ich rat Euch drum,
Zuerst Collegium Logicum.
Da wird der Geist Euch wohl dressiert,
In Spansche Stiefeln eingeschnürt,
Daß er bedächtger so fortan
Hinschleiche die Gedankenbahn,
Und nicht etwa die Kreuz und Quer
Irrlichteliere den Weg daher. (HA 3:376)

Welling’s denunciation of these scholars is accompanied by his conviction that true theology is not that which is taught by these same “heretic-making” theologians, but that which comes through the holy spirit, and is, therefore, without limitation or rule:

Weilen wir nun unsere Theologie nicht auf Schulen, das ist, von Menschen, sondern von dem Heiligen Geist gelernet haben, so werden uns die Herrn Ketzermacher auch entschuldigen, daß wir allhier nicht reden, wie sie Apoc. XIII.II und nicht ihren zusammen gekünstelten Lehrätzen, sondern dem Geist der Wahrheit, welcher an keine Regeln gebunden, folgen. (Welling 271)

Such a juxtaposition again shows the sort of appeal that Welling may have had to Goethe at the time that he was composing the *Urfaust*, as a myth that fought rules and limits on knowledge and form. Welling's challenge to orthodoxy lends itself to the disposition of the Sturm und Drang, and here, to the beginning point of Goethe's original Faust draft, not in terms of a ready set collection of beliefs, but in terms of the radical opposition to orthodoxy. Welling's importance here is not his cosmogony itself, but his rejection of orthodox learning and belief.

In this respect, the Lucifer myth of Welling is relevant, not from the standpoint of its correspondence to any content in Goethe's own "Luzifer-Mythos" in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, but from the standpoint of how its motifs are reflected in the disposition of Goethe's *Urfaust* mythology (here one might see Rotermund 1954).

For our purposes, perhaps the most important of the three sections of Welling's work is the first (and original) section, in which Welling gives the outline of this alternative Christian creation. In particular, the so-called Lucifer myth, with its corresponding explanation of the individuation of matter and relationship to light and darkness, is relevant to the discussion of Goethe's own "Luzifer-Mythos."

6.5 The Importance of Welling's "Luzifer-Mythos" for Goethe

Indeed, in looking first at the Lucifer myth in Welling's work, it is important to understand that this myth functions as part of a larger cosmogony being offered in the work as a whole. The "Luzifer-Mythos" described in Goethe's *Dichtung und Wahrheit* does not have this same relationship to the reworking of his Faust myth: rather than an essential element of the story, the "Luzifer-Mythos" serves as more of an example of Goethe's approach to mythology itself, as a poetic argument, as discussed in previous sections in this dissertation.

The core of the Lucifer myth in Welling's work is in the first book of his tripartite work, the original treatise on salt, dating back to 1719. Early on in this work, Lucifer's role in Welling's cosmogony reflects that which is beyond human comprehension, and thus, shrouded in a divine mystery:

Denn da der Allmächtige den Lucifer und alle seine Heerscharen geschaffen, und ihm dieses grosse Universum nemlich dieses unser Sonnen=Systema zu beherrschen eingegeben, und ihm in freyen Willen darstellte, daß er seiner glorwürdigen Majestät mit ganz freyem, in GOTT versenckten Willen dienen solte, ohne all Nöthigung und Zwang, hat sich der Lucifer in seiner sogrossen Macht und Herrlichkeit, gleich als in einem Spiegel, vergaft, und sich dem schuldigen Gehorsam entzogen, und also wider die Göttliche Macht und Herrlichkeit gesetzt/gesesst (?), darum denn der Allmächtige GOTT die Trennung vornehmen müssen, davon in der Folge ein mehrers, so viel uns GOTTES Geist verleyen wird, geredet werden solle: diese müssen wir allhier nur noch erinnern, daß der menschlichen

Creatur in diesem sterblichen Leibe, diese Geheimnisse zu begreifen, sonderlich auch, die da vor seinem Anfange geschehen, darunter die Schöpfung, und der Fall Lucifers, nicht der geringsten eines, ein ganz nichtiges Unterfangen (sic?) ist, sondern werden versiegelt bleiben, bis auf dis ganzliche Offenbarung Göttlicher Majestät, und bleibt uns also ganz unbegreiflich, warum er den Hochmuth und Ungehorsam, als das wahre wesentliche Böse, nicht gehindert, sondern zugelassen. (Welling 60)

This passage appears to reflect an aspect of Welling's work that Goethe found noteworthy, when one considers the following from *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, which immediately follows the earlier-cited passage from the same work, related to Goethe's introduction to Welling via Klettenberg.

