

A little touch of Goethe in Weber

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Goethe's context for Weber

Weber lived in an intellectual context in which Kant and Goethe were common presences. Though, while Kant is directly visible in Weber's epistemological foundation, Goethe occupies a less debated position. Simmel characterizes such position as the search for a humanistic formation of the human being, through "the development of human faculties to the fullest extent of all possibilities" (Simmel, 1906, p. 62). Later in the poet's life, this ideal was subjected to profound changes. In contrast to the orientation towards an individual education that culminates in differentiation, as an autonomous individual who seeks perfection (the development of one's being and feelings), the constant orientation towards an active life emerges, centered on the key concept of activity – the shift from the individual as the subject of an individual being to the individual as the subject of an individual task" (Simmel, 2005, p. 195). García (1992) depicts this change as the transition from "*Bildung* to *Beruf*" (education to occupation) based on the two Wilhelm Meister novels: while *Wilhelm Meister's apprenticeship* points to the universalist ideal, *Wilhelm Meister's journeyman years or the renunciants* restricts this quest to strict professional specialization.

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Weber asserts that both Faust's failure to achieve his aspirations to totality and Goethe's late work are characterized by the premises of restraint and self-limitation to specialized work. This is the context that surrounds Weber's quotes from Goethe in his lecture *Science as a vocation* and in *The protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism* (Pesc), seeking to characterize specialization not only in its intellectual dimension, but, in the broader concept of "*Beruf*", as a calling in terms of constant dedication to a same activity. For Weber, Luther's translation of the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians – "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called" – is significant (Schluchter, 2024; Kemple, 2014).

Key to his reading of the poet, for the editors of Max Weber-Gesamtausgabe (MWG), it is no coincidence that Goethe appears at the end of *Pesc* or of *Science as a vocation*, through the concept of personality: as humanistic and ascetic self-limitation

[...] in Weber's eyes, *Years of wandering* and *Faust II* developed a basic sense of ascetic motif that transcends the Christian religion; and in *Urworte* it becomes clear through the interaction of the devil, individuality and the character of the person with the "world" that, ultimately, one can only avoid the danger of losing one's self to the accidental, one's inner self to the outer, through self-limitation (MWG, I/17, 1992, p. 42).

In the context of universities, Weber appropriates Goethe to underline the need for self-limitation (*Selbstbegrenzung*) and renunciation of Faustian universality, based on constant dedication to the same activity, the "demands of the day". In his consideration of the concept of personality, Weber stands alongside Goethe in the subtle difference between the "*Dämon*" and the "*Teufel*", also doing so in *Politics as a vocation*, to point out the lack of contact of young politicians with the harsh reality of the contest for power and the absence of organizational capacities that would enable a "sense of proportion" and a realistic "ethics of responsibility" – hence the use of the quotation taken from Goethe's *Faust II*: "Remember that the Devil's old, When you're old, too, you'll understand him" (Goethe, 2017, p. 312). This same quotation is used in *Science as a vocation* to indicate the same need for a certain experience of the world, for restraint of passions in the face of the need to support what exists.

Taking this reference to Goethe's *Faust*, our analysis will focus on Faust and Mephisto, particularly their "long-lasting social relationship" (Weber, 1980). Here we find a scarcely explored aspect. Starting with an analysis of the *Intermediate considerations* (MWG I/19, 1989), we focus on the tension affecting the self in modernity and on the impossibility of "reconciliation between universality and individuality" (Sell, 2019), which is different from the certain level of reconciliation that Faust

achieves at the end of his journey, which brings him closer to Hegel, when he states that he “knows the world sufficiently”, accepting himself.

This tone allows us to explore the effects of intellectualism and the disenchantment of the world as concepts that appear in Faust’s activity. He has always been in search of a compensatory causality that would provide him with the meaning of the world – that which “connects him at his deepest core”. Taking the work of Pierucci (2003) as a guide, we point out a strong connection between Faust and the “loss of meaning”, the second key in the concept of disenchantment.

The text moves towards the image of “the end of Faust’s life”, which Weber brings up at the end of *Pesc*: Faust is trapped in constant activity and the intent of his long-lasting social relationship with Mephisto persists through end, without him ever reaching full acceptance of his self. Living his highest moment, he uses the conditional pronouncing the well known words – “I might say to the passing moment, ‘Linger awhile, you are so fair!’” – but he doesn’t, creating a powerful image of the impossibility of “holding on to the moment”. In our analysis, the text situated him in the displacement of hedonism and eudaemonia – the possibility of living well in the present. Weber also points out that the rationalism of world domination, present in the spirit of capitalism, is “completely devoid [*entkleidet*] of any eudaemonistic, not to say hedonistic, admixture” (MWG I/18, 2016, p. 159). In the more general context of “*Vorbemerkung*”, the displacement of eudaemonism and hedonism occurs before the “most fateful force in our modern life: capitalism” (*Idem*, p. 105). The end of Faust’s life, trying to tame the ocean and destroying nature and killing a couple of elders (Philemon and Baucis) and their guest pilgrim, places him within the best-known image of the end of the *Protestant ethics*: the rigid crust of steel.

Fictional universe and concepts in interaction

Methodologically, we are inspired by Kemple (2014): the fictional universe must interact with conceptual research, suggesting speculative scenarios that emerge from or even inform real experience, based on an exposition of literature within its historical and theoretical context. Weber mobilizes the fictional universe in a meaning of performative signification which historically adapts to our context. This allows for an association between fictional speculation and the factual argumentation inherent in the construction of concepts: “more than simply dramatizing the facts, they offer a way of imagining the workings of the world through the frameworks of fiction [...] hybrid constructions of historical fact and literary fiction [that] provide imaginary models of what might have happened or could have turned out otherwise” (Kemple, 2014, pp. 151-152). For García (2011), Weber moves like Janus: on the one hand,

he demands logically and empirically defined concepts and, on the other, he uses metaphors from Goethe and Rilke that in a certain way re-enchant the social universe.

This is not limited to providing rhetorical figures that play a secondary role in systematic reflection. For us, this is a mnemonic resource of investigation and exposition that establishes the enclosure of the arc of time of the studied phenomenon at its current development situation. The fictional image as the last word appears to be the end of a process as if it were irreversible; however, it should be understood as something open: the contingencies of countless possibilities for development belong to the future. We draw on regularity: Weber quotes Goethe to present a wide-angle image that reveals time itself, as at the end of *Pesc* or of *Science as a vocation*. It's no different in "The 'objectivity' of knowledge", Weber (1988b), with the beautiful image of the magical cloak that Faust wished to possess to fly towards the Sun.

In these textual situations, he allows himself to make value judgments, but soon dismiss them, leaving the poetic image as the last word – enunciation that lingers after redress. Considering this formidable resource of investigation and exposition that crystallizes concepts by using literature as an image of the time can provide Weber scholars with new ideas – and here the work aims to bring some contribution. The history of sociology is not only that of the *logos*, but also that of the *mythos*, "[...] perhaps it can't be any other way, because the order of scientific discourse comes up against the inexpressible in its own terms and needs to resort to allegory, metaphor, a type of language that can only be interpreted from the coordinates of a long cultural tradition" (García, 1992, p. 12).

