



Section 6. Literary theory

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THE MOTIF OF COMPOSITIONAL CYCLICITY WITHIN J. GOETHE'S 'FAUST'

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Abstract

'Faust' is a true masterpiece of the world literature. For many years, literary critics have been striving to decipher a series of complex codes and symbols laid down by J. Goethe, alongside the writers have exploited the motifs that are actual within 'Faust'. This work examines the motif of compositional cyclicity and the concepts that are collateral to it. The scientific novelty of the work reveals itself in the presentation of the new broad compositional classification based on the stages of protagonist's personality development and in the disclosing of the act-concept.

Keywords: 'Faust', motif, compositional cyclicity, J. Goethe, oberhalbmenschlich, concept

'Faust' is the most prominent work of J. Goethe and one of the main masterpieces of world of literature. It can be presented as a multi-layered work and studied as a philosophical tract alongside the literary tragedy; however, within this article, the motif of the compositional cyclicity within 'Faust' is considered. The composition is a set of spatial, sensual, light, perspective and other relations that connect the certain elements of the work into a single whole, i.e. any composition is a system, 'organic unity of structure' (Zeleznov L.A., 2004). J. Goethe creates a rather complex composition, piling it up with cyclicity and other related motifs from the very beginning of the work. Thus, it begins with prologues, ones in the theater and in Heaven,

that reflect the macro- and microcosmic concept. Within the prologue in the theatre, dramatis personae, the Director, the Poet and the Comedian, discuss highly moral issues — art, spirituality and creativity, but their approaches to them differ; the Director's point of view is a materialistic side of the spectrum; he intends to benefit from the performance (if there is a stage as a material object, 'the stage is set, the boards complete' (Kline A., 2003), then it is to yield a profit). Alongside it, he assesses the audience moderate: 'As if they're at the baker's, starving, nearly breaking their necks: just for a ticket (Kline A., 2003). Thus, he expresses the key idea of the materialistic world: 'The man who seeks to be approved, Must stick to the best tools

for it... soft wood's the best to split (Kline A., 2003), that is, the idea of adaptation for the sake of profit-making is stated. The opposite point of view is taken by the Poet, who claims that vanity is destructive, he is looking for 'heavenly silence' (Kline A., 2003) instead. A theater for him is the abode of art. The poet expresses another crucial idea, which defines the main ontological contradiction within the tragedy — 'What dazzles is a Momentary act: What's true is left for posterity' (Kline A., 2003). He claims that a moment that benefits a person is insignificant compared to an ageless cultural heritage. This idea triggers a series of cyclic motifs that are reflected in Faust's pursuit of the moment, which is itself an illusory category. The moment is counterposed to perpetuating both in the prologue and within the storyline of Faust's individual mental formation. The poet strives for selfless eternal creation in contrast to the Director-materialist.

Some sort of intermediary between a Director and a Poet is a Comedian who does not regard either life or art highly. He finds his goal in offering the 'worldly fun' (Kline A., 2003), and considers his goal significant. The Comedian is not a materialist by nature, just as he does not see creation as his goal. This prologue is a reflection of the whole plot at the micro level. Director, Comedian and Poet form the trinity of the image of Faust, the way of his formation. Faust-the Director strives to get answers to his questions at the mundane level, he studies material sources. Faust-the Poet, on the other hand, seeks to find True answers to questions that lie beyond mundane understanding. 'Often, when the first years are done, unseeing, It appears at last, complete, in deepest sense' (Kline A., 2003) says the Poet, showing no will to be a 'sloppy worker' (Kline A., 2003). Likewise Faust comes to the conclusion that 'No wiser than ... was before' (Kline A., 2003) after studying the 'manmade' sciences. And yet, the scene ends with the words of the Director, who concludes that the Poet is the master of inspiration, and in order to achieve success, (that is, to stage a play) one should 'use them all' (Kline A., 2003) and 'Grasp it firmly like a hoe' (Kline A., 2003). Therefore, in the prologue another idea, that is reflected further in the text, is marked — the theme of means of achieving the goal.

It should be noted that another meaning of this prologue can be assumed, thus, an analogy between three main ideational actors — God, Mephistopheles and Faust -are possible to be drawn. If the role of the Poet, the seeker of truth, would be assigned to Faust, and the role of the Comedian, who takes life lightly, to Mephistopheles, then the role of the Director should go to God. However, it is noteworthy that in the German text God is referred to as *Der Herr* (Goethe J. W. Von. 1808), that is, 'Lord' or 'Master'. If we turn to the monolingual dictionary, then the word Director is defined as a '*der Leiter* (e-r Firma) (Dieter Götz, Günther Haensch, Hans Wellmann, 2006), i.e. an executive. That is, if the analogy with the theater is drawn, then *Der Herr* is to be the creator of the entire theater. He cannot be a materialist only; the image of God in Faust is ambiguous. He is in several hypostasis — the Lord, who owns the soul of Faust, a disputant, and the judge of the very dispute. If the idea of macro- and microcosm is taken into account, then Faust is created in divine likeness, the Lord's image. However, Faust owns not his soul (God owns it as he is his 'servant' (Kline A., 2003)) but his will; that is, the will turns out to be a micro-cosm of the soul. Argument in favor of this point of view is Faust's try to translate a Christian text in order to 'reach revelation's brink' (Kline A., 2003). It is noteworthy that Faust seeks to look into the past, into the 'eternal' works ever created to find the answers he looks for that also contributes to the motif's of cyclicity progression. His intention is to translate the sacred original into '... beloved German' (Kline A., 2003), but in the course of his work, the protagonist encounters translation difficulties. He faces the choice whether to value higher a word, mind, power, or an act. Thus, he, as a translator, is free to choose the translation solution that he deems the most suitable; it is his own volitional decision. It should be noted that the very fact that Faust seeks to translate the Holy Scriptures manifests a sort of challenge to scholasticism, actual in the Middle Ages that proclaimed the search for a deep meaning of words the heresy itself. Faust does not just want to depart from the following embedded dogmas; he establishes a free intellectual dialogue with the Holy Scriptures through his will.