Ich schaffte das Werk an, das, wie alle Schriften dieser Art, seinen Stammbaum in gerader Linie bis zur neuplatonischen Schule verfolgen konnte. Meine vorzüglichste Bemühung an diesem Buche war, die dunklen Hinweisungen, wo der Verfasser von einer Stelle auf die andere deutet und dadurch das, was er verbirgt, zu enthüllen verspricht, aufs genauste zu bemerken und am Rande die Seitenzahlen solcher sich einander aufklären sollenden Stellen zu bezeichnen. Aber auch so blieb das Buch noch dunkel und unverständlich genug; außer daß man sich zuletzt in eine gewisse Terminologie hineinstudierte, und, indem man mit derselben nach eigenem Belieben gebarte, etwas, wo nicht zu verstehen, doch wenigstens zu sagen glaubte. (HA 9:342, emphasis added here)

From Goethe's description of the work, it is the impenetrability of the work itself that seems to have, in some sense, compelled him to study it, not so much from the standpoint of an intellectual challenge to master the knowledge within it, but because it seemed to reflect, at least from the outside, a hidden and self-contained store of wisdom, something unattainable through rational argumentation but only to be understood through experience and immersion into this new mythology (whether in an initiatory sense, as Zimmermann seems to think, or otherwise). From the standpoint of the poetic debates of the eighteenth century, one might say that Goethe saw in this the possibility of other worlds for poetic construction based on mythologies lying outside of the dominant cosmology of the culture -- the very basis from which he would construct his own "Luzifer-Mythos," Faust conception, etc.

The essential question here is not the content of the Lucifer myth in Welling, nor is it particularly important to locate Goethe within any particular esoteric tradition, but rather, the explanation of originality, as Goethe himself avers that he found the content difficult to understand. It is more a question of perspective that is of concern here, namely, that Welling inspired the young Goethe with the vision of creating his own mythology.

6.5.1 Inscrutability as an Element in Goethe's Myth-Making in the *Urfaust*

On a more concrete level, one sees already in Goethe's dramatic adaptation in the *Urfaust* a nod toward the inscrutable and secret wisdom that he found appealing in Welling, whether it be the *Erdgeist's* admonition to Faust that Faust could not actually

conceive of the *Erdgeist*'s nature ("Du gleichst dem Geist, den du begreifst, / Nicht mir!") or in Faust's challenge to Wagner's comments about the progress of wisdom:

"O ja, bis an die Sterne weit! /
Mein Freund, die Zeiten der Vergangenheit /
Sind uns ein Buch mit sieben Siegeln.
Was ihr den Geist der Zeiten heißt, /
Das ist im Grund der Herren eigener Geist, /
In dem die Zeiten sich bespiegeln. /
Da ist's denn wahrlich oft ein Jammer! (HA 3 : 371, 373).

The same limits to knowledge and understanding are present in two other aspects of Welling's cosmogony and Lucifer myth, namely 1) description of the fall in terms of the light / divine essence, related to Genesis, and 2) the relationship of divine essence to matter in individuation. Each of these aspects is related to motifs of darkness and light.

6.5.2 Welling's Description of the Fall of Lucifer

In the first case, lightness and dark are both aspects of the essential substratum of the universe in Welling's cosmogony, *Schamajim*, as well as related to the limits of human understanding/knowledge in the absence of divine guidance:

Und weil nun das Licht, so da seinen andern Ursprung, als in GOtt hat,
in ihme und allen seinen Anhang nicht mehr gespühret ward, war in
diesem grossen Raum nichts, als eine erschrecklicje Finsterniß: nemlich
das Wesen, woraus der Raum und die Kreyse, so dieser Lucifer innen
hatte, die da waren seine Schamajim, das ist, ein feuriges Licht=Wasser,

ode wässriges Licht=Feuer, ward gleichsam zu einer greiflichen und materialischen Finsterniß, in welcher der Lucifer, der nunmehr Satanas, das ist, ein Widersacher, geworden war, mit allen seinen Millionen des Göttlichen Lichts ermangelnde, in abscheulicher finstern Feuers=Gestalt rasete und tobete. Diese Finsterniß nennet der heilige Text Gen. I.v.2 Erden, nemlich diese ganze Universum, weilen diejenige Schamajim, in welcher der Lucifer in seiner Herrlichkeit gewohnt, nunmehr eine tief finster greiflich Wesen geworden waren, daher der Text sagt: Die Erde aber war öde und leer, (eine verwirrete wüste Ungestalt,) und es war finster oben auf dem Abgrunde, (weil dieses ganze Universum greiflich, finster, dicke, undurchsichtig,) und der Geist GOTTes schwebte oben über dem Gewässer. Dieser Vers ist in Wahrheit so voller Geheimnissen der Schöpfung, daß er ohne das Licht Göttlicher Gnade ganz und gar nicht begriffen werden mag. (Welling 103-104)

In Welling's mythological conception of the universe, lightness and dark are aspects of one and the same essence, of the same whole, within which any individual differentiation implies not an essential or physical separation, but a different perspective. This essence, here referred to as *Schamajim*, is fundamental to understanding creation itself, as the mysterious substance that binds together all creation.

