



Volume 2. From Absolutism to Napoleon, 1648-1815
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Excerpts from *Faust* (1808)

Goethe worked on *Faust* throughout his artistic life; he published Part I in 1808 and completed Part II in 1832, the year of his death. Difficult to translate, this poetic masterpiece dramatizes humanity's futile and often self-destructive search for transcendent knowledge and an understanding of the totality of things. It raises the question of how – and with what moral and philosophical justification – human reason is to be acted upon (recognizing that knowledge in and of itself is an unsatisfying possession). Faust figures in part as the embodiment of amoral, all-rationalizing modernity, but at the same time also as the agent of human optimism against Mephistopheles's perceptive but ultimately barren nihilism. In this way, *Faust* addresses major themes of the Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment eras.

FAUST

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

PROLOGUE IN HEAVEN

THE LORD. THE HEAVENLY HOSTS.

Afterwards MEPHISTOPHELES.

Three Archangels come forward

RAPHAEL

The Sun, in ancient guise, competing
With brother spheres in rival song,
With thunder-march, his orb completing,
Moves his predestin'd course along;
His aspect to the powers supernal
Gives strength, though fathom him none may;
Transcending thought, the works eternal
Are fair as on the primal day.

GABRIEL

With speed, thought baffling, unabating,
Earth's splendour whirls in circling flight;

Its Eden-brightness alternating
With solemn, awe-inspiring night;
Ocean's broad waves in wild commotion,
Against the rocks' deep base are hurled;
And with the spheres, both rock and ocean
Eternally are swiftly whirled.

MICHAEL

And tempests roar in emulation
From sea to land, from land to sea,
And raging form, without cessation,
A chain of wondrous agency,
Full in the thunder's path careering,
Flaring the swift destructions play;
But, Lord, Thy servants are revering
The mild procession of thy day.

THE THREE

Thine aspect to the powers supernal
Gives strength, though fathom thee none may;
And all thy works, sublime, eternal,
Are fair as on the primal day.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Since thou, O Lord, approachest us once more,
And how it fares with us, to ask art fain,
Since thou hast kindly welcom'd me of yore,
Thou see'st me also now among thy train.
Excuse me, fine harangues I cannot make,
Though all the circle look on me with scorn;
My pathos soon thy laughter would awake,
Hadst thou the laughing mood not long forsworn.
Of suns and worlds I nothing have to say,
I see alone mankind's self-torturing pains.
The little world-god still the self-same stamp retains,
And is as wondrous now as on the primal day.
Better he might have fared, poor wight,
Hadst thou not given him a gleam of heavenly light;
Reason, he names it, and doth so
Use it, than brutes more brutish still to grow.
With deference to your grace, he seems to me
Like any long-legged grasshopper to be,
Which ever flies, and flying springs,

And in the grass its ancient ditty sings.
Would he but always in the grass repose!
In every heap of dung he thrusts his nose.

THE LORD

Hast thou naught else to say? Is blame
In coming here, as ever, thy sole aim?
Does nothing on the earth to thee seem right?

MEPHISTOPHELES

No, Lord! I find things there, as ever, in sad plight.
Men, in their evil days, move my compassion;
Such sorry things to plague is nothing worth.

THE LORD

Know'st thou my servant, Faust?

MEPHISTOPHELES

The doctor?

THE LORD

Right.

MEPHISTOPHELES

He serves thee truly in a wondrous fashion.
Poor fool! His food and drink are not of earth.
An inward impulse hurries him afar,
Himself half conscious of his frenzied mood;
From heaven claimeth he the fairest star,
And from the earth craves every highest good,
And all that's near, and all that's far,
Fails to allay the tumult in his blood.

THE LORD

Though in perplexity he serves me now,
I soon will lead him where more light appears;
When buds the sapling, doth the gardener know
That flowers and fruit will deck the coming years.

MEPHISTOPHELES

What wilt thou wager? Him thou yet shall lose,
If leave to me thou wilt but give,
Gently to lead him as I choose!

THE LORD

So long as he on earth doth live,
So long 'tis not forbidden thee.
Man still must err, while he doth strive.

MEPHISTOPHELES

I thank you; for not willingly
I traffic with the dead, and still aver
That youth's plump blooming cheek I very much prefer.
I'm not at home to corpses; 'tis my way,
Like cats with captive mice to toy and play.

