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Short Title: Shelley's *Faust* Translations

Captions

Fig. 1: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Shelley adds. c. 4, fol. 144^{r}. With kind permission of The Bodleian Library.

Fig. 2: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Shelley adds. e. 18, p. 103. With kind permission of The Bodleian Library. (N.B. this page is written in reverso in relation to the notebook pagination which is why it is photographed upside down)

The Contexts of Percy Bysshe Shelley's *Faust* Translations

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Abstract:

Percy Bysshe Shelley's fascination with Goethe's *Faust* spanned a large part of his writing career, starting with a line-by-line translation of nearly a thousand lines from the drama's opening in 1815 and culminating in a poetic rendition of the 'Prolog im Himmel' and 'Walpurgisnacht' finished shortly before his untimely death in July 1822. This article offers a detailed examination of the two *Faust* translations and the contexts in which they were produced. The 1815 translation is read against the backdrop of contemporary language learning materials whereas the 1822 translation is brought into relation with Goethe's conception of *Weltliteratur* as a web of textual encounters across linguistic boundaries.

Keywords: Percy Bysshe Shelley, Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Faust*, world literature, translation, language learning

> They approach you again, fluctuating Shapes!
> The early thus once the troubled view beholds
> The experiment I well you now have made to stop?
> Feel I my heart still that error has inclined?
> They throng you to! now good thus may they dispose,
> Thus they from vapour and cloud around me rise;
> My bosom feels thus a juvenile shuddering
> train
> By the magic-blast of your touch around-thundered.[1]

[1] Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Shelley adds. c. 4, fols 142–71 (fol. 142^{r}); a facsimile reproduction is available in *The Bodleian Shelley Manuscripts*, ed. by Donald Reiman and others, 23 vols (New York: Garland, 1986–2002), XXI: *Miscellaneous Poetry, Prose and Translations from Bodleian MS. Shelley adds. c. 4*, ed. by E. B. Murray (1995), pp. 120–80. This edition is hereafter abbreviated as BSM.

The reader might recognize in the above lines, as in a distorted mirror, the first stanza of the 'Zueignung' to Goethe's *Faust*. This is the beginning of a translation by Percy Bysshe Shelley that will continue in this vein for nearly a thousand lines. There is no direct evidence about the date of composition, but the most likely supposition is that Shelley interrupted work on the translation when he began composing *Alastor; or, The Spirit of Solitude* in the autumn of 1815. I will therefore refer to it as the 1815 *Faust* translation to distinguish it from Shelley's 1822 translation of two scenes, 'Prolog im Himmel' and 'Walpurgisnacht', which I will discuss in the second half of this paper.[2]

The semantic discord of the 1815 *Faust* translation is in sharp contrast to the neatness of its material presentation: the only surviving witness, a holograph manuscript, is a homemade booklet consisting of four carefully folded quires that were once held together by pins, a few of which are still in place. Bruce Barker-Benfield, the previous librarian responsible for the Shelley manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, has observed that 'Percy and Mary Shelley were in the habit of assembling loose sheets into booklet form for a variety of purposes: recognition of that format is therefore useful for the understanding of their literary manuscripts' (BSM, XXIII, p. 59). Homemade booklets would be used either for press copies to be sent to the publisher or for fair copies to be circulated among members of the Shelley circle and/or preserved for future reference. The 1815 *Faust* transcription is executed in Shelley's most legible hand and mimics the layout of a printed book — the title of each scene is written in a larger script, at the centre of the page, and marked off by horizontal lines. The stage directions are either centred or enclosed in brackets, and the name of each speaker is

[2] This paper is based on research carried out in the course of editing Shelley's *Faust* translations for the fifth volume of *The Poems of Shelley*, ed. by Michael Rossington and others (London: Routledge, forthcoming). Citations from the 1815 *Faust* translation are from Shelley's manuscript, citations from the 1822 'May-day Night' and 'Prologue in Heaven' are from the forthcoming *Poems of Shelley* volume, which also contains a fuller discussion of contextual evidence about the surviving manuscript evidence and dating.

written out in full, on a separate line and centred on the page. By contrast, dramatic composition — be it translation or original work — would take place in notebooks and typically include multiple layers of cancellation and revision, omit stage directions, and often only mark changes of speaker with a dash.[3] Despite the translation's eccentric quality, both the booklet format and the careful transcription indicate that Shelley valued it enough to wish to preserve or even share it.

William Michael Rossetti, who was the first to publish three extracts from the translation, described it as 'a Shelleyan curiosity' that had been

> done as a mere exercise in acquiring the language […] but has its interest as showing the then early and chequered stage of Shelley's knowledge of German, and the way he went to work in studying, and will beguile the Shelleyan enthusiast of a smile.[4]

It is true that learning German is a likely motivating factor and that the translation is peppered with comical mistakes, yet as a carefully presented document of one major British poet's close engagement with the work of his German contemporary, Shelley's 1815 *Faust* translation is worthy of more serious scholarly attention than it has hitherto received. This would include acknowledging the significance of the material evidence: if this translation is a mere language learning exercise, why is it so painstakingly copied out? And why has it been preserved? Such questions have not been posed in Shelley scholarship. Aside from the extracts selected by Rossetti, the translation has only been published as a manuscript facsimile (BSM, XXI, pp. 120–80); my edition will be the first to present a complete reading

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[3] Compare the penmanship in Figures 1 and 2, showing a page from the 1815 *Faust* translation and from the draft of the 1822 'Prolog im Himmel' translation, respectively. These can be further compared to the open access digital edition of Shelley manuscripts at *The Shelley-Godwin Archive*, ed. by Neil Fraistat and others <http://shelleygodwinarchive.org/> [accessed 10 September 2020]. *The Huntington Digital Library* also includes freely accessible high resolution scans of three of Shelley's draft notebooks, with the shelfmarks HM 2111, HM 2167, and HM 2177, that can be found if entering the search term 'Shelley Notebooks' <https://hdl.huntington.org/digital/search/searchterm/shelley%20notebooks> [accessed 10 September 2020].

