Chapter Six

The Mechanism of Metaphor and Metonymy in Doctor Faustus
THE MECHANISM OF METAPHOR

AND METONYMY IN DOCTOR FAUSTUS

For the first signifier to be, there has to be a hole in the all-pervading silence so as to provide the place for it to be. This occulted first signifier that veils the hole as the site of its being, is in itself obscured by the multiplication and silencing of language, that, as a complex mechanism of the textual language, is really symptomatic of an insistence of the said signifier to be delivered through identification. If there is an occulted signifier in the play-text that insists by means of a two sided metalanguage generated by the language of the play, on a name, then there is also the other mechanism of the same language that allows the name to be apprehended.

The playing of language of the language of the play seeks to generate an excess of language by doubling, re-doubling, critically inverting or faithfully simulating, in a word, multiplying, what is present in another form in the text. In the first place, the story of Faustus is a double. Towards the beginning of the play, Faustus addresses the devil with a proposal for an exchange: 'I do giue them al for Mephastophilis', he says[338-39]. After twenty-four years, in his hour of reckoning, Faustus
addresses God, with another proposal, this time for another exchange. In exchange of his life, 'Ile burne my bookes!' is what he has to offer [1477]. This doubling by Faustus of his own story is textually re-doubled in terms of a sizeable comical metatext.

In act one, scene two, Wagner duplicates his master's action both in manner and in matter. In this scene, Wagner's intention to 'triumph' over the two Scholars is a reflection of his master's wish to 'raigne sole king of all our prouinces'. In order to do so, Wagner chooses an innocuous question of their's - 'wheres thy maister?' [199] - as his point of departure. Only towards the end of the scene, he produces the answer sought for by the two Scholars, but he does so, once again simulating his scholarly master, in a learned manner [222-26].

Wagner, who, on the previous occasion, had interpreted the word 'where' used by the Scholars, literally, has his own words, such as, 'commings in', interpreted by the Clown literally, in scene four of the same act. Interpreting the phrase 'commings in' in Wagner's question, otherwise meaning, 'income', literally, the Clown replies, referring to the holes in his dress: 'I, and goings out too' [356, Emphasis added]. Later in the same scene, the Clown interprets the word 'familiars', meaning, 'attendant demons', literally, as 'well-known' [379-84]. The master of the Clown, too,
plays on the literal meaning of the word 'beaten' in the phrase 'beaten silke' [369]. But, that the master has his own master in mind is clear from his allusion to 'giuing' one's 'soule to the Diuel for a shoulder of mutton, though it were blood rawe' [357-61]. As a double of Wagner who is himself a comical double of his learned master, the Clown, who is hard of hearing and prone to mis-hearing, submits himself to the authority of Wagner, because the latter proved to be a speaker of bombastic words: 'God forgiue me, he speakes Dutch fustian:/ well, Ile folow him, Ile serue him, thats flat' [431-32].

Like Wagner and the Clown before him, the horse-courser, too, creates an excess of language. He likes to play on words and he does so with the words 'water' and 'doctor', much to the irritation of Faustus, because the the third word that connected the two words was 'urine'. Would 'doctor' Faustus examine the 'water' of the horse in case it fell sick, the horse-courser asks, departing from Faustus' warning never to ride the horse into water so as to create the excess [1127-40]. Also, while stating his own predicament a little later, the horse-courser actually re-states the predicament of Doctor Faustus. The discourse on the endeavour of Faustus to exceed life and be lead in the end to his death is doubled by the similar discourse of the horse-courser:
...but yet like an asse as I was, I would not be ruled by him, for he bade me I should ride him into no water; now, I thinking my horse had had some rare qualitie that he would not haue had me knowne of, I like a venturous youth, rid him into the deepe pond at the townes ende. I was no sooner in the middle of the pond, but my horse vanisht away, and I sat vpon a bottle of hey, neuer so neare drowning in my life. [1152-59].

Faustus wishes to stretch 'as farre as doth the minde of man' so as to know 'the secrets' that God 'would not haue had [him] knowne of'. Led by his wish, he makes a 'rare' pact with Lucifer that ultimately sees him through to hell. Except that his bargain is a lot cheaper, the Horse-courser, similarly, wishing to discover 'some rare qualitie' of the horse he had purchased, ends up discovering the ironically rare quality of it to be transposed, in the hands of an 'overreaching' owner, from an active eater into a passive bundle of its food.

If Faustus, Wagner and the Clown constitute one set of three characters, Robin, Ralph and Faustus constitute another. But while the first three seek to multiply language by doubling what already exists, the other three seek to do so by means of a reversal of some strain present in the text.
In act four, scene one, Robin steals one of Faustus' 'coniuring books' [922-23], and uses it to steal a goblet from the bar in the next scene. In this scene, Robin promises to provide Ralph with complete oral gratification, first with 'ipocrase' and then with Nan Spit [945-51], and thereby, he subverts, in anticipation, the Faustus-Dutchess of Vanholt episode, in which Faustus offers to provide oral pleasure to the Dutchess. Moreover, the suppression of the words of the Master Parson as a father-substitute, entirely, under the craving for the kitchen maid, is a subversion of Faustus' disregard for the words of the Old Man, and of his craving for the company of, essentially, a she-devil. What is more, the overjoyed Ralph declares that he would 'feede' Robin's 'devil' with 'horse-bread' as long as he lived [953-54], thereby anticipating Faustus' reversion from the position of the eater to that of the feeder. This very inversion is doubled in the next scene of which it is theme. There, Robin and Ralph steal a silver goblet from the Vinter. Robin does so, as the play-text brings out, not really for his own oral pleasure but in order to provide it to their horses: 'our horses shal eate no hay as long as this lasts' [960-61]. Just as the kissing of the 'spirit' in the guise of 'Helen of Greece', by Faustus, is comically anticipated by the Clown's wishing to

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1 A large section of the additional material in this scene and the previous one in the B text is devoted to a number of comic characters drinking beer and recalling, among other things, how Faustus had consumed a load of hay. B, IV, v and vi.
‘tickle pretie wenches plackets’ while disguised as a ‘frisking flea’, in an earlier scene [418-23].

