or Goethe?
Why a second lecture on Faust?

➤ To do justice to Goethe’s conception of his work as an organic whole – FI + FII.
➤ To appreciate the author’s developing perspective in order to grasp the meanings in the play.
➤ To further explore main issues raised in the first lecture, which can only be fully appreciated in the light of the whole text.
➤ To situate the work within this course:

  Romanticism as reaction to the Enlightenment
  with respect to knowledge
    morality
    political government
Goethe’s Impact

• Comparable to Socrates on Greek philosophy
• Hegel (Marx), Schopenhauer, Nietzsche...
• Faustean Man/ powerful modern icon

  promethean

  secular

  superior

➢ CAPITALISM and MARXISM
1: *Faust* (knowledge)

- **Reaction** to perceived *overemphasis* on theoretical knowledge (*scientism/rationalism*)
- Not **anti**-science / **anti**-reason but **beyond** them
- Pursuit of **holistic** knowledge based on **human** creativity/intuition/feeling/life...
- *The heart has reasons that reason knows not of.* (Pascal)
Faustean Man

promethean

secular

superior
FAUST [Sitting restlessly at his desk].

Well, that's philosophy I've read,*
And law and Medicine, and I fear
Theology too from A to Z;
Hard Studies all, that have cost me dear.
And so I sit, poor silly man,
No wiser now than when I began.
They call me Professor and Doctor, forsooth,
For misleading many an innocent youth
The last ten years now, I suppose,*
Pulling them to and fro by the nose;
And I see all our search for knowledge is vain,
And this burns my heart with bitter pain.
I've more sense, to be sure, than the learned fools,
The masters and pastors, the scribes from the schools:
No scruples to plague me, no irksome doubt,
No hell fire or devil to worry about—
Yet I take no pleasure in anything now;
For I know I know nothing, I wonder how
I can still keep up the presence of teaching
Or bettering mankind with my empty preaching.
Can I even boost any worldly success?
What fame or riches do I possess?
No dog would put up with such an existence!
And so I am seeking magic's assistance,
Calling on spirits and their might
To show me many a secret sight.
To relieve me of the wretched task
Of telling things I ought rather to ask,
To grant me vision of Nature's forces
That bind the world, all its seeds and sources
And innermost life—all this I shall see,
And stop peddling in words that mean nothing to me.
knowledge (evaluate)

• The Enlightenment thinkers tended to limit knowledge to what can be achieved through scientific and mathematical type procedures.

• Faust stresses unlimited experience.
  ➢ think of as many types of knowledge that you may be familiar with.
  ➢ poetic, artistic, existential, relational, religious(faith), mystical...
2: *Faust*  (morality)

- BASIS: Vision of reality (world-view)
  - *pantheism* (*Deus sive Natura* - Spinoza)
  - monotheism, deism, agnosticism, atheism, *remythologization* (FI: scene 19) . . .
- **Nature**: all-encompassing, creativity, activity
  - MAN in the image of NATURE (GOD) = FAUST *promethean*, (secular, superior)
    - creative impulse / thirst for absolute experience / ceaseless striving / insatiability
a. *promethean* (absolute)

**FAUST.** I tell you, the mere pleasure’s not the point! To dizzying, painful joy I dedicate Myself, to refreshing frustration, loving hate! I’ve purged the lust for knowledge from my soul; Now the full range of suffering it shall face And in my inner self I will embrace The experience allotted to the whole Race of mankind; my mind shall grasp the heights And depths, my heart know all their sorrows and delights. Thus ‘II expand myself, and their self I shall be, And perish in the end, like all humanity.
FAUST [in the palace].
    I saw four come, I only saw three go.
What their speech meant I do not know.
They talked of debt, and then another word
That almost rhymed—could it be death I heard?
A dark and hollow sound, a ghostly sigh.
I have not broken through to freedom yet.
I must clear magic from my path, forget
All magic conjurations— for then I
Would be confronting Nature all alone:
Man’s life worth while, man standing on his own!
promethean (rebel-creator)

• Faust’s promethean creative activity ends with him fully playing ‘god’
• He pursues his ‘brave new world’ by literally striving to create a new human race “in HIS image and likeness” (FII:11559-11580)
b. secular (this world)

- Many meanings today: not necessarily anti-religion
- Focus on common ground in a pluralistic context

- Faustean morality: do not waste your time on anything beyond this world
  (FI:1660-1670; FII:11,442; FI: scene 19)
c. superior (beyond good and evil)

- Conventional morality is for the masses
- The great human defines morality in accordance with his creative genius
- What furthers the promethean nature is good, what hampers it is evil
- No radical evil: conventional evil is actually a necessary complement to achieve the goal of creativity: Mephisto and Faust are both aspects of true humanity (FI:1335-6 ;1675-87; FII:10,192-5)
FAUST. Poor devil! What can you offer to me?
A mind like yours, how can it comprehend
A human spirit’s high activity?
But have you food that leaves one still unsatisfied,
Quicksilver-gold that breaks up in
One’s very hands? Can you provide
A game that I can never win,
Procure a girl whose roving eye
Invites the next man even as I lie
In her embrace? A meteoric fame
That fades as quickly as it came?
Show me the fruit that rots before it’s plucked
And trees that change their foliage every day!
morality (evaluate)

