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# Review of Faust. Zweyter Theil - Paralipomena: Studienausgabe

## Abstract

In 2011, Reclam published a two-volume Studienausgabe of Faust I and II (based on the Ausgabe letzter Hand), edited and with commentary by Ulrich Gaier. The following year, Edition Isele published Gaier's Lesarten von Goethes "Faust." These three volumes were originally published in 1999 as part of a box set titled Faust-Dichtungen (Reclam). The Studienausgabe and Lesarten von Goethes "Faust," as Gaier explains in the preface to the latter, are revised and expanded versions of the second and third volumes of his Faust-Dichtungen (9). The publication history of these texts does not take away from their contribution to Faust scholarship or their usefulness for both scholars and students at all levels; however, readers should note that, due to their publication history, they do not necessarily reflect the most recent advances in the field. The correspondence between these texts is especially significant for readers of the Studienausgabe, as Gaier's introductions to scenes and acts refer throughout to the various "readings" in Lesarten von Goethes "Faust," which address the following categories: religious, natural philosophical, magical, historical, sociological, economic, anthropological, and poetic. In the preface to Lesarten von Goethes "Faust," he notes that the earlier religious and historical readings have been expanded and that the poetic section has the most new material, including sections elaborating on lesser-known connections to art, music, and world literature as well as Goethe's use of "Chronotextualität" and "Chronomarker zur Kennzeichnung der historischen Entwicklungsstufen der Handlung" (12). Gaier defines the former as "ein Verfahren Goethes, Kulturepochen durch Nachbildung der für sie kennzeichnenden Gattungen, Genres und Formen von Dichtung für den Leser und Hörer sinnfällig zu machen" (759). He then offers specific examples of "Chronomarker" from both parts of Faust and concludes that in the final scenes "Grablegung" and "Bergschluchten" Goethe merges the time periods between 1500 and 1830 (763). With some background on the history of these three texts, let us turn to Gaier's primary argument, which runs throughout both Lesarten von Goethes "Faust" and the two volumes of the Studienausgabe.

## Disciplines

European History | European Languages and Societies | German Language and Literature

## Comments

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**Lesarten von Goethes Faust by Ulrich Gaier, and: Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Faust: Eine □ Tragödie, Erster Theil, Frühere Fassung (“Urfaust”), Paralipomena, Studienausgabe ed. by Ulrich Gaier, and: Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Faust: Zweyter Theil, Paralipomena, Studienausgabe ed. by Ulrich Gaier (review)**

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words' representation of these various concepts, which Mephistopheles names as his element (and "actual" is misleading; "proper" would capture the sense better). But as Smith reproduces the sentence, Mephistopheles is aligning himself with *what evil represents*. The reader may be forgiven for seeing an echo of Mephistopheles's remark a few lines earlier that he is "part of the force that always would / do evil, but only manages to do good," and thus read a hint of a secret agenda into these lines. If Mephistopheles means ill but does good, what does evil "represent" if not the good? It is a powerful suggestion, but not one that Goethe has made in these lines.

An example of Smith's poetry falling short of Goethe's level comes in the final scene in the dungeon, when Margaret's moving lamentation of her fate comes off as a bit clunky: "I am now wholly within your might. / Just let me nurse my little one / once more. I held it close all night. / They took it from me to cause me pain, / and now I've murdered it, they say / I'll never be happy again" (198).

But no translation of *Faust* can avoid the occasional flat passage or missing the occasional nuance of Goethe's text. These are minor instances, and there are certainly beautiful passages. In the "Walpurgis Night" scene, for instance, Smith rises fully to meet Goethe's frenetic versification and diction, and his text brims with energy. The modern American English reads smoothly, and the verse rarely hinders comprehension or gives the text a feeling of foreignness. Except for the lack of line numbers and the near absence of critical or explanatory material (the introduction is two and a half pages long, and most of it is a plot summary), there is nothing that recommends against this new version. A new addition to the range of available *Faust* translations, a new staging ground for an encounter with Goethe's masterpiece, is always welcome.

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Andrew Hamilton

Ulrich Gaier, **Lesarten von Goethes Faust**. Konstanz, Eggingen: Edition Isele, 2012. 856 pp.; Ulrich Gaier, ed., **Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Faust: Eine Tragödie, Erster Theil, Frühere Fassung ("Urfaust"), Paralipomena, Studienausgabe**. Stuttgart: Reclam, 2011. 882 pp.; Ulrich Gaier, ed., **Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Faust: Zweyter Theil, Paralipomena, Studienausgabe**. Stuttgart: Reclam, 2011. 1024 pp.

