

In the field of literature, few works have attracted and retained the popular and scholarly interest that is given to Goethe's Faust. Containing the touching tragedy of Gretchen, which we know from Gounod's opera, it is also a fountainhead of much speculation centering around its more profound aspects. This evening, Michigan State University presents another program in the series, Goethe's Faust. Tonight's presentation will deal with the aspect of magic in Faust, its origin and function in the drama. Again, the illustrated discussion is being presented by Dr. George Radimersky. This program is a presentation of the Department of Foreign Languages. Good evening again, ladies and gentlemen. In our previous presentation, we tried to point out that Faust was going somewhere in his quest for knowledge, mentally, morally, and spiritually, and that the path which he was taking could well be seen as making sense within the great idea of the so-called return-to-God concept, or, in other words, in the light of man's redemption. Generally, this awareness on the part of man is a condition of his spiritual consciousness, that is, one largely of knowledge, factual knowledge, speculative knowledge, and, on its highest level, contemplative. Faust had emerged from the first and, not knowing how to reach for the third and last, he busied himself with the second, that is, the extension of knowledge by means of magic, at least so he confesses. In other words, we saw how the urge toward an ever greater and ever higher forms of knowledge is, by the nature of its very impetus, inseparably associated with the second stage, namely magic itself. Of course, the entire situation is an attempt of Faust to solve the riddle of existence, of man's relationships to a higher sphere of being of which somehow he seems to be aware of. It seems obvious then, does it not, that there must exist a close relationship between factual knowledge and the nature of magic. And we thought that tonight in our presentation we might consider the origin of magic, its nature, and what its function seems to be within the greatest Faust drama. Let us also not forget that just as it was the case in our last presentation, we still move, we still live, and we still breathe in a world of ideas, in a world of philosophies and abstracts. We might say that at the very beginning that in the eyes of those who take magic seriously, magic is, to quote, not the performance of illicit tricks but a serious attempt to solve the riddle of the world, unquote. But in the eyes of those who speak seriously of man's highest forms of spiritual consciousness, the promise to this particular claim can never be fulfilled because, again to quote, the mere transcending of phenomena does not entail the attainment of the absolute." Unquote. And this conflicting view may well be taken as being at the root of the use of magic in the Faust drama. Now, the manner in which magic came to be such a great and possibly disreputable force in human society is one of the very fascinating problems that we can pursue. The anthropologist will have one answer to this, the orthodox theologian will have his own, the skeptic poo-hoos the entire thing, but the objective explorer of man's spiritual consciousness looks at it as being distinctly a reality. Now, let us see what we can find out about this particular aspect. Rabbinic literature tells us that when God counseled with his angels concerning the creation of yet another spirit, man, the angels, being equipped with foreknowledge, advised against such a step, fearing that man would do only wrong. But God, we learn further, opposed them, and he did create man, and he equipped him with foreknowledge. But beyond that, he gave him also knowledge itself. Now, foreknowledge is the faculty to see what will happen in the future, whereas knowledge is the function of experience and familiarity. This the angels didn't have, nor did they have the capacity to choose between right and wrong, and this man did have? Well, as we know, man chose wrong, something which certain later Church fathers saw as an error of judgment on the part of man, but actually nothing morally wicked. But aside from this, it is an absorbing observation that the factor of magic is consistently associated in rabbinic, Mohammedan, and Christian literature with a class of angels that came to be known

as demons, as devils, or just as plain spirits. To bring a bit of order into this confusion or seeming confusion, we must imagine that under the so-called monotheistic god concept of the Jews, there is no such a creature as a bad or wicked or an evil angel. But these do appear in Mohammedan and in the Christian literature. Under the former concept, they are never evil. They may be imperfect, to be sure, but they are never evil. Thus, the concept of evil angels must have been introduced into the latter from somewhere else possibly from the outside and there is sufficient evidence for us to believe that it was introduced into the latter from ancient Persia but this is a subject matter for another discussion. Suffice it here to say that magic is said to have been brought down to man by evil angels and we have this idea present in other civilizations non-monotheistic civilizations, such as, for instance, in Egypt, where we find records telling us that the teaching of magic