Two aspects of the text that are constructed and then reversed are those related to gender and to the desire of the dead ancestors to exist. Valdes is the first one to raise the question of gender by conceptually condensing the better sides of the two genders. Relating to the services of the spirits, he says, the spirits who will ‘guard’ them like ‘lyons’, ‘like Almaine Rutters with their horsemens staues’ and like ‘Lapland Gyants’ trotting by their sides, will also be ‘like women, or vnwedded maides’ [150-156]. Later, while promising Faustus to bring to his bed anyone whom he chose to have as his mistress, Mephistophilis similarly condenses the two genders into a fantastic whole. He compares the beauty of Faustus’ mistresses to the ‘beauty’ of ‘bright Lucifer’ before his expulsion from heaven [589-90]. In the comic scenes, the fantastic whole is subverted in terms of the Clown’s discourse on the distinction between genders in the case of devils. The Clown explains to Wagner that of the two devils whom the latter had summoned to attack him, ‘there was a hee diuell and a shee diuell’. He then proceeds to systematically draw a line between the two: ‘Ile tell you how you shall know them: all hee diuelJs has horns, and all shee diuelJs has clifts and clouen feete’ [407-11].
As far as Faustus' symbolic desire, namely, the desire in him of the dead ancestors to live again, is concerned, the same, too, is inverted by these comical characters. Textually, the desire of the son to make the dead ancestors live again is reversed in terms of the son's death-wish against the parents, over and over again in the text. Only a streak of it is present in Faustus' random allusion to Justinian: 'Exhaereditare filium non potest pater, nisi, etc' [59, meaning, 'a father cannot disinherit his son unless -']. Wagner, Faustus' boy, expresses it indirectly: 'I thinke my maister meanes to die shortly, / For he hath giuen to me al his goodes' [1238-39]. But the Seven Deadly Sins are less soft: 'I am Pride. I disdain to have any parents'; 'I am Wrath. I had neither father nor mother' [738]; and, 'Who I, sir ? I am Gluttony. My parents are al dead' [753]. Like most of the Deadly Sins, the textual description of Faustus' own parentage, too, is cryptical [Prologue,11]. In the final scene, Faustus directly curses his ancestors: 'Curst be the parents that ingendred me!' [1467].

Faustus not only sets the doubling metalanguage in motion but also sustains it. Thus, in the only scene in the third act in which Faustus encounters Pope Adrian, he simulates paternalistic power, good as well as bad. He is an invisible figure in this scene, trying to usurp the power of God through simulation. Textually, the words 'I thanke you sir' [869] and 'You say true; Ile hate' [873], spoken by the absent Faustus before
snatching the dishes from the Pope, are an effort to answer on behalf of God addressed by the Pope. The same is an inversion of the comical reflection of the Clown who had earlier said to Wagner that the 'lice' on his person were as 'bolde' with his 'flesh' 'as if they had payd for my [his] meate and drinke' [382-84].

In the scene at Rome, Faustus simulates Lucifer's power to deceive as well, in that, an absent Faustus 'snatches' the 'meate' and 'wine' from the Pope, just as an absent Lucifer had snatched his flesh and spirit from him earlier, both employing the services of Mephistophilis. The same act of snatching is comically re-inverted when Faustus deceives the horse-courser by allowing him to pull his leg away. What is snatched by deceit is always the most significant thing in its immediate context. The 'legge' is the most important metonymy of Faustus in the immediate context of his desire to 'walke on foote' [1114], just as the 'horse' is of the horse-courser and food is of the feast. Faustus' deceiving the horse-courser is the expression of the redirection of his own action upon himself, for, Faustus lets the horse-courser do to him in the second half of the episode, exactly what he had done to the horse-courser in the first half of it, namely, cutting out the metonymy, or the name, whose absence is the cause of the symptomatic insistence of metaphor in terms of an excess generating - and in that sense creative - metalanguage.
The back and forth movement of words in Doctor Faustus is a relentless pursuit of language to have what causes it to be, named, which only makes the words go crosswise, in an exchange with itself. The note on which the first half of the play-text ends is one of writing crosswise.

