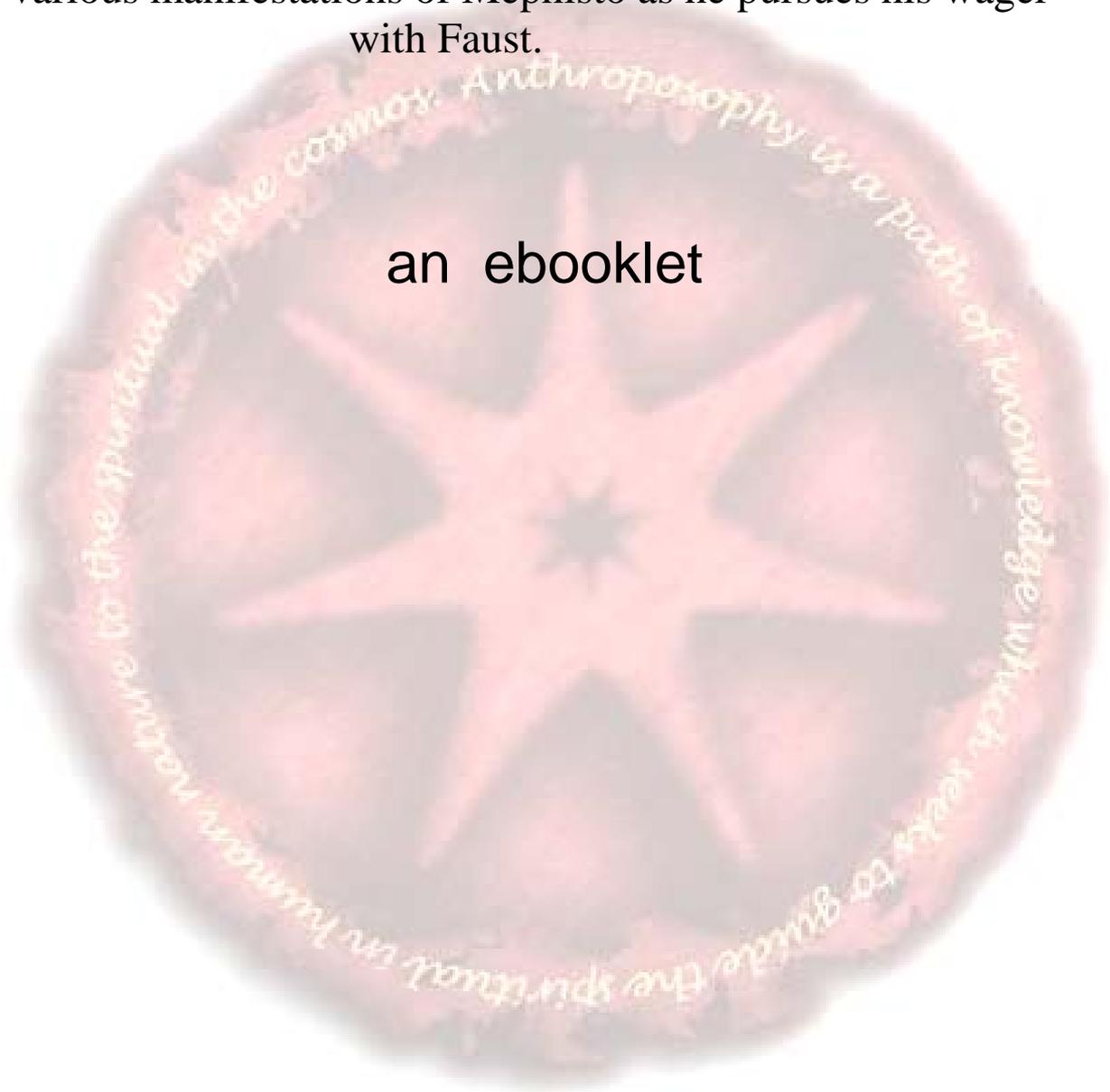


Good And Evil In Faust

The relationship of Mephistopheles to God and to Faust, and the various manifestations of Mephisto as he pursues his wager with Faust.

