

Schedule of Classes and class discussion questions for *Faust Part I*, by J.W. Goethe, based on the De Leon/Burgin prose translation (on Blackboard)

GENERAL POINTERS

1. PLEASE PRINT OUT A COPY OF DE LEON'S TRANSLATION FOR USE IN CLASS AND ON THE TEST (unless you are using David Luke's translation exclusively). For class presentations, and especially, for the test you need a PRINTED edition of Goethe's *Faust*, into which you may handwrite any notes you wish.

2. DO NOT FORGET TO READ AND STUDY DE LEON'S READER'S NOTES, pp 76-82. They contain important information you need to know that we will not necessarily go over in class unless questions are raised about it.

(NB: If you are reading David Luke's (or any other) full poetic translation of *Faust Part One*, you should still consult the De Leon translation on Blackboard in order to understand which scenes in *Faust* we will be focusing on in class.)

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES ON GOETHE'S *FAUST I*

THE LINE NUMBERS (ll.) GIVEN IN THE SCHEDULE BELOW REFER TO THE DAVID LUKE TRANSLATION. IF YOU ARE READING DE LEON'S TRANSLATION, IGNORE THEM.

MAR 2, (4)- From Faith to Skepticism & Goethe's Faust: REASON, DEISM, AND THE NEW ENLIGHTENED FAUST STORY

Reading due: Goethe's *Faust*: "The Prologue in Heaven" (and Faust Act I, Scenes 1-3), De Leon, pp. 7-19. (Luke ll 243-1433) (NB: De Leon omits the Dedication and The Prologue in the Theater).

Reading due: De Leon Act I (Faust's Study; Auerbach's Tavern in Leipzig; The Witch's Kitchen). (Luke ll.1434-1850; 2073-2604)

(NB: We shall not discuss scenes 4 & 5, but you should read them carefully for future reference.)

Focus of the presentation, March 2: Prologue: A new frame for an old story; God & Mephistopheles in cahoots

1. How does the idea of God's wager with the devil and Goethe's view of the relationship between God and Mephistopheles (Good and Evil) transform the story of Faust?
2. How has the Devil changed over the course of 200 years?

Scenes 1-2: Faust's initial monologue – How Goethe's Faust differs from Marlowe's.

1. Do you agree with Faust's opinion in these lines: "What you call the spirit of the _____ times is nothing more than the spirit of those men in which their time's reflected."?

2. Do you agree with Faust's conclusion that we can know nothing truly?

Scene 3: The Word and the Dog and the Nature of Evil

Analysis of the counterpoint in Faust's first speech between his attempts to interpret the Word and calm the Dog, Reasoning vs Barking. p. 21 (De Leon); ll 1178-1258 (Luke)

Mephistopheles' two-fold identification of himself:

"A part of that power which forever wills Evil-and forever does Good".

1. What is the meaning of that riddle? (asks Faust for us, p 22)

"I am the spirit that forever negates." Think about the following:

1. Why is negativity evil?
2. What causes one to be negative?
3. Is negation of any good?

Faust's depression or melancholia

What are Faust's main symptoms of depression or melancholia?

How does Mephistopheles propose to cure Faust's depression?

Does Faust believe in an afterlife?

Is pacting with the Devil an antidote to depression?

Is Faust eager to make a pact with the devil? Why or why not?

What are the precise terms of Faust's agreement with Mephistopheles?

What does Faust think of the idea of signing in blood?

Why does Mephistopheles insist?

[Scene 4: Auerbach's Tavern: Goethe's version of comic relief; the sinful joys of gluttony. The tavern songs will inspire all musical versions of *Faust*.

Scene 5: The Witch's Kitchen: Goethe's invention and sophisticated use of witchcraft to entertain readers with quaint customs/beliefs of the past.]

(NOTE: Magical rejuvenation through the Devil's powers is not part of the Faust legend at all. The only dramatic function of the "Witches' Kitchen" scene is to have Faust drink the magic brew)

MARCH 9 SECOND CLASS ON GOETHE'S FAUST: HOW GOETHE GAVE NEW (AND ETERNAL) LIFE TO AN OLD STORY: THE GRETCHEN STORY

Reading due: De Leon Act II, Scenes 1-4 (Luke, ll. 2605 – 3833.)

(NB: Scenes 1-4 of Act II in De Leon's version combine and shorten the material of scenes 10-23 of Luke's full poetic version of the play.)

(NOTE: Walpurgis Night – Apart from a few obscure 18th c sources, there is no evidence in the Faust tradition for associating him with the legends of

the May Day witches' Sabbath. Goethe's sources for this tradition were 17th c compendia of medieval folklore. The annual witches' revels involved a procession of witches which ascended in darkness the summit of the Brocken Mt. where orgiastic revels were held in celebration of Satan. The Walpurgis Night scene was extremely popular with musical adapters of *Faust* and through some of those musical adaptations exercised a major influence on Bulgakov's *Master and Margarita*.)

FOCUS OF THE PRESENTATION ON MARCH 9: THE GRETCHEN TRAGEDY IN GOETHE

NOTE: The Gretchen/Margaret tragedy has no precedent in *Faustbook* and is not part of Marlowe's play. **IT IS ONE OF GOETHE'S MOST IMPORTANT INNOVATIONS INTRODUCED INTO THE TRADITIONAL STORY.**

Gretchen's tragedy combines a popular tale of seduction and abandonment (of a pure, naïve and simple good girl by a seductive, wealthy "Don Juan") and, symbolically, constitutes a late 18th c rendition and reversal of the Biblical tale of Eve's fall from Grace. The Gretchen story had an enormous impact on the popular imagination of the 19th century because it established Faust as a libertine. It also made the Faust story more operatic and romantic, and feminized an all-male myth. Especially important for the 19th and 20th century musical tradition of *Faust* are the songs that Gretchen and Mephistopheles sing.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE GRETCHEN STORY TO THINK ABOUT (SEE POWER POINT PRESENTATION)

What are Gretchen's main qualities?

Why is she attracted to Faust?

What does she feel about Mephistopheles?

And why does she fall for Faust?

Or, is it Mephistopheles whom she falls for?

What causes Faust "to forget" about Gretchen?

Can Faust's "forgetting about Gretchen" be justified in any way?
Gretchen represents for Goethe an embodiment of the Feminine.
Does she embody the Feminine for you?
What does she add to the Faust story, or was it better without her?
Why do female heroes in literature often lack agency in their stories, and why are their stories usually limited to 'the love plot'?
How does Faust justify Gretchen's crimes?
Does Gretchen blame Faust at all? Does Faust accept any responsibility?
What, ultimately, constitutes FAUST'S tragedy?

SPRING RECESS – MARCH 13-21

MARCH 23- TWO FAUSTS: 200 YEARS OF SEPARATION: THE REFORM AND ENLIGHTENMENT FAUSTS

Reading due: De Leon Act II (Luke lines 3620- the end). Finish Faust Part I and start REREADING MARLOWE'S "DR. FAUSTUS"

MARCH 25 – OPENBOOK TEST ON MARLOWE'S *DR. FAUSTUS* & GOETHE'S *FAUST PART I*