In 2011, Reclam published a two-volume *Studienausgabe* of *Faust I* and *II* (based on the *Ausgabe letzter Hand*), edited and with commentary by Ulrich Gaier. The following year, Edition Isele published Gaier's *Lesarten von Goethes "Faust"*. These three volumes were originally published in 1999 as part of a box set titled *Faust-Dichtungen* (Reclam). The *Studienausgabe* and *Lesarten von Goethes "Faust,"* as Gaier explains in the preface to the latter, are revised and expanded versions of the second and third volumes of his *Faust-Dichtungen* (9). The publication history of these texts does not take away from their contribution to *Faust* scholarship or their usefulness for both scholars and students at all levels; however, readers should note that, due to their publication history, they do not necessarily reflect the most recent advances in the field. The correspondence between these texts is especially significant for readers of the *Studienausgabe*, as Gaier's introductions to scenes and acts refer throughout to the various "readings" in *Lesarten von Goethes "Faust,"* which address the following categories: religious, natural philosophical, magical, historical, sociological, economic, anthropological, and poetic. In the preface to *Lesarten von Goethes*

"Faust," he notes that the earlier religious and historical readings have been expanded and that the poetic section has the most new material, including sections elaborating on lesser-known connections to art, music, and world literature as well as Goethe's use of "Chronotextualität" and "Chronomarker zur Kennzeichnung der historischen Entwicklungsstufen der Handlung" (12). Gaier defines the former as "ein Verfahren Goethes, Kulturepochen durch Nachbildung der für sie kennzeichnenden Gattungen, Genres und Formen von Dichtung für den Leser und Hörer sinnfällig zu machen" (759). He then offers specific examples of "Chronomarker" from both parts of *Faust* and concludes that in the final scenes "Grablegung" and "Bergschluchten" Goethe merges the time periods between 1500 and 1830 (763). With some background on the history of these three texts, let us turn to Gaier's primary argument, which runs throughout both *Lesarten von Goethes "Faust"* and the two volumes of the *Studienausgabe*.

*Lesarten von Goethes "Faust"* begins with a short chapter covering the Faust legend and related texts prior to Goethe. The next chapter addresses the development of Goethe's *Faust* from its inception to end. In this chapter, Gaier introduces the work of the Renaissance philosopher Marsilio Ficino (1433–99), whose Plato commentary Goethe references in 1781. Gaier argues that Ficino offers fundamental insight into *Faust*: "Buch XIV von Ficinios *Theologia platonica*, auf das auch relativ viele Stellen im *Faust* direkt anspielen, trägt den Titel: 'Die Seele strebt Gott zu werden,' und beschreibt sieben Formen der Wege dieses Strebens, die auf eine bemerkenswerte Weise mit Gelehrtdrama, Gretchendrama und den fünf Akten des *Faust II* inhaltlich im Einklang stehen" (98–99). The seven forms of striving seek, in order, (1) "die höchste Wahrheit und das höchste Gut" (137); (2) "alle Dinge [zu] werden" (219); (3) "alles zu leisten und alles zu beherrschen" (279); (4) "überall und immer zu sein" (347); (5) "vier Gewalten Gottes sich zu verschaffen: Voraussicht, Gerechtigkeit, Stärke und Mäßigung" (460); (6) "den höchsten Grad von Reichtum und Lust" (522); and (7) "daß wir uns verehren wie Gott" (570). Each of these corresponds not only to the seven parts of the tragedy (*Gelehrtdrama*, *Gretchendrama*, acts 1–5) but also to the first seven "Lesarten," as they are presented in the book. Faust's repeated failures, from beginning to end and in all of Ficino's categories, ultimately result in the poetic success of Goethe's "Tragödie des neuzeitlichen Menschen" (120). While Ficino is present throughout *Lesarten von Goethes "Faust"*, he remains one among many thinkers who contributed to the development of *Faust*. Gaier also credits Herder, Lessing, and Schiller, as well as Dante, Shakespeare, and Rousseau, among others. In the helpful "Intertextualität" section that concludes the book, Gaier cross-references key figures and texts from the Bible and classical literature, as well as sixteenth-, seventeenth-, and eighteenth-century European literature, with lines and passages throughout *Faust*. It is, after all, a "Text über Texte, Dichtung über Dichtungen in einem Maße, wie es wohl für kein anderes Werk der Weltliteratur zutrifft" (647). While Gaier reads *Faust* through the lens of Ficino, the readings outlined above cannot be contained in Ficino's "Art theologischer Totalität," which Gaier argues Goethe incorporated in his anthropological reinterpretation (120).