6.5.3 The Process of Individuation in Welling's Cosmogony

In the process of individuation, the opposition of light and dark is, for Welling, the principle by which the individual being is intrinsically limited upon creation through

its mortal nature by divine rule as a consequence of the fall of Lucifer (and the ensuing fall of man):

[...] weilen GOtt der Allmächtige durch den Fluch, alle ertzgeschaffene Simplicität und Reinigkeit in jeder Creatur hinein gekehret, das ist, das Lichtwesen in ihnen concentrirt, und mit finsterer Greiflichkeit umgeschlossen, auch zugleich in aller Creatur dieses Erd=Kreyses einen Gafs, Jährung oder Ferment, durch die erweckte geistliche auch materialistische Widerwärtigkeit des Lichts und der Finsterniß, der Hitze und der Kälte, der Nässe und der Erdekene, erwecket, der nunmehr in der ganzen Natur stets geschäftig und im Würcken ist, bis er alle gemischte Körper wieder in ihre erstere materialische Anfänge refoolviret, welches dann heisset, die Absterbung, der Tod und Verfaulung, wodurch alles irrdische und verdammliche, der durch den Fluch in die Finsterniß gefallenen Welt, gänzlich wiederum zerstöret werde, auf daß alles Geschöpfe in seinem ersten Lichtwesen (worinn es vor dem Fluch gestanden) wiederum hervor kame [...] (Welling 149)

Here the important thing to note is that although creation comes from God, in Welling's cosmogony, the process of individuation within creation is a consequence of the fall of Lucifer. The significance of myth, as well as of the description of *Schamajim*, for the young Goethe becomes clearer if one turns to the words of Mephistopheles in the *Urfaust*.

6.5.4 Welling's Cosmogony in the Motifs Used in the *Urfaust*

A similar neoplatonic understanding of the relationship of all beings through essence is manipulated by the Mephistopheles character in the *Urfaust*, who mocks the Student by arguing that what passes for knowledge is insufficient, because the individual thing can only be understood insofar as it is cut off from the essential aspect of its being:

Wer will was Lebigs erkennen und beschreiben, /

Muß erst den Geist heraußer treiben, /

Dann hat er die Teil' in seiner Hand, /

Fehlt leider nur das geistlich Band. /

Encheiresin naturae nennt's die Chimie! (HA 3: 376-377)

This passage is notable for a number of reasons. First of all, it places in the mouth of the devil a succinct description of both the living essence of all things, the divine essence or “das geistliche Band,” similar to the Schamajim described by Welling, and also points to an understanding of individual objects as being, by necessity, cut off from this essence. If this were the only similarity between language of the *Urfaust* and the motifs of Welling's cosmogony in this respect, the connection might be tenuous at best, for there were other sources of neoplatonic tradition available to the Goethe (cited previously in his comments in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*). However, when discussing such interconnectedness of all Being through divine substance, Welling also makes use of a particular metaphor that is of striking importance to the reader of the *Urfaust*: that of weaving. There are many passages in the *Urfaust* that make reference to “weaving” (*Weben*). Of particular interest, in the ironic description of reality by Mephisto in his sarcastic remarks to the student, which directly precedes the discussion of “das geistliche

Band,” the image of the weaving (*weben*) is invoked to describe the interconnectedness of all creation:

Zwar ist's mit der Gedankenfabrik /
Wie mit einem Webermeisterstück, /
Wo ein Tritt tausend Fäden regt, /
Die Schifflein 'rüber hinüber schießen, /
Die Fäden ungesehen fließen, /
Ein Schlag tausend Verbindungen schlägt.
Der Philosoph, der tritt herein /
Und beweist Euch, es müßt so sein.
Das Erst wär so, das Zweite so /
Und drum das Dritt und Vierte so.
Und wenn das Erst und Zweit nicht wär, /
Das Dritt und Viert wär nimmermehr.
Das preisen die Schüler allerorten,
Sind aber keine Weber worden. (HA3:376-377 lines 353-366)




Here, in order to avoid confusion, it is important to note that while Mephisto is using irony in his attempt to confuse the student, the weaving metaphor is ultimately being employed to undermine the rational, scholarly attempts at knowledge and learning. In Mephisto's language, one who knows understands things in their essence is a “weaver,” that is, one who understands the interconnectedness of all things in terms of the living essence or “das geistlich[e] Band” that is represented as a “Webmeisterstück” graspable by only holistic thought, metaphorically represented as “Gedankenfabrik.”

One notes that in the first part of Welling's work, "Vom Salz," a recurring metaphor used in discussing the alchemist's understanding of the essence of various metals is that of the "weave" or texture (Webung) of the metals. The term "Webung" is used repeatedly. In Book I, Section 21, immediately prior to his first use of this term, Welling makes clear that the context in which he is talking concerns understanding the metals in their essence as determined by God:

Von den Metallen, wie auch Mineralien und allen andern Corpora, müssen wir auch noch dieses zuvor aus gar sonderbaren Ursachen sagen, daß sie nahe ihrem Wesen von dem Allmächtigen Gott also specificirte Körper, und zudem vorbescheidenen harmonischen Zweck der Haushaltung dieser ganzen Welt kommen sind, wie sonderlich in dem 16. § zu sehen, und auch folgend noch erwiesen werden wird. (Welling 21)

When speaking of the composition of metals in Section 22, Welling speaks not of an atomic understanding of metals, but rather of handling metals and understanding them in their essence (e.g. core primes such as salt, sulfur and mercury, etc.), and here specifically with the metaphor of a weaver handling different types of thread:

Von der Webung der Metallen, müssen wir auch noch, ehe wir weiter gehen, ein wenig reden, und dieselbe in etwas erklären, dann an diesem Beweiß und Erkenntniß nicht wenig gelegen, und soll uns hierzu die Mechanica dienen, sehen also erstlich in allen Handwercken, die das leinenes, seidene, wollene und häcene Zeuge weben, daß je langfäsichter und zärter diese Fäselein oder Fädemges sind, die sie weben wollen, he tüchtiger und stärcker ihr Werck wird, auch die gar zu kurzhaarige Wolle,

