Mephisto mocks the hollow mask of academic learning.



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Mephisto mocks the hollow mask of academic learning.

Husband your time. Time fleets so swiftly on;
Yet order teaches how time may be won.

My dear young friend, I bid you therefore
A course of logic[1] first prepare for.

Then will your mind be drilled and braced,
In Spanish boots be tightly laced.

And henceforth greater caution taught,
Shuffle along the path of thought,

Nor zigzag, as the wind may blow.
Will o' the wisp it to and fro.

Then will they teach you many a day.
That what at a stroke you did alway.[2]

Like eating and like drinking free,
Must needs be done with one, two, three.

True, the tissue of thought hath warp and weft,
Like a masterpiece of the weaver's craft.

One tread, and a thousand threads do flit,
Hitherward, thitherward, shoots the shuttle;

The threads flow out, unseen and subtle;
One stroke, and a thousand knots are knit.

Then the philosopher learnedly
Shows you that so the thing must be.

The first was so, the second so,
Therefore the third and fourth are so;[3]

And were not the first and second, then
The third and fourth had never been.

All scholars praise it, but Lord love 'em.
It hasn't yet made weavers of 'em!

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[1] [*Collegium Logicum*]

[2] [Old English for always]

[3] [Alluding to the first four steps of pre-cosmic cosmogenesis, *i.e.*, before time and space. Consult "The One Ray strides through 7 Regions in 3 Steps," in our Secret Doctrine's First Proposition Series. — ED. PHIL.]

He who some living thing would study
Drives first the spirit out of the body.

And then the parts he holds in his hand.
And there fails him but the spiritual band.

Encheiresis Naturæ,[1] Chemistry calls it.
Mocks itself, knowing not what befalls it.



Goethe in der römischen Campagna (Rome 1787),
by Johann Heinrich Wilhelm Tischbein (1751–1829), Städel Museum [2]

[1] Alluding to the manipulation of Nature by unenlightened chemists, materialists, and hylo-idealists, the very antipodes of Nature's alchemical laboratory — one vast clockwork guided by immutable laws. See how Princess-Nature wrapped herself under ass' skin to deceive fools: the ass' skin is more congenial to the tastes of modern philosophists and materialistic alchemists, who sacrifice the living soul for the dead-form, rather than adoring Truth in all her nakedness. And thus, it is that the skin only falls before Prince Charming, who recognises the marriage betrothal in the ring sent. To all those courtiers who hover round Dame Nature while dismembering her material covering, she has nothing to offer but her outer skin (*Cf. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, XI *pp.* 530-31). Yet Princess-Nature, in her eternal wisdom, provides antidotes against moral, as well as against mineral and vegetable poisons (*ibid.*, I *p.* 380).

Consult "Hylo-Idealism is a fig leaf for Crass Materialism," in our Black versus White Magic Series, and "Alchemy is the quintessence in Nature's highest correlations," in our Secret Doctrine's First Proposition Series. — ED. PHIL.

[2] Who is the happiest of men? He who values the merits of others, and in their pleasure takes joy, even as though 'twere his own.

Etymological Notes.

Mephisto is a contracted form of Mephistopheles.[1]

> Ich bin der Geist der stets verneint.[2]
>
> — *Mephisto*, in FAUST [3]

> La force terrible et juste qui tue éternellement les avortons a été nommée par les Hébreux, Sammäël; par les Orientaux, Satan; et par les Latins, Lucifer. Le Lucifer de la Cabale n'est pas un ange maudit et foudroyé, c'est l'ange qui éclaire et qui *régénère* en brûlant.[4]
>
> — ÉLIPHAS LÉVI, *Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie*, II, Introd.

> The Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it seeth Him not; neither knoweth Him.
>
> — *Gospel according to John*, xiv, 17

> Mere intellectual enlightenment cannot recognize the spiritual. As the sun puts out a fire, so spirit puts out the eyes of mere intellect.[5]
>
> — W. HOWITT

There is an abundance of spellings and etymological analyses of Demon Mephisto. Here a shortlist of three:

1. Mephastophilus.

According to the speculation of eminent Austrian scholar and linguist Karl Julius Schröer (1825-1900) *Mephastophilus* it is a compound of Hebrew *mephitz* "destroyer" + *tophel* "liar" (short for *tophel sheqer*, literally "falsehood plasterer;" see *Job* xiii, 4).