an ebooklet



Dr. Adrian Anderson

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Introduction

The above theme is dealt with in a uniquely Goethean manner, which is in many aspects different from the Christian theological perspective on good and evil. Goethe's acute insights derive from a living, existential encounter with the theme, as is indicated in a comment he made in a letter to Lavater, "In mir reinigt sich's unendlich, und doch gestehe ich gerne, Gott und Satan, Höll' und Himmel ist in mir Einem".¹ (In me there is a never-ending purifying, and yet I gladly admit, in me, God and Satan, Hell and Heaven are one.) This essay explores the portrayal of the relationship of evil to good, and to Faust as the striving human being.

The relationship of Mephistopheles to God; of Evil to Good.

To determine the nature of the relationship of Mephistopheles to Good and to Faust, in the drama, it is necessary to examine firstly whether the dynamics and the entities involved in fact follow Biblical principles. In the Prologue of 'Faust' it is unclear to what extent evil has the possibility to succeed, as God is quite undisturbed by Mephistopheles, who in turn is very confident. The same dynamic is to be found in the Book of Job, wherein two devastating attacks on Job by Satan are also fully permitted by God, who nevertheless remains entirely confident of Job's loyalty. Goethe portrays Mephistopheles as an entity who, in enticing human beings into egoistic, evil actions is actually serving God's purposes. However this precise concept is not Biblical, as the treatment of the theme in the Book of Job, and elsewhere in the Old Testament, is distinctly different.

The Book of Job is concerned to show that no matter how much suffering Job, a devout person, has to undergo in his life, he (and hence others) can remain true to God. Whereas in Goethe's drama, Faust is not a religious person devoted to God,² but rather a person ceaselessly striving for the highest level of meaningful activity. As Mephistopheles states, he demands the most beautiful star in heaven, and Earth's

¹ Konrad Burdach, 1932, *Das religiöse Problem in Goethes 'Faust'*; in Werner Keller (Hrsg.), *Aufsätze zu Goethes Faust - Wege der Forschung*, Darmstadt, 1974, s. 38. Burdach zitiert aus einem Brief Goethes zu Lavater am 7. Mai 1781. Der Brief befindet sich in *Goethe's Briefe*, Hamburgerausgabe, 1962, Band 1, S. 355.

² Osman Durrani, 1977, *Faust and the Bible: a Study of Goethe's use of Scriptural Allusions and Christian Religious Motifs in Faust I and II*, in the series *European University Papers*, Berne, p. 30.

highest pleasure (Ls. 304-5). Secondly the pact between God and Mephistopheles in Goethe's drama has another non-Biblical tension to it, namely can Mephistopheles tempt Faust with such experiences that he will be content to remain in them, and to refrain from further initiative³

One sees here clearly that Faust does not 'sell his soul to the devil', he makes a wager with him – because of his incessant drive for knowledge and inner fulfilment – to the effect that the Devil may have ownership of his soul if the earthly pleasures offered to him become truly permanently fulfilling. Faust is however, quite confident that this will never happen; and the audience is aware that Mephistopheles, in the Prologue in Heaven, has already been allowed by God to test Faust, and tempt him to become satisfied with transitory pleasures.

In the Prologue other elements also indicate that Goethe's portrayal of evil and good does not closely follow Biblical precepts. For example, Faust is represented as connected to his spiritual foundations, "Ein guter Mensch in seinem dunklen Drange, ist sich des rechten Weges wohl bewußt" (A good man, with his obscure urges, is still aware of the right way; ls. 328/9). However theologically, since Creation is regarded as blemished, through the 'Fall of Man', human beings are not connected with their integrity unless they have a devout Christianity. A further difference between the accepted Christian perspective and 'Faust' is that God is still actively creating, he is the Creator-God par excellence. As a result of this, a major paradigm arises in Faust, namely that humanity is itself constantly impelled to meaningful activity, thereby furthering the creative impulses of God. It is very significant in this connection, that God refers to Creation as "Das Werdende, das ewig wirkt und lebt" (The ongoing-developing principle, which is eternally alive and efficacious; l. 346). This eternally-creative aspect of God in 'Faust' is strengthened by the original draft of line 346, which read, "Das Sein des Seins, das ewig lebt (The existence of existence, which eternally lives)".⁴