In a broader sense, the action of Faustus himself could be described in the form of writing crosswise, or chiasmus: The developments through the first act of the play culminate in Faustus' wilfully made deed with Lucifer in the first scene of the second act, with which, the first movement of the history of Faustus ends, because, it is by writing the deed with his own blood that he gains his place in the symbolic order and has his name inscribed therein. The writing of the deed constitutes one of the most significant dramatic moments of the play, because it is at this point that Faustus binds himself to the law of the word for life in the form of a pact, an exchange. Hence, the second and final movement of the history of Faustus is merely a duplication of the first, because Faustus, thereafter does no more than live to materialise the same, word for word. The first movement involves a Faustus who is dying to live for ever - he says he has never 'plodde so fast' [97] - while the second movement involves a Faustus who is living to die, for he was 'but a man condemned to die' [1142-43]. In between the two, exactly at the middle of the text, comes the textual chiasmus.
While introducing himself to writing by writing Jehovah's name, Faustus writes it 'forward and backward anagrammatiz'd' [243]. The reversal is reinforced out by the friars, who respond to Faustus' 'writing' with their 'booke's' to sing the dirge from: 'How! bell, booke, and candle, - candle, booke, - bell, - Forward and backward, to curse Faustus to hell!' [887-88]. Hell, a rupture which one could cross both in forward and backward directions, is itself a chiasmus, for, Mephistophilis as the mouth-piece of it, as the person presumed to know, describes 'hell' in terms of a rotation of words, a going round and round the edge of the mouth, a chiasmus: 'For where we are is hell, / And where hell is, must we euer be' [554-55].

'A closer look at the material constituent of the excess generated by a self-mirroring metalanguage reveals, that the multiplication is an insistence, a relentless repetition, of an occult signifier that is conspicuous in its absence, because the insistence leads to - along two different routes, direct and indirect - nothing but the unveiling of it. '

'Wagner respectes Faustus for his learning, as much as the Clown admires Wagner for his learned words. Also, both Wagner and the Clown, like the Horse-courser later on, love to play with words. In other words, one of the two ways in which the signifier is lead up to is 'speech'. What the
comical speech duplicates in terms of imitation or subversion, is the higher, courtly speech, or the speech of such exalted constructs as the Emperor of Germany, the Duke and Duchess of Vanholt, the Scholars and so on. Crowning all is the 'heavenly words' of Faustus.

The metonymical association of words enables the reader to apprehend the signifier thus engendered at the level of the metaphorical insistence on the identification of it. Large sections of the play-text are devoted to Faustus' confering, his arguing, his 'questioning' Mephistophilis, his solving 'problems' and to other Scholarly and mock-Scholarly discourses. 'I see theres vertue in my heauenly words' [262], says Faustus, and he is probably right in saying so. Doctor Faustus is his speech, his poetry. A survey of Faustus' association with speech brings out the following: Faustus, as soon as he is 'inricht with tongues' [168], proceeds to acquire 'the words of art' [187] from Valdes. Deciding to 'coniure', he repeats 'incantations', and causes Mephistophilis to appear in his real shape. Proud of his 'coniuring speeches', Faustus says, 'theres vertue in my heauenly words'. He calls himself a 'coniurer laureate' [267], decides never to 'name' God and to 'pray to the prince of hell' forever, and writes it the form of a deed with the said Prince of hell. Later on, Faustus wants and at the same time fails to, name salvation. Also, he is cautioned by Lucifer never to 'name God' or 'talke of Christ' and instructed, instead,
to 'talke of the diuel, and nothing else' [720]. In a brief interlude in between Faustus' cosmic tour, he returns home to exchange with his friends and closest companions, a few 'kinde words' and 'skilful' and 'witty' 'answers' [910-15]. In course of time his name spreads. But what torments him till the end is the fact that he could not 'pray to God'. Moreover, he has to do everything in the devil's name or in the name of Belzebub. In the end, before his hysteric speech and entry into hell, he asks the Scholars not to 'tremble' at his 'speeches' [1373-74], while proceeding to confess, to articulate for the first time, his 'offence'.

The order of speech of the text is almost entirely occupied by Faustus. Hence, in spite of the fact that a number of other constructs do identify with the signifier in question, such as the propensity of constructs like Wagner, the Clown and the Horse-courser to play with words, it is identical in the play-text to the towering Faustus, as towering as, in Cornelius' words, the 'Delphian oracle' [172]. As such, Faustus represents a cut on the surface of the body that makes communication between the inside and the outside, in other words, discourse, possible. In a word, Faustus represents the signifier 'mouth' as the site of all speech.

The other route comprising of a similar metonymical association along which the same signifier could be arrived at, as one that coexists with
speech in the text as well as with the process of textual doubling, leads to the mouth as the site for receiving oral gratification, which, in textual terms, is sexual. The eating and drinking, and the goblet and ippocras are associated, in terms of the feeding, the feeder and allusion to lechery, pretty wenches and Nan Spit, with oral sexuality. In order to trace this streak from its origin, it would be appropriate to start from its inception in the Prologue to the play.

One learns from the Chorus right at the beginning, that the play is not going to be about the battle-fields of 'Thracimene' where Mars 'did mate' the Carthaginians. The word 'mate' is probably employed to produce an effect of alliteration with 'Mars' and 'marching', and not for 'potentially' subverting the - hitherto victorious - Carthaginians, to the war god as the provider of their power to win, at the level of lexical allusion. As far as the next proposition is concerned, however, sexuality is not an allusion but the very constituent of it. It comes about in the form of the expression that the play is nor about 'sporting in the dalliance of loue'. •

• There is no allusion here to the 'courts' of king Edward whose 'state' was 'ouerturned' while he was sporting with his lover Gaveston, because Marlowe will write Edward II in (?) 1591. Rather, the word 'sporting' leads one to the sense evoked by the world 'sport' in Othello: 'When the blood
is made dull with the act of sport' [II.i,227], that is, sexual intercourse. The word 'sporting' in Doctor Faustus is closer to sexual play than to sexual intercourse. It is so, because the word 'sporting' connotes the lingering of the act playfully. 'Dalliance of loue', then, is dallying love, or foreplay.