[4] *The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. by William Michael Rossetti, 2 vols (London: Moxon, 1870), II, 597.

text. In this paper, I consider the poetic purposes that Shelley might have pursued in his engagement with *Faust*, both in the literal translation of 1815 and the poetic translation of 1822. In different ways, the two translations are representative of how a global ideal such as *Weltliteratur* relies on individual encounters with foreign writing. Goethe himself emphasized the personal aspect of *Weltliteratur* in his speech at the 1828 congress of the Gesellschaft deutscher Naturforscher und Ärzte:

> Wenn wir eine europäische, ja eine allgemeine Weltliteratur zu verkündigen gewagt haben, so heißt dieses nicht daß die verschiedenen Nationen von einander und ihren Erzeugnissen Kenntnis nehmen, denn in diesem Sinne existiert sie schon lange, setzt sich fort und erneuert sich mehr oder weniger; nein! hier ist vielmehr davon die Rede, daß die lebendigen und strebenden Literatoren einander kennen lernen und durch Neigung und Gemeinsinn sich veranlaßt finden gesellschaftlich zu wirken. Dieses wird aber mehr durch Reisende als durch Korrespondenz bewirkt, indem ja persönlicher Gegenwart ganz allein gelingt das wahre Verhältnis unter Menschen zu bestimmen und zu befestigen.[5]

The full realization of *Weltliteratur* is dependent on authors meeting and getting to know one another in person. As present-day scholars we can reconstruct the material movement of people across Europe, but we are of course unable to recreate their *persönliche Gegenwart*; nonetheless, written materials, and especially private papers, can also reveal something about an individual writer's personal encounter with the literature of another nation. This article approaches the surviving manuscripts containing Shelley's *Faust* translations as evidence of his encounter with Goethe's work. They indicate how *Weltliteratur* comes into being through a symbiotic process of learning to read a foreign literature and translating it back into one's own.

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[5] Johann Wolfgang Goethe, insert title of speech, FA, I, XXV, p. 79.

The canonical account of Shelley reading German stems from his residence in Pisa and is provided by Edward John Trelawny: 'I called on him one morning at ten, he was in his study with a German folio open, resting on the broad marble mantelpiece, over an old-fashioned fire-place, and with a dictionary in his hand.'[6] In its contemporary context, Trelawny's portrait of Shelley reading a German work with the aid of a dictionary does not indicate an incompetent reader, but a poet in tune with literary trends. 'Nothing I envy him so much as to be able to read that astonishing production [i.e. *Faust*] in the original', Lord Byron is supposed to have said of Shelley in the period that Trelawny describes, and it seems that Shelley was the authority on matters relating to Goethe in the circle of literary men gathered around him and Byron in 1821–22.[7] It was a time when German literature was subject to increased attention, both by admirers such as the young Coleridge, Matthew 'Monk' Lewis, and Thomas Carlyle, as well as by detractors such as the older Coleridge or Tory reviewers, but reading German was still a niche skill. It is perhaps telling that Coleridge and Wordsworth travelled to Germany with the express purpose of learning the language in order to earn a living as translators on their return, an ambition also espoused by Shelley's step-brother-in-law Charles Clairmont.[8] In the unfinished political essay 'A Philosophical View of Reform', Shelley represented Germany as an emerging cultural force to be reckoned with:

> Germany, which is, among the great nations of Europe, one of the latest civilized, with the exception of Russia, is rising with the fervour of a vigorous youth to the assertion of those rights for which it has that desire arising from knowledge, the surest pledge of victory. The deep passion and the bold and Æschylean vigour of the imagery of their poetry; the enthusiasm, however distorted, of their religious sentiments; the flexibility and comprehensiveness of their language which is a many-sided mirror of every changing thought, their severe, bold and liberal spirit of criticism, their subtle and deep philosophy mingling fervid intuitions into truth

[6] Edward John Trelawney, *Records of Shelley, Byron, and the Author*, 2 vols (London: Pickering, 1878), I, 93.
[7] Thomas Medwin, *Conversations of Lord Byron: Noted During a Residence with his Lordship at Pisa, in the Years 1821 and 1822. A New Edition* (London: Colburn, 1824), p. 170.
[8] *The Clairmont Correspondence: Letters of Claire Clairmont, Charles Clairmont, and Fanny Imlay Godwin, 1808–1879*, ed. by Marion Kingston Stocking, 2 vols (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), I, 63.

> with obscure error (for the period of just distinction is yet to come) and their taste and power in the plastic arts, prove that they are a great People.[9]

This description reflects the growing status of German culture, philosophy, and literature, and Shelley's own studies seem to have been primarily directed towards learning to read German; there is no record of him speaking the language or intending to travel to Germany.

Such a focus on literature was by no means unusual in the period and it was also reflected in the teaching of German. Nicola McLelland has observed that the 'key development in German studies in eighteenth-century Britain was without a doubt the process by which German was increasingly styled as a literary language alongside French'.[10] This process can be seen in the arguments used by authors of language learning materials to advertise their books. William Render, for instance, promises that the student who diligently works through his textbook will be in a position to 'take up any German work, and, by the help of a good Dictionary, be enabled to feel the sense of the author with little difficulty'.[11] The new orientation towards reading German literature combined with developments in the philosophy of language to transform the structure of language learning textbooks (often referred to as grammars). While early eighteenth-century textbooks were based on rote memorization of grammatical rules and set dialogues, by the early decades of the nineteenth century these had largely been replaced by translation exercises whose purpose was both to consolidate the student's understanding of grammar and to introduce them to highlights of German literature, including poetry and drama by contemporary authors. In this regard, Shelley's decision to study German by translating *Faust* may have been a natural continuation of the literary translation exercises he would have found in his textbook.

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[9] *The Complete Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. by Roger Ingpen and Walter E. Peck, 10 vols (London: Ernest Benn Ltd., 1926–30), VII, 15.

[10] Nicola McLelland, *German Through English Eyes: A History of Language Teaching and Learning in Britain 1500–2000* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2015), p. 57.

[11] William Render, *A Complete Analysis of the German Language; or, A Philological and Grammatical View of its Construction, Analogies, and Various Properties* (London: Symonds, 1804), p. xxxii.