Mephistopheles refers to himself as "ein Teil des Teils, der anfangs alles war.. (a part of the part, which at the beginning was everything)." Such generalized cosmogonic nuances give the impression that God and Mephistopheles are, to some extent, personifications of non-individuated pantheistic forces. This supra-personal nuance in Goethe's world-view is enhanced by his attitude that evil is a coherent, integral part of God's creation. The comment of Goethe in 'Zum Shakespeare-Tag', "Das, was wir bösen nennen, ist nur die andere Seite vom Guten (That, which we call evil, is only the other side of the Good)." clearly shows that he understood the connection of good and evil in this way.⁵ One may conclude from the above, that the attitude to human nature, evil and good and to Creation in Goethe's drama, does not follow a mainstream theological perspective.⁶

³ Nevertheless it is true that the Book of Job and 1 Samuel, as well as 1 Kings and Ezekiel all teach the general concept that God does sanction evil at times, through one of his 'evil spirits'. For example, 1 Samuel 16, 14.. "and an evil spirit from the Lord made him very restless".

⁴ Friso Melzer, 1932, *Goethes Faust: Eine evangelische Auslegung*, Berlin, Ss. 25, 27.

⁵ Quoted by Erich Trunz, 1954, in '*Anmerkungen*' zur Faust, in *Goethes Werke* Band 3, s. 494.

⁶ There are also the further points of difference between 'Faust' and usual Christian attitudes, for example that Mephisto has a humorous tone in the Prologue, and God regards him only as a rascal.

However it appears from 'Faust' that Goethe considered that evil could also manifest in specific entities, whether in Satan or in lesser demonic beings. Mephistopheles can be considered such an individualized entity, and perhaps the essence of Mephistopheles' relationship to Creation - from his own point of view - is his relationship to human consciousness. He seeks to prevent the 'pointless effort' towards creative and ethical matters, and to thereby obtain mastery of each soul. Mephistopheles is aware of the significance of an active searching intelligence for humanity, "Verachte nur Vernunft und Wissenschaft, des Menschen allerhöchste Kraft (I despise only reason and knowledge, man's very highest power)"; l.1851). Mephistopheles is aware that the higher intelligence can act as a shield for humanity, from his influences. He sarcastically comments on what happens to humanity if reason, without ethical qualities – represented by the 'feminine element' – is active, "er nennt's Vernunft und braucht's allein, nur tierischer als jedes Tier zu sein" (he calls it reason, and that alone he needs to be more bestial than any beast); l. 285-6).

However from God's viewpoint, Mephistopheles' relationship to humanity is somewhat different, namely he is that stimulus in the human being's soul-life that has the role of attempting to stop the human being from constantly striving towards new creative challenges and opportunities. Mephistopheles' impulse is to turn human reason away from interest in future possibilities and higher purposes, and thus to dull the drive towards exploration and self-development. He also incites a person towards un-ethical activity, but this incitement clarifies the ethical issues involved and hence leads to enhanced morality. This concept of the relationship of Evil to Good is indeed "ebenso tiefsinnig wie seltsam (as peculiar as it is profound)".⁷

However Goethe introduces an additional complex element in this matter, namely Mephistopheles is aware that the final result of his evil actions is the Good, "Ich bin ein Teil von jener Kraft die stets das Böse will und stets das Gute schafft (I am a part of that power which constantly wills evil, and constantly creates the Good)"; ls. 1336/7) Mephistopheles is, against his will, a kind of catalyst that assists God in the production of morality amongst humanity, and in his intention to carry creativity onwards, through the activity of human beings.⁸ The result of this unwilling subordination of Mephistopheles' deeds to the development of divine Will and the Good is, as F. T. Vischer expresses it, "Mephistopheles ...erzieht den Faust, ohne es zu wollen, bildet ihn zur Einheit des Idealismus und Realismus (Mephistopheles...educates Faust, without wanting to, moulds him into a unity of Idealism and Realism)."⁹

A characteristic difference between God and Mephistopheles is clearly defined in their attitude toward Faust. God perceives a quality in Faust to constantly keep expressing his creative-will with integrity, and he trusts that Faust is able to resist any undermining. Whereas in contrast, Mephistopheles does not perceive this quality, and "sees Faust's

⁷ Joachim Müller, 1969 *Prolog und Epilog zu Goethes Faustdichtung*, in Keller, 'Aufsätze', 1974, s. 237.