However, it should be mentioned that Weber and Goethe have important differences: Weberian conceptual thinking is informed by the Kantian referential and requires univocity and clarity in the conceptual construction; Goethe, beyond the Hegelian tendency towards synthesis and reconciliation between the individual and the universal, moves towards the incommensurable and follows what is common to the poetic imagination – the presence of ambiguity and the unspeakable. He has adopted the principle of revealing the deepest to the attentive reader through configurations that simultaneously oppose each other and mirror each other. The mirroring draws on similes (*Gleichnisse*), while the inverse appears in gradations, often antinomial, promoting variations on the same theme: the verses repeat similarities and contrasts.

There is a vast literature on Faust. Here we draw on a short selection of recent studies by Brazilian and German researchers, although keeping focused on the original text with its difficulties: 1. Faust has 12110 verses, composed over more than sixty years with several interruptions, in two very different parts; 2. work of a lifetime, the writing reveals the temporal layers of its construction; 3. Goethe

sought to make the contradictions of the text more intricate, resorting to “blurring the new scenes by fumigating them to ascribe an additional, old-fashioned patina” (Jaeger, 2019, p. 280).

The third difficulty, which builds the image of a patina, is the one that helps the present study, as it indicates the need to choose one among several layers of Faust’s patina (all of them are valid), which will provide a fixed point of view to realign the long field of verses, aiming to rebuild Faust from a specific perspective. We cannot elude partiality and, methodologically, we have affinity for Weber’s unilateral point of view of ideal types, isolating one of the threads of such a vast poetic work, even if this ends up as the immeasurable and enigmatic character of a work of art and its ambiguities, which makes it alive.

To maintain Faust’s dynamic, we have chosen not to develop an exegesis of Weberian concepts. In place of a systematic exposition, we have opted to relocate the concepts for the background, making them reemerge through the characters: “the relationship [with the social element] should lead not away from the work of art but deeper into it” (Adorno, 2019a, p. 60). The text is written close to the essay form, characterized by an “antisystematic impulse into its own way of proceeding and introduces concepts unceremoniously, ‘immediately,’ just as it receives them” (Adorno, 2019b, p. 37).

To begin with, we will work with one of the themes that organize the dialogue between Weber and Goethe – that of the diremption, and we will do so with the help of a resource present in Faust, which traces the mirroring and contradiction of its meaning orientations – the oxymorons. Therefore, we will return to the theme of rejection of the world.

Tension, diremption and reconciliation

We start with *An intermediate consideration* (MWG I/19, 1989), which assesses the intensity and direction of the world’s religious rejection. By aligning the different value-spheres, Weber undertakes a perspective from within such spheres, which unfolds into the multilaterality of the prevalent rationalities that advance according to their inner legalities. This variation in points of view can be compared to “a plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses, a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices” (Bakhtin, 1984) that characterizes the characters of Dostoiévski.

We can consider that the subject who performs an action (*Handeln*) is rarely guided by a single sphere of rationality; this agent acts rather in transit between spheres. Social relations are always immersed in tension. Considering Weber’s emphasis on the irreconcilable nature of meaning orientations inherent in rationality

spheres, action implies tensions upon the self in modernity, which is expressed in the separation of the spheres of rationality, as put forth by the neo-Kantian school of Baden (Sell, 2013). For Goldman ([1992] 2023), tension is a key issue in Weber's work, as he always seeks practices that place the self in tension with the everyday domains of the world and that can serve as levers for change and innovation.

Let's consider the inner legalities of the spheres of meaning that Weber develops in *An intermediate consideration*: the reconciliation between configurations of meaning – for example, between duty and eroticism, between the salvation religion and the intellect – becomes difficult, which results in a choice, always exclusionary and “out of tune”. After commenting on a passage from Goethe about the difficult combination between sexual love and mutual duties until the *pianissimo* of old age, Weber wrote: “pure life [*rein*] is rarely granted. If it is granted, one can speak of luck and the grace of fate – not [of] one's own merit” (MWG I/19, 1989, p. 511)¹.

A similar condition appears in Goethe, because Mephisto's action is also divided, turning the agent into a prisoner of choices. Diremption is one of Mephisto's traits. When he enters Faust's room for the first time, in the form of a dog, he cannot notice the imperfection of one corner of the pentagram, which hinders him from going out the same way he entered. However, in our view, when he takes on the human form of a student, the path he chooses to enter will have to be the same as the one to exit (he becomes imbued with the human): “It's an iron law we devils can't flout, the way we come in we've got to go out, we're free as to entrée but not as to exit” (Goethe, 2014, p. 50, verse 1443) – law of ghosts and the Devil, which, taken in the form of the student, points to the fact that, by choosing a way, we get trapped to it. Faust, on the other hand, appears on stage manifesting the tensions upon the self, but he is the argument for self-diremption when he states that “two souls live in me, alas, irreconcilable with one another” (Goethe, 2014, p. 40, v. 1138)².

Diremption comes up again in the categories of reason and science (*Vernunft* and *Wissenschaft*), a trace of light of divine origin and the maximum power of hu-

1. “Selten gewährt es das Leben rein; wem es gewährt wird, der spreche von Glück und Gnade des Schicksals, – nicht: von eigenem Verdienst” (MWG I/19, p. 511). The adjective “rein” supports several translation options, qualifying life as pure, clear, total or perfect. The reference to Goethe's poem is unclear; it could be the poem “Four Seasons”. See Weber (MWG I/19, p. 511).
2. Verse 1112, “Zwei Seelen wohnen, ach! In meiner Brust [...]” (Goethe, 2016, p. 118). In the article, the quotations from Faust in English use the edition: Johann Goethe, 2014. *Faust. A tragedy*. Parts One and Two completely revised. Translated by Martin Greenberg. New Haven, Yale University Press. We worked with the Brazilian bilingual edition and consulted *Faust* directly in German. The endnotes present the verses in German, numbered and referenced by the editions: Johann Goethe, 2016, *Fausto. Uma tragédia*. São Paulo, Editora 34. Bilingual edition, First part – and Goethe, Johann. 2017, *Fausto. Uma tragédia*. São Paulo, Editora 34. Bilingual edition, Second part.

man beings. In Mephisto's words: "despise learning, heap contempt on reason, the human race's best possession [...] I will drag him deep into debauchery where all proves shallow, meaningless" (*Idem*, p. 64, v. 1881)³. Reason and science also operate the tragedy of the erudite scholar, they no longer reach what holds the world and life together in their deep core, leading to Faust's disenchantment of the world for losing meaning. Again, Mephisto: "about suns and worlds I don't know beans, I only see how mortals find their lives pure misery" (*Idem*, p. 12, v. 286)⁴, mortals who, upon receiving a flash of divine light, adopt it as reason (*Vernunft*): "he'd be much better off, in my opinion, without the bit of heavenly light you dealt him out. [...] He calls it Reason, and the use he puts it to? To act more beastly than beasts ever do" (*Idem*, p. 12, v. 290)⁵. Reason appears attacked by what is familiar to the spheres that give meaning to life: it illuminates and leads, but loses the whole, the cosmos and the alliance with the self, by the discernment that separates – and, on top of that, it produces bestiality, always guided by their justifications. From a Weberian point of view, *Faust* approaches reason for what it cannot offer, that is, a cosmos endowed with meaning – taking the disenchantment of the world as a loss of meaning. On the other hand, salvation religions build a course toward the world's meaning and illuminate existence – but Faust stays away from them, because he doesn't know that "*Der Herr*" has appointed him to salvation.