THE LORD

Enough! 'tis granted thee! Divert
This mortal spirit from his primal source;
Him, canst thou seize, thy power exert
And lead him on thy downward course,
Then stand abash'd, when thou perforce must own,
A good man in his darkest aberration,
Of the right path is conscious still.

MEPHISTOPHELES

'Tis done! Full soon thou'lt see my exultation;
As for my bet no fears I entertain.
And if my end I finally should gain,
Excuse my triumphing with all my soul.
Dust he shall eat, ay, and with relish take,
As did my cousin, the renowned snake.

THE LORD

Here too thou'rt free to act without control;
I ne'er have cherished hate for such as thee.
Of all the spirits who deny,
The scoffer is least wearisome to me.
Ever too prone is man activity to shirk,
In unconditioned rest he fain would live;
Hence this companion purposely I give,
Who stirs, excites, and must, as devil, work.
But ye, the genuine sons of heaven, rejoice!
In the full living beauty still rejoice!
May that which works and lives, the ever-growing,
In bonds of love enfold you, mercy-fraught,

And Seeming's changeful forms, around you flowing,
Do ye arrest, in ever-during thought!
(*Heaven closes, the Archangels disperse.*)

MEPHISTOPHELES (*alone*)

The ancient one I like sometimes to see,
And not to break with him am always civil;
'Tis courteous in so great a lord as he,
To speak so kindly even to the devil.

FIRST PART OF THE TRAGEDY NIGHT

*A high vaulted narrow Gothic chamber.
FAUST, restless, seated at his desk.*

FAUST

I have, alas! Philosophy,
Medicine, Jurisprudence too,
And to my cost Theology,
With ardent labour, studied through.
And here I stand, with all my lore,
Poor fool, no wiser than before.
Magister, doctor styled, indeed,
Already these ten years I lead,
Up, down, across, and to and fro,
My pupils by the nose,--and learn,
That we in truth can nothing know!
That in my heart like fire doth burn.
'Tis true I've more cunning than all your dull tribe,
Magister and doctor, priest, parson, and scribe;
Scruple or doubt comes not to enthrall me,
Neither can devil nor hell now appal me--
Hence also my heart must all pleasure forego!
I may not pretend, aught rightly to know,
I may not pretend, through teaching, to find
A means to improve or convert mankind.
Then I have neither goods nor treasure,
No worldly honour, rank, or pleasure;
No dog in such fashion would longer live!
Therefore myself to magic I give,

In hope, through spirit-voice and might,
Secrets now veiled to bring to light,
That I no more, with aching brow,
Need speak of what I nothing know;
That I the force may recognise
That binds creation's inmost energies;
Her vital powers, her embryo seeds survey,
And fling the trade in empty words away.

O full-orb'd moon, did but thy rays
Their last upon mine anguish gaze!
Beside this desk, at dead of night,
Oft have I watched to hail thy light:
Then, pensive friend! o'er book and scroll,
With soothing power, thy radiance stole!
In thy dear light, ah, might I climb,
Freely, some mountain height sublime,
Round mountain caves with spirits ride,
In thy mild haze o'er meadows glide,
And, purged from knowledge-fumes, renew
My spirit, in thy healing dew!

Woe's me! still prison'd in the gloom
Of this abhorr'd and musty room!
Where heaven's dear light itself doth pass,
But dimly through the painted glass!
Hemmed in by book-heaps, piled around,
Worm-eaten, hid 'neath dust and mould,
Which to the high vault's topmost bound,
A smoke-stained paper doth enfold;
With boxes round thee piled, and glass,
And many a useless instrument,
With old ancestral lumber blent--
This is thy world! a world! alas!
And dost thou ask why heaves thy heart,
With tighten'd pressure in thy breast?
Why the dull ache will not depart,
By which thy life-pulse is oppress'd?
Instead of nature's living sphere,
Created for mankind of old,
Brute skeletons surround thee here,
And dead men's bones in smoke and mould.

Up! Forth into the distant land!
Is not this book of mystery
By Nostradamus' proper hand,
An all-sufficient guide? Thou'lt see
The courses of the stars unroll'd;
When nature doth her thoughts unfold
To thee, thy soul shall rise, and seek
Communion high with her to hold,
As spirit doth with spirit speak!
Vain by dull poring to divine
The meaning of each hallow'd sign.
Spirits! I feel you hov'ring near;
Make answer, if my voice ye hear!
(He opens the book and perceives the sign of the Macrocosmos.)