⁸ Ibid., s.237.

⁹ Friedrich Theodor Vischer, 1857, *Kritische Bemerkungen über den ersten Theil von Göthe's 'Faust', namentlich den, 'Prolog im Himmel*, s. 208, in Keller, 'Aufsätze', 1974. Various commentators such as Durrani and Seidlin (Oskar Seidlin, 1944, "Das Etwas und das Nichts", in Keller, 'Aufsätze' s. 365) in an attempt to grasp this, consider the question whether 'the good' (das Gute) here means evil, or 'evil' (das Böse) means the good. However I agree with Durrani (s. 66) that this approach would seriously contradict the entire theme of the drama.

striving only as a stupidity.”¹⁰ In this sense Mephistopheles has only an incomplete perspective on humanity (whom Faust represents), and Mephistopheles is, as he himself emphasizes (I.1349), only an incomplete part of the All.¹¹ Mephistopheles is also in himself an unintegrated entity, having powerful intelligence, and yet he is bodily ugly, with cloven hoofs and has close association with snails and toads, etc. Mephistopheles’ influence is dualistic, at times he can be helpful and supportive of Faust, whilst at other times he is vicious and callous.

The nature of Mephistopheles; his various characteristics

(Wesensarten/Charakterzüge)

The impersonal cosmic element in the Prologue extends to some extent into the first scene of Part One, but soon recedes. Faust has to struggle with his own duality in the absence of God, and Mephistopheles’ personality is convincingly depicted. For example Faust is able to persuade Mephistopheles to change his offer of a pact into a wager. As Rickert rightly insists, we should not make the mistake of thinking that because of the initial transcendental-pantheistic nuance “Goethe ein ‘radikal Böses’ im positiven Sinne nicht kannte (Goethe did not know a ‘radical evil’ in the fully definite sense).”¹²

Some critics have concluded that Mephistopheles can not be a real individual being, because if he were, he would remember the divine declaration from God that his efforts shall fail, making his activity pointless.¹³ One solution to this is that Mephistopheles functions without constant awareness of what transpired in the dialogue with God. So there is an element of psychological discontinuity, to help express the non-human, transcendental nature of Mephistopheles.¹⁴ Another solution to this question is that Mephistopheles is simply so intellectually arrogant, that he does not take the words of God as absolute and infallible. Furthermore, Mephistopheles’ actions do result in unethical behaviour by Faust, and as the last scene Heaven (‘Himmel’) shows, Mephistopheles’ deeds have had an effect which is taken seriously by heavenly spirits. It seems to me for these reasons that Sudau’s conclusion is erroneous, namely that Mephistopheles is not a psychologically valid figure, because “...er wäre sich der Vergeblichkeit all ihrer subjektiven Anstrengungen von vornherein bewußt (...he would already beforehand be aware of the futility of all the subjective efforts of his deeds).”¹⁵

As the drama proceeds Mephistopheles’ evil nature is revealed as one who does not hesitate to deny or to destroy. He thinks that all Creation in general should be destroyed (I. 1339/0), and he has no qualms about the appalling devastation wrought in Gretchen’s life, and heartlessly sings about the impending total ruination of Gretchen’s life (I.3682-97). The callousness is reinforced by the fact that the song has a ghastly

¹⁰ Heinrich Rickert, 1925, *Die Einheit des Faustischen Charakters. Eine Studie zu Goethes Faustdichtung*, in Keller, “Aufsätze”, 1974, s. 256.

¹¹ Osman Durrani, “*Faust and the Bible*”, s. 65.

¹² Heinrich Rickert, *Ibid.*, s. 253.