Many textbooks would also include discussion of the distinguishing characteristics of the German language and German prosody (McLelland, pp. 51–78). F. A. Wendeborn pioneered the use of exercises in his *German Grammar with Practical Exercises* (1774). The first exercise introduces the indefinite article:

> A man who, on serious[1] reflection[2], is convinced[3], that he has, comparatively[4] speaking, but a short time to live, will not delay[5] an earnest preparation[6] for a journey[7] into another world[8], from whence[9] a traveller[10] is not to expect[11] a return[12].
>
> [1]Ernsthaft. [2]das Nachdenken. [3]überzeugt.
> [4]vergleichungsweise. [5]aufschieben.
> [6]die Vorbereitung. [7]eine Reise. [8]die Welt.
> [9]von wannen. [10]ein Reisender. [11]erwarten.
> [12]die Zurükkunft. [*sic*]
>
> Ein Habicht[1], der eine Taube[2] verfolgte[3], sah[4] ihr mit einem scharfen Auge nach, und schoß[5], von einer großen Höhe[6], auf sie herab: allein, ein Jäger[7] rettete[8] sie, indem er, mit einer Flinte[9], dem Raubvogel[10] eine Kugel[11] in die Brust[12] schoß[13].
>
> [1]A hawk. [2]a pigeon. [3]to pursue.
> [4]to watch, look after. [5]to dart upon.
> [6]the height. [7]a sportsman. [8]to save.
> [9]a gun. [10]a bird of prey. [11]a ball.
> [12]the breast. [13]to shoot.[12]

Since Wendeborn does not offer any guidance beyond the numerical keying of words to their translations, the student using his *German Grammar* would require the assistance of a more fluent speaker to complete the exercises.

Georg Heinrich Noehden, by contrast, tried to create a textbook that would also be suitable for students working on their own. In a prefatory remark on the difficulties of conveying pronunciation in written form, he writes:

> If we could suppose, that all those who deem it expedient to study a foreign language, had it in their power to procure the assistance of a native, this labour might certainly be dispensed with. But as there may be some, that have no such opportunities, it seems to be incumbent upon him, who writes for the public at

[12] F. A. Wendeborn, *German Grammar with Practical Exercises*, 6th edn (London: Boosey, 1814), p. 9.

> large, to include in his plan, as far as he is able to do so, also the latter class of his readers.[13]

This suggests that the market for German textbooks was expanding to include those who could not afford a private tutor, but it is also indicative of the pedagogic reorientation from conversation towards reading skills. George Crabb published a textbook almost entirely structured around literary translation exercises that also included some measures to help the student work independently of a teacher. It begins with a list of 'General Rules', e.g. 'I. All articles, adjectives, participles, and pronouns, agree with their nouns in gender, number, and case', with each rule illustrated by one or several examples.[14] Unlike in earlier textbooks, these rules are not meant to be memorized, but to serve as a reference point as the student progresses through the volume. The first exercise, a fable, begins as follows:

> Ein Wolf der im Schlunde[1] ein Bein hatte[2], welches ihm großen Schmerz [3]verursachte[2], versprach[3] einem Storche eine gute Belohnung[3], wenn er es mit seinem Schnabel herausziehen[3] wollte[2]. (p. 21)

Below the fable, Crabb glosses the important words, e.g. '*Schlund*, throat. | *Schmerz*, pain.', but whereas Wendeborn used numbers to key words to their translation, in Crabb, the number is keyed to a question: '1. Why not in seinem Schlunde, XXXIV? 2. What transposes this verb, XXIV? 3. Which is the prefix?' (p. 22). The Roman numeral at the end of the question refers back to the 'General Rules' at the outset of the volume. As Crabb explains in the preface, these questions are for students 'who are desirous of becoming familiar with the construction of the German Language […]; they call the attention of the scholar to the rules and mechanism of the language, by examples immediately before the eye' (p. iii). Crabb's textbook thus caters to two types of student: those who are satisfied with merely learning to

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[13] Georg Heinrich Noehden, *German Grammar: Adapted for the Use of Englishmen* (London: Whittingham, 1800), p. 29.

[14] George Crabb, *An Easy and Entertaining Selection of German Prose and Poetry: With a Small Dictionary, and Other Aids for Translating* (London: Whittingham, 1800), p. 1.

read and translate German with the help of glosses, and those who wish to gain a deeper understanding of German grammar by working through the questions.

We know from a list of books that Shelley left behind in England when he moved to Italy in 1818 that he owned a 'German Grammar' and 'Rayleys German Dic'[15] and the literal approach of his 1815 *Faust* translation is consistent with contemporary language learning methods. Since these were oriented towards teaching German as a literary language, it is important to also consider the translation's literary interest. David Constantine compares it to Hölderlin's literal Pindar translations,[16] of which he has elsewhere argued that it is 'worth emphasizing the primacy of the *poetic* over the translational intention'.[17] A poetic intention 'entails moving abroad into the foreign language and returning afterwards into one's own' enriched by this journey: 'Poets translate because they love the foreign poet and wish to make him or her better known; but also, and not just incidentally, they translate to get better at their native tongue.'[18] This insight opens up a fruitful perspective on Shelley's 1815 *Faust* translation — inviting us to focus not on the grammatical mistakes, but on the poetic gains. The former are legion and easy to ridicule, the latter more carefully hidden but also more rewarding when thinking about *Weltliteratur*.

Goethe's conception of *Weltliteratur* differs from the definitions of 'world literature' offered in the last thirty years in several important respects. Hendrik Birus has noted 'daß dieser Begriff — im Gegensatz zu seiner heutigen Verwendung — bei Goethe weder in quantitativer Hinsicht ("alle Einzelliteraturen umfassend") noch in qualitativer ("die besten

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[15] This probably indicates *Nathan Bailey's Dictionary: English–German and German–English* which had appeared in eleven editions by 1810. The list is in New York, New York Public Library, Pforzheimer Collection of Shelley and his Circle, MS Shelleiana 1082, fols 1^{r}, 9^{r}.
[16] David Constantine, 'German', in *The Oxford History of Literary Translation in English*, ed. by Roger Ellis, Stuart Gillespie, and David Hopkins, 5 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005–0), IV: *1790–1900*, ed. by Peter France and Kenneth Haynes (2006), pp. 211–29 (p. 222).
[17] David Constantine, *Hölderlin* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 239.
[18] David Constantine, 'Service Abroad: Hölderlin, Poet-Translator, A Lecture', *Translation and Literature*, 20 (2011), 79–97 (pp. 81, 82).