Ah! at this spectacle through every sense,
What sudden ecstasy of joy is flowing!
I feel new rapture, hallow'd and intense,
Through every nerve and vein with ardour glowing.
Was it a god who character'd this scroll,
The tumult in my spirit healing,
O'er my sad heart with rapture stealing,
And by a mystic impulse, to my soul,
The powers of nature all around revealing.
Am I a God? What light intense!
In these pure symbols do I see,
Nature exert her vital energy.
Now of the wise man's words I learn the sense;
"Unlock'd the spirit-world is lying,
Thy sense is shut, thy heart is dead!
Up scholar, lave, with zeal undying,
Thine earthly breast in the morning-red!"
(He contemplates the sign.)

How all things live and work, and ever blending,
Weave one vast whole from Being's ample range!
How powers celestial, rising and descending,
Their golden buckets ceaseless interchange!
Their flight on rapture-breathing pinions winging,
From heaven to earth their genial influence bringing,
Through the wild sphere their chimes melodious ringing!

A wondrous show! but ah! a show alone!
Where shall I grasp thee, infinite nature, where?
Ye breasts, ye fountains of all life, whereon
Hang heaven and earth, from which the withered heart
For solace yearns, ye still impart
Your sweet and fostering tides--where are ye--where?
Ye gush, and must I languish in despair?
*(He turns over the leaves of the book impatiently, and perceives
the sign of the Earth-spirit.)*

How all unlike the influence of this sign!
Earth-spirit, thou to me art nigher,
E'en now my strength is rising higher,
E'en now I glow as with new wine;
Courage I feel, abroad the world to dare,
The woe of earth, the bliss of earth to bear,
With storms to wrestle, brave the lightning's glare,
And mid the crashing shipwreck not despair.

Clouds gather over me--
The moon conceals her light--
The lamp is quenched--
Vapours are rising--
Quivering round my head
Flash the red beams--
Down from the vaulted roof
A shuddering horror floats,
And seizes me!
I feel it, spirit, prayer-compell'd, 'tis thou
Art hovering near!
Unveil thyself!
Ha! How my heart is riven now!
Each sense, with eager palpitation,
Is strain'd to catch some new sensation!
I feel my heart surrender'd unto thee!
Thou must! Thou must! Though life should be the fee!
*(He seizes the book, and pronounces mysteriously the sign
of the spirit. A ruddy flame flashes up; the spirit appears in the
flame.)*

SPIRIT
Who calls me?

FAUST (*turning aside*)
Dreadful shape!

SPIRIT
With might, thou hast compelled me to appear,
Long hast been sucking at my sphere,
And now--

FAUST
Woe's me! I cannot bear the sight!

SPIRIT
To see me thou dost breathe thine invocation,
My voice to hear, to gaze upon my brow;
Me doth thy strong entreaty bow--
Lo! I am here I--What cowering agitation
Grasps thee, the demigod! Where's now the soul's deep cry?
Where is the breast, which in its depths a world conceiv'd
And bore and cherished? which, with ecstasy,
To rank itself with us, the spirits, heaved?
Where art thou, Faust? whose voice I heard resound,
Who towards me press'd with energy profound?
Art thou he? Thou,--who by my breath art blighted,
Who, in his spirit's depths affrighted,
Trembles, a crush'd and writhing worm!

FAUST
Shall I yield, thing of flame, to thee?
Faust, and thine equal, I am he!

SPIRIT
In the currents of life, in action's storm,
I float and I wave
With billowy motion!
Birth and the grave
A limitless ocean,
A constant weaving
With change still rife,
A restless heaving,
A glowing life--
Thus time's whirring loom unceasing I ply,
And weave the life-garment of deity.

FAUST

Thou, restless spirit, dost from end to end
O'ersweep the world; how near I feel to thee!

SPIRIT

Thou'rt like the spirit, thou dost comprehend,
Not me! (*Vanishes.*)

FAUST (*deeply moved*)

Not thee?
Whom then?
I, God's own image!
And not rank with thee! A knock.
Oh death! I know it--'tis my famulus--
My fairest fortune now escapes!
That all these visionary shapes
A soulless groveller should banish thus!

[. . .]

STUDY (PACT)

FAUST. MEPHISTOPHELES

FAUST

A knock? Come in! Who now would break my rest?

MEPHISTOPHELES

'Tis I!

FAUST

Come in!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Thrice be the words express'd.

FAUST

Then I repeat, Come in!