In his *Faust*, Goethe inscribed bipolar processes⁶, processes that show two opposed façades, just like Weber when characterizing Janus face of intramundane asceticism, which, wanting the good of salvation in the other world, ended up creating in this world the evil of wealth that it rejected⁷; or the long process of disenchantment of the world marked by a double action, initially as a force that leads to decline of magical beliefs in nature, unifying a cosmos endowed with meaning, and later on, shattering this unified cosmos that becomes divided by reason and science.

3. Verse 1851, "Verachte nur Vernunft und Wissenschaft, Des Menschen allerhöchste Kraft, [...] Den schlepp'ich durch das wilde Leben, Durch flache Unbedeutendheit" (Goethe, 2016, p. 180).

4. Verse 279, "Von Sonn' und Welten weiss ich nichts zu sagen, Ich sehe nur, wie sich die Menschen plagen". (Goethe, 2016, p. 50).

5. Verse 285, "Er nennt's Vernunft und braucht's allein, nur tierischer als jedes Tier zu sein [...] Ein wenig besser würd'er Leben, hättest du ihm nicht den Schein des Himmelslichts gegeben" (Goethe, 2016, p. 50).

6. Term by Pierucci (2003) that organizes the historical phases of the process of disenchantment of the world.

7. In this consideration, Weber uses a phrase from Mephisto, but inverting it: "But then asceticism was the strength that 'always wants good and always does evil' – that is, evil in the sense he had in mind: possession and its temptations" (Weber, 2005, p. 116). Mephisto says he is: "a humble part of that great power which always means evil, always does good" [Ein Teil von jener Kraft/Die das Böse will und das Gute schafft], verse 1336, (Goethe, 2016, p. 138).

Goethe resorts notably to oxymorons to expose diremptions in the psychological dimension. In a crucial passage, they characterize Faust's desires that subsidize his wager with Mephisto, as he seeks: "gratifications that are painful, love and hatred violently mixed, anguish that enlivens, inspiriting trouble" (Goethe, 2014 p. 61, v. 1793)⁸. As inseparable opposing forces that are always simultaneous and that hinder "pure life" (Weber), they will ever be present in his inner state, intensified by his Promethean will representative of humanity, trapped in the heights and depths, from the sublime to the horror, one affecting the other, resulting in the expression that precedes these oxymorons: "I want frenzied excitements" (*Idem*, p. 61, v. 1793)⁹.

Only frenzy could result from this diremption, which now unites qualitative and quantitative traits that redefine inner life: "all that men everywhere undergo [...] make mine [...] everything human encompass in my single person" (*Idem*, p. 62, v. 1799)¹⁰. The verb *genießen* is very important, appealing to what can be savored, received, tasted, and enjoyed; however, it will always be opposed by the renunciation and chronic dissatisfaction of an orientation always focused on the future and a state of scantiness, the simultaneous as an antithetical force that nullifies enjoyment and replaces the desire [*Gelüst*], another key to interpreting *Faust*:

I've rushed about the world for many a year, Seized what I had a mind to, everywhere. It didn't please me? – goodbye, did I care! On what escaped me didn't waste a tear. My sole wish has been what? – to desire, Sate my desire and desire again, all over. I stormed through life in grand style, mightily, But wiser now, I act more thoughtfully. I've learned enough about the world we live in, What lies beyond is closed to human vision. (Goethe, 2014, p. 417, v. 11789)¹¹.

8. Verse 1765, "[...] Dem Taumel weih'ich mich, dem schmerzlichen Genuss, Verliebten Hass, erquickendem Verdruss" (Goethe, 2016, p. 174).
9. Verse 1766, "Dem Taumel weih'ich mich" (Goethe, 2016, p. 174).
10. Verse 1770, "Und was der ganzen Menschheit zugeteilt ist, will ich in meinem innern Selbst genießen" (Goethe, 2016, p. 174).
11. Verse 11433, "Ich bin nur durch die Welt gerannt/ Ein jed' Gelüst ergriff ich bei den Haaren/ Was nicht genügte, ließ ich fahren/ Was mir entwischte, ließ ich ziehn/ Ich habe nur begehrt und nur vollbracht/ Und abermals gewünscht und so mit Macht/ Mein Leben durchgestürmt/ erst gross und mächtig/ Nun aber geht es weise, geht bedächtig" (Goethe, 2017, p. 954). One state that cancels the other, in this sad situation in *Faust*, reminds us of one of the development phases of the subjective spirit in Hegel, commented by Marcos Müller (2019, p. 1273): "The contradiction of will and its consequences, among them the bad infinity of the recurring choice of a new finite content, which, in turn, is repeatedly abandoned, is the main argument for the "suspension" of the will as arbitrariness in the figure of the will that has the universal form of wanting for its own sake. object, content and end".

Thinking about the tensions and this antinomical character of diremptions, could a reconciliation occur? Jaeger (2010; 2024) maintains that it doesn't, because the calvary of the absolute spirit, in Hegel's image at the end of the *Phenomenology*, always rips Faust out of the present, so that his spirit can never return to itself. Moreover, Faust does not remember, he does not have the volition and the preservation effort necessary to do so, what distances him from the concepts of *Aufheben/Aufhebung* and also *Bildung*. His quest for wholeness places him in endless path, already warned by Mephisto: "Believe me [...] only a God can take in all of them, the whole lot, for He dwells in eternal light, while we poor devils are stuck down below in darkness and gloom, lacking even candlelight, and all you qualify for is, half day, half night" (Goethe, 2014, p. 62, v. 1804)¹².

In *An intermediate consideration* (MWG I/19, 1989), Weber implies the impossibility of reconciliation between the action and the various spheres of meaning involved in it, their interior legalities. His qualification of the tension inherent in action, as an antinomy, is close to Goethe's choice of oxymorons. Weber's reflection on the Faustian aspiration to wholeness is also notable. Commenting Tolstoy in *Science as a vocation*, he associates the life of peasants to the rhythm of nature, which fulfils a complete cycle, differing from the modern culture that extends its contents to infinity, making its totality escape easily from the individual, who loses what is significant in this totality.