2. Mephistopheles.

According to Denton Jaques Snider (1841-1925)[6] the first and last parts of *Mephistopheles* are a corrupted compound from the Greek particle of negation μή (mē), and the Greek word for "love" or "loving" φίλος (philos); the meaning of the middle term is unknown.[7]

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[1] *Faust* is a tragic play in two parts by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe* (1749-1832), German novelist, dramatist, poet, humanist, scientist, polymath, and acclaimed philosopher.

* Also spelled Göthe or Gœthe.

[2] *i.e.*, I am the spirit that always denies.

[3] [Disguised as Heinrich Faust in Goethe's tragic play, lines 1908-1941; translated by Albert G. Latham.]

[4] [*i.e.*, The terrible and just force that eternally kills abortions was named by the Hebrews, Samael; by the Orientals, Satan; and by the Latins, Lucifer. The Lucifer of the Kabbalah is not a cursed and thunderstruck angel, but the angel who illuminates and regenerates by burning.]

[5] [Cf. Head (mind) learning versus Soul (heart) wisdom in: *Compassion: The Spirit of Truth*, Gwernymynydd: Philaletheians UK, 2005; v. 100-2023; 398pp. Appendix C., *pp.* 341-42. — ED. PHIL.]

[6] *Goethe's Faust: a Commentary*, Saint Louis: The William Harvey Miner Co. Inc., c. 1886; 2-vols., 3rd ed.

[7] [Be that as it may, compare alternative etymology overleaf. — ED. PHIL.]

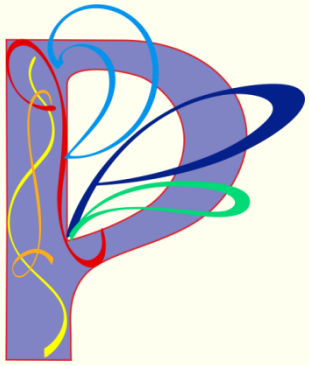
3. Mephostopheles.

According to Paul Bishop,[1] the old form of Mephisto being *Mephostopheles*, means "not loving light" or "not a friend of light," from the particle of negation μή (mē) and φῶς (phōs) or light.[2]

There is more in a name than the profane is prepared to understand, or the learned mystic to explain.

Devil is the patron genius of theological Christianity: "no Devil, no Christ." The necessity of Evil, dignified by the epithet of "Father of Lies" was, according to the clergy, the founder of all the world-religions of hoary antiquity, and of the heresies (or rather the heterodoxies) of later periods, as well as the *Deus ex Machina* of modern Spiritualism.

Satan is the prop and mainstay of Christian sacerdotalism. He is the union of all that is most base in matter, with the hate, envy, and craft of a spiritual intelligence. The Satan of the New Testament was the personification of an abstract idea, rather than a personal being with attributes. Denying of the personal objective existence of the Devil is in itself "a sin against the Holy Ghost."[3]





[1] Editor of *A Companion to Goethe's Faust. Parts I and II. Studies in German Literature, Linguistics, and Culture.* Rochester: Camden House, 2006.

[2] [This interpretation reflects the esoteric character of Mephisto. — ED. PHIL.]

[3] [Dear Reader, for an in-depth analysis of the subject refer to "Satan is the embodiment of envy and of cunning," in our Blavatsky Speaks Series. — ED. PHIL.]

In-depth reading for students.



On Devil and Satan.

- HUGO'S LA FIN DE SATAN (1911)
- THEOLOGICAL MALICE IS THE ROOT CAUSE OF SATANIC MAGIC

  — *in our Black versus White Magic Series*
- SATAN IS THE EMBODIMENT OF ENVY AND OF CUNNING
- THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IS FAR MORE DREADED BY THE DEVIL THAN BY GOD HIMSELF

  — *in our Blavatsky Speaks Series.*
- ÉLIPHAS LEVI ON DEATH AND SATAN

  — *in our Constitution of Man Series.*
- HOW A DEVIL'S IMP REDEEMED HIS LOAF

  — *in our Down to Earth Series.*
- EVEN NUMBERS ARE DEVILISH AND UNLUCKY

  — *in our Mystic Verse and Insights Series.*



On Darkness and Light.