¹³ Alexander Rudolph Hohlfeld, 1920/21, *Pakt und Wette in Goethes ‘Faust’*, in Keller, “Aufsätze”, 1974, “Goethe hat es vermieden uns an Gottes Allwissenheit zu erinnern..” s. 388.

¹⁴ Hence also the flow of time in ‘Faust’ can become disjointed and incongruous, allowing Crusaders to appear in ancient Greece (Part 2, 3rd Act).

¹⁵ Ralf Sudau, 1993, *Johann Wolfgang Goethe. Faust I und Faust II Interpretation von Ralf Sudau*, in Oldenbourg Interpretationen, München, s. 62.

echo of Ophelia's song in Hamlet.¹⁶ His callousness towards women is also shown in 'The Neighbour's House ('Der Nachbarin Haus') through the way he spitefully plays with the emotions of Martha concerning her absent, and possibly deceased, husband. Mephistopheles is also undisturbed by the moral degradation of Faust, of students, and the murder of Valentine, and of Philemon and Baucis together with their guest.

Mephistopheles as the 'spirit who denies' has a blindness both to the spiritual implication of the fact that the human being strives ever onwards, and to the higher spiritual element in Creation itself. This is shown in the *Witches Kitchen* (Hexenküche) scene, where he is surprised that Faust does not want to sink into sensuality and meaningless pleasure (l.2297/8).¹⁷ His denial of the spiritual reality, in which the Mothers exist (Ls.6246-8), is a powerful expression of the nihilism derived from his inner blindness. He knows these realms exist, but cannot acknowledge the full significance of their nature, in direct contrast to Faust's intuitive mind.¹⁸

As a participant at the Emperor's Court, Mephistopheles suggests the development of a socially irresponsible solution regarding state fiscal policy. His actions however appear to be an object-lesson for Faust regarding the significance of personal morality for society in general, for example how an attitude towards the printing of money can have destructive influences in the community. In this way Faust's focus is widened beyond the experience of personal moral issues and personal goals. Mephistopheles entices people to agree to the plan of irresponsibly printing money, by making references to the egoistical advantages it will bring. There are sinister parodies in this scene to Biblical teachings. Mephistopheles refers to the plentiful wine in this new (i.e. renewed) kingdom - a cynical reflection of the promise by Christ of drinking the fruit of the vine anew in the kingdom, (Matthew 26: 28).¹⁹ The treasurer remarks in response to Mephistopheles' paper money, "In diesem Zeichen wird nun jeder selig (In this sign everyone will become blessed)" (l. 6083) are also a reference to the famous event in Christian history of Constantine's decision to make Christianity the state religion because of a vision he had.²⁰ This event was also described as a source of joy by mainstream church fathers, but its consequences for some sectors of Christendom were disastrous.

In Part Two, Mephistopheles' nature undergoes a transformation, in that he at times provides worthwhile advice to Faust, and indeed has to serve him in his striving towards self development. He appears in Part Two at times more as the fallen angel than as a satanic being who has always been evil.²¹ Already in Part 1 (Ls. 1776-83) this 'fallen angel' aspect manifests briefly, but in the course of Part Two, one is lead to the thought that Mephistopheles is the kind of being that could be one day be redeemed. In a conversation with Eckermann Goethe opined that indeed such a being could be redeemed by God.²²

¹⁶ Erich Trunz, 1954, in 'Anmerkungen' zu Faust, in *Goethes Werke* Band 3, s. 520

¹⁷ Erich Trunz, 1954, *Ibid.*, Band 3, s. 514.

¹⁸ Jaroslav Pelikan, 1995, *Faust the Theologian*, New Haven, p. 50.

¹⁹ Durrani, *ibid.*, p. 132. Further Durrani points out that Mephistopheles' description of the gold and gems in the soil as 'golden calves' indicates the inherent falseness of his idea, as this is an oblique reference to an event in the Old Testament when the Israelites underwent a time of apostasy.

²⁰ Durrani, *ibid.*, p. 132.

²¹ Fuchs, *ibid.*, "ein gefallener Engel spricht" (in Zeilen 1776-83), p. 358.