Werke aus ihnen") angemessen zu fassen ist.'[19] Instead, *Weltliteratur* is a kind of literary cross-pollination that happens across linguistic boundaries: 'internationale literarische Wechselwirkungen' as Birus puts it with reference to a series of notes that Goethe wrote between 1826 and 1829 on the foreign reception of German literature (p. 8). These notes include the following set of criteria:

> 1) Ob sie die Ideen gelten lassen, an denen wir festhalten und die uns in Sitte und Kunst zu statten kommen.
> 2) Inwiefern sie die Früchte unsrer Gelehrsamkeit genießbar finden und die Resultate derselben sich aneignen.
> 3) Inwiefern sie sich unsrer ästhetischen Formen bedienen.
> 4) Inwiefern sie das was wir schon gestaltet haben wieder als Stoff behandeln. (FA, I, XXII, p. 722)

The third point is of particular relevance for evaluating the poetic gains of Shelley's *Faust* translation: it reveals him in the process of appropriating Goethe's aesthetic forms. This means that in addition to understanding *what* the original says on the level of content, Shelley's translation has an ulterior poetic intention — to understand *how* it says it on the level of form. In this regard, it realizes one aspect of Goethe's conception of *Weltliteratur*: it shows a British poet practising to become a better writer in English by exploring the workings of Goethe's German.

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The 1815 *Faust* translation is approximately a thousand lines long; it starts with the 'Zueignung', skips the 'Vorspiel auf dem Theater', then follows the original line-by-line until line 1213 (i.e. encompassing the 'Zueignung', 'Prolog im Himmel', 'Nacht', and 'Vor dem Tor' in full, as well as the opening of 'Studierzimmer'). Although not quite word-by-word, the translation consistently privileges German syntax and phraseology to the extent of

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[19] Hendrik Birus, 'Goethes Idee der Weltliteratur: Eine historische Vergegenwärtigung', in *Weltliteratur Heute: Konzepte und Perspektiven*, ed. by Manfred Schmeling (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1995), pp. 5–28 (p. 8).

becoming incomprehensible in English. Shelley struggles with separable verbs, conjugation, and declension. His problems are compounded by idiomatic expressions as well as by vowel changes that prevented him from identifying the infinitive form or nominal case under which words are listed in a dictionary. Some representative examples of Shelley’s mistranslations are found in the dialogue that ensues upon Wagner’s entrance in the *Nacht* scene:

> WAGNER
> Pardon! I heard you declaiming
> You   certainly a greek play?
> In this art may I that profit
> When to day too day work it much.
> I have it often boasted heard
> A player can a priest teach.
>
> FAUST
> Yes, when the Priest a player is
> As that ~~then~~ for well in time come may
>
> WAGNER
> Ah when ~~thus~~ it thus in his museum conjured is,
> And sees the world hardly one (   )
> Hardly thro a telescope, nor of distant things
> How shall it them thro persuasion lead?
> (fols 151^{v}–52^{r})

> WAGNER
> Verzeiht! ich hör’ euch declamiren;
> Ihr las’t gewiß ein griechisch Trauerspiel?
> In dieser Kunst möcht’ ich ’was profitiren,
> Denn heut zu Tage wirkt das viel.
> Ich hab’ es öfters rühmen hören,
> Ein Komödiant könnt’ einen Pfarrer lehren.
>
> FAUST
> Ja, wenn der Pfarrer ein Komödiant ist;
> Wie das denn wohl zu Zeiten kommen mag.
>
> WAGNER
> Ach! wenn man so in sein Museum gebannt ist,
> Und sieht die Welt kaum einen Feyertag,
> Kaum durch ein Fernglas, nur von weiten,
> Wie soll man sie durch Ueberredung leiten?[20]

[20] Citations from *Faust* follow the first edition of 1808 as this was the text most likely used by Shelley. For ease of reference, line numbers are given from Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Faust*, FA, VII/1 (522–33).

Although most of the individual words are rendered with a more or less accurate English equivalent, the passage overall is hard to make sense of without recourse to the German. It is worth noting that the two words that Shelley failed to translate are represented by either a gap ('You certainly a greek play?') or an empty pair of brackets ('And sees the world hardly one ( )'): he consistently marks omissions throughout the transcription, leaving enough space to insert the missing word at a later date, which suggests that he intended to complete the translation at a point in the future. These particular two lacunae can be plausibly explained by Shelley's inability to identify *las't* as the past tense of *lesen* while *Feyertag* may have been spelled *Feiertag* or simply omitted in his dictionary. His failure to grasp colloquial cadences results in 'to day too day' for *heut zu Tage* and 'work it much' for *wirkt das viel* (525). He also gets his pronouns mixed up, giving 'his' for *sein* (530) and 'them' for *sie* (533). The fact that he wrote 'then', which he cancelled and replaced with 'for', to translate *denn* (529), as well as the choice of 'nor' for *nur* (532) indicates his (possibly inadvertent) tendency to select words that sound similar even when this phonetic equivalence is not substantiated by the sense.

Some of Shelley's mistakes 'would have embarrassed a conscientious novice' as E. B. Murray puts it in his rather hostile commentary on the translation (BSM, XXII, p. 476), but the fact that such easy-to-spot mistakes have not been corrected indicates a remarkable perseverance in working alone on such a difficult text. At the same time, other features of the translation suggest a purpose to the literalism. The coinage of 'magic-blast' for *Zauberhauch* and the more experimental 'around-thundered' for *umwittert* in line 8 of the opening stanza (cited above) inaugurate an interest in reconstructing German compounds that is sustained throughout. Further examples include 'near-watched' (fol. 147^{v}) for *herangewacht* (389), 'mind-vapours' (fol. 147^{v}) for *Wissensqualm* (396) and 'blessed-vaporous' (fol. 149^{r}) for

segenduftenden (451) — both of which reproduce the archaic sense of *Qualm* and *Duft* as 'vapour' — 'life-motion' and 'lifes-depth' (fol. 148^{r}, fol. 150^{v}) for *Lebensregung* and *Lebenstiefen* (413, 497), 'thunder-sentence' (fol. 154^{v}) for *Donnerwort* (622), 'rhymewise' (fol. 157^{v}) for *reimweis* (727), 'future-pleasure' (fol. 159^{r}) for *Werdelust* (789), and 'flamefire' (fol. 167^{r}) for *Flammenfeuer* (1044). Faust's comment on Wagner after his departure, 'Such' Er den redlichen Gewinn! | Sey er kein schellenlauter Thor!' (548–49), is rendered as 'Seeks he the Oratorical power! | Is he no sounding-lute fool!' (fol. 152^{v}); the adjectival 'sounding-lute' probably being based on the assumption that *schellenlaut* is a compound of *schellen* and *Laute*.