- BEREFT OF SPIRITUAL LIGHT, MAN IS BUT A SOULLESS BEING

  — *in our Blavatsky Speaks Series.*
- DARKNESS IS INNER LIGHT

  — *in our Confusing Words Series.*
- DAZZLED GLIMPSES INTO THE ASTRAL LIGHT

  — *in our Down o Earth Series.*
- LUCIFER IS CHRISTOS, INNER LIGHT

— in our Secret Doctrine's Third Proposition Series.

- PROMETHEUS, THE LIGHT-BRINGER, HURLED DOWN TO THE BOWELS OF THE EARTH

— in our Down to Earth Series.

- PROPOSITION 1 - AKASHA VS. ASTRAL LIGHT
- PROPOSITION 1 - LIGHT DROPS ONE SOLITARY RAY
- PROPOSITION 1 - ONE LIGHT FOR ALL

— in our Secret Doctrine's First Proposition Series.

- THE SUN OF TRUTH FEARS NO LIGHT AND NEEDS NO LIES

— in our Theosophy and Theosophists Series.



Further reading for students.



From our Mystic Verse and Insights Series.

- Akhenaten's hymn to Aten
- ALEXANDER POPE'S UNIVERSAL PRAYER
- ALL YOU VAIN DELIGHTS BY JOHN FLETCHER
- AMETHYST SUNSET IN COSTA RICA
- APOLLONIUS OF TYANA ON SACRIFICE
- ARE THOU A VAIN BREATH
- ARMAGEDDON, WISDOM REVEALING HERSELF TO THE ELECT
- BEAUTY OF PURE MATHEMATICS
- BLACK BIRDS ARE SYMBOLS OF PRIMEVAL WISDOM
- BLAVATSKY ON DIVINE WISDOM
- BLAVATSKY ON OCCULT HYGIENE
- BLAVATSKY ON SPIRIT AND MATTER
- BLAVATSKY ON THE ACQUISITION OF KNOWLEDGE

- BLAVATSKY ON THE SILENT BROTHERHOOD
- BLAVATSKY ON THE TEARS OF THE ANGELS
- BLAVATSKY ON THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT
- BLOOMS OF MYSTIC VERSE AND SPIRITUAL INSIGHT
- BYRON ON MAN BEING IN PART DIVINE
- CENTRE OF THE MANIFESTED WORLD
- CHAITANYA'S DEVOTIONAL PRAYER
- CICERO'S HYMN TO PHILOSOPHY
- CLEANTHES' HYMN TO ZEUS
- CORTEGE OF THE SOLAR GOD
- DANTE'S INFERNO
- DESATIR ON THE EYE OF THE HEART
- DU BELLAY ON BEAUTY
- EACH HAD LIVED IN THE OTHER'S MIND AND SPEECH
- EHRMANN'S DESIDERATA
- ELIOT'S FOUR QUARTETS
- ENOCH WARNS THOSE WHO FEED ON BLOOD
- EVEN NUMBERS ARE DEVILISH AND UNLUCKY
- EVERYONE’S LIFE IS IN HIS HANDS AND HEART
- FAITH IS DIVINE SELF-CONFIDENCE
- FOLEY ON THE WORKINGS OF NEMESIS
- HANUMAN’S DEEPENING PERCEPTION OF THE ONE
- HARE-WORSHIP
- HERMES AND JOHN ON THE FATHER OF THINGS IN THE WORLD
- HERMETIC FIRE, SPIRIT OF THE FLAME
- HOMER ON ATHENA'S RETURN TO OLYMPUS
- JUDGE ON HUMANITY, THE GREAT ORPHAN
- KALIDASA AND KEATS TO AUTUMN
- KATHA ON THE SECRET CAVE OF THE HEART
- KEPLER ON THE SOUL OF THE EARTH
- KNIGHT STREET ON LOVE
- LÉVI ON HOW TO REPEL THE WICKED - TR. WAITE
- LOMBROSO'S APOTHEOSIS OF MATERIALISM
- MAN'S FIRST INITIATION COMES IN DREAMS