²² Fuchs, *ibid.*, aus einem Gespräch mit Eckermann 28 Feb, 8^{te} und 12^{te} März 1831, s. 359.

That Goethe held this view of evil is supported by statements in other of his works. For example that evil in humanity is a part of a 'divine plan' is affirmed in 'Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre'... "ja, (man betrachtet) Sünde selbst und Verbrechen nichts als Hindernisse, sondern als Fordernisse das Heilige zu verehren und liebzugewinnen (...indeed, {one regards} even sin itself and crime not as a hindrance, but rather as challenges to revere and become fond of what is holy)." This quote is supported by remarks in his autobiography.²³ Resenhöfft reports that Goethe early in his life says of Mephistopheles that he has come to know him "so früh als Freund und Feind (so early as friend and enemy)."²⁴ Mephistopheles appears to be an individualized entity who is also a representative of the general tendency towards evil in humanity, and whose 'cosmic task' is to intensify this tendency. He therefore exists in two forms, transcendental and in humanity; these are not mutually exclusive functions. Goethe indicates clearly in the Walpurgis Night scene, that Mephistopheles is not Satan, but rather one of various fallen beings, hence he can manifest qualities other than evil (Is. 3933-4 & 4037-40).

In this connection, Mephistopheles says in the Hexenküche... "den Bösen sind sie los, die Bösen sind geblieben (The Evil One has left them, but evil beings remain); Is. 2509)". This could be a reference to Mephistopheles' double existence, as a separate being in his own realm, and as being who - via various minor devils - still influences humankind. The emphasis is on the unawareness that humanity has of the Devil's actual transcendental reality. However these lines could also mean that although the mythical figure of 'Satan' has been relegated to fairy-tales, evil is still very much present in the individual human being. Vischer's conclusion that Goethe is here humorously denying Mephistopheles his own existence seems less likely to me.²⁵

A striking example of a positive influence of Mephistopheles occurs when he reveals to Faust that Helena can only be attained if he journeys to the mysterious, lofty beings known as 'the Mothers'. Furthermore, Faust is enabled to attain to the Mothers through a key given to him by Mephistopheles. The expression 'the Mothers' was understood in ancient Greece to refer to an especially sacred realm or rather the beings who reign within it.²⁶ So in directing Faust towards them, and greatly facilitating his journey, Mephistopheles becomes a being who links Faust to the divine. One sees here that Mephistopheles does have an understanding of spiritual realities, and provides assistance to the striving human being. As Goethe explained to Eckerman, this understanding which Mephistopheles has is, "das Resultat einer großen

²³ Sudau, *ibid.*, s. 61. Das Zitat findet sich in 'Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre'; zweites Buch; Band 8, s.157, in der Hamburgerausgabe. In 'Dichtung und Wahrheit', (Band 10, s.177), es findet sich die Wörter auf Lateinisch, 'nemo contra deum nisi deus ipse', bzw., Niemand gegen Gott, es sei denn Gott selbst.

²⁴ Wilhelm Resenhöfft, 1975, Goethes "Faust". Gleichnis schöpferischer Sinnerfassung, Frankfurt/Main, s. 269-270.

²⁵ Theodor Vischer, 'Kritische Bemerkungen', in Keller, Aufsätze, s. 214, "wenn Mephisto sagt 'den Bösen sind sie los, die Bösen sind geblieben', es folgt eigentlich aus diesem Worte eine Aufhebung seiner eigenen mythischen Existenz, ab er doch ist er der es sagt; das ist der Humor davon.

²⁶ Plutarch, The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans, (transl. J. Dryden), no date, New York, p. 381, and Plutarch, Über den Verfall der Orakel, quoted, D. Lohmeyer, 1977, München, s. 392.