Although the Chorus denies any association of the play-text with such sexual matters, it describes Faustus as 'swolne' with 'cunning', that is, with 'knowledge' which, Biblically, is sexual in nature. At the end of the Prologue to the first act, Faustus is described as 'glutted' with the gifts of learning, and as 'surffeting' upon necromancy. Moreover, the Chorus chooses the word 'sweete' to describe Faustus' notion of magic. At this level, the mouth is akin to that of the baby that seeks food and sexual gratification at once. The object it looks forward to is what Valdes describes - significantly in association with the beautiful faces of unwedded maids - as 'the white breasts of the queene of Loue' [156-58].

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2 Especially with reference to the phrases 'to know' and carnal knowledge. Also, one of the archaic meanings of the word 'knowledge' is 'sexual intimacy', as in Chambers Dictionary, and 'sexual intercourse', as in Websters Dictionary.

3 Keeping in view the awkward effect produced by the repetition of the word 'graced' twice in lines 16 and 17: 'The fruitful plot of scholarism grac'd, / That shortly he was graced with doctor's name', Breymann suggested that the first 'grac'd' be read as 'grazed'.

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'Faustus himself seeks 'pleasant fruites' and 'princely delicatess' [113]. Also, he loves to dine, to 'banquet, and carowse, and swill' [1241] even when death was threateningly close. He snatches food and wine that lawfully belonged to someone else. Furthermore, the pageant of the Seven Deadly Sins 'feedes' his soul [781], and God Himself is no more than his 'appetite'. That Faustus' sexual desire is essentially an oral craving is evident from his pleading Mephistophilis to 'glut' the same, time and again. He is 'wanton and lascious' [573], and he avowedly seeks to be 'ravished'. In the role of a magician he looks forward to 'omnipotence'. Hence, by following the Chorus in letter and spirit, Faustus uses the word 'sweete' eight times - out of twelve in all in the text - to indicate the carnal and culinary bent of his 'imaginary' mouth.

The same mouth characterizes a number of other literary constructs as well. Rather, Faustus here is no more than one of the voices of the sexual-textual desire. The network stretches from the Prologue to the Epilogue spinning a magical web, of which, Faustus' own wish to be an 'omnipotent' magician is but an image.

In the first place, the words of 'Gluttony' and 'Lechery' explain how the
need for food is changed into the demand for love, doing so by raising
the question of oral pleasure around the word 'rawe'. While Gluttony, in
naming his progeny, refers to 'Martin Martlemas-biefe' [759], Letchery
clarifies that he 'loues an inch of raw Mutton better than an ell of fride
stock fish' [776-78].

Also, almost the entire second scene of the first act is devoted to Wagner's
attempt to hold back this information from the two Scholars that Faustus
was at 'dinner' in the company of Valdes and Cornelius. The bottle of
wine that Wagner was carrying indeed speaks louder than words in as far
as it signifies that a large part of Faustus' enterprise is orally oriented,
and that the question is of listening to it.

Next, the word 'raw' returns with all the associations, in the fourth scene
of the first act, when, Wagner, referring to the Clown's 'hunger' as one
of the chief constituents of his predicament, says that the Clown would
give his soul to the devil in exchange of a 'shoulder of mutton', 'rawe'.
The Clown ratifies that he will have it 'roasted' and with 'good sawce' if
he has to 'pay so deere' [362-65]. Though the Clown sees himself less as
the consumer and more as the consumed, for he finds 'the lice' on his

\footnote{\textsuperscript{4} Also, 'Envy' is 'lean with seeing others eat'.}
person ‘as bolde’ with his ‘flesh’ as if they had paid for his ‘meate and
drinke’, he introduces his craving for flesh in the ‘rawe’ when he says to
Wagner, who is himself ‘prone to leachery’ [217]: ‘if you turne me into
any thing, let it be in the likenesse of a little pretie frisking flea, that I
may be here and there and every where: O, Ile tickle the pretie wench’s
plackets, Ile be amongst them, ifaith’ [419-23].

Furthermore, a large section of the only scene of the third act is devoted
to the interruption of the congregation at ‘holy Peters feast’ by Faustus,
which, led by Mephistophilis, he views as a gathering for ‘belly cheare’
[855]. There, in Rome, in consonance with his earlier promise to Lucifer
to ‘make my [his] spirites pull his [God’s] churches downe’ [711], the
invisible Faustus, cursing - ‘the deuil choake you’ [864] - ‘snatches’ the
dishes of meat and the cup of wine from the Pope.

Moreover, in the second scene of the fourth act, Robin says to Ralph, with
the magical power which ‘one of Doctor Faustus conjuring books’ entitles
him to [922-23], he could let Ralph get ‘druncke with ipocrase at any
taberne in Europe for nothing’. If ‘thats nothing’, as the Master Parson
says, then he will fetch him Nan Spit, the ‘kitchin maide’ for his ‘vse’ at
‘midnight’, which, as a proposal, Ralph finds irresistible [945-54]. The next
scene is devoted to the stealing of ‘goblet’ from the Vinter by Robin and
Ralph. At the end of the scene, Robin offers to pay for Mephistophilis' 'supper' in order to pacify him [997-99]. When Mephistophilis threatens to transform them into an ape and a dog respectively, Robin contemplates on 'nuts and apples' for himself and the 'porridge-pot' for Ralph [1002-6].