Seide zu nichts als groben Silke dienet, Zum zweyten sehen wir bey denen Papiermachern, daß wann sie ihre Lappem sortiret haben, und jede Sorte unter den Stempeln arbeiten, damit sie zart und flockigt wie eine Pflaumfeder werden, und ihnen ferner das rechte Leim=Wasser geben, so bekommen sie nach jeder Sorte ein gutes und tüchtiges Papier; da sie die Lappen aber gar zu starck arbeiten, daß die Fäderlein sich gar zertheilen, und unter den Stempeln gar zerreißen, und sich zu kleinen kügelchen arbeiten, gleich einen durchs Feuer aufgetriebenen , so wird es ein brüchiges und nichtsnutzendes Papier. Gleiche Bewandniß hat es auch mit denen Metallen und Mineralien; dann gleich wie bey den Papiermachern und Silkwürcken die Lappen und Wolle mit Wasser gearbeitet, und mit dem Leim=Wasser zur Festigkeit gebracht werden, also werden der rothe und weisse  der Metallen durch das hieuten zum erstenmale körperlich ausgewürckte zärtere Salz, (so ihnen in ihrer Webung anstatt des Wassers dienet,) zu fast gleichen metallischen Fäden, in ihrer eignen Art und Specie ausgewürcket, da je eines gröber als das andere, wie uns die Mechanica klärlich vor Augen leget, sonderlich bey dem Schmiede= und Dratzieher=Handwercke, dann je besser die zwey  ra in den Metallen ausgewürcket worden, je besser und beständiger sie sich arbeiten und ausdehnenfassen, so wir sonderlich und unwidersprechlich an dem Gold und Silber, sowohol an ihren sehr dünnen

und zarten Blättern, als auch verguldeten und solibern Drat zu sehen haben. (Welling 21-22)

Such an description, using symbolic reference to alchemical primes along with the term “*Webung*” as a metaphor for the essential interconnectedness of all things, is particularly striking in the context of Goethe’s *Urfaust*, given that the term “*Webung*” is a rather peculiar one, used by Welling, without much of a history in the German language in such a context.¹

The similarity of the context and usage of the term *weben* in Goethe’s *Urfaust* to Welling’s *Webung* is unmistakable. Of further significance in this context is the fact that the essences contained in Welling’s “*Webung*” are *living* essences that bind the metals in their forms, much like the notion of “das geistliche Band” mentioned by Mephisto:

¹ According to the *Deutsches Wörterbuch* of Jakob und Wilhelm Grimm, the history of this term falls into two general categories: WEBUNG, f.: textura, webunge Diefenbach gl. 582b; nrhein. wevinge, textura, textus Teuthonista 497a Verdam; webung Calepinus XI ling. 1462a (auch von Stieler, Steinbach, Campe angeführt). litterarisch nicht häufig: erdencken alle wollin gemechte und dero webung N. v. Wyle translationen 396 Keller; daselbst wiesz man mir ... einen mit güldenen sternen besäeten purper-rock ... diese webung aber soll zu Alexandria aufkommen seyn v. Lohenstein Arminius 2, 188; kleine löcher in der leinwand ... so bei webung dessen ... verursacht werden Amaranthes 117. übertragen: die frevelhafte fädelung und webung des dunkeln handels Arndt nothgedr. bericht 86. WEBUNG, f. zu weben 'sich hin und her bewegen': die webung, das weben, das gewebe, vigor, vegetatio, viriditas, motus, motio ... excitatio, impulsus Stieler 2448; denn was ist diese webung anderst anzusehen denn ein creutzmachung? Wicel annotationes (1536) 77b. zu weben vom opfer: darauff alsz bald nach geschehener erhebung und webung dieser ehrengabe, die geistliche erndte in der welt angehen solte Pomarius grosze postilla (1590) 1, 413b. zu weben 'wehen': (holz wird in brand gesetzt durch anhauchen, wind und) webung Alemannia 11, 203 (Straszburg 1658). (Grimm web citation) For the first definition, see: <http://www.woerterbuchnetz.de/DWB?lemma=webung>, also <http://www.woerterbuchnetz.de/DWB?bookref=27,2676,15>. For the second, see <http://www.woerterbuchnetz.de/DWB?lemma=webung>, also <http://www.woerterbuchnetz.de/DWB?bookref=27,2676,28>.

[...] dahero dann genug zu schliessen, daß ihre Textur oder Webung, gleich einem verderbten oder groben Papier durch das unterirdische Feuer, (wiederkurzhieroben erwehnet) gar zu starck oder gar zu wenig gewest, daher ihr Corpus dem unausgearbeiteten Corpore oder metallischem Wasser, nemlich dem  am nächsten geblieben; und gleich wie dieses an seiner unbegreiflichen Zahl der allerkleinsten Kügelchen bestehet, und also das Feuer im geringsten nicht bestehen, noch sich zusammen und ausdehnen lassen kan, weil die unzählbare Kügelchen gleich einem Wasser aus Mangel lebendigen  nicht aneinander halten, noch sich ausstrecken und zusammen lassen können, wie die vier ausgewebten Metallen . Also und eben dergestalt bestehen diese zwey Körper aus solchen doch größern Kügelchen, wodurch die Reduction dieser beyden Körper zu einem lebendigen  dargethan und leichtlich bewiesen werden mag, auch solches allen wahren Chymicis zur Gnüge bekannt; dann wann sie von ihrem Heterogeneo, nemlich brennenden  geschieden, sind sie nichts als ; und daß des lebendigen  wenig bey ihnen seyn müsse, lehret die unwidersprechliche Erfahrung, indem wir selbst durch Mittel einiger Alcalinorum aus einem Pfund Bley fast über 11. Untzen guten