- Compare *faustean* morality with *Bentham’s* Utilitarianism and *Kant’s* Reason-based moralities
  - “fully human” / ‘freedom’ ...?
  - A function of pleasure/ pain?...reason?... ceaseless striving?...empathy?...
  - Is faustean morality ‘a-moral’...?
3: Faust (government)

• The implied mandate for political government would appear to stress providing constant unrelenting danger and challenge, to enhance the emergence of a race of faustean humans (Nietzsche’s ubermensch) (FII:15,574-580)

➤ Compare this with Hobbes’ and Locke’s concern for security, and Bentham’s maximization of pleasure for the maximum number...
Riddles ?!?  

• Why is *Faust* ‘saved’ ?  
• ...a ‘tragedy’ ?  
• ...is *Goethe* a pure *faustean* ?  
• ...is *Margaret* an exception (a *christian hangover* !?) ?

➢ no *radical evil* / no ‘*Hell’’ ?!?  
➢ *necessary price* of promethean *creativity* ?!?  
➢ G= F + *Mephisto* (*Voltairean* critic!?) ?!?  
➢ *Margaret* = ‘*sinlessly sinning’’ ?!?
Goethe versus Faust

• Text-interpretation: *life and work* studied together as an *organic unity* and in terms of *development*

• Three-stage evolution (see fliesheet)
  ➢ Romanticism (*Storm and Stress*)
  ➢ Classicism / Classics ("fateful trip" to Italy)
  ➢ Classic-Romantic (*Weimar Classicism*)
Completed lies now my dramatic dirge
Which I concluded in the end with fright,
No longer moved by man’s tumultuous urge,
No longer by the power of the night.
Who likes depicting the chaotic surge
Of feeling, when he has emerged to light?
And thus be closed, with all its sorceries,
This narrow circle of barbarities.

Abschied (Farewell)
Classicism

Romanticism
The passionate discord between classicists and romanticist should finally be reconciled. That we should educate and give form to ourselves [uns bilden] is the most important demand; and our models would be immaterial if we did not
THE HOMUNCULUS. Order a warrior to fight,  
Or a young girl to dance all night,  
And things soon reach their right conclusion.  
And let me see--tonight is Classical  
Walpurgis night, as I recall.  
A lucky chance, I do declare!  
He’ll be in his own element there.

MEPHISTOPHELES. I know of no such date.

THE HOMUNCULUS. Indeed!  
You’ll not have heard of it, you and your breed.  
Romantic ghosts are all they know in hell:  
A proper ghost is classical as well*.  

FII, 76
LYNCEUS THE WATCHMAN [on the castle tower, singing].
A watchman by calling.
Far-sighted by birth,
From this tower, my dwelling,
I gaze at the earth:
At the earth near and far,
At the world far and near,
At the moon and the stars,
At the woods and the deer.

A beauty eternal
In all things I see,
And the world and myself
Are both pleasing to me.

Oh blest are these eyes,
All they’ve seen and can tell:

Let it be as it may—
They have loved it so well!
Men live their lives in blindness: so
Shall even Faust be blinded at the last!
[She breathes on him. Exit.]

FAUST [blinded].
Night seems to close upon me deeper still,
But in my inmost soul a bright light shines.
I hasten to complete my great designs:
My words alone can work my mastering will.
Rise from your sleep, my servants, every man!
Give visible success to my bold plan!
Set to work now with shovel and with spade:
I have marked it all out, let it be made!
With a well-ordered project and with hard
Toil we shall win supreme reward;
Until the edifice of this achievement stands,
One mind shall move a thousand hands.
Riddles !?!

• ‘SAVED’: the ‘classic’ completes the ‘romantic’
• ‘TRAGEDY’: ‘blindness’ not ‘wickedness’;
  ‘appearance/reality’ \textit{tragic gap}
  \textbf{BUT} ! …does Faust \textbf{risk} anything (\textit{heroism?}) ?!?
• ‘G & F’: romantic \textit{vitality} energizing
  classic \textit{self-mastery} and \textit{rational serenity}
  \textbf{striving}: conditional \textbf{not} absolute
  \textbf{insatiability}: practical impossibility /creatively wrong
  \textbf{creativity} and \textbf{serenity} not incompatible
Classic

Romantic
Bottom line

• *Nietzsche* : attended my lecture and agrees with this interpretation

• *Faust’s revenge* : the independent life of the poetic creation

• Have a *faustean* Life (apologies to *Goethe*) !?!
Care make its nest in the heart’s deepest hole
And secretly torments the soul;
Its restless rocking motion mars our mind’s content.
Its masks are ever-changing, it appears
As house and home, as wife and child, it will invent
Wounds, poisons, fires and floods— from all
These blows we flinch before they ever fall,
And for imagined losses shed continual tears.