The chapters in *Lesarten von Goethes "Faust"* are quite diverse and, at times, disjointed. For instance, "Magische Lesart" moves from an analysis of act 1 to the *Gelehrtdrama* and then the *Gretchendrama*, followed by acts 2 through 5. "Anthropologische Lesart," on the other hand, is divided into five thematic sections ("Ehrfurchten," "Lebensmühe," "Eros," "Wetten," and "Entgrenzungen"). In the

chapter dedicated to economic matters, Gaier correctly emphasizes the importance of *Faust I*, which has often been overshadowed by the events that unfold in *Faust II*. Yet in addressing issues related to the history of economic thought (money, gold, needs, economic theories), he relies too heavily on Bernd Mahl's *Goethes ökonomisches Wissen* (1982) and Hans Christoph Binswanger's *Geld und Magie* (1985). Unfortunately, there is almost no mention of the important research done on the topic of *Faust* and economics during the last few decades. Overall, however, *Lesarten von Goethes "Faust"* remains an impressive work of scholarship that showcases Gaier's decades of work on the text. Readers of *Faust* will also find a wealth of valuable information and careful analysis in the *Studienausgabe*, which is a welcome addition to Goethe scholarship. In all three texts, Gaier engages Albrecht Schöne's *Faust* commentary (Frankfurter Ausgabe), noting subtle and not-so-subtle differences in their analyses. *Lesarten*, after all, come in many forms and fashions, particularly with respect to *Faust*.

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Rüdiger Scholz, **Die Geschichte der Faust-Forschung: Weltanschauung, Wissenschaft und Goethes Drama**. Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2011. 906 pp.

Der profilierte, kritische Goethe-Forscher Rüdiger Scholz legt nun eine gründlich recherchierte, gut lesbare und höchst lesenswerte Geschichte der *Faust*-Forschung vor. Das ausufernde Material ist umfassend, klar und präzise auf über 900 (!) Seiten in zwei Teilbänden präsentiert, in denen zunächst die "Grundlinien" der Resultate der *Faust*-Forschung zusammengefasst (20–54), dann ein "idealistischer Ansatz" (Schelling, Hegel) mit Konsequenzen für die Forschung (55–72) und "Goethe-kritische *Faust*-Interpretationen" dargestellt werden (73–96). Den Hauptteil bildet ein detaillierter, chronologisch und thematisch gegliederter Durchgang von den "Interpretationen des langen 19. Jahrhunderts" (104–270) bis zu "Faust im globalen Kapitalismus" (599–797) und abschließenden Gedanken zur "Faustforschung am Scheideweg" (798–805); es folgen ein Literaturverzeichnis von mehr als 1500 Titeln, ein sehr nützliches Namensregister und weitere Illustrationen. (Diese sind in Farbe und entstammen dem Goethezeit-Portal.) Journalistische Würdigungen oder Kritik und Nachempfundenes in belletristischer Form—etwa von Goethe-Gesellschaften, Museen und Gedenkstätten—bleiben, gottseidank, weitgehend außen vor. In dieser Hinsicht interessieren jedoch Scholz' Ausführungen zur "Faust-Kultur" der Gegenwart, den neueren *Faust*-Inszenierungen, Faust in der Musik, in den bildenden Künsten und der Germanistik. Seine eigene Forschungs-Position umreißt Scholz eindeutig und ehrlich: es geht ihm um eine historisch gesellschaftliche, eine sozialgeschichtliche Interpretation des literarischen Textes.

*Faust* ist unbestritten ein Werk der Weltliteratur; das Drama hat jedoch bei der Wertung des Titelhelden und seiner Geschichte höchst widersprüchliche Auslegungen erfahren, was die Rezeptionsgeschichte so facettenreich macht und noch immer unser Interesse beansprucht. Rüdiger Scholz legt keinen trockenen Forschungsbericht vor, wie ihn so viele beflissene neuere Dissertationen zum *Faust*-Drama und zu Goethe liefern, sondern eine profunde Darstellung der wissenschaftlichen Ergebnisse. Er referiert und diskutiert die weltanschaulichen Positionen in der (akademischen) Interpretation mit wissenschaftlichem Anspruch. Er orientiert sich in seinem Überblick über die gesamte Forschung an