Unlike in Hegel, about the reconciliation between the individual and the universal, in Goethe and Weber the absolute is inaccessible. For Faust, only after death "All insufficiency [...] is made good", because he, in choosing wholeness, will have to leave through the same path he entered, that is, that of insufficiency. Bathed in the dew of Lethe, his fixation on the wholeness fades as he deals with oblivion (*Vergesslichkeit*) another term that accompanied his action. According to the editors of MWG I/18, Weber read Bielschowsky's book (*Goethe, sein Leben und seine Werke*), which provides a great key: "self-knowledge [about the immoderation of Faustian striving, ed.] is self-liberation and self-limitation, but wise self-limitation is the opposite of what Mephistopheles wanted from him" (MWG I/18, 2016, p. 662) – that's why Faust is bathed in oblivion.

However, contradicting Jaeger, a certain reconciliation occurs, as Faust finally finds a word that fully counteracts the attitude of whom ever found the world scant. The verse of momentary reconciliation with this world is written with all the light-

12. Verse 1780, "Glaub unsereinem: dieses Ganze/ Ist nur für einen Gott gemacht!/ Er findet sich in einem ew'gen Glanze/ Uns hat er in die Finsternis gebracht/ Und euch taugt einzig Tag und Nacht" (Goethe, 2016, p. 174).

ness of the term “enough” (*genug*), a major and ascending chord that only occurs once, pulled by the tonic – enough – “I’ve learned enough about the world we live in” (Goethe, 2014, p. 418, v. 11797)¹³.

In *An intermediate consideration* such reconciliation would seem strange, since action in the world became associated with tension and the choice between different gods. Conditioned by oblivion, Faust can make possible what was unfeasible, reversing Weber’s expectation that:

[...] an individual could absorb the overall culture, or that he could in some sense absorb what was “essential” about it, for which there was also no definitive measure, and that “culture” and the pursuit of it could therefore have some kind of inner worldly meaning for him. Certainly, “culture” for the individual did not consist in the quantum of what he acquired, of “cultural goods”, but in a form formed from it. But there was no guarantee that this – for him – would come to a meaningful end at the moment of his death (MWG I/19, 1989, p. 518)¹⁴.

Wholeness has not been reached (the first monologue in the workroom is lost), but there is a moment of sufficiency, also fleeting, amid forgetfulness of the previous stages, which creates something like a definitive criterion. In the last stages of his life, he didn’t become a vase possessing grace, but ended up resembling a tool, stuck incessantly in activity. This made him go round the world, neither complete nor satisfied, but having seen enough, being about to be blinded by apprehension.

Indeed, this is an illusory event. After all, Goethe always puts forth an affirmation through its opposite. Even so, as a perceptive mark, we can’t ignore it: the sound of the shovels that he hears in his last perception is a sound that reconnects him with the divine plan to lead him to the light, a variation of Faust’s response to the Apprehension (*die Sorge*), which arises from the smoke of the linden trees: “The night seems darker, presses closer round me, Yet all is clear, as bright as day, within” (Goethe, 2014, p. 420, v. 11857)¹⁵.

The tensions, diremptions and possibilities of reconciliation are themes around which Weber and Goethe’s *Faust* enter in dialogue. Weber’s antinomian vision be-

13. Verse 11441, “Der Erdenkreis ist mir genug bekannt” (Goethe, 2017, p. 954).

14. “[...] dass ein einzelner die Gesamtkultur, oder dass er das in irgendeinem Sinne ‘Wesentliche’ an ihr, für welches es überdies keinen endgültigen Maßstab gab, in sich aufnehmen könne, und dass also die ‘Kultur’ und das Streben nach ihr irgendeine innerweltlichen Sinn für ihn haben könne. Gewiss bestand ‘Kultur’ für den einzelnen nicht im Quantum des von ihm an, ‘Kulturgütern’ Errafften, sondern in einer geformten daraus. Aber dafür, dass diese – für ihn – ein sinnvolles Ende gerade mit dem ‘zufälligen’ Zeitpunkt seine Todes erreicht habe, bestand keine Gewähr” (Weber, 1989, p. 518-519).

15. Verse 11500, “Die Nacht scheint tiefer tief hereinzudringen, Allein im Innern leuchtet helles Licht” (Goethe, 2017, p. 964).

tween action's spheres of meaning can be compared to Goethe's presentation of the self through oxymorons. However, it is necessary to go further and try to construct an image that amalgamates Faust's actions, by getting back to the beginning, when he appears on stage in the first actions and monologues.

The tragedy of the erudite and the wager

Faust comes to life as the bearer of a constant aspiration, oriented towards action, a driving force that leads him to activity, for being dissatisfied with himself and the results he achieves. He enters the scene unsatisfied with the limits of human understanding provided by science and philosophy: despite studying them resolutely (*Durchaus hab studiert*) and with maximum commitment (*heißem Bemühen*), he cannot know what connects the world at its deepest core, resulting in the feeling of not being able to know anything (*daß wir nichts Wissen können*).

Assuming the Promethean point of view as a representative of humanity, given the interdiction of not having access to the whole, the problem arises: "What am I, then?". And he concludes: "What am I, then, if it can never be: The realization of all human possibility, that crown my soul so avidly reaches for?" (Goethe, 2014, p. 63, v. 1833)¹⁶. This impossibility of access to the One as a cosmos endowed with meaning, which would satisfy his search for a compensatory causality, shows us how Faust moves within the concept of disenchantment of the world.

These elements guide his actions with Mephisto, building a durable social relationship: Faust: "If ever you see me loll at ease, then it's all yours, you can have it, my life! If ever you fool me with flatteries into feeling satisfied with myself, or tempt me with visions of luxuries, that's it, the last day that I breathe this air, I'll bet you!!". Mephisto replies: "Done!". Faust sealed the wager: "If ever I plead with the passing moment, Linger a while, you are so fair! [...] And time for me be over with!" (*Idem*, p. 59). From Faust's point of view, the relationship between them is characterized by the struggle not to fulfill this expectation, which is its meaning – in short, a sense of challenge that prevails in the wager, and Mephisto will respond with reciprocity, trying until the end to brake Faust's active energy. This is the meaningful core of "reciprocity in their relationship" (Weber, 1980).

The wager traps him in the denial by the self to accept life, an impediment to staying in the present time, which Jaeger (2010) points out as an interdiction to stopping: any being now is useless and desolate and only the one that is not there,

16. Verse 1803, "Was bin ich denn, wenn es nicht möglich ist, der Menschheit Krone zu erringen, nach der sich alle Sinne dringen?" (Goethe, 2016, p. 176).

the not-yet-existent, promises authentic life. For Negt (2010), Mephisto becomes an essential component by influencing and inciting activity, restlessness and work, through a pact that is Calvinist. Weber associated intramundane asceticism with the same element of rejection of the world, which becomes dominated by incessant, endless action, as it has not yet accomplished enough, the instrumental aspect of asceticism.

The impossibility of holding the moment is an important key for Faust. The term "*Augenblick*" ("moment", "instant") indicates the time dimension of a glimpse. Faust experienced a moment that qualifies as the self's fullest realization and even so he pronounced the words in the conditional: "He only earns his freedom, life itself, who daily strives to conquer it anew. [...] Then, then, I might say [*dürft'ich sagen*] to the passing moment, 'Linger awhile, you are so fair!'" (Goethe, 2014, p. 422, v. 11935)¹⁷. The vision of a free people that fight is a variation of the first verse of his first monologue, a beginning that emerges at the end as an action of grace that participates in leading his soul upwards: "The spirit world's most noble soul is saved from Devil. Who strives, and keeps on striving still, for him there is salvation" (*Idem*, p. 436, v. 12300)¹⁸.