Finally, the whole of the fifth scene of the fourth act is devoted to fetching 'tasty grapes', so as to satisfy the Dutchess of Vanholt's desire to have 'ripe grapes' in the 'dead time of the winter' [1209-10]; and, when Faustus is close to his end, in the first scene of the last act, he is, to Wagner's surprise, still fond of 'feasting' and 'belly cheere' [1240-44].

The mechanism of metonymy in the text, thus, makes possible the naming of the signifier occupying the occulted position in it, in seeking to negotiate with which, or the absence of which, the language of the text is led to, metaphorically, first multiplying, and then silencing, itself.

(\text{In the second half of the play-text, where language stops multiplying and takes to silencing itself, the metaphorical mechanism of language is completed. The reversal at the level of metalanguage, that is, the reversal from a self-multiplying language to a self-silencing language, is made possible by a direct confrontation of the metaphorical process with the metonymy - mouth.})
In the second half of the play-text, the mouth as the metonymy of the rupture that it hides as a signifier - one that is arrived at in terms of the association of words - enter into a more specific relationship with the metaphor that has so far insisted on the recognition of the mouth not by indicating the hole it hides but by weaving a symptomatic metalanguage.

To return to the question of multiplication of the language of the play is to discern the prevalence of language in two different forms, namely, of speech and writing. In the play-text, a primacy is clearly attributed to writing over speech. The dominance of writing over speech is depicted, primarily, in terms of Faustus' entry into the order of writing by writing a deed, that is, by his subscribing to the laws of writing at the cost of his blood, body and soul. The pact determines Faustus' bondage to writing, because, by writing the deed, 'man' Faustus turns, from an unqualified 'me', into 'the said Iohn Faustus', a name [527-42].

(Writing, that is instituted by the deed, straightaway imposes a sanction on speech. After the deed is written, Faustus is prohibited by Lucifer to name God. As a matter of fact, writing insists on the replacement of speech by writing. There has always been notable signs of resistance to speech in the play-text. In the first place, there is the Clown who is hard of hearing and prone to mis-hearing. Next, 'Sloath' is reluctant to speak.
Also, Faustus himself is not always awake to the words spoken to him. For instance, when the Horse courser 'hallow in [the] eare' of Faustus who is asleep, Mephistophilis says: 'he heares thee not' [1176]. At the background of his reluctance to listen is Faustus' longing for a 'quiet sleepe'[1145-46]. But at the level of the play that is not comical, if there is a resistance to speech, then there is also an insistence on writing.

Faustus has freedom of speech at the beginning. He loves to speak and others love to listen to him. His 'common talke' is 'aphorismes' to others[47]. He 'disputes', he 'professes', he 'confers', he gives and takes 'council', he raises 'questions' and he solves 'problems'. After his pact with writing, speech is systematically discouraged, especially by Mephistophilis at the beginning. Mephistophilis' resistance to speech is manifest in the exchange of words between him and Faustus:

Faust. ... Tell me who made the world?

Meph. I will not.

Faust. Sweete Mephaustophilus, tell me.

Meph. Moue me not, for I will not tell thee.

Faust. Villaine, have I not bound thee to tel me any thing?

Meph. I, that is not against our kingdome, but this is.

[678-84].

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Resistance to speech is textually bound to an insistence on writing, Mephistophilis being the chief agent of both. If 'prayer' is associated with 'God', then 'writing' is associated with Lucifer. But even before the actual writing of the deed, Faustus had started to experience the insistence of writing, which is evident from his seeking to acquaint himself with the magical alphabets. First, he drew lines, circles, scenes, letters and characters on the ground [79]. Then, the slightly more experienced practitioner of writing wrote 'Iehouahs name', shortened names of Saints, 'figures of euery adiunct to the heavens, / And characters of signes and erring starres' [242-46]. However, Faustus' bondage to writing takes place only after he has signed the pact.

'Mephistophilis is a close guardian of the law of writing, which is why he always invokes the written text whenever Faustus' devotion, contrary to his promise in writing, is flagging. The written text is used by Mephistophilis to enforce the laws of Lucifer. Hence, when Mephistophilis asks Faustus to 'write a deed of gift', and Faustus, in reply, showing him the 'blood that trickled' from his 'arm' - pleads Mephistophilis to let that be 'propitious' for his 'wish', Mephistophilis is quick to insist: 'But Faustus, thou must / Write it in manner of a deed of gift' [466-92]. In this manner, thanks to Mephistophilis' urgency and meticulousness, Faustus
writes the deed, in spite of an inner resistance to it, and has his life and
death surrendered to the laws of Lucifer as a result.

Soon after entering the world of language as a speaking member by
repeating ‘incantations’, Faustus begins to hear words coming from
another source, saying obnoxious things, such as, ‘thou art a spirite’, ‘thou
art damn’d’ and so on. To Faustus - who enjoys listening to Homer and
hates the Friars singing the ‘dirge’ to drive away his spirit - these are
‘feareful ecchoes’ [624-32]. That is so, partly because these words that
seemed to appear from nowhere, were spoken in spite of him. In fact, like
the trimethylamin formula in Freud’s dream, a word is most expressive
when it does not mean anything at all, because only when it means
nothing at all that it is left with the one meaning - namely, it is a word.
But, after the deed is completed, a mysterious ‘inscription’ appears on
Faustus’ bloody arm - ‘Homo fuge’ - not as spoken words but as a written
text. It marks the beginning of Faustus’ correspondence with writing from
within.