to man was a consequence of man's relationships with God through the medium of the so-called fallen angels. Now, in the recognitions of Clement, specifically A3 297, we read that, if I were to quote, lustful angels teach men that demons, by certain magical invocations could be made to obey men. These demons here are elemental spirits and we shall talk about them some other time. The Slavonic book of Enoch, which by the way is considered not to be genuine, tells us that Samyaza, the leader of a band of 200 angels, having been sent down to earth by God to take care of men, lusted after the daughters of men, and presents us a situation which is very similar to that recorded in our own bible genesis 6:4 and we read to quote Enoch "and all the others together with them took unto themselves wives and each one chose for himself one and they taught them charms and enchantments and the cutting of roots and made them acquainted with plants" unquote. That same book of Enoch by the way also tells us that it was Samyaza who taught this so-called enchantment and that it was his fellow angel, Barachiel, who taught astrology. The following statement can be appreciated by us only if we remember that even demons and devils must obey the will of god. The Mohammedan book the machari specifically 194 95, and by the way also the Quran, tell us that magic was sent down to man as quote "a trial from god" unquote. The relationships between magic and knowledge as such are nowhere brought out more clearly than in another passage in that same book of Enoch, which I quoted, where we read that since man is born a spirit, all pursuits of things which are not spiritual and do not answer to his spiritual needs, such as, for instance, the making of weapons or objects contributing to his earthly needs and to his comforts, yes, even the use of paper and ink and pen is an evil and by necessity has its source in an evil power. In all this, the important feature is the intimate association of the teaching and practice of knowledge with the teaching and practice of magic, nowhere brought out more emphatically and more emphatically underlined than in the history of medicine. Perhaps also the teaching of astrology, that bridge between the knowable and the unknowable, as we called it in our last presentation of our Faust studies. Entirely in harmony with these mystical accounts is Faust's own admission to his Famulus Wagner during the Easter morning walk. And I would like to quote you in a minute something of this. He tells us that during that walk, and also he himself and his own father were still bound by that magic medicine combination which you see now must have endured the countless centuries of legends and so forth and now I would like very much to read you that admission on his part. My sire Faust says of good repute and somber mood or nature's power in every mystic zone with honest zeal but methods of his own still loved with toil fantastic to brood seclude in his dark alchemic self. His time with brother adepts he would spend and after numberless receipts compel opposing elements to fuse and blend. Faust the magician rises directly from this background of magic and experimental science and becomes, because of this inseparable mixture between these two pursuits, the old and disappointed scholar we

met in his study. To be sure, the first allusion to magic in the form of witchcraft already appears in the conversation between two girls during that same Easter morning walk when one of them urges the other away from a certain old woman, a witch to be sure, who offers by implied magic to procure for her anything that her heart desires. "Tis true, she showed me on St. Andrew's night, my future sweetheart, as just as he were living," she says. But this, as certain other instances of magic also, can perhaps be interpreted as being the poet's use of popular and current superstition of his day. Because of its mysterious nature and probably also the need for concentration and seclusion, the magician usually chose a lonely abode such as we see here. This is actually said to have been the tower in which the 16th century German Dr. Faustus had studied. It is located in the confines of the huge monastery at Maulbronn, not very far from Heidelberg. It may well be that at this moment we may ask ourselves the question just exactly what is magic. There are fairly good definitions available, and we could take any one of them, but here is one that has been developed by an anthropologist. Magic, to quote, is the art or body of arts which claims or is believed to be able to compel a deity or supernatural power or to do or to refrain from doing some act or to change temporarily the order of natural events or which claims or is believed to produce effects by the assistance of supernatural beings as angels demons or departed spirits or by the mastery of secret forces in nature unquote which by the way reminds us that in the Tavari 1 340 we read that there actually two kinds of magic, the one taught by the devils and the other by the angels that had been sent down to take care of men by God, such as, for instance, Samyazar, whom we mentioned a little while ago. Evidently, this definition of magic is almost as mysterious as magic itself, and it may seem enlightening to add that anthropologists associate magic ordinarily with primitive