MEPHISTOPHELES

'Tis well,
I hope that we shall soon agree!
For now your fancies to expel,
Here, as a youth of high degree,
I come in gold-lac'd scarlet vest,
And stiff-silk mantle richly dress'd,
A cock's gay feather for a plume,
A long and pointed rapier, too;
And briefly I would counsel you
To don at once the same costume,
And, free from trammels, speed away,
That what life is you may essay.

FAUST

In every garb I needs must feel oppress'd,
My heart to earth's low cares a prey.
Too old the trifler's part to play,
Too young to live by no desire possess'd.
What can the world to me afford?
Renounce! renounce! is still the word;
This is the everlasting song
In every ear that ceaseless rings,
And which, alas, our whole life long,
Hoarsely each passing moment sings.
But to new horror I awake each morn,
And I could weep hot tears, to see the sun
Dawn on another day, whose round forlorn
Accomplishes no wish of mine--not one.
Which still, with froward captiousness, impains
E'en the presentiment of every joy,
While low realities and paltry cares
The spirit's fond imaginings destroy.
Then must I too, when falls the veil of night,
Stretch'd on my pallet languish in despair,
Appalling dreams my soul affright;
No rest vouchsafed me even there.
The god, who throned within my breast resides,
Deep in my soul can stir the springs;
With sovereign sway my energies he guides,
He cannot move external things;
And so existence is to me a weight.
Death fondly I desire, and life I hate.

MEPHISTOPHELES

And yet, methinks, by most 'twill be confess'd
That Death is never quite a welcome guest.

FAUST

Happy the man around whose brow he binds
The bloodstain'd wreath in conquest's dazzling hour;
Or whom, excited by the dance, he finds
Dissolv'd in bliss, in love's delicious bower!
O that before the lofty spirit's might,
Enraptured, I had rendered up my soul!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Yet did a certain man refrain one night,
Of its brown juice to drain the crystal bowl.

FAUST

To play the spy diverts you then?

MEPHISTOPHELES

I own,
Though not omniscient, much to me is known.

FAUST

If o'er my soul the tone familiar, stealing,
Drew me from harrowing thought's bewild'ring maze,
Touching the ling'ring chords of childlike feeling,
With sweet harmonies of happier days:
So curse I all, around the soul that windeth
Its magic and alluring spell,
And with delusive flattery bindeth
Its victim to this dreary cell!
Curs'd before all things be the high opinion,
Wherewith the spirit girds itself around!
Of shows delusive curs'd be the dominion,
Within whose mocking sphere our sense is bound!
Accurs'd of dreams the treacherous wiles,
The cheat of glory, deathless fame!
Accurs'd what each as property beguiles,
Wife, child, slave, plough, whate'er its name!
Accurs'd be mammon, when with treasure
He doth to daring deeds incite:

Or when to steep the soul in pleasure,
He spreads the couch of soft delight!
Curs'd be the grape's balsamic juice!
Accurs'd love's dream, of joys the first!
Accurs'd be hope! accurs'd be faith!
And more than all, be patience curs'd!

CHORUS OP SPIRITS (*invisible*)

Woe! woe!
Thou hast destroy'd
The beautiful world
With violent blow;
'Tis shiver'd! 'tis shatter'd!
The fragments abroad by a demigod scatter'd!
Now we sweep
The wrecks into nothingness!
Fondly we weep
The beauty that's gone!
Thou, 'mongst the Sons of earth,
Lofty and mighty one,
Build it once more!
In thine own bosom the lost world restore!
Now with unclouded sense
Enter a new career;
Songs shall salute thine ear,
Ne'er heard before!

MEPHISTOPHELES

My little ones these spirits be.
Hark! with shrewd intelligence,
How they recommend to thee
Action, and the joys of sense!
In the busy world to dwell,
Fain they would allure thee hence:
For within this lonely cell,
Stagnate sap of life and sense.

Forbear to trifle longer with thy grief,
Which, vulture-like, consumes thee in this den.
The worst society is some relief,
Making thee feel thyself a man with men.
Nathless, it is not meant, I trow,
To thrust thee 'mid the vulgar throng.

I to the upper ranks do not belong;
Yet if, by me companion'd, thou
Thy steps through life forthwith wilt take;
Upon the spot myself I'll make
Thy comrade;-- Should it suit thy need,
I am thy servant, am thy slave indeed!

FAUST

And how must I thy services repay?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Thereto thou lengthen'd respite hast!

FAUST

No! No!