Writing in the play-text is associated with the ‘booke’, specifically, the
damned book. The manner in which Faustus is introduced to the the book
by Mephistophilis brings out that, in the play-text, writing constitutes an
exchange with itself, for the book is introduced by Mephistophilis in
exchange of the deed of Faustus in writing. It is handed over to Faustus by Mephistophilis after the former had handed over a written deed to the latter. The exchange takes place when Faustus demands of Mephistophilis a wife. In reply to his demand, he is promised, and not provided with, beautiful mistresses. As a matter of fact, what Faustus is actually provided with against his demand for a wife is a book that he is told contained all that he had 'wit to aske' [479-611]. Moreover, by insisting on the return to the book and on staying close to it, Mephistophilis insists on Faustus' realising the fact that all exchanges in Lucifer's world expected the support of writing.

The book is by no means an unknown referent to Doctor Faustus. Contrarily, Faustus is to be found for the most part in the play-text in his 'study', which is already stuffed with the writings of Aristotle, Galen, Justinian, the Old Philosophers, Roger Bacon, Albertus Magnus and so on; as well as, with plenty of books, such as, the Hebrew Psalter, Jerome's Bible, The New Testament, Hippocrates' Aphorisms, Aeneid through allusion, and so on. But although it binds Faustus to a structure existing prior to his entry into it, he himself knows nothing of it nor of its actual power to bind him.
Furthermore, whether flawed or not, there is a profusion of 'scholarism' in the first half of the play in particular. There are references to the disciplines of Theology, Analytics, Logic, Physic and Necromancy. Moreover, there are Cambridge technical terms such as, 'grac't' and 'commencde', and other academic terms such as 'scholers', 'doctor', 'licentiate', 'aphorismes', 'billes', 'quidditie', syllogisms, 'canonize', 'art', the 'Rector' and so on. In the first scene in particular, Faustus argues with himself almost exclusively in terms of citations from books, that is, in writing. One remembers that Faustus wishes, apart from other things, to make spirits 'reade' him 'straunge philosophie'. It is indeed the privilege of Doctor Faustus, the Renaissance scholar, to be able to wish to 'fill the publike schooles with silk' [114-19], without surprising anyone at all.

[Mephistophilis' reference to the written text, on behalf of Lucifer, which too is constituted around the 'book' as the signifier of it, is remarkable for its insistence. In answer to the questions raised by Faustus soon after writing the deed, Mephistophilis extends to Faustus a book that supposedly contained all answers: 'Hold, take this booke, peruse it thorowly'. The conversation between Faustus and Mephistophilis following the exchange of the deed with the book, brings out the insistence of Mephistophilis on writing:
Meph. The iterating of these lines brings golde...

   Pronounce this thrice devoutly to thy selfe,
   And men in armour shall appear to thee,
   Ready to execute what thou desir'st.

Faust. Thankes, Mephistophilus: yet faine would I
   haue a booke wherein I might beholde al spels
   and incantations, that I might raise vp spirits
   when I please

Meph. Here they are in this booke. [There turne to them.

Faust. Now would I haue a booke where I might see
   al characters and planets of the heauens, that
   I might knowe their motions and dispositions.

Meph. Here they are too. [Turne to them.

Faust. Nay, let me haue one booke more...wherein I
   might see al plants, hearbes and trees that
   grow upon the earth.

Meph. Here they be. [592-610 Emphasis added].

Faustus, however, is clearly not ready to ascribe such power to the
written text: 'O, thou art deceiued', says he.
With the passage of time, however, Faustus becomes more and more accustomed to the laws of writing. In act two, scene two, when he is wavering, Lucifer enters with his chief comrades. He warns Faustus never to name God, tries to please him in terms of the pageant of the Seven Deadly Sins, and, before departing, gives him a book. This time, Faustus considers the book to be a treasure. It represents the insistence of the letter in Faustus' life that thus binds him by the law of 'writing' to read only the 'damned booke' and never to touch the 'scriptures' [98-105]. Later on, Faustus himself will offer to re-write the deed in order to make amends for his having broken the promise made to Lucifer [1307-10]. In the play-text, 'writing' signifies participation in language in a more concrete way than it is possible at the level of speech, for speech, in the words of Lucifer to be reported by Mephistophilis, does not bring 'security' [468].

In the second half of the play-text, Faustus acts as an agent of writing, in the sense that, he directs his efforts systematically to the task of silencing speech. Problematically, Faustus silences speech with speech. It means that the more successful he is in the task of silencing speech, the more heavenly his own speech will prove to be. The act of silencing speech by Faustus comprises a play of language that is, textually, privileged, for it is left to the reader to be apprehended without the mediation of any
additional speech. Accordingly, the words of the Chorus that is supplementary to the play, bids adieu.