geschieden, und ist uns vor deme ein Artist bekannt gewest, der durch eben diesen Weg, doch mit etwas längerer Zeit und andern Handgriffen, fast auf die XIV. Untzen aus einem Pfund geschieden. Welches dann klärlich darthut, was itzo gesagt, nemlich daß sie meist aus



bestehen, und wenig lebendigen



bey sich haben. (Welling 22)

At the end of this complicated Section 22, Welling leaves the reader with several points that are relevant to our discussion of Goethe; first, that he is speaking of metal not *per se* but rather, in the sense of “geistlichen Vitriol,” second, that these metals are composed almost entirely of mercury, and at the same time of sulfur as well, and thirdly, that the learned scholars or “Physici” cannot comprehend this, in contrast to true chemists -- “wahren Chymicis”—a phrase that calls to mind Goethe’s letters to Frau von Klettenberg and his comments in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* regarding the secretive and mysterious chemistry in which he was interested:

Wir nennen auch nicht ein hohes philosophisches Salz, durch das



Naturae bereitet, da nemlich ein solches Corpus wiederum in sein erstes salinisches mercurialisches Wesen, oder zu seinem ersten Anfang reducirt



worden sey, sondern unsere Rede ist von einem wahren Metall




oder geistlichen Vitriol zum Unterscheid des gemeinen Vitriols, als aus welchem noch allemal ein metallisches Corpus wiederum zu scheiden.

Und ein solches Salz ist denen, so das rechte schlechte und nicht kostbare Menstruum, und die rechte Calcination des Körpers wohl verstehen, leicht


zu machen, allen wahren Chymicis wohl bekannt. Fragen dann also ferner




nicht unbillig, weil diese Körper  und  (der andern Metallen

anjeto zu geschweigen,) fast ganz und gar lauter  und auch eben zugleich fast ganz und gar lauter Salz sind, wie sich doch dieses reimen könne, was sonst die Physici lehren, daß die Metallen aus drey

Anfängen oder Principiis, nemlich 


bestehen, und wie sie bey solchem wahren und klaren Beweis solche ihre Principia behaupten wollen? Und wer kan uns nun beweisen, daß in den Metallen drey wesentliche Anfänge sind, oder daß sie aus denselben bestehen? Allein wer unsern hieroben geführten Reden Gehör geben will, word endlich diesen verwirrten Knoten auflösen, und sich aus diesem wundersamen Labyrinth finden können. Weme die beyden obbenannten

Natur=, der rothe und weisse, und ihr salinisches oder feurig= und wasseriges Herkommen (und wie dieselbe in diesen irdischen Globo in einem jedem specificirten Körper, zu eben desselben Gestalt eines jeden Corporis qualificirt worden,) kenne, der wird die eingeworfene Frage, wie

es seyn könne, daß die Corpora  und  fast ganz und gar , und auch zugleich fast ganz und gar Salz sind? [sic in original] auch was es vor eine Bewandniß habe mit den drey Principiis Salz, Schwefel und




, als Anfängen der Metallen ? [sic in original] leichtlich beantworten können; welches auch die Folge weiteres erklären wird. (Welling 23)

In this passage, the description of mercury seems to correspond to the idea of “das geistlich[e] Band” as described in Goethe, and this, indeed, is appropriate, when one considers how Mephisto referred in the end to “das geistlich[e] Band,” saying “Encheiresin naturae nennt's die Chimie!” Mercury, referred to by Welling via its symbolic representation as an alchemical prime as “,” is also known in ancient pharmacological terms as “Encheiresis naturae” (Peters 196-7).

The importance of this correspondence is not to claim that Goethe was pursuing an alchemical line of thought in the *Urfaust*, but to point out that the repeated use of the “Webung” metaphor in Welling, which appears alongside an alchemical description of “encheiresis naturae,” strongly suggests that the metaphor of “Weben” used in the *Urfaust*, used in connection with “das geistig[e] Band” and “encheiresin naturae,” was something that may well have resulted from Goethe’s reading of Welling.