Weltbetrachtung (the outcome of a mighty and comprehensive reflecting about the world)”.²⁷

In the ‘Laboratorium’ scene, Mephistopheles is partly responsible for the generation of Homunculus, his influence presumably equipping Homunculus with more intelligence. This episode points to a fundamental role of Mephistopheles, namely indirectly assisting in the stimulation of new life, new beginnings.²⁸ Mephistopheles also directed the attention of Homunculus to the sleeping Faust. However Homunculus is in turn capable of sensing an important connection between Faust and Helena, and thus he perceives Faust’s urgent need to go to ancient Greece to find Helena. Mephistopheles is not only incapable of such perception, but he also subordinates his will to the commands of Homunculus. When Homunculus declares that the journey to Greece should commence, Mephistopheles is impelled to obey this being, despite his antipathy to the plan and the place. Here the change in the dynamics of Mephistopheles also becomes evident, his actions are assisting Faust rather than harming him.

Later, as Phorkyas, Mephistopheles in the noble realm of Grecian deities, is primarily ugly rather than evil, and thus contrasts with Helena who is the archetypally beautiful woman. In the third act, in ‘Before the Palace of Menlaus’ (‘Vor dem Palaste Menelas’), Mephistopheles assists Faust further, through persuading Helena to enter Faust’s castle. Mephistopheles however knows Helena’s secrets, and she is vulnerable to his tactics; when he reveals the Achilles episode in her past, she is overwhelmed. Furthermore, Helena is also persuaded by Mephistopheles’ lies to leave ancient Greece, however Mephistopheles is not actually destructive towards her, as he was with Gretchen. In contrast to Helena, Faust is beyond Phorkyas’ influence, he is predominantly absent in the same scene. But when he is present he is not deceived by Mephistopheles’ importunate urging. Faust in the Inner Court of a Castle (‘Innerer Burghof’) scene, does not follow Mephistopheles’ urge to flee from Menelas’ troops, instead he is a serene ruler, secure in the knowledge of his military victory. This is a very significant dynamic for it implies the dis-empowerment of Mephistopheles-Phorkyas over Faust. This dis-empowerment could also be regarded as depicted in the fact that Faust has virtually broken his wager with Mephistopheles, (by his yearning to commit to a life with Helena) and yet the wager is never mentioned by Phorkyas.

It may be the case that the consciousness-condition of Mephistopheles, in his phase as Phorkyas, is simply unable to seize the opportunity to argue that Faust has now lost the wager. The solution may be however that Phorkyas considers Helena is firstly, a supernatural entity, and not an earthly woman which he has ‘given’ to Faust for his pleasure, in the way that Gretchen was. Secondly, her appearance in Faust’s life was only partly due to Mephistopheles-Phorkyas, it was not an event that originated from Mephistopheles. This being the case, one may conclude that Faust’s tarrying with Helena, a transcendent reality (similar to Euphorion), is beyond the terms of the wager.²⁹ However it is also the case that Faust and Helena did not settle down, and

²⁷ Albert Fuchs, 1968, *Mephistopheles. Wesen, Charakterzüge, Intelligenz - Seine geheime Tragödie - Das Problem seiner Rettung*, aus einem Gespräch mit Eckerman, 10^{te} Jan 1825, in *Keller, ‘Aufsätze’*, p.356.

²⁸ Melian Stawell & Lowes Dickinson, 1928, *Goethe & Faust: an Interpretation*. London, p. 165.

²⁹ This is a major point, but it is not directly the theme of the essay. Trunz presents his reflections on this, in his Commentary, S. 583-4.

tarry in the brief moment, for events kept overtaking them. They moved from the castle to Arcadia, then their son, Euphorion proves to be a recalcitrant being, who dies suddenly, with the result that Helena disappears. Since Mephistopheles was in close proximity to Faust and Helena at their union, it may well be that he considered that his influence was still at work, and that Faust would in fact not be tarrying in the 'fair moment'.

In the next scene, 'High Mountains' ('Hochgebirg'), Mephistopheles, now manifesting in his usual form, impels Faust to take up a commanding role in a battle, and become associated with the use of improper magical powers, (ls. 10,301-7, 10,311-2). In the 'Palast' scene when Faust has been given a coastal area to reclaim, Mephistopheles again shows a devilish quality, praising rapacious greed and egotism in commercial undertakings. Later, towards the end of the drama, in response to Faust's dissatisfaction at not being complete master of the highest point of the newly reclaimed land, Mephistopheles proceeds to cause serious crimes, namely the murder of three people, and indirectly thereby invokes the curse of the grey women into Faust's old age.