He is the model for incessant activity in an era that has brought individual subjectivity into focus, greatly expanding its scope. Faust is the vision of an internally active life, disturbed by diremption and tension. A historical contingency that rejected hedonism and eudaemonism. Weber attested to this in Benjamin Franklin, whose ethics was marked by strict avoidance of all enjoyment of life and "above all completely devoid of any eudæmonistic, not to say hedonistic, admixture", a devotion to activity that from the point of view of an individual's happiness "appears entirely transcendental and absolutely irrational" (MWG I/18, 2016, p. 159). Zinzendorf opposes this condition, through "his fundamentally eudæmonistic ideal of having men experience eternal bliss (he calls it happiness) emotionally in the present [...]" (*Idem*, p. 371).

Happiness seems to be far from Faust, it's not easy to get in contact with him, an energy always in search of something, centered on the verb of striving (*streben*). Let's leave him aside.

17. Verse 11575, "Nur der verdient sich Freiheit wie das Leben, der täglich sie erobern muss. [...] Zum Augenblick dürft'ich sagen: Verweile doch, du bist so schön!" (Goethe, 2017, p. 982).

18. Verse 11935, "Wer immer strebend sich bemüht, den können wir erlösen" (Goethe, 2017, p. 1038). Here, several translations make one mistake, as it indicates a target for aspiration. Interposing the idea of a target may indicate that this is a defined value, when the verse points to another semantic circle, centered on the idea of maximum effort or striving, saying nothing about the target, or, as we maintain, about the results of the action in the world. Translations of Spanish even affirm the aspiration for an ideal.

Dämon and Teufel

Revisiting the beautiful text of *Science as a vocation* (MWG I/17, 1992) allows us to see a new Weberian variation on a theme by Goethe, when Weber presents the necessity of engaging in one's work and meeting "the demands of the day", both humanely and professionally, what will be simpler and easier when everyone finds and obeys the Demon that holds the strings of their life.

Weber's use of the term Demon (*Dämon*) refers to Goethe's work "Primordial words – The Orphic". According to Jochen Schmidt¹⁹, the term refers to individuality, to the internal law that finds its fulfillment in the sequence of seasons of the biographical process, a cyclical and at the same time progressive characteristic of the life process. This is a variation of the constant aspiration, carried by the lack and incompleteness of the Faustian trait of future-oriented dissatisfaction.

We should note that the Demon is not the Devil – there is a difference between *Dämon* and *Teufel*, both of which Weber mentions in *Science as a vocation*²⁰. Demon indicates the individual's inner voice, which appears and disappears whensoever, the subjective process of the encounter with the person's character, following Goethe's usage. But who is this other, the Devil? It's Mephisto, his simile (*Gleichnisse*), clearly an autonomous, non-subjective external entity, who appears when he is called and when he is wagered upon. He preserves only the feet of his monstrous bodily form because, as a sophist, he is bathed in culture: "the world's grown so cultured today, even the Devil's been caught up in it" (Goethe, 2014, p. 88, v. 2545)²¹.

It would be worth asking: what does this culture mean? It means the millennial accumulation of experience about the human being, something that will be, through it, partially accessed by Faust, even though he always rejects the knowledge of the human in Mephisto. Weber proposes the matter of how to deal with this *Teufel*, quoting the verses when Mephisto turns to young students and says: "Remember that the Devil's old, When you're old, too, you'll understand him." (Goethe, 2014, p. 247, v. 7023)²².

It is not a satire on chronology, but on the pride – that can occur at any stage of life – of seeking to create from oneself, which demonstrates the illusion of a cult

19. Quoted from Schluchter (2017b), *El desencantamiento del mundo. Seis estudios sobre Max Weber*. Similar theme can be seen in: Schluchter (2017a), "Dialectics of disenchantment: A Weberian look at Western modernity".

20. In this regard, see García (1992), for whom Weber and Goethe alternate the use of *Dämon* and *Teufel*, confusing them. In our reading of both authors, we see that the use of the terms, on the contrary, is quite different. On this, see Eckermann (2016). On the metaphor of the devil, in an analysis that crosses Weber and Lukács, see Kadarkay (1994), "The demonic self: Max Weber and Georg Lukács".

21. Verse 2495, "Auch die Kultur, die alle Welt beleckt, hat auf den Teufel sich erstreckt" (Goethe, 2016, p. 256).

22. Verse 6817, "Bedenkt, der Teufel, der ist alt, so werdet alt ihn zu verstehen" (Goethe, 2017, p. 312).

of interiority, of resolving the world within oneself. Schluchter (1996) argues that *Science as a vocation* is a sharp attack on *Erlebnis* and the weight of subjectivism in modern culture, which could be countered by limiting specialized work to exercising one's profession in moderation, stripping away the ideals of *Bildung* to the detriment of the world of specializing.

Mephisto also warns, in the same monologue in which he states that the Devil is old: "original, depart in your splendor! How would the realization offend you: who can think something stupid, who can think something clever that the previous world has not already thought?" (Goethe, 2017, p. 312)²³.

"To grow old" means to know the realities of life, at least those that are in the narrowest field of actuation and, above all, of action, to which Weber would respond by that attitude capable of looking at the realities of life in the face, enduring them and living up to them. Still in *Science as a vocation*, Weber, a little further on, continues: "if you want to deal with this Devil, you must not flee from him, as is so often the case today, but [...] you first have to see his ways through to the end, to see his power and his limits" (MWG I/17, 1992, p. 105)²⁴. It's Faust who won't let him get away, details are everything.

Mephisto provides access to a wealth of inaccessible experiences and Faust follows him suspiciously: reason and science, even at their lowest, are valued as the main human weapon against diabolical passions.

The affinity with Weber's position of considering science as a struggle for clarity is evident, just as Faust's relationship with the sciences he studies, although based in the field of clarity, is that of disenchantment of the world. "The increasing intellectualization and rationalization, therefore, do not mean an increasing general knowledge of the living conditions under which one stands" (MWG I/17, 1992, pp. 86-87)²⁵, which seems to reproduce Faust's initial monologue: "[...] I've studied, alas, philosophy, Law and medicine, recto and verso, and how I regret it, theology also [...] With what result? [...] I'm no whit wiser than when I began!" (Goethe, 2014, p. 15, v. 364)²⁶.

23. Verse 6807, "Original, fahr hin deiner Pracht! – Wie würde dich die Einsicht kränken: wer kann was Dummes, wer was Kluges denken, das nicht die Vorwelt schon gedacht?" (Goethe, 2017, p. 312).