6.5.5 *Wirkungskraft und Samen*

Welling’s description of the “Webung” related to metals continues in Sections 23 with a discussion of how the heavenly seed (“himmlischen Saamen”) emanating from the sun activates the “weaving” process and creates a matrix that shapes the specific metals according to their individual forms:



[...] und gar nichts, als ein  ist, wie allen wahren Chymicis bekannt, und dieser Schwefel oder schleimichte, feurige, salinische Substanz gebähret ferner aus dieser Erden die Matricem dieses oder jenes Metalls, wie solches unumstößlich an allen Rießling=Steinen und Felsen zu sehen, daß, wenn man sie mit einem Eifen oder einem Stein an den anderen schlaget, sie alsdenn solches schwefelichte Feuer von sich geben. Je reiner nun die Geburth dieser Erden von der jungfräulichen Erden entsprossen, und mit dem himmmlischen Saamen (siehe mit allen Fleiß den 16. §. Und die daselbst angeführte Oerter) begabt worden, je reiner wird diese Matrix, und die in ihr empfangene und erzeugte Geburth der Metallen, nach Art ihres eignen specificirten Wesens seyn. (Welling 25)

As noted in the quotation, the use of the term “Saamen” appears first in Section 16 of the first book, but it is in Section 23 that this term comes into play within the context of the “Webung.” This process is further elaborated in Sections 24 and 25. Without digressing into all of the details of this process, the link between the “Saamen” and “Webung” is made more explicit at the close of Section 25, when Welling describes the role of the “living” metal, mercury, in determining the natural “development” (Auswürckung, as translated by McVeigh) of a living thing, such as a bird, when one measures the saline “weaving-water” (Webungs-Wasser) and the “heavenly lunar seed” (himmlischen lunarischen Saamen):

Mit dem siebenden Metall oder vielmehr Metall=Wasser, nemlich dem



, hat es der Mineræ wegen gleiche Bewandniß, denn deren rothe

Farbe uns klarlich zu erkennen giebet, daß diese ihre Matrix fast aus lauter Schwefel d.i. flüchtigen Feuers=Strahlen und fast weniger Erde bestehe, und des menstruosischen, salinischen Webungs=Wassers (als welches den Schwefel bindet), gemangelt habe, daher sie diese himmlischen  rischen Saamen in der ersten Coagulation in dieser wässerigen Form, ohne fernere Auswürckung liegen lassen müssen: hat aber die Minera eine andere Farbe als grau so gehöret auch ein ander Urtheil von einem in der Natur Ehrfähren in einer solchen Form, und weiset uns also der lebendige  den ersten Grad der natürlichen Auswürckung oder den ersten vorgesetzten Endzweck. Sehen also die mercurialischen Alchymisten, mit was vor einem Vogel sie zu thun haben, und was vor ein Feuer sie benöthiget, ihme seine Schwingfedern zu verbrennen, und ihn weilen er annoch homogen, fix und beständig zu Gold zu machen. Nemlich das, so ihme in seiner Minera gemangelt, und aus vorhergehendem leicht zu verstehen. Denn weilen ihme der grobe irdische Schwefel nichts them können, sonderlich da ihme das menstruosische Salz gemangelt, so muß er haben Schwefel und Salz in rechter Proportion oder ein solches fixes sulphurisches Salz, so da in allem Feuer beständig fix und flüßig, und all fix Corpora durchdringen mag. (Welling 27)



At the close of this passage, one notes the inability of earthly prime sulfur to affect the heavenly prime sulfur, whose affect on the development of a being is formally and proportionately fixed in all bodies. This idea, in connection with the terms used in the

passage, such as *Auswürkung*, *Saamen* and *Webung*, calls to mind the description of Faust of the type knowledge of things that he is seeking, in the opening Nacht scene:

Drum hab ich mich der Magie ergeben, /
Ob mir durch Geistes Kraft und Mund /
Nicht manch Geheimnis werde kund. /
Daß ich nicht mehr mit saurem Schweiß /
Rede von dem, was ich nicht weiß.
Daß ich erkenne, was die Welt /
Im Innersten zusammenhält, /
Schau alle Wirkungskraft und Samen /
Und tu nicht mehr in Worten kramen. (HA3:367 lines 24-32)

In this key passage, Faust explains his turn to magic by not only expressing the dissatisfaction that Goethe felt for the words of those like Gottsched, but in a description that seems to point to the essence of Welling's influence upon Goethe: the turn to magic is here mythically represented as the means of nearing truth that eludes reason and language. The lasting impact of Welling's inscrutable metaphors and myth appears here in the realization that reality itself is not knowable or describable by means of words or leaning; it must, therefore, be approached by metaphor, here represented mythically in Faust's turn to magic.

In another passage from Section 33, Welling makes clear that he is talking about things in their innermost essence ("in seinem innersten"), with the Saamen providing a link between the Macrocosm (here described as *dieses ganzen Universi* or *[die] grosse[n] Welt*) and the Microcosm (here described as *der Mensch* or *die kleine Welt*):

Das himmlische geistliche  und  oder Saamen, daraus alle Geschöpfe gebohren werden, und fortwachsen, welche Geschöpfe und Saamen sämtlich in dem Menschen vollkommen gemacht worden; daß also der Mensch (die kleine Welt) die einzige Versammlung ist dieses ganzen Universi (der grossen Welt) darinnen alle ihre Ausgeburthen, so unzehlbarer Formen und Gestalten, wiederum zusammen kommen, [...] (Welling 38)

Again, given the context of these terms appearing in the text alongside the a Macrocosm reference, the one idea acknowledged by all to link Welling to Goethe's *Faust* texts, one must consider whether or not the other terms are merely coincidental, or whether it can be inferred that Goethe likely borrowed additional alchemical imagery used by Welling for his own purposes as well.