Shelley's handling of compounds suggests that he was not simply interested in learning to read German, but also in understanding its manner of conveying meaning. He was probably aware that most Germanists praised compound formation as a peculiar excellence of the language. Daniel Boileau's remark on their semantic clarity is representative: 'The German compound words are all formed out of these well-known roots of the language without the interference of any other idiom; they are formed according to familiar analogies and instantly become perfectly intelligible to the meanest capacity', a claim illustrated by a comparison of *Pocket-book*, *Poor-house*, and *Day-light* to *Suicide*, *Dentist*, and *Architect* as well as to *Selbstmord*, *Zahnartzt* [*sic*], and *Baumeister*.[21] In addition to being more easily intelligible than words with Greek or Latin roots, native compounds were taken to convey meaning more intensely. Coleridge, reporting a remark by Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock on the 'superior power which the German Language possessed, of concentrating meaning', explained the value of German compounds as follows:

> For the German possessing the same unlimited privilege of forming compounds, both with prepositions and with epithets as the Greek, it can express the richest single Greek word in a single German one, and is thus freed from the necessity of

[21] Daniel Boileau, *The Nature and Genius of the German Language Displayed in a More Extended Review of its Grammatical Forms than is to be Found in any Grammar Extant* (London: Boosey & Sons, 1820), pp. 5–6.

> weak or ungraceful paraphrases […] and yet I seem to feel that concentration or condensation is not the happiest mode of expressing this excellence, which seems to consist not so much in the less time required for conveying an impression, as in the unity and simultaneousness with which the impression is conveyed. It tends to make their language more picturesque: it *depictures* images better.[22]

From this perspective, Shelley's literal approach can be understood as an attempt to grasp *how* the German language produces meaning. This would explain why he adheres to German phrasing even in simple cases; for instance, in his translation of Mephistopheles' words 'Für einen Leichnam bin ich nicht zu Haus; | Mir geht es wie der Katze mit der Maus' (321–22) into 'For a dead body am I not to house | With me goes it as a Kat with a mouse' (fol. 145^{v}), the preference for the literal 'to house' over the idiomatic 'at home' seems to be a deliberate choice rather than a mere failure to understand the sense. The misspelling 'Kat' furthermore suggests that Shelley consulted the German text as he was transcribing the fair copy and was distracted by *Katze*. There are further examples of such interference from the German, e.g., the capitalized 'Shapes' for *Gestalten* in the first line, 'spirits craft & mouth' (fol. 147^{r}) for 'Geistes Kraft und Mund' (378), and 'Kristal' (fol. 162^{v}) for *Krystall* (880).

An even more striking example of purposeful literalism is found in Mephistopheles' words as he steps forth and addresses God (Fig. 1):

> When thou o Lord thyself once again approachest
> (is)
> And enquirest how all itself with us finds
> And thou me often accustomed willingness knowest
> So seest thou me even under the servants
> (fol. 144^{r})
>
> Da du, o Herr, dich einmal wieder nahst
> Und fragst wie alles sich bey uns befinde,
> Und du mich sonst gewöhnlich gerne sahst;
> So siehst du mich auch unter dem Gesinde.
> (271–74)

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[22] *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. by Kathleen Coburn and others, 16 vols (London: Routledge, 1969–2002), IV/2: *The Friend*, ed. by Barbara E. Rooke (1989), pp. 241–42. This edition hereafter abbreviated as CW.

In translating ‘sich […] befinde’ (272), Shelley opts for the unidiomatic literalism of ‘itself […] finds’ even though he must have known that *sich befinden* translates into English as ‘to be’ since he underlined the two words and inserted ‘is’ in brackets above ‘itself’. Although he would often insert variant words or phrases above or below a line when drafting and then use an underline to indicate his preferred choice, in the context of this transcription the function of supralinear insertions and underlines seems rather to be that of keeping multiple meanings in play. Another instance of this practice can be seen a bit lower on the same page, where Shelley translates ‘Er scheint mir, mit Verlaub von Ew. Gnaden’ (287) as

> appears
> He shines to me with   of eternal graces
> (fol. 144r)

As can be seen in Figure 1 (four lines from the bottom of the page), Shelley has made sure to leave enough blank space to subsequently insert a translation of *Verlaub* while lack of familiarity with German conventions has led him to express *Ew. Gnaden* as ‘eternal graces’. But more interesting than these mistakes is the addition of ‘appears’, underlined, above ‘shines’: it indicates that Shelley suspends making a decision between ‘shines to me’ and ‘appears to me’ when translating *scheint mir*. Another example is found in the opening stanza, where *Zug* (8) is rendered as ‘touch’, underlined, and with ‘train’ inserted above it. These supralinear glosses are a material feature of the manuscript that supports the hypothesis that Shelley’s primary purpose is not to render the text in readable English but to represent the German and its polyvalences. Nor can we exclude the possibility that he might have felt, as Constantine later would, that ‘there are moments when by this mechanical procedure a strange poetry materializes’ (‘German’, p. 222) — take, for instance, Shelley’s rendition of Faust’s disillusion with empty rhetoric:

> Yes, your oration, which so brilliant is

> In which you manhood Cutting curl
> Is slow as the Cloud-wind
> Which autumn'd through dry leaves rushes
> (fol. 152v)
>
> Ja, eure Reden, die so blinkend sind,
> In denen ihr der Menschheit Schnitzel kräuselt,
> Sind unerquicklich wie der Nebelwind,
> Der herbstlich durch die dürren Blätter säuselt!
> (554–57)

Shelley's insistence on radical literalism in his translation, even when a more idiomatic English expression must have been readily available, suggests that this particular document is not simply a language learning exercise: it is an exercise in learning *about* the language, both how German generates meaning in general and how Goethe in particular explores its potential for semantic multiplicity. In short: the literalism of this translation examines how the language of *Faust* is 'poetic'.