Faust is meanwhile unaware of the moral defects in his actions, and dreams of a new, ideal form of society in which people can experience a form of Utopias. However this utopian dream involves the people in a constant activity of battling the ocean, which would try to take back the land. Hence this great social ideal of Faust wherein he would gladly 'tarry' is still not a static moment, because there would be a lively, challenging element involved, which would continually engage the will of the people. However Mephistopheles, aware that Faust's life is drawing to a close, but unable to perceive this subtle yet important initiative-element in his latest plans, eagerly prepares Faust's grave. He anticipates the opportunity to follow his innate urge, and claim the right to lead Faust's soul down into a hellish realm of primeval elemental chaos, "Die Elemente sind mit uns verschworen und auf Vernichtung läufte hinaus (The elements are in league with us, and everything is moving to destruction)" (ls. 11549/50).³⁰ Once Faust has died, Mephistopheles then makes futile attempts to seize hold of Faust's immortal being, in a spiritual realm.

As Mephistopheles realizes that he has lost the wager, and the angels are in fact taking Faust up into heaven, he manifests an element of goodness, admiring the beauty of the angels, although his attitude is too sensuous for the reality. One sees here that his personality takes on a similar quality to that which he had in the Prologue, the satanic aspect recedes. He speaks in a mood of regret, almost yearning to be part of the good, begging the angels to cast a loving glance at him (l. 11,756). But in the proximity of the angels he experiences discomfort, and yet, though disappointed, he concludes that he deserves his fate, as he failed to properly pursue his own intentions.

In conclusion, it seems to me that Mephistopheles appears in the drama as an integral part of the over-all scheme of God's Creation. He is a personalized expression of a cosmic principle, restlessly seeking to ensnare human souls by numbing their initiative, so that beyond earthly life they become his slaves. But he has little chance of success, as the striving human being has forces in him or her that are intimately linked to creative impulses which ceaselessly surge throughout Creation, carrying it towards a

³⁰ Albrecht Weber, {ohne Datum}, Wege zu Goethes "Faust", Frankfurt am Main, s. 61.

goal which is eternally re-defining and expanding itself. Further, there is an ethical dimension to human nature, deriving from the ‘eternal-feminine’, which seeks to transform and purify the soul. Helped by these two influences, the soul shall never rest content with the denying, stultifying force in Creation that Mephistopheles represents.

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Appendix: the theme briefly reviewed from Rudolf Steiner's perspective

Rudolf Steiner's commentaries on Faust fill two volumes in his Complete Works. There are two major points which need to be briefly noted here. Steiner taught that evil has its origin in spiritual beings of differing types. These two classes of beings induce two differing types of unethical drives in humanity. One type is efficacious in the naïve and self-centred ideas and desires; the other is primarily, but not exclusively active in the volition. The first type is of lesser malignancy than the second type.

At worst, the first type can lead to crimes of passion, usually it induces a selfish and indulgent attitude; its dynamics are typified by highly emotionally charged, fiery states. Steiner refers the term "Devil" to the being responsible for this, but avoids such Biblical terms, preferring the term, "Lucifer".

He refers the term "Satan" to the being responsible for the other type of evil, namely a much more serious type; the cold-blooded premeditated act of criminal nature. Again, Steiner avoids such Biblical terms and chooses a term from Zoroastrian religious documents; namely "Ahriman". Steiner taught that the presence of this twofold evil is the element which is inevitable and necessary if humankind is to be spiritualized – and this, in his view, is the purpose of the creation of humanity.

Steiner taught that in Mephistopheles there is a combinational character, involving both of these types of evil. Interestingly, the first type of evil, which is not fully malignant, as well as the deeply brutal side of evil, the second type, can both be seen portrayed in Faust, in quite a remarkable way. For example, Mephisto could not render assistance to Faust in his quest to find Helen, (the higher spiritual potential) if he were to be only a sadistically evil being. This sub-plot in *Faust* is closely associated with Steiner's view that the lesser type of evil is a power which does result quite clearly in humanity as ultimately being impelled towards the good.