The devil is an egoist I know:
And, for Heaven's sake, 'tis not his way
Kindness to any one to show.
Let the condition plainly be exprest!
Such a domestic is a dangerous guest.

MEPHISTOPHELES

I'll pledge myself to be thy servant here,
Still at thy back alert and prompt to be;
But when together yonder we appear,
Then shalt thou do the same for me.

FAUST

But small concern I feel for yonder world;
Hast thou this system into ruin hurl'd,
Another may arise the void to fill.
This earth the fountain whence my pleasures flow,
This sun doth daily shine upon my woe,
And if this world I must forego,
Let happen then,--what can and will.
I to this theme will close mine ears,
If men hereafter hate and love,
And if there be in yonder spheres
A depth below or height above.

MEPHISTOPHELES

In this mood thou mayst venture it. But make
The compact! I at once will undertake

To charm thee with mine arts. I'll give thee more
Than mortal eye hath e'er beheld before.

FAUST

What, sorry Devil, hast thou to bestow?
Was ever mortal spirit, in its high endeavour,
Fathom'd by Being such as thou?
Yet food thou hast which satisfieth never,
Hast ruddy gold, that still doth flow
Like restless quicksilver away,
A game thou hast, at which none win who play,
A girl who would, with amorous eye,
E'en from my breast, a neighbour snare,
Lofty ambition's joy divine,
That, meteor-like, dissolves in air.
Show me the fruit that, ere 'tis pluck'd, doth rot,
And trees, whose verdure daily buds anew!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Such a commission scares me not,
I can provide such treasures, it is true;
But, my good friend, a season will come round,
When on what's good we may regale in peace.

FAUST

If e'er upon my couch, stretched at my ease, I'm found,
Then may my life that instant cease!
Me canst thou cheat with glozing wile
Till self-reproach away I cast,--
Me with joy's lure canst thou beguile
Let that day be for me the last!
Be this our wager!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Settled!

FAUST

Sure and fast!
When to the moment I shall say,
"Linger awhile! so fair thou art!"
Then mayst thou fetter me straightway,
Then to the abyss will I depart!
Then may the solemn death-bell sound,

Then from thy service thou art free,
The index then may cease its round,
And time be never more for me!

MEPHISTOPHELES

I shall remember: pause, ere 'tis too late.

FAUST

Thereto a perfect right hast thou.
My strength I do not rashly overrate.
Slave am I here, at any rate,
If thine, or whose, it matters not, I trow.

MEPHISTOPHELES

At thine inaugural feast I will this day
Attend, my duties to commence.--
But one thing!--Accidents may happen, hence
A line or two in writing grant, I pray.

FAUST

A writing, Pedant! dost demand from me?
Man, and man's plighted word, are these unknown to thee?
Is't not enough, that by the word I gave,
My doom for evermore is cast?
Doth not the world in all its currents rave,
And must a promise hold me fast?
Yet fixed is this delusion in our heart;
Who, of his own free will, therefrom would part?
How blest within whose breast truth reigneth pure!
No sacrifice will he repent when made!
A formal deed, with seal and signature,
A spectre this from which all shrink afraid.
The word its life resigneth in the pen,
Leather and wax usurp the mastery then.
Spirits of evil! what dost thou require?
Brass, marble, parchment, paper, dost desire?
Shall I with chisel, pen, or graver write?
Thy choice is free; to me 'tis all the same.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Wherefore thy passion so excite
And thus thine eloquence inflame?

A scrap is for our compact good.
Thou under-signest merely with a drop of blood.

FAUST

If this will satisfy thy mind,
Thy whim I'll gratify, howe'er absurd.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Blood is a juice of very special kind.

FAUST

Be not afraid that I shall break my word!
The scope of all my energy
Is in exact accordance with my vow.
Vainly I have aspired too high;
I'm on a level but with such as thou;
Me the great spirit scorn'd, defied;
Nature from me herself doth hide;
Rent is the web of thought; my mind
Doth knowledge loathe of every kind.
In depths of sensual pleasure drown'd,
Let us our fiery passions still!
Enwrapp'd in magic's veil profound,
Let wondrous charms our senses thrill!
Plunge we in time's tempestuous flow,
Stem we the rolling surge of chance!
There may alternate weal and woe,
Success and failure, as they can,
Mingle and shift in changeful dance!
Excitement is the sphere for man.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Nor goal, nor measure is prescrib'd to you,
If you desire to taste of every thing,
To snatch at joy while on the wing,
May your career amuse and profit too!
Only fall to and don't be over coy!