The first layer of words to disappear, right at the beginning of this half, is, appropriately, that of the Chorus. A glance at the language of the Chorus in the text suggests that the Chorus is not particularly conducive to speech. In the Prologue to the play, the words of the Chorus are characterised by a haste, as is evident from its choice of the phrases ‘soon he’ and ‘shortly he was’, and from the generally cryptical nature of the narrative on Faustus’ infancy. In the Prologue to the third act, the first seven lines of the Chorus serve to verbally represent those achievements of Faustus that are too ‘astronomical’ to be actually represented on stage. As far as these constitute some of the rare achievements of Doctor Faustus, the Chorus is also indicative of the limit of verbal presentation itself.

When the Chorus enters for the third time, exactly at the beginning of the second half of the play-text, it does so with the view to announce its departure from the play to which it will not return until the special performance of Faustus in terms of the metalanguage on silence to be generated by him has not ended. Silence begins to settle down from the last two lines of the Prologue to the fourth act onwards, when, in the fear
of prejudicing the reader's impression of Faustus' performance at Innsbruck, the Chorus excuses itself:

What there he did, in triall of his art,

*I leaue vntold, your eyes shall see performd.*

[920-21 Emphasis added]

After the voluntary retirement of the Chorus from the play, it is the turn of the other constructs to be silenced, by Faustus. The first move of Faustus in that direction is his move to silence 'higher' speech of the emperor and of the insolent Knight present at the Emperor's Court. At Innsbruck, whereas he silences the emperor by proving the reports of his skill that the emperor had heard of, doing so in terms of summoning two spirits in the guise of the emperor's ancestors who were perfect enough in detail to put even the finer doubts in the mind of the emperor to rest, Faustus instructs the Knight who had 'interrupted' him during his conference with the emperor, in a rather crude way, to keep his mouth shut.

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5 In the B Text Faustus lays down the condition to the emperor's witnessing the bodies of his dead ancestors in these terms:

My lord, I must forewarn your majesty
That when my spirits present the royal shapes
Of Alexander and his paramour,
Your grace demand no questions of the king,
But in dumb silence let them come and go.

(IV,i, 93-97).
In act four, scene six of the B text, which is a detailed scene set in the court of the Duke of Vanholt, all the low characters who have been victims of Faustus' magic, assemble, to voice their grievances against the doctor. However, when these characters get to the point of threatening to upset the higher Duke-Faustus discourse - one, of which their words and actions constituted a subset - by revealing some of the less artful sports to have been played by Faustus, such as, his having devoured a cart load of hay, Faustus, one by one, charms them dumb.

In the A text, after the Horse-courser and the Vanholt episodes, when Faustus has returned once again to his study and is in the company of the Scholars, he is requested by the First Scholar to let them 'see' the 'peerelesse Dame of Greece' [1246-53]. It was necessary for Faustus to conjure up Helen in order to settle, or silence, the dispute of the Scholars with testimony. Moreover, it is mandatory for the Scholars to be dead silent as long as she is present before them, for, Faustus warns the scholars not to speak: 'Be silent, then, for danger is in words' [1262 Emphasis added]. Although there is no explanation as to why it should be so, Helen's appearance in the symbolic plane not only grinds speech to a halt, but also continues to elude speech even after she had departed. After Helen, who is silent in herself, has walked across and off the stage, the scholars exclaim at the speechless beauty in words that, instead of
naming what they saw, only manage to re-enforce the silence: 'Too simple is my wit to tell her praise', says the Second Scholar, and, in the words of the Third Scholar, the beauty of Helen 'passeth all compare.'[1263-67].

By now Faustus has silenced virtually all speech, both courtly and comical, that is present in the play, save his own. His own words reach the climax with the naming of his real wish - though the truly devilish shape of it is disguised under a fantasy at the time of his doing so - in the purple passage dedicated to Helen of Greece. Helen is real mediated by the imaginary, which is why she is irresistible though fatal. Helen is not to be obscured by the excess of language generated by Faustus. Rather, she emerges in the shape of a silent mouth, or the mouth of ultimate silence in a fantasised form, one whose emergence is sustained by silence and a declaration of speechlessness from the two ends.

(Helen is an open mouth, speaking, with tongues of flame, the silent language of destruction. She is a ball of fire. The element of fantasy is necessary in order to allow Faustus to believe that he was responding not to his real desire of self-destruction but to an intense longing - equal to
that of the moth for fire - for sexual consummation.6

The imaginary mouth demands oral pleasure, and the real mouth, destruction and immortality. The heavenly ‘lips’ of ‘sweete Helen’ is a mouth that takes into account both. Also, the mouth of Helen both ‘suckes forth’ Faustus’ soul and ‘giues’ it to him ‘againe’. The mouth of Helen is directly associated with her face. To come to the ‘face’ of Helen is to come to an uncomparable brightness, the likeness of which is necessary to ‘lancht a thousand shippes’ and ‘burn’ ‘the toplesse Towres of Ilium’. The face of Helen leads to her entire body which defies description in being too bright. Her body is as radiated as that of ‘flaming Jupiter’ when the latter appeared in his divine glory before Semele. Helen’s is the mouth of fire, one ‘kisse’ of which is enough to destroy as well as immortalize Faustus [1328-47]. Significantly, to the Old Man as the law-keeper of God, this irradiation is the equivalent of a ‘furnace’ from which he is too eager to ‘flie’ - echoing the inscription on Faustus’ arm, ‘Homo fuge’ or man fly - ‘vnto [his] God’ [1352-56].