forms of religion. One common denominator seems to run through all the various components of this definition and of course it had to be an analyst of mysticism to point out that the person engaging in the practice of magic always wants something. He never gives anything. Now, a definition is a useful thing to have, isn't it? But it becomes much more understandable when we add some descriptive conditions to the dry skeleton of such a definition. The serious anthropologist will say that a bona fide act of magic must meet three requirements. First, certain words must be spoken, and this is called the spell. Second, certain acts must be performed, and that is called the rite. And third, there must be an officiating person present. And all this must be surrounded by absolute carefulness wrapped into a certain emotional state of the person officiating, namely the magician. Now let us see if we possibly could capture some degree of the emotionally charged atmosphere as Faust himself conjures the earth spirit. And this is a scene which we may refer to again sometime in the future. Here's Faust. Faust perceived the sign of the earth spirit in the book of Nostradamus. And he says, How otherwise upon me works the sign, Thou spirit of the earth art nearer, even now my powers are loftier, are nearer, even now my powers are clearer, I glow as drunk with new made wine, new strength and heart to meet the world and sight me, the woe of earth, the bliss of earth invite me, and though the shock of storms may smite me, no crash or shipwreck shall have power to fright me, clouds gather o'er me, the mount and moon conceals a light, the lamps extinguished, mists rise red angry rays are darting around my head there falls a horror from the vaulted roof and seizes me. I feel thy presence spirit I invoke reveal thyself high in my heart what rending stroke with new impulsion my senses heave in this convulsion I feel thee draw my heart absorb exhaust me thou must thou must and though my life it cost me. And at that, he seizes the book and mysteriously pronounces the sign of the spirit, a ruddy flame flashes and the spirit appears in the flame. "Who calls me?" It is remarkable, actually, how many of the components of magic as given in the definition are present in the use of magic in the first part of the

Faust drama. And when we realize moreover that in that first part of the drama no less than 24 instances of magic occur ranging all the way from the allusion to the popular witch woman to the profoundly intended conjuring of the earth spirit, we are faced with a situation actually that was created by the poet and one that can hardly be brushed aside lightly. The intellectual history of the race is replete with acts of magic and the names of magicians, and it is perhaps not accidental that anthropologists also claim that there was a time when man didn't know what magic was. There are acts of magic performed by Aaron and Moses as we know before the Pharaoh, famous because they were then considered to be a sort of a contest between the powers of darkness and light. And they were reminiscent also of our Tavari reference of a little while ago that there are actually two kinds of magic, devil magic and angel magic. There is as we see King Saul going to the witch of Endor and it might not be without interest to recall that Saul went to her after he had banished all those persons from his kingdom that had so-called familiar spirits. There is the event of the Duchess of Gloucester calling upon the devil; there is the magic performed by the three witches in Macbeth; and there are countless countless others. Among magicians ancestral to Faust we could mention besides Simon Magus of the New Testament such men as Merlin. Merlin as we know, was a fifth century magician said to have been born to a Welsh princess from a union with a demon, an origin that's very similar to that of Cain of the Old Testament, who also, according to legend, is said to have had such an origin. There is Dr. John Dee, the English mathematician and astrologer. There are Machiavelli, Pulci, Aritano, and Nostradamus, the great teacher of Goethe's Faust figure by the way. All of these men are said to have possessed in their makeup pronounced streaks of magical gifts. And there is of course the direct ancestor to Goethe's Faust, the 16th century German scholar: the mountebank, the charlatan, and magician, Dr. Faustus, whose picture I would like to have you look at once more. And this is where Mephisto enters. Whether he is to represent god's angel, the tempter according to the ancient Hebrew writings, or a devil demon, tailored very much along ancient Persian lines, or a lesser spirit, perhaps an elemental spirit, or the Christian Satan. During his associations with Faust, he produces so much magic that it, that is, magic, plus that magic produced by Faust himself creates such an atmosphere of mystery in the drama that the latter may be considered to be, as it were, suspended in such an atmosphere. We now might well do well to look at some of the instances all within the first part of the Faust drama itself. Who knows we might make some very interesting observations? Well reference to the witch woman for instance on the Easter morning walk has already been made. We might add here parenthetically a reference to the well-known Slavic witch Baba