FAUST

Hearken! The end I aim at is not joy;
I crave excitement, agonizing bliss,
Enamour'd hatred, quickening vexation.
Purg'd from the love of knowledge, my vocation,

The scope of all my powers henceforth be this,
To bare my breast to every pang,--to know
In my heart's core all human weal and woe,
To grasp in thought the lofty and the deep,
Men's various fortunes on my breast to heap,
And thus to theirs dilate my individual mind,
And share at length with them the shipwreck of mankind.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Oh, credit me, who still as ages roll,
Have chew'd this bitter fare from year to year,
No mortal, from the cradle to the bier,
Digests the ancient leaven! Know, this Whole
Doth for the Deity alone subsist!
He in eternal brightness doth exist,
Us unto darkness he hath brought, and here
Where day and night alternate, is your sphere.

FAUST

But 'tis my will.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Well spoken, I admit!
But one thing puzzles me, my friend;
Time's short, art long; methinks 'twere fit
That you to friendly counsel should attend.
A poet choose as your ally!
Let him thought's wide dominion sweep,
Each good and noble quality,
Upon your honoured brow to heap;
The lion's magnanimity,
The fleetness of the hind,
The fiery blood of Italy,
The Northern's stedfast mind.
Let him to you the mystery show
To blend high aims and cunning low;
And while youth's passions are aflame
To fall in love by rule and plan!
I fain would meet with such a man;
Would him Sir Microcosmus name.

FAUST

What then am I, if I aspire in vain
The crown of our humanity to gain,
Towards which my every sense doth strain?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Thou'rt after all--just what thou art.
Put on thy head a wig with countless locks,
And to a cubit's height upraise thy socks,
Still thou remainest ever, what thou art.

FAUST

I feel it, I have heap'd upon my brain
The gather'd treasure of man's thought in vain;
And when at length from studious toil I rest,
No power, new-born, springs up within my breast;
A hair's breadth is not added to my height,
I am no nearer to the infinite.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Good sir, these things you view indeed,
Just as by other men they're view'd;
We must more cleverly proceed,
Before life's joys our grasp elude.
The devil! thou hast hands and feet,
And head and heart are also thine;
What I enjoy with relish sweet,
Is it on that account less mine?
If for six stallions I can pay,
Do I not own their strength and speed?
A proper man I dash away,
As their two dozen legs were mine indeed.
Up then, from idle pondering free,
And forth into the world with me!
I tell you what;--your speculative churl
Is like a beast which some ill spirit leads,
On barren wilderness, in ceaseless whirl,
While all around lie fair and verdant meads.

FAUST

But how shall we begin?

MEPHISTOPHELES

We will go hence with speed,
A place of torment this indeed!
A precious life, thyself to bore,
And some few youngsters evermore!
Leave that to neighbour Paunch!--withdraw,
Why wilt thou plague thyself with thrashing straw?
The very best that thou dost know
Thou dar'st not to the striplings show.
One in the passage now doth wait!

FAUST

I'm in no mood to see him now,

MEPHISTOPHELES

Poor lad! He must be tired, I trow;
He must not go disconsolate.
Hand me thy cap and gown; the mask
Is for my purpose quite first rate.
(He changes his dress.)
Now leave it to my wit! I ask
But quarter of an hour; meanwhile equip,
And make all ready for our pleasant trip!

(Exit FAUST.)

MEPHISTOPHELES *(in FAUST'S long gown)*

Mortal! the loftiest attributes of men,
Reason and Knowledge, only thus contemn,
Still let the Prince of lies, without control,
With shows, and mocking charms delude thy soul,
I have thee unconditionally then!
Fate hath endow'd him with an ardent mind,
Which unrestrain'd still presses on for ever,
And whose precipitate endeavour
Earth's joys o'erleaping, leaveth them behind.
Him will I drag through life's wild waste,
Through scenes of vapid dulness, where at last
Bewilder'd, he shall falter, and stick fast;
And, still to mock his greedy haste,
Viands and drink shall float his craving lips beyond--
Vainly he'll seek refreshment, anguish-tost,

And were he not the devil's by his bond,
Yet must his soul infallibly be lost!

[. . .]

Source of English translation: *Goethe's Faust*, translated by Anna Swanick, with an introduction and bibliography by Karl Breul. London: George Bell and Sons, 1905, pp. 8-20, 50-60.