After his encounter with the real mouth, albeit in the form of a sexual fantasy, Faustus’ own speech begins to falter. His words increasingly

6 Otherwise, Helen is a figment of imagination of Homer and Euripides.
reveal the silence that structures all speech, that is, the silence from the hollow in which all speech emanates, and into which it always recedes in the end. Faustus' Hellenic outburst in an heightened language is followed by a confession of his sins to the Scholars who had never had a hint of it before. His speech, whose content indeed makes the Scholars to 'tremble' at it, bears, by virtue of the repetitions and stutterings in terms of which it is brought out, the impression of being the words of one who is 'growne into some sickenesse by being ouer solitary [1363-64]. With time, now running very fast, these outbursts that constitute Faustus' speech recede further into the original silence. Soon, the speech of Faustus begins to be impeded, even halted, by an unknown force. Faustus says, he wants to speak but something 'stayes' his 'tong' [1388-89]. With the disintegration of his speech, his words are more and more restricted to the rudiments of language. Very much in consonance with his state of speechlessness, Faustus, unconsciously and anticipatorily, seeks to silence his forthcoming speech in advance. Fully convinced that the signifier cannot stave off the real silence, he says to the Scholars: 'and what noyse soeuer yee heare, come not vnto me, for nothing can rescue me' [1412-13].

Faustus has now almost entirely lost his support in speech. His dying speech - more a series of irregular outbursts punctuated by prolonged silences, a chain of interjections and spasmodic utterances - bears the
mark of decomposition of speech caused by the subject’s arrival at the
brink of the ultimate silence, beyond the first as well as final signifier in
the place of the hole. At the time of articulation of his dying speech,
Faustus’ existence, probably unknown to him, is no more hinged to his
heavenly words but is left entirely at the mercy of writing.

The metaphorical function of language is completed, even rendered
redundant, by the emergence of the signifier mouth - itself a metonymy
of the whole person - in terms of the metonymical function of association
of language, for, metaphor is but aimed at the discovery of metonymy.
Therefore, while the excess of language contains undertones of an
unidentified mouth, the closure of language is brought about by the
overtones of a manifest mouth, manifest, in the first instance, under the
cover of a fantasy, and finally, without the cover.

Arriving at the mouth of the symbolic order, at the threshold of his
ultimate wish-fulfilment, Faustus encounters the real order that looms
large behind the mouth as the signifier designed to conceal it. To Faustus,
the real order is a horrendous sight. He cries out to it - ‘ugly hell gape
not!’ [1476] and the next moment he is sucked in by it. This ugly mouth
of hell is the expression of the ultimate duality of creation and
destruction, for it is one that sucks in life as well as throws it forth. It is

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because of the duality that ultimately informs this mouth that it is 'real'. It is truly real because it is ugly and cruel. As such, it is also the mouth that conditions the real wish of Faustus, one which undercuts all his articulation by tracing it back to the original silence and grounding it there.

The signifier 'mouth' in the play-text - that is associated with the mouth which seeks nourishment and pleasure in the most general terms, the mouth that is the site of all discourse and the fearful mouth conceived as beautiful in fantasy - really stands for the mouth that represents the hole in the transcendental lack, in the shape of the mouth of hell. With Faustus confronting the ugly mouth of hell, the reader arrives at the joint of language with the unconscious. It is a point at which the signifier of lack refers not to another signifier but to the lack that is overwhelmingly imminent.

His heavenly words having lost their place to the mouth of hell, the life of a mostly speechless Faustus is here onwards left to the mercy of the thin line of writing. This is so, because Faustus must wait for the life-sustaining deed to expire before he is to die. The crusade of language against itself set into motion by the surfacing of the real mouth at the heart of a reduplicating language, ends with Faustus' death-wish,
appropriately expressed at the level of the metatext, in the form of the wish to erase his only point of binding left with language, that is, writing. Writing is life, for Faustus had purchased twenty four years of life in writing. Hence, even though he existed at this moment because his hour of death as pre-determined in writing had not arrived, his real wish getting the better of him leads Faustus to wish he had never known writing, 'neuer read booke'[76-77 Emphasis added]. That Faustus is fast approaching the real mouth or the rupture that will ultimately draw him in, is foreshadowed by his evocation to it in the form of his calling for a mouth to protect him by engulfing him: 'Earth gape', he cries [1142]. Next, Faustus loosely moves on to another image of the mouth, calling out for protection, once again, in a paradoxical language:

Now draw vp Faustus, like a foggy mist,
Into the intrailes of yon labring cloude,
That when you vomite foorth into the ayre,
My limbes may issue from your smoaky mouthes,
So that my soule may but ascend to heauen!

[1445-49].
Everything culminates in the very last words spoken by Faustus, after the articulation of which there is no reason for him to exist any more. The few words that Faustus is left with at the final point of his 'tragicall historie' are completely conditioned by the real desire of his, which is why the last words of Faustus are employed to express an otherwise strange wish, namely, that writing, which alone sustained his existence at that moment, just like speech before it, was destroyed: 'Ile burne my bookes', he says, and immediately, Faustus is dragged by the devils into the gaping hell.

That the line of writing has been severed is what is left for the Chorus to ratify in the epilogue which, accordingly, begins: 'Cut is the branch'.

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7 Restoring the seriousness due to the proposition, that is not there in the last words of Robin when he vows to 'never rob' Faustus' 'library' any more.