Yaga, also a clear-cut example of a magician physician combination and an illusion recorded in the mythology of magic that witchcraft, witchcraft was imparted by the demons to women especially. Faust's conjuring of the earth spirit may well be associated with the former deep-seated desire to leave this material world and to enter one of higher activities this is doubtless the poet's contribution to an acknowledgement of the spiritual history of the race whereas the changing of the poodle into the traveling scholar is designed to illustrate very plainly a spirit manifestation emanating from the essential nature of the spirit world itself. Well we could gather enough instances of this latter type from the very first part of the drama itself to weave a very interesting picture of the spirit world but we have to go on. Faust's act of crowding the poodle, an act performed according to all the requirements of magic itself, is done merely in order to obtain the poodle's identity. The magic power of the pentagram, which holds Mephisto a prisoner in Faust's study, afforded a glimpse into the power of symbols. The magic of the rats, summoned by Mephisto to gnaw the threshold so that he, the master, can escape. Perhaps also the

use of the magical horses for the desperate ride to the prison where Gretchen is awaiting her execution. All both of these instances exhibit the avowed ability of the members of the demon world to change shape according to plan and intent. Mephisto first appearing in the shape of the poodle and then changing back again, of course, also. The first two examples show perhaps also that minor spirits are controllable by superior ones. A similar insight into the mechanism of the spirit world is presented to us when Mephisto puts Faust to sleep, keeping him so with the aid of hosts of aerial spirits. To this we could add the drawing of wine by Mephisto from the wooden table top at Auerbach's cellar. Not necessarily instructive, but certainly adding to the element of entertainment very much along the lines of our modern stage magician. More important seems to be Mephisto's producing of the so-called Helena vision in the witch's kitchen, because Helena will appear again. In the second part of the drama, Faust will be with a shadow, seeking to detain it, and that is considered to be a symbol of the union of the poet's Teutonic genius with the classical ideal. Faust's rejuvenation by means of a fire potion may have historically speaking significance because it is plainly witchcraft and moreover it is performed by a woman and that to be sure occurs very frequently in medieval literature and also as actually is true in the practice of medieval medicine. Then, Mephisto procuring the jewels twice for Faust so that Faust himself might give them to Gretchen reminds one of the a very treasure that can be lifted only through the power of magic. Allusion to such a situation is made at least twice. Once when Faust bids Mephisto just to go out and get some jewels for him, and then also when both of them ascend the broken mountain during the so-called witch's Sabbath. This situation, by the way, bears a faint association to the ancient tale recorded in the Babli Gittin 68a, according to which the angel Hashmedai lacked at the sight of a magician who sat on a buried treasure without actually knowing it. Then, of course, there is the magical influence by Mephisto and Faust's sword during the duel with Valentine, Gretchen's brother. We know, don't we, that Valentine was killed by Faust at that occasion. There is, at last, the entire witchery of the Walpurgisnacht, the witch's Sabbath, a highly sexually charged revel which contains no fewer than four separate acts of magic. This entire situation is, of course, intimately associated and related to the person of the witch herself, the woman that can turn into one by means of salves, herbs, ointments, and sundry juices. [Author name], by the way, gives us a detailed account of such a transformation in his biography of Leonardo da Vinci. In all this, we do not wish to use the element of magic as it appears in the second part of the drama, except possibly for one single instance, namely Faust's command to Mephisto to procure by magic enough laborers for him so that he might be able to finish his great pet project, the so-called reclamation project, the draining of large swamp areas for human habitation and cultivation. This instance may have some significance, but what can we learn from such a very varied and highly varied use of magic? Certainly we can observe several features. There seems to be no common denominator to them. It is difficult to undertake any sort of a classification, but there seems to be very dimly perceptible an intent in all this on the part of the poet. So then our first observation is a very natural one. It is a very strange situation especially when we realize that only two, possibly only one instance has any real significance to Faust as such, namely the conjuring of the earth spirit and the demand for laborers. But even so, during the former Faust never poses those questions which if they were answered might add to either his factual or super sensible knowledge. And the second is never carried out because Faust dies just a few moments after he uttered this command. And yet there is more to it than seems to meet the eye as it were. In order to make the association between Faust and Mephisto creditable at all, there are necessary certain elements which make Faust the spirit that he avowedly is, a devil, if not the devil, in capital