- MATTHEW ON THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
- MAY THE SOLAR RAY WITHIN ILLUMINE OUR MIND
- MUELLER ON THE-SELF
- MYER ON THE UNKNOWN AND UNKNOWABLE
- NOT A SINGLE TEAR OF HALLOWED LOVE IS FRUITLESS
- OM IS THE BOW, SELF THE ARROW, BRAHMAN THE AIM
- ORACULAR AND SPEAKING STONES
- ORPHEUS' HYMN TO EARTH
- OUR EXISTENCE IS FASHIONED OUT OF CHAOS
- OVID ON NASCENT HUMANITY WATCHED BY ANGELS
- OVID'S STORY OF ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE
- PATMORE ON HOW HAS SHE CHEAPEN'D PARADISE
- PLOTINUS ON THE DUAL APHRODITE
- PRAISE HIM WITH TIMBREL AND DANCE
- PRANA IS THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND LIFE
- PROCLUS' HYMN TO ATHENA - TR. TAYLOR
- RESIST WITHOUT RESISTANCE
- RHOADES' MYSTIC VERSE
- RUSKIN AT THE GATE OF THE GARDEN OF EDEN
- RUSKIN ON HOME
- SCHILLER'S IDEAL LIFE
- SELECTED THOUGHTS OF APOLLONIUS TYANAEUS
- SELECTED THOUGHTS OF THOMAS A KEMPIS
- SHELLEY ON THE DEVOTION OF THE MOTH FOR THE STAR
- SHELLEY'S ODE TO THE WEST WIND
- SHELLEY'S SIMPLE DWELLING
- SOCRATES' SUPERCELESTIAL TRIAD
- SPIRIT ORDERS, MATTER OBEYS
- SYNESIUS' THIRD HYMN TO THE FATHER AND SON
- TALE OF A STARRY NIGHT BY ALPHONSE DAUDET
- TAYLOR ON FIVE DIVINE DANCES
- TAYLOR ON THE GOOD OF PLOTINUS
- THE ALETHEIA OF OCCULT SCIENCE
- THE ANCIENT SAGE BY LORD TENNYSON

- THE CROSS IN THE CIRCLE AND THE TREE
- THE LABOURS OF HERCULES ARE DEGREES OF INITIATION
- THE LAST SHALL BE FIRST, AND THE FIRST LAST
- THE PITH AND MARROW OF OCCULTISM
- THE RAINBOW OF HOPE
- THE WAX OF PREJUDICE
- THE WHITE-BEARDED MAN FROM THE POLE OF HEAVEN, WHERE THE SUN NEVER SETS
- THEOSOPHY'S HOLY MISSION
- THERE IS A ROAD, STEEP AND THORNY
- TIRESIAS, THE BLIND SEER OF THEBES, BY LORD TENNYSON
- TOLSTOY ON HOW TO MAKE A POOR MAN HAPPY
- TOUCH ANY MAN AND YOU TOUCH HEAVEN
- VEX NOT THOU THE POET'S MIND WITH THY SHALLOW WIT
- VIRGIL'S MENS AGITAT MOLEM
- WHAT DID THE LILY QUEEN SAY TO SENSA
- WHAT MADNESS IT IS TO BE MAN AND TO SEEK THE TRUTH
- WHAT SHOULD BE THE MEASURE OF OUR CONDUCT
- WHEN MOTHER BECOMES IMMACULATE
- WHEN THE MIND WILLS, MATTER OBEYS
- WHEN THE NEUTER BECOMES POSITIVE
- WHEN THE OUTER IS MISTAKEN FOR THE INNER BY FRANZ HARTMANN
- WHO FURNISHED MAN WITH HIS IMMORTAL MONAD?
- WHO SHALL DELIVER ME?
- WITH THE ADEPTS BY FRANZ HARTMANN
- WOMAN'S HEAVENLY GIFTS
- WORDSWORTH'S NATURE NEVER DID BETRAY
- ZOROASTER ON VIRTUE, WISDOM, AND EQUITY