24. "[...] dass man auch vor diesem Teufel, wenn man mit ihm fertig werden will, nicht – die Flucht ergreifen darf, wie es heute so gern geschieht, sonder dass man seine Wege erst einmal zu Ende überschauen muss, um seine Macht und seine Schranken zu sehen" (MWG I/17, p. 105).

25. "Die zunehmende Intellektualisierung und Rationalisierung bedeutet also nicht eine zunehmende allgemeine Kenntnis der Lebensbedingungen, unter denen man steht" (MWG I/17, pp. 86-87).

26. Verse 354, "Habe nun, ach! Philosophie, Juristerei und Medizin, und leider auch Theologie durchaus studiert, mit heißem Bemühn. [...] Und sehe, dass wir nichts wissen können!" (Goethe, 2016, p. 62).

The problem of becoming an ethical personality partly organizes the references to *Dämon* and *Teufel*. At this point, it is interesting to consider, “that for Weber [...] the key category of self-transformation is not the ‘subject’ but the ‘personality’, a concept with roots in Goethe, Humboldt, Kant, and the neo-kantians of Weber’s and Mann’s time” (Goldman, 2023, p. 7).

How to interpret all these references to *Dämon*, *Teufel* and the gods and demons? This is about the requirement for a person to develop towards one’s own life, through autonomous and conscious choices, with a view to the ultimate values that guide her/him. This is Weber’s ethical individualism: the conquest and possession of a homogeneous and lasting foundation for conducting oneself in life, which must be done consciously, by remaining faithful to the principles chosen. In his essay on Roscher and Knies, Weber associates personality with the constancy of its internal relationship with certain ultimate “values” and “meanings” of life (Weber, 1988c).

Personality is a manifestation of “elective affinities”, which bounds together ethics and the idea of election, of conscious choice, from which gods and demons emerge, as the highest value incarnations, in this metaphor of ancient polytheism (an approach that is neither that of Demon nor of Devil).

In *An intermediate consideration* (MWG I/19, 1989) the basis is always the total content of human existence, in all its aspects, from the organic cycle of peasant life through its enrichment with cultural contents. In his work on *Wertfreiheit* (Weber, 1988a), he considers naïve a life that passes by like a natural event (*Naturereignis dahingleiten*). This perspective originates from a conduct of life that is made through a “conscious choice” [*bewusst wählt*], he comments quoting Plato, when the soul chooses its destiny.

Still regarding this conscious sublimation that seeks to conduct life, it’s about not being a puppet of nature’s impulses, of unsublimated affections. However, when we read “The elective affinities” (Goethe, 1994) and we are faced with cultivated characters, we perceive that they are still subject to the same forces of nature, elevated in eroticism, as a force that cannot be controlled. Erotic passion subsumes the sphere of duty, and duty, unable to be harmonized with desire, does not achieve renunciation before a stronger power, which leads to dissolution.

Life as a conscious choice seems to be a search for the law itself, in this return to Goethe’s “Primordial words”. This is the verse that closes the *Dämon*: “this is how you have to be, you can’t escape” (*So musst du sein, dir kannst du nicht entfliehen*) (Goethe *apud* Marianne Weber, 1995, p. 449).

Through irony, this is the active subject’s blind spot, it escapes him. In the metaphor of a battlefield, the personality has to be conquered in a modeling of the

self, in the face of the helplessness of modern life, a modeling that is done through discipline and action (Goldman 2023).

A transitory moment: new borders of life

It's Faust's blind spot. Beautiful images in this oeuvre are those that occur in open regions, which encompass in themselves the constant demand for a new direction of life. Whether in the image of the sky, the orientation upwards or forwards, whether on the top of a mountain or the edge of the mirror of a refulgent lake, the landscape mirrors that other tonal region of Faust, far removed from the irascible and dissatisfied spirit that grips him²⁷. For this reason, it is the scenes that build the passenger's sensation and those that best occurs under the sign of the "moment" (*Augenblick*): "the bright waters glitter before my feet, a new day is dawning, new shores calling to me" (Goethe, 2014, p. 27, v. 724²⁸) – "To the bright new day I see dawning!" (Goethe, 2014, p. 28, v. 759)²⁹.

However, the same Sun, in indicating the new day, only does so by setting it ablaze and, in its gesture, contains the return to the main theme of Faust: "We thought to light the torch of life, a sea of fire, and oh what a fire, overwhelms us instead. Is it love, is it hate, the seething flames that envelop us – pain following joy, joy pain in awful alternation" (*Idem*, p. 174, v. 4874)³⁰. What Faust lacks, without losing the meaning of being in a mild region, is sustaining the moment of integration with what is there. Although being in a beautiful landscape, he doesn't experience the gesture that nature wants to imbue him, because what returns is his uneasiness.

In this scene, Faust's personality is once again guided by the intellect, which does not provide enlightenment: "But a final statement to the world by virtue of its 'sense' is what it represents" (MWG I/19, 1989, p. 515)³¹. At this point, continuing with Weber, Faust is the intellect's effort to escape its own laws, since, in its case, the course of the world does not appear as a process endowed with meaning. Intellectualism,

27. This is a sentence from the "Spirit of the Earth": "You are a simile of the spirit that holds you" [Du gleichst dem Geist den du begreifst], verso 512 (Goethe, 2016, p. 72).

28. Verse 700, "Die Spiegelflut erglänzt zu meinen Füßen, zu neuen Ufern lockt ein neuer Tag" (Goethe, 2016, p. 86). According to Marianne Weber (1995), this verse was frequently recited by Max Weber, including during his moments of illness.

29. Verse 4668, "Schon der neue Tag geboren" (Goethe, 2017, p. 40).

30. Verse 4710, "Des Lebens Fackel wollten wir entzünden, ein Feuermeer umschlingt uns, welch ein Feuer! Ist's Lieb? Ist's Hass? Die glühend uns umwinden, mit Schmerz und Freuden wechselnd ungeheuer [...]" (Goethe, 2017, p. 44).

31. "[...] sonder eine letzte Stellungnahme zur Welt kraft unmittelbaren Erfassens ihres 'Sinnes' sei das, was sie darbiete." (MWG I/19, p. 514).

the other side of technical mastery over nature, captures his restlessness and acts as a driving force in his life, allowing him to give himself over to action, which is another layer of the Goethean patina. Giving himself over to constant activity, with the utmost effort, is Faust's great end, as well as the mark of the beginning, when he translates the Gospel: "in the beginning was the deed"³².

Consuming the world or the mechanized petrification

The final paragraph of *Pesc* points to the idea that limitation to a specialized work implies a renunciation of Faustian universality, which is present in the end that Goethe gave to Faust's life and also in the last stages of Wilhelm Meister's life, when he abandons his integral personality and, making his renunciation, restricts himself to specialized work. Thus, "action and renunciation today are inevitably interdependent" (MWG I/18, 2016, p. 485). Weber demonstrates that intramundane asceticism, by impregnating itself with elective affinities with the economic cosmos and capital accumulation, created a strong and subterranean connection that displaced other orientations and action coordination, such as hedonism, eudaemonism and humanist rationalism, whose dimension and influence should be better understood through the advancement of historical research (MWG I/18, 2016). Also, literary research. There is a parallel with one of his letters (from 1887), published in his biography written by Marianne Weber (1995), in which Max rejects the idea that Goethe had embraced the universality of the human condition. Avoiding deification of the poet, he points to the deeper issue of his work, which allows us to observe this shift from eudemonism/hedonism:

[...] in general, the conception of life that we hold does not affirm the importance of the feeling of well-being and enjoying an aspect of life. People not only face the question of which path to take, but they cannot find inner happiness and satisfaction. [...] this is the most profound question that we can derive from Goethe's works, including Faust (p. 183).