letters. Stripped of the atmosphere of his own world, the spirit world, he would be colorless and unconvincing. And there have been Faust scholars who claim, perhaps justifiably so, that the chief character in this drama is not Faust at all, but rather Mephisto. Could it be then, poetically speaking, that Goethe, the poet, like so many others before and after him was fascinated by the mechanism of the spirit world and of magic as being one phase of such a mechanism? Be it as it may, a second observation seems to have the virtue of a certain degree of validity particularly when we see it within the large framework of the drama; namely the contest between the cosmic forces of good and evil, that is between god and the Christian satan. We have reference to the point of eminence of the entire drama, namely the inevitable return of man, he of course of Faust, to god as it is foreordained in the universal mechanism of predestination. We remember do we not that Faust on his way to god that is traveling that same path that the all mankind is traveling and that he is traversing three spheres of knowledge that is he lives in three separate different intellectual spheres; first a factual and secular knowledge, then that knowledge which is hidden with a veil of mystery and that can be pierced only with the power of magic, and finally the highest form the highest level spiritual or revealed knowledge. We also remember, do we not, that he has left the lowest sphere, that of secular knowledge, and that at the end of his life he catches a glimpse of the highest form of knowledge, that of working for his fellow men which we now consider to be a social gospel. But while he has the companionship of Mephisto, whoever this mysterious fellow may be, he lives in the intellectual climate of the second sphere, namely magic. It seems to have been the poet's intent to create such an atmosphere as a natural milieu, not so much for Faust as for Mephisto. And now, a third observation is perhaps also in order. Not one of the two dozen instances of magic in the first part of Faust is initiated by Faust with the consistent intent of gaining super sensible or more of factual knowledge as he at first claimed. Not one of these instances results in an increase of either form of knowledge to him. There's only one conclusion left, the one already mentioned, namely, to the effect that it is a necessary milieu for the creditableness of the companionship between Faust and Mephisto. Before Faust enters into the pact arrangement with Mephisto, he utters a terrible tenfold curse, and the aerial spirits, again that very close kinship with elemental spirits, and man, innately friendly to man, they moan and they wail, exhorting him to build that beautiful world again within which he had until that very moment been living. Namely, a world of striving for the highest, but not a world of magic. Striving towards the mystic union with the world soul, but no useful acquisitions of facts, of figures, and of burdensome speculation. As Francis Bacon once upon a time said "a little learning is a dangerous thing but much learning leadeth a man to God." The beautiful world which Faust destroyed by his curse is the way to God through love. Hence the Gretchen love tragedy, with all its implications of being a reflection of the divine love. Hence also the closing words of the drama, the woman's soul leadeth us onward and up. And maybe the persistent use of magic by Faust and his spending of an entire lifetime in such an environment, a terribly serious but well-intended undertaking by him, is one of those errors foreknown by the Lord and implied in his word to Mephisto when he said, While man's desires and aspirations stir, he cannot choose but err. Faust's quest is the quest of a seeker, of a Nordic seeker, for union with the ideal of truth and beauty. There are numberless instances and numberless bits of evidence in the drama that marked Faust as such a seeker. Maybe, maybe, Goethe himself, a man with two souls, and sensing the road of the mystic, meant to say that on it the way of magic is one of those errors and that the only way for man to his ultimate goal is that of love. The iridescence of magic, used as an instrument by the divinely appointed tempter, testing God's creation, man, is of no avail and only bears testimony that God's

creation, man, is sound. He deserves to live. He deserves to be saved. As the Mater Gloriosa says near the end of the drama, "rise thou to higher spheres conduct him who feeling thee shall follow there." Thank you and good night. The aspect of magic its origin and function and Goethe's drama Faust has been the subject of discussion this evening. Subsequent presentations in this series will deal with Mephistopheles: his origin, nature, and function; and the pact idea. The discussion of these phases of Goethe's Faust are being offered by Dr. George Radimersky and are a presentation of the Department of Foreign Languages of Michigan State University. This program was directed by Les Marcus and produced by Don Pash and has been presented over the facilities of Michigan State University Television.