6.5.6 Macrocosm

As noted previously, the most commonly associated aspect of Welling's cosmogony that is seen as relevant to the construction of the *Urfaust* is the Macrocosm (although some see this as referring back to many sources, with Welling being merely one). Because this connection, unlike the other aspects discussed in this dissertation, is generally acknowledged to varying degrees by all, the point to be taken by addressing it here is to note that the Makrokosmos passage explicitly links the viewing of the sigil of the Macrocosm with the "weaving" imagery:

Er schlägt das Buch auf und erblickt das Zeichen des Makrokosmus.

Ha! welche Wonne fließt in diesem Blick /

Auf einmal mir durch alle meine Sinnen.
Ich fühle junges heiliges Lebensglück,/
Fühl neue Glut durch Nerv und Adern rinnen.
War es ein Gott, der diese Zeichen schrieb, /
Die all das innre Toben stillen, /
Das arme Herz mit Freude füllen Und mit geheimnisvollem Trieb /
Die Kräfte der Natur enthüllen?
Bin ich ein Gott? mir wird so licht! /
Ich schau in diesen reinen Zügen /
Die wirkende Natur vor meiner Seele liegen./
Jetzt erst erkenn ich, was der Weise spricht:
»Die Geisterwelt ist nicht verschlossen, /
Dein Sinn ist zu, dein Herz ist tot.
Auf! bade, Schüler, unverdrossen /
Die irdsche Brust im Morgenrot.«
Er beschaut das Zeichen.
Wie alles sich zum Ganzen webt, /
Eins in dem andern würkt und lebt! (HA3:369 lines 77-95)

(N.B. In the Schöne edition of the “Frühe Fassung,” the term “wirkende” from the above *Urfaust* passage, which is rendered as “wirkende” in *Faust I* (line 441), is listed as “winkende.” Schöne notes the discrepancy between versions. In the Hamburger-Ausgabe edition of the *Urfaust*, cited above, the term used is consistent with the eventual term used in *Faust I* and also with the language used by Welling.) With this direct link

between Macrocosm sigil and the image of “weaving” in Goethe’s *Urfaust*, given the acknowledgement by virtually all scholars of a connection between the former and Welling, the likelihood of a connection between the latter imagery/metaphor should be considered all the more probable.

6.6 The Common Denominator between Welling and Goethe

Like Goethe, who perceived Gottsched as his foremost opponent, Welling had to contend with potential hostility from orthodox theologians toward his imaginative cosmogony. Welling stood in the line of neoplatonic thought and relied upon those before him, like Gottfried Arnold, who had been rejected as “heretics.” These thinkers had been condemned, much in the manner noted by Faust to the Gottsched-like Wagner, for having dared to speak the truth, and thus suffered persecution. The search for truth and the reality beneath the superficial is the common denominator between Goethe and Welling. However much Goethe may have been frustrated by his inability to understand the arcane and intricate details of Welling’s mythological framework, it was clear to him that the intended end of their efforts was the same: to approach reality with images and metaphors that connect everything.

Welling used of images such as “weaving” (*Weben*), “vital power” (*Wirckungskraft*) and “seed” (*Saamen*). It is not surprising that Goethe, at critical points in his drama, used these words as well. The metaphor of weaving appeared in attempts to express the striving toward comprehension of an ultimate reality, described by the *Erdegeist* :

In Lebensfluten, im Tatensturm

Wall ich auf und ab,
Webe hin und her!
Geburt und Grab,
Ein ewges Meer,
Ein wechselnd Leben!
So schaff ich am sausenden Webstuhl der Zeit
Und würke der Gottheit lebendiges Kleid. (HA 3:371; lines 149-156)

Faust likewise sees this reality as a weaving, when he asks Gretchen:

Schau ich nicht Aug' in Auge dir,
Und drängt nicht alles
Nach Haupt und Herzen dir
Und webt in ewigem Geheimnis
Unsichtbar sichtbar neben dir? (HA 3:408; lines 1138-1142)

If anything, this question from Faust seems to confirm that the “weaving” in this case refers to an ultimate reality beyond that of the visible world, placing it squarely in the neoplatonic tradition espoused by Welling. Indeed, the description of this weaving in the context of an eternal secret (*in ewigem Geheimnis*) also points to its inscrutability, which may very well have been the appeal to Goethe in the first place. Perhaps the most important realization that Goethe came to when trying to make sense of the Welling text was that the hidden “reality” being alluded was itself, by nature, ineffable, beyond discursive description and the limitation of words, and something only to be approximated by metaphor, myth or cosmogony.

7 Conclusion

A gap has existed in Faust studies, a gap that seems likely to have resulted more than anything from the fact that the *Urfaust* is all too often treated as merely a rough draft of the later work, and not as a work in its own right. By concentrating on Goethe's work on the Faust theme as it developed in the early nineteenth century, scholars have cast their focus far from the origins of Goethe's interest in the Faust theme itself. In returning to the timeline of the formation of the *Urfaust* itself, one is able to see the organic progression of the project, and specifically, how it is shaped by Goethe's quest for a counterpole to the arguments of Gottsched, whom he had encountered while he was a student in Leipzig. This counterpole he finds in the work of Welling, whose image-laden, holistic approach to cosmogony provided an example of how to organize a myth in opposition to an Enlightenment worldview dominated by reason and the discursive as well as rhetorical approach to defining reality by means of words.