Goethe's *Faust* allows us to observe this dislocation. His dissatisfaction hinders the hedonistic acceptance of the present, for being trapped in the not yet existing, by someone who pleads for the ultimate moment and never manages to sustain it, and when he does, it is phantasmagorical (Helena) or false (free people in a free land). His burden of desires, extended to the totality of what can be granted to humanity, held him hostage to constant aspiration and blocked him from *ataraxia*.

32. Verse 1237, "Im Anfang war die Tat!" (Goethe, 2016, p. 130).

So he remained very far from finding and following his *Dämon*, having to make up for his absence by relying on magic and then making a wager with the simile of the Devil (Mephisto) and, whether a wager or a pact, it's always a matter of insufficiency. Humanist rationalism was abandoned, as an intellectualist quest whose limitations could never allow satisfaction.

In these respect, the trajectory of Faust is a long commentary on these three classes of development of rationality that the West has dislocated. We could read Goethe from start to finish with this idea, adopting one of the colors of his patina. Max Weber can bring to the vast Faustian literature the conceptual principle that rationality is multilateral (*Vielseitigkeit*) and selective, when it is refined according to its inner historical logic, developing strong subterranean links with other historical powers. Faust's life teaches us this selectivity in the figuration of losses, of what is forgotten, because it is by forgetting that action can be imbued with a dominant logic that is determined by the future, with no return to previous state.

Activity without an objective is one of the keys³³. What was the aim of Faust's life? This is about a renunciation of a type of knowledge guided by wholeness and infinity, never achieved, and also a renunciation operated by cutting off reason and science to compensatory causality: it is impossible to reach "what sustains life in its deepest core". At this point, our work comes close to Kemple's conclusions: "Both Goethe and Weber understand the will to act as a response to the modern quest for meaning and conviction, even when action entails renouncing the multi-dimensional pursuit of cultural development when one submits to one's singular fate" (Kemple, 2014, p. 54). Another dimension of this end is indicated in a choice of what consists of the beginning, in which Faust translates the Gospel according to Saint John gains importance, reorienting it: "in the beginning was the deed".

Goethe imbues Faust's journey with incessant activity, with active life as the most important impulse, regardless of what the action comprises or its results, though being, in its maximum commitment, the key to a lasting social relationship and the gesture of a personality.

For Weber, care for external goods should weigh but like a light mantle (quoting Baxter) and that this residual evil of wealth produced by action while seeking

33. Faust is always in search of "new spheres of pure activity" [Zu neuen Sphären reiner Tätigkeit], verse 705 (Goethe, 2016, p. 86). Faust's activity, although without a defined goal or value, becomes associated with the character "reiner", a variation of the "pure" life we saw at the beginning. This is the key to your salvation; Goethe said to Eckermann: "the key to Faust's salvation is an ever higher and purer activity, and from above the eternal love that comes without it said" (Eckermann, 2016, p. 481). An increasingly pure activity, whose result is atrocity, starts from the energy that desires good and carries out evil.

salvation, ended up becoming an hard crust of steel (*stahlhartes Gehäuse*), that is, a compulsive behavior that resulted in the unprecedented power of material goods in this world. When Faust takes distance from the erudite quest and also from reconciliation with nature, he seeks through the possession of material goods, a high content. when he enters the stage as a historical character from the tragedy of colonization, getting involved with the possession of vast tracts of land and pillage that become his guide to action: “Wealth, property I’ll win, and power! The doing’s all and fame mere vapor” (Goethe, 2014, p. 372, v. 10524)³⁴.

We are faced with the face of Janus who, on the one side, rejects the world, for then dominating it with the other face, revealing what Weber called the rationalism of world domination; in the case of Faust, the expansion of the self, as desired in the wager, pointing to infinity, turns into a consuming of the world (Jaeger, 2019). For Adorno (2019c), the metaphysics of Faust does not lie in the struggle that beckons the neo-Kantian reward in infinity, but rather in the replacement of the order of the nature with another, which the episode of the fire and deaths of Philemon, Baucis and the Pilgrim suggests³⁵.

Faust acts in the world, seeking to dominate its orders and subjecting it to action, without expecting any compensation in the afterlife, which has never mattered to him. Salvation for him is glorification of the relentless aspiration to dominate the world, even without a specific purpose or aiming for specific results.

Faust’s last image is, therefore, an elective affinity with the mechanized petrification, not regarding bureaucracy, but rather action. At this point, the *Intermediate consideration*, in considering the diremption between possession of the sacred as a vase and action as an instrument of the sacred, resorts to the idea of a tool³⁶.

This is the last image of Faust: that of a tool, destitute of purpose, consuming nature. It’s no coincidence that the last sound he hears is the sound of tools, of shovels clanking, in the foreknowledge of an event without reality, false.

34. Verse 10188, “Herrschaft gewinn ich, Eigentum! Die Tat ist alles, nichts der Ruhm” (Goethe, 2017, p. 766).

35. This placement refers to the overcoming of the natural order as an earthly residue in the slow process of purification of Faust’s entelechy, hence the metaphysics of overcoming the natural order in another – Verschwinden der Ordnung des Natürlichen in einer anderen. Here, we take this dialectic in the context of the destruction of the natural order in favor of another, that of advanced capitalism.

36. Weber uses these terms in his *An intermediate consideration* (Weber, 1989) to separate mysticism as a vessel (*Gefäß*) of the sacred and asceticism as an instrument (*Werkzeug*) of the sacred. The same terms, with similar meanings, were used by Goethe and can be seen in Eckermann (2016).

On top of all summits

On *Pesc's* final pages, Weber claims that Goethe sought to express the perception of a “a renunciation, a departure from an age of full and beautiful humanity”. This image is encapsulated in the beginning of the last act. Philemon and Baucis embody the motive of a hospitable life, living in a small cottage next to the linden trees – the last obstacle to Faust’s colonizing plan, the lacking part in the possession of vast tracts of land. In the record of hospitality, a Pilgrim who long before had been saved by the couple from the waves recognizes the place and approaches it, being welcomed, but is amazed by the profound transformation of the landscape – result of Faust’s projects aimed at building a belvedere on the place of the cottage and the trees, to view his vast empire.