Alongside the linguistic qualities of the translation, we must also consider the material nature of the manuscript evidence. As noted above, the care with which the translation is transcribed suggests that it was prepared for safekeeping and/or private circulation. One hypothesis is that it might have been intended as a line-by-line gloss to use in conjunction with reading *Faust* in German. It would have enabled Shelley to follow the basic meaning while appreciating the original's aesthetic form (e.g. features such as rhyme patterns or rhythmic variation). He would have had need for such an aid to reading *Faust* in the original because no complete translation of the work appeared in his lifetime (he died in July 1822). The publication of Madame de Staël's *De l'Allemagne* in 1813 had stirred interest in *Faust* in French- and English-speaking literary circles, but the first complete translations did not appear until much later: Albert Stapfer's French translation in 1823 and Abraham Hayward's English prose translation in 1833. In the intervening years, several partial translations and prose summaries were published. These would typically include sanctimonious condemnation of the drama's immoral aspects, which the translators duly omitted.

This means that if Shelley wanted to read *Faust* uncensored, he would have to learn German to do it — a predicament that illustrates the necessity of translation for *Weltliteratur* to be possible. As Goethe put it in a letter to Carlyle:

> Und so ist jeder Übersetzer anzusehen, daß er sich als Vermittler dieses allgemein geistigen Handels bemüht, und den Wechseltausch zu befördern sich zum Geschäft macht. Denn, was man auch von der Unzulänglichkeit des Übersetzens sagen mag, so ist und bleibt es doch eins der wichtigsten und würdigsten Geschäfte in dem allgemeinen Weltwesen. (FA, II, X, p. 498)

But just as there may be losses in translation, so translation itself may represent a loss if it makes us complacent about learning foreign languages. It is precisely because a complete translation of *Faust* did *not* exist that Shelley produced the manuscript that now serves as a rare document of his engagement with the German language.

Although translations may give a preliminary knowledge of another nation's literature, *Weltliteratur* in its full sense — which includes literary interactions on the level of aesthetic form no less than conceptual content — can only come to fruition when authors are willing to fully immerse themselves in a foreign language and its modalities of meaning. In one of the notes to the *West-östlicher Divan*, Goethe remarks 'daß man jeden Dichter in seiner Sprache und im eigenthümlichen Bezirk seiner Zeit und Sitten aufsuchen, kennen und schätzen müsse' (FA, I, III, p. 270). Shelley's 1815 *Faust* translation is an attempt to do just that: get to know Goethe in German. His 1822 translation of two scenes from *Faust* continues this exchange (*Wechseltausch*) by bringing Goethe's work into his own English. As I will show in the final part of the paper, the impetus of this later translation is no longer to understand the German, but to create a new work in the English language in line with Shelley's belief that a successful poetic translation must be a poem in its own right.

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During his stay in Italy, Shelley became acquainted with John Gisborne, who acted as his tutor in German. The two read *Faust* together.[23] Shelley announces his translation of the 'Prologue in Heaven' and 'May-day Night' in a letter to Gisborne of 10 April 1822:

> Have you read Calderon's *Magico Prodigioso*? I find a striking similarity between Faust & this drama […]. *Cypriano* evidently furnished the *germ* of Faust, as Faust may furnish the germ of other poems; although it is [as] different from it in structure & plan, as the acorn from the oak. — I have, — (imagine my presumption) translated several scenes from both, as the basis of a paper for our journal. (*Letters*, II, p. 407)

Cypriano is the name of the protagonist of Pedro Calderón de la Barca's *El mágico prodigioso* (1667) and Shelley routinely used it to refer to the play as a whole. His 1822 *Faust* translation is therefore part of a comparative critical interpretation of Goethe and Calderón, a practical exercise of mediating between representative writers of separate national literary traditions. Exercises of this kind would come to define Goethe's model of *Weltliteratur* in the 1820s. The phrasing is carefully chosen: the word 'germ' and its synonyms 'seed' and 'acorn' occur frequently in Shelley's statements on poetry. 'All high poetry is infinite; it is as the first acorn, which contained all oaks potentially', he asserts in the *Defence of Poetry*, where he also argues that a poem transcends the time and place it is written in because it 'contains within itself the germ of a relation to whatever motives or actions have place in the possible varieties of human nature'.[24] The metaphor also recurs in the passage where Shelley famously compares translation to a violet:

> Sounds as well as thoughts have relations, both between each other and towards that which they represent […]. Hence the vanity of translation; it were as wise to cast a violet into a crucible that you might discover the formal principle of its colour and odour, as seek to transfuse from one language into another the creations of a poet. The plant must spring again from its seed or it will bear no flower — and this is the burthen of the curse of Babel. (p. 514)

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[23] *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. by Frederick L. Jones, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), II, 301 (16 June 1821), 308 (13 July 1821), 361 (22 October 1821).

[24] *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*, ed. by Donald H. Reiman and Neil Fraistat, 2nd edn (New York: Norton & Co, 2002), pp. 510–35 (pp. 528, 515).

The original might provide the seed of inspiration, but the translation sprouting from it must be an autonomous poem in its own right. This suggests a rhizomatic relation between translation and original: both are nodes in a network of poetry in different languages. This network could be described with Goethe's term *Weltliteratur*; in Shelley's words, it forms one 'great poem, which all poets, like the co-operating thoughts of one great mind, have built up since the beginning of the world' (*Defence*, p. 522).

Shelley's belief in the interconnectivity of all poetry inflects his translations of *Faust* and *El mágico prodigioso*. He began drafting both translations at roughly the same time in the same notebook: the opening lines of 'May-day Night' and a scene from *El mágico prodigioso* are interleaved in such a way that it is now impossible to determine which came first (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Shelley adds. e. 18, pp. 57–61). Whereas the 1815 *Faust* translation had started at the beginning and proceeded line-by-line until Shelley abandoned the project, the fact that he began his 1822 translation with 'May-day Night' suggests that he did not intend to translate all of *Faust*, but only the parts pertinent to his comparison with Calderón. More importantly, the physical proximity of these two translations where they are drafted in the notebook is mirrored by a lexical proximity in the translation choices that Shelley makes when rendering Goethe's German and Calderón's Spanish into English. One such example is his reflexive use of the verb 'to precipitate' in both translations.

> Dann diesen Felsen zu ersteigen,
> Von dem der Quell sich ewig sprudelnd stürzt,
> Das ist die Lust, die solche Pfade würzt!