Goethe encountered Welling while convalescing in Frankfurt after his sickness in Leipzig. This is significant, not merely because he was then a budding figure of the *Sturm und Drang* whose intellectual program demanded a response to Gottsched, but also because he found in Welling the sort of counterexample that could help him with the sort of non-discursive response to the Enlightenment that were important not merely as a sort of template for a Faust mythology specifically, but more fundamentally as providing the sort of holistic, image-laden language that appealed to a poetics attempting to transcend definition and conceptualization. In a very real sense, the "turn to magic" that is depicted thematically in the *Urfaust* mirrors Goethe's own realization during the time of composition of that work that the "magical" approach of Welling was just as significant

in its possibility as a springboard for the creation of an alternative to the poetic approaches of Gottsched as it was the basis for a radically new Faust image – perhaps even more important, given that Goethe appears to borrow from Welling less in terms of theoretical coherence and more with respect to imagery and totality.

The power of mythological images over words and rhetoric characterizes both Faust's turn to magic and Goethe's turn away from the rhetorical approach of Gottsched and toward the alchemical and mythological imagery offered by Welling. The irony of those who seek a mystical, as opposed to mythological, influence and connection between Welling and Goethe is that in order to prove such, they must employ the very methods of theoretical explanation and justification of such a relationship, by attempting to show a coherence between the images of alchemical metaphor in Welling and the development of Goethe's work, which seems to miss the point of Welling's appeal entirely: its appeal was precisely in the non-discursive, holistic way in which Welling re-*imagined*, as opposed to re-*defined*, reality. Indeed, this seems to be the only plausible view of Welling's appeal to Goethe, given that Goethe readily admits his inability to understand Welling's work in spite of his stated fascination with and repeated reading of it.

Attempting to prove or seek a harmony between Goethe's views in Frankfurt or his later intellectual development and the cosmogony of Welling is a task which seems not only difficult, but also improbable given the lack of evidence that Goethe maintained any adherence (strict or otherwise) to the *beliefs* in Welling's *Opus*. Nevertheless, the convenience of using Welling's image-rich language and mythology in combatting the discursive arguments of Gottsched stands on its own as a sufficient ground for the

importance of Welling for Goethe's creative process within the development of the *Urfaust*. By isolating and identifying elements within the *Urfaust*, such as the anti-Gottsched poetics argument via the use of theatrical forms such as the *commedia dell'arte*, one is able to see this contrast with Welling more clearly. Goethe's use of images and metaphors borrowed from Welling suggest that the turn to magic was very much connected itself with the attempt to respond poetically to the Enlightenment. Indeed, other authors have noted that Faust's arguments with Wagner appear in themselves to be a satirical replay of Goethe's debate with Gottsched (Reich 43-86). Furthermore, by situating these arguments contextually within the intellectual development of the young Goethe as he moves from Leipzig to Frankfurt, the historical and biographical details only serve to strengthen the suggestion that these themes were interrelated in the mind of the young author.

By illuminating the connection between Welling and Goethe in the *Urfaust*, and defining it in poetic and mythical, as opposed to mystical, terms, one sees the possibility for continued and renewed focus in this area of Goethe scholarship long overlooked by scholars. For instance, Goethe's approach to myth/mythology in general can be seen in the light of Welling. Goethe's engagement with mythology persisted throughout his entire life. The "totalization" process that Goethe formed in his approach, when viewed as an outgrowth of the mythological response to discursive thought, is an important finding with respect to understanding Goethe's lifelong engagement and relationship to the Enlightenment, helping to establish the middle ground between those who would characterize him as a friend or foe of the movement, and point toward the complexity of this relationship as described by Schulz, Koopmann and Vierhaus.

It is necessary to compare and contrast Goethe and Welling on their use of Biblical sources in order to understand Goethe's appreciation for "heretics" in general and the Pietist Gottfried Arnold in particular. In light of Goethe's appropriation of Welling's work, the mythology behind the *Erdgeist* needs to be re-examined, with a better insight into Goethe's appropriation of images, such as those offered by Paracelsus (*archeus terrae*) and Bruno (*anima terrae*), and of Lucifer in other "heretical" sources. The connections between Welling's *Opus* and Goethe's *Urfaust* are not so much conceptual, but are rather directly and linearly grounded in the organic unfoldment of the biographical timeline of Goethe's intellectual history. This relationship between the two works, in turn, when subsumed into Goethe's own synthetic understanding of Gottsched and Welling as effectively being polar opposites, allows one to not only read Goethe's *Faust* with a new eye, but also to gain renewed access to other of Goethe's works making use of mythology or archetypal forms, such as in "Prometheus" (1772-1774), *Iphigenie auf Tauris* (1779-1786), *Faust II* (1832), etc. Even Goethe's scientific writings, such as the image-rich works *Die Metamorphose der Pflanzen* (1790) and also *Zur Farbenlehre* (1810), with their additional emphasis on a holistic outlook, might be approached with a fresh perspective as a result of these findings. The dramatic shift in Goethe's thinking while working on the *Urfaust*, reflected in the Faustian "turn to magic" and understood as a commentary on the shortcomings of the Enlightenment, offers a perspective that not only helps one to approach his later *Faust I* anew, but that also helps yoke together other seemingly disparate interests pursued by Goethe, such as mythology, genre theory, color theory, and botany from the standpoint of a perspective that valued image over concept.

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