In contrast to the hospitality offered to the Pilgrim, an irascible and despotic Faust appears. He orders Mephisto and his mighty men to move the elders to a new location, so that he can remove this obstacle. The meaning of his action, of which he only became conscious later, is this: “This, this, is the worst torment, to have so much, yet still to want!” (Goethe, 2017, p. 411, v. 11607)³⁷. Philemon, Baucis and the Pilgrim are burned together with the hut and the linden trees: “Some straw ignited and the fierce fire now makes those three their funeral pyre” (*Idem*, p. 415, v. 11724)³⁸. We can say that Faust is at the same time more distant from and closer to rest, as death as death get nearer, so the recall of the wager arises in the memory of the reader: “If ever I plead with the passing moment, ‘Linger a while, you are so fair!’”. Goethe exaggerates the fact that this doesn’t happen, and opens up a dark Faust, in a deep night. In Lynceu’s eyes: “O fortunate eyes/ Whatever you’ve seen/ Let it be what it was/ Always lovely it’s been” (Goethe, 2014, pp. 412-13).

The literature dedicated to the topic mentions the context of Goethe’s work, at the time of great engineering works linked to industrialism and its metal-mechanical forms expanded to the unimaginable.

This final image of the results of Faust’s actions suggests different dimensions of affinity with Weber’s thinking. 1) It is a foray into a rationalism of world domination that followed the previous centuries of bourgeois revolutions, as their consequence. 2) It is the image of intramundane asceticism, geared towards the conduct of an active life that leads to salvation, what bypasses the agent as a tool. 3) As such, it enables indifference to the outcome of actions in the world and their repercussions,

37. Verse 11251, “So sind am härtesten wir gequält, im Reichtum fühlend, was uns fehlt” (Goethe, 2017, p. 920).

38. Verse 11368, “Entflammte Stroh. Nur lodert’s frei, als Scheiterhaufen dieser drei” (Goethe, 2017, p. 936).

whether in terms of creation and destruction of economic development (Berman, 1982) or in terms of a ruthless individual. Bringing these points together, Weber allows us to locate the final actions of Faust in that

[...] tremendous cosmos of the modern economic order. This order is now bound to the technical and economic conditions of machine production which today determine the lives of all the individuals who are born into this mechanism, not only those directly concerned with economic acquisition, with irresistible force. Perhaps it will so determine them until the last ton of fossilized coal is burnt. (Weber, 2005, p. 123; MWG I/18, 2016, pp. 486-487).

With this, we bring Weber into the great theme of recent Faustian literature, the tragedy of colonization and the climate crisis, in opening of the Pandora's box that consumes nature. It's indeed a very relevant topic, but we don't intend to elaborate on it.

We're rather concerned here with retaining the image of that epoch, which Weber, a little before quoting Goethe, left as the last word describing the full crystallization of a historical process. Faust reminds us of that crystallized and ethicized conduct of life, which exerts overwhelming pressure – *das stahlharte Gehäuse des kapitalismus*, the capitalism's defined as “condition of our life and our whole existence, adding that it has taken on the character of an ‘absolutely inescapable confinement or spell’ [*Gebanntheit* – MWG I/18, 2016, p. 104]” (Kemple, 2014, p. 25).

This is the latest inversion of a two-façades process, of that light cloak that became its opposite³⁹.

There's more here. Goethe's handling of nature in the scene involving Philemon, Baucis and the Pilgrim places us at the pinnacle of material production: it is machinery, conducted by fire metallurgy and “human sacrifice in the moonlight”, in an image that alludes to volcanism, the abrupt eruption of an explosive and subterranean process that expel large quantities of matter from the crust of the Earth, which spread and affect everything around them, and from an event that involves the Earth's crust, projecting enormous weight. As an image of the study of Geology, volcanism refers to an abrupt and explosive change, such as the extrusion of colossal quantities of lava rising into very high mountains and also overturning continents that contain everything, while neptunism indicates the time of slow and sedimentary changes⁴⁰.

39. Here is the image in Parsons' translation: “In Baxter's view the care for external goods should only lie on the shoulders of the “saint like a light cloak, which can be thrown aside at any moment”. But fate decreed that the cloak should become an iron cage” (Weber, 2005, p. 123). “Aber aus dem Mantel ließ das Verhängnis ein stahlhartes Gehäuse werden” (MWG I/18, p. 487).

40. This was a theme of natural science in Goethe's time, which he incorporated, and it appears directly

Images also deceive. The hard crust of steel, as a powerful image, has generated a fatalistic and resigned image of Weber, which has tainted the analysis. It is not a fatalistic image, but one that points to the full development of a historical process: capitalism is this volcanic process, whose crust revolves everything around it, imposing itself on the universe of action and selecting its courses of rationalization according to its stages and directions (*Stufen und Richtungen*)⁴¹.

The other side of these stages and directions is the displacement of hedonism, eudaemonism and humanist rationalism towards the rarefied, towards what passes and cannot be gripped. The impossibility of holding on to the moment as the thread of analysis, a little touch of Goethe in Weber.

This displacement must be better understood by Weber scholars. On this last point, it should be carefully considered that the elective affinity between intramundane asceticism and the spirit of capitalism promoted incessant activity, linking it to the hard crust of incessant activity. However, capitalism is not an entity, but a historical individuality. It is here that we observe contingencies, what has been missed in the process of Western rationalization, or rather, what was disregarded by the action within the multilaterality of rationalization.

in the “Night of classical Walpurgis” scene in the second part of *Faust*. The scene that ends with the fire and the “double night of the lindens” is a weak allusion to volcanism: it emerges as a passing note and prompts a memory that places Faust once again in the 19th century, in an environment of great and colossal alterations to the natural and human landscape, pointing out, above all, the human consequences.

41. Terms in the subtitle of *Intermediate consideration* that we apply in another context.

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Abstract

A little touch of Goethe in Weber

Goethe was a common presence in the intellectual context of Weber's work. A presence that was not limited to providing metaphors with a secondary role. Here we draw on a regularity: at the end of his texts and lectures, Weber quotes Goethe, allowing himself value judgments that are soon dismissed, leaving the poetic image as the last word – enunciation that remains after retreat. This strategy crystallizes concepts and can bring new ideas regarding the wider scope of Weber's work. Taking *The protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism*, *Science as a vocation* and *An intermediate consideration*, we intend to bring new contributions by means of analyzing *Faust* through a thorough review of the work in the light of an approach to Weber's thought.

Keywords: Max Weber; Goethe; Faust; Literature.

Resumo

Um pequeno toque de Goethe em Weber

No contexto intelectual de Weber, a presença de Goethe era comum. A presença do poeta não se limita a fornecer metáforas que desempenham um papel secundário. Partimos de uma regularidade: Weber cita Goethe no final de seus textos e conferências, se permitindo julgamentos de valor, que são logo cortados, deixando a imagem poética como última palavra, enunciação que permanece após um recuo. Esse recurso cristaliza conceitos e pode trazer novas ideias da ambientação mais ampla da obra de Weber. Trabalhando com *A ética protestante*, *Ciência como vocação* e a *Consideração intermediária*, pretendemos trazer novas contribuições através de uma análise do *Fausto*, o qual foi inteiramente revisto à luz de uma aproximação com o pensamento de Weber.

Palavras-chave: Max Weber; Goethe; Fausto; Literatura.

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