Faust exclaims at the outset of 'Walpurgisnacht' (3842–44). For *sich stürzen* Shelley first drafted 'Scatter themselves' (MS Shelley adds. e. 18, p. 57) before arriving at the final version of the passage:

> And climb those rocks, where ever-bubbling springs
> Precipitate themselves in waterfalls
> Is the true sport that seasons such a path. ('May-day Night', 8–10)

He also experimented with 'precipitate itself' to translate *strömen* in Mephistopheles' description of the witches' chorus, 'Ja, den ganzen Berg entlang | Strömt ein wüthender Zaubergesang' (3954–55). He initially rendered these lines as 'Precipitates itself across the mountains' (MS Shelley adds. e. 18, p. 44) before opting for the etymologically related 'streams' for *strömen* in the final version: 'The torrent of a raging wizard song | Streams the whole mountain along' ('May-day Night', 144–45).

Shelley also introduces the verb in his translation of a scene from *El mágico prodigioso* that is written overleaf. In this scene Demonio (the Demon) orchestrates a tempest and presents himself to Cypriano as the sole survivor of a shipwreck. As he emerges out of the waves, Demonio describes the sea as a 'monstruo que de sí me arroja', which Shelley renders as 'the monster which | Precipitates itself upon me'.[25] This preoccupation with 'precipitating' most likely originates in Shelley's reading of Walter Scott's novel *The Pirate*.[26] In a paragraph describing a shipwreck in a tempest, Scott uses the verb no less than three times: the ship is 'precipitated against the rock, […] and again precipitated upon the face of the rock' while the protagonist Mordaunt dashes to 'precipitate himself' down a cliff to help a lone survivor.[27] Shelley is likely to have noticed the similarities between Calderón's and Scott's tempest scenes, so it is not surprising that he drew on Scott when translating Calderón. At the same time, the word resonates with the tempestuous momentum that also characterizes Faust and Mephistopheles' ascent up the Brocken, and so was rife for being repurposed in his translation of 'May-day Night'. This practice of interweaving translation

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[25] Pedro Calderón de la Barca, *El mágico prodigioso*, ed. by Bruce W. Wardropper, 5th edn (Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra, 2011), l. 1260; San Marino, Huntington Library, HM 2111, fols 15^{v}-16^{r}.
[26] Mary Shelley's journal records her reading of it on 30 January–2 February 1822, which makes it likely that Shelley had read it, too. *The Journals of Mary Shelley, 1814–1844*, ed. by Paula R. Feldman and Diana Scott-Kilvert, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), II, 393.
[27] Walter Scott, *The Pirate*, ed. by Mark Weinstein and Alison Lumsden (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2001), p. 68.

and allusion substantiates Shelley's conviction that one literary work furnishes the germ to another and that all poems are part of a multilingual poetic network.

This is not to say that Shelley just echoes whatever he happened to be reading at the time. The deliberate nature of his allusions is evidenced by the obvious intertextual relations between the 1822 *Faust* translation and the work of Shakespeare. According to his cousin Thomas Medwin, Shelley had noted a Shakespearean influence on *Faust* ('Margaret's madness, as I have heard Shelley observe, bore a strong resemblance to Ophelia's')[28] so it is perhaps in returning like for like that he made Shakespeare's witches a model for rendering the witcheries of 'May-day Night', as in the following chorus:

> Die Salbe giebt den Hexen Muth,
> Ein Lumpen ist zum Segel gut,
> Ein gutes Schiff ist jeder Trog,
> Der flieget nie, der heut nicht flog.
> (4008–11)
>
> Come onward, away! aroint thee, aroint!
> A witch to be strong must anoint, — anoint
> Then every trough, will be boat enough;
> With a rag for a sail we can sweep through the sky,
> Who flies not tonight when means he to fly?
> (202–06)

The first of the above lines does not correspond to anything in the original, it is introduced for the sake of 'aroint', a rhyme-word to 'anoint', which loosely translates Goethe's *Salbe*. But the word is also chosen because, for an English reader, 'aroint' has an archaic feel with Shakespearean associations: it recalls both *Macbeth*, 'Aroint thee, witch' (I. 3. 5), and *King Lear*, 'aroint thee, witch, aroint thee!' (III. 4. 124).[29] This kind of expansion is typical of the 'May-day Night' translation: while generally striving to represent the full German meaning, Shelley does not hesitate to add or rearrange lines in order to strengthen the overall rhythm

[28] Thomas Medwin, *The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, 2 vols (London: Newby, 1847), II, 268.
[29] *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. by G. Blakemore Evans and others, 2nd edn (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997).

and rhyme scheme. Timothy Webb argues that the translation's poetic intention justifies its departures from the original, even when these are unintentional. Commenting on Shelley's rendition of 'die unvollkommne Scheibe | Des rothen Monds' (3851–52) as 'The blank unwelcome round of the red moon' (19) Webb writes:

> Obviously *unvollkommne* […] suggested *unwillkommne* and Shelley's *unwelcome*. Whether this change was unconscious or not is of little importance. What does matter is that by a process whose aims were poetic rather than pedantic Shelley hit upon an adjective which evokes most suggestively the ominous atmosphere of the *Walpurgisnacht*.[30]

Poetic appropriateness blurs the line between inadvertent mistake and deliberate variation. And yet Shelley was dissatisfied with the result. 'I feel how imperfect a representation, even with all the licence I assume to figure to myself how Göthe wd. have written in English, my words convey', he confessed to Gisborne, adding that '[n]o one but Coleridge is capable of this work' (*Letters*, II, p. 407). In line with this conviction, Shelley filled his 'May-day Night' with echoes of Coleridge; compare, for instance, his rendition of a line from the Witches' chorus to a line from Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*:

> Was reit'st du so schnelle! (*Faust*, 3971)
>
> Since you ride by so fast, on the headlong blast ('May-day Night', 167)
>
> The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast (*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, CW, I/1, p. 377, l. 49)

If the poetry of Shakespeare and Coleridge helped Shelley generate the intoxicating energy of the witches' revels on the Brocken, his treatment of the celestial hymns of 'Prolog im Himmel' had a different centre of gravity. Most British reviewers condemned what they perceived as Goethe's religious and artistic profligacy even as they begrudgingly admired his poetic talent — a reception that somewhat resembled the fate of Shelley's own publications.

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[30] Timothy Webb, *The Violet in the Crucible: Shelley and Translation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), p. 176.

The *Quarterly Review*'s description of *Faust* as 'one of the most extravagant productions of ill-directed though boundless genius' bears comparison to the same *Review*'s lengthy denunciation of the moral perniciousness of Shelley's *Laon and Cythna*, which is prefaced by the admission that 'we are bound to say that it is not without beautiful passages'.[31] The 'Prolog im Himmel' was censured for its blasphemous reworking of the Book of Job, and Shelley, who according to Mary Shelley had himself 'meditated' to write a lyrical drama 'founded on the book of Job', might have been attracted to the 'Prolog' as a model for his own work.[32] It appears to have been a reference point in the composition of his lyrical drama *Hellas* in late autumn 1821. In an unused draft for a preface, Shelley noted that '[t]he ~~readers of Faust~~ admirers of Goethe will [?perhaps] recognize in the [?true] chorus […] an attempt to naturalize the inimitable harmony of the lyrical poetry of Faust' (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Shelley, adds. e. 7, pp. 193–94).

Shelley's translation of the Archangels' chorus in the 'Prologue in Heaven' (243–70), carried out only a few months after the composition of *Hellas*, can be understood as a second attempt to naturalize the harmony of Goethe's verse. It presented him with a hard challenge, as can be illustrated by his struggle with Raphael's opening lines:

> Die Sonne tönt, nach alter Weise,
> In Brudersphären Wettgesang,
> Und ihre vorgeschriebne Reise
> Vollendet sie mit Donnergang.
> Ihr Anblick giebt den Engeln Stärke,
> Wenn keiner sie ergründen mag.
> Die unbegreiflich hohen Werke
> Sind herrlich wie am ersten Tag.
> (243–50)

[31] 'Art. VI. — *Cours de Littérature Dramatique*. Par A. W. Schlegel.', *The Quarterly Review*, 12 (1814), 112–46 (p. 144); 'Art. VII. I. — *Laon and Cythna, or the Revolution of the Golden City: A Vision of the Nineteenth Century*. By Percy B. Shelley.', *The Quarterly Review*, 21 (1819), 460–71 (p. 461).
[32] *The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. by Mary Shelley, 4 vols (London: Moxon, 1839), II, 131.

For these eight lines, Shelley produced *c*. 40 lines of draft over three pages (see Fig. 2 for the first of these pages) and he made further revisions as he transcribed a fair copy into a booklet prepared for the purpose (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Shelley adds. c. 4, fols 126-30). His final version reads:

> The Sun makes music as of old
> Amid the rival spheres of Heaven
> On its predestined circle rolled
> With thunder-speed: The Angels even
> Draw strength from gazing on its glance
> Though none its meaning fathom may,
> The world's unwithered countenance
> Is bright as at creation's day. (MS Shelley adds. c. 4, fol. 126^{r})

However, not being pleased with this, Shelley added a footnote containing an alternative 'literal' translation of the chorus.[33] This translation differs both from the draft in his notebook and from the 1815 *Faust* translation, and must therefore have been composed specifically for the footnote. Raphael's opening words are rendered as follows:

> The Sun sounds, according to ancient custom
> In the song of emulation of his brother spheres,
> And its forewritten circle
> Fulfills with a step of thunder.
> It's countenance gives the Angels strength
> Though no one can fathom it.
> The incredible high works
> Are excellent as at the first day. (MS Shelley adds. c. 4, fol. 127^{r})

The footnote concludes with a remark that recalls the passage of the *Defence of Poetry* in which he compared translation to casting a violet in a crucible:

> Such is a *literal* translation of this astonishing chorus; it is impossible to represent in another language the melody of the versification; even the volatile strength and delicacy of the ideas escape in the crucible of translation, and the reader is surprised to find a *caput mortuum*. (MS Shelley adds. c. 4, fol. 127^{r})

[33] This footnote is reproduced in most editions of the translation; see, e.g., Mary Shelley's edition of the *Poetical Works*, IV, pp. 340–41.

When the relations between sounds are disturbed, the ideas evaporate as well.

Nevertheless, a comparison between the poetic and literal versions gives some hints about Shelley's conception of how sound interacts with sense in the two languages. Goethe's *Brudersphären* are rendered as 'brother spheres' in the literal, but have to give way to 'rival spheres' in the poetic version. As can be seen in Fig. 2, the notebook draft does not include the wording 'brother spheres', but Shelley had experimented with 'sister spheres' — most likely on account of the assonance heard in the *i*-sound of 'Amid' and 'sister' as well as in his final choice of 'rival'. This indicates that he is concerned enough with accuracy to hesitate about transforming *Brudersphären* into 'sister spheres', but not enough to insert a tonally inappropriate 'brother spheres'. The rendition 'rival spheres' is a compromise that does not belie the original sense while also fitting in with the soundscape of his translation. In the following line, Shelley's Latinate 'predestined' is a correct translation of *vorgeschriebne*, but in the literal version he prefers the Germanic 'forewritten', showing that he is paying attention to the etymology and construction of words. The coinage 'with thunder-speed' recreates the iambic metre of *mit Donnergang*, which is lost in the literal 'step of thunder' and which echoes Shelley's fascination with German compounds. 'Die unbegreiflich hohen Werke' are transformed into 'The world's unwithered countenance' — a translation that completely departs from the literal meaning that Shelley interprets as 'The incredible high works', but that describes God's creation in a way that fits with the overall prosodic structure that he develops in rendering this chorus. In this sense, his poetic translation strikes a balance between an accurate rendition of the German meaning and a melodious evocation of its prosodic textures.

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Shelley learned to read *Faust* in the original because there was no complete translation available in his lifetime, but also in order to learn about German: to understand how the language works, how it constructs meaning by means of compounds, the kind of metrical patterns that are available, and how its sounds relate to thoughts. He may have started with the kind of translation exercises that were common in Romantic-era German textbooks, but in the course of his engagement with *Faust* he moved towards a Goethean conception of *Weltliteratur*, one which involves a poet immersing himself in the literature of another language and then drawing on this knowledge when writing in his own.

If Shelley's 1815 *Faust* translation can be read as an apprentice's journey into Goethe's German, the 1822 rendition of 'Prologue in Heaven' and 'May-day Night' is carried out with the poetical intention of bringing some of the seeds contained in Goethe's work to fruition as autonomous poetry in English. The later translation also embodies Shelley's own world-literary idea that all poetry is part of one 'great poem' by introducing echoes and allusions to the works of Calderón, Coleridge, Scott, and Shakespeare. Although, even in 1822, Shelley's grasp of German is not perfect, it is important to acknowledge that most of his variations on the original are done in the service of enhancing his translation's poetic qualities, aiming for the point of indifference between poetic and semantic accuracy.

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