Faust states that 'In the Beginning was the Act!' (Kline A., 2003) choosing it as the primary source. His choice, made at the very beginning of the tragedy, launches a whole chain of events and consequences of his volitional choice. Thus, activity becomes the key story-driven and ideational category that sets the tone for the entire narrative. Within this work, two elements that are inherently associated with the act-concept are of particular interest — goal-setting and, as mentioned above, the means of its achieving. This very category is one through which motif of compositional cyclicity is realized. However, this concept should be defined within specific narration of 'Faust'. Isaac Holland claims that activity is 'one kind, one thing, one vessel, one furnace and one Action for white and red' (Telegin S., 2015). Giammaria Gonella emphasizes the important features of activity — its totality and integrity ((Telegin S., 2015). Activity within this literary and philosophical work is considered not as an individual action, but as an absolute concept that is integral and unified.

When it comes to the aim, Faust desires to relive the life in its highest moment, that is the concentrated moment, the result of his activity. Thus, the compositional specificity of 'Faust' can be defined as the mental way of protagonist from the theory, i.e. intellectual activity ('Now I've done Philosophy, I've finished Law and Medicine' (Kline A., 2003)) to the practice, i.e. creation ('A masterpiece of the human spirit' (Kline A., 2003)). Compositionally, this work is a complex one, and it can be considered from different perspectives. First, it can be divided the following way:

Prologues

It is expedient to merge them, since they set the general ideational pithiness of the tragedy, even though they are metaphorically antonymous.

Part 1

This part presents a cyclical reflection of Faust-the Director (Faust-the materialist). He, having learned the 'humane' sciences, seeks to escape from his laboratory, physical and metaphorical. He is close to death and he regrets that he has lived his life, searching for truth in the wrong place. This fear makes

him turn to the spiritual method of cognition. It is logical that this part includes a meeting with the Spirit and Mephistopheles (a cyclic reflection of the compositional antonymy of the scenes presented in the prologues), as well as Faust's metamorphosis — he becomes a youth, that reflects the motif of cyclicity (in this case physical, not abstract, but yet unnatural) as well. It is noteworthy, that it is not the Spirit that rejuvenates Faust, but the Witch, which refers a reader to the theme of means (who and what helps Faust in achieving his goal). This part marks the extension of Faust's habitable space, he goes beyond his Study. It should also be noted that this part is one within which he meets Gretchen and it includes a quite explicit bourgeois drama.

Part 2

The second part begins with Faust who is 'trying to sleep' (Kline A., 2003), which is symbolic since it is replete with implicit meanings and symbolism. This very category of activity within act-concept is already being realized not through the spiritual and abstract (Faust was looking for truth as a spiritual category), but there is a shift to activity-based approach. Faust interacts with the Emperor, he himself takes the initiative in interacting with Elena. Thus, the motif of cyclicity is realized through the fact that, if in the first part the mundane (as opposed to the spiritual, expressed in interaction with the sciences) is superimposed on theological and religious categories, in the second part the mundane or 'low' (expressed in social interaction) is superimposed on classical, antique images. This part turns out to be complex and piled up, especially considering the Homunculus storyline and chaotic acts (Margaret's salvation, Faust's meeting with his unborn son, etc.), however, considering the path of Faust's formation, it is important to note that at first glance, he achieves what Mephistopheles promises him — he gets the very moment but it becomes illusory (a reference to the theme of the illusory moment of success that the Director craves in the prologue in the theater). Moreover, Faust goes blind, which manifests a motive of metaphorical cyclicity: in the first part, there is a spatial expansion within the composition of the work — Faust goes beyond his physical (material) Study, as an image of his subjective materialistic con-

sciousness; however, at the end of the story, he physically goes blind and again turns out to be closed in his consciousness, that is, he again mentally and metaphorically goes inside himself, but this time in order to know the 'verum', natural, spiritual Truth.

However, compositionally, this work can be also divided according to the stages of the character's formation:

Stage 1 — materialism

At this stage, Faust is a scientist who has spent years in search of truth (as a scientific category), but this truth itself does not make sense for him, as it is lacked ambivalence (it is only mundane, not exalted) and activity, since protagonist believes that 'if you can't feel it, if it never Rises from the soul' (Kline A., 2003), then knowledge does not make any sense. The very understanding of the need for active knowledge raises the character to a new, second level, that compositionally can be designated as a transition to the second part of this classification.

Stage 2 — meeting with oberhalbmenschlich

The second part within this classification is marked by the appearance of the Spirit and Mephistopheles, two non-human beings (ones that can be called 'oberhalbmenschlich'). It seems appropriate to combine these meetings into one part, since these abstract creatures, although being semantically metaphorical, are still 'above' human. Considering this issue through the prism of the motif of cyclicity, it is possible to divide the state of the character compositionally into Faust- the Director and Faust-Poet.

A) The meeting of Faust and the Spirit.

From the point of view of symbolism, it is noteworthy that it is the Earth-Spirit, whom he meets after seeing a sign of the Macrocosm, i.e. the Kabbalistic symbol. Faust assures that he is ready to know the truth: 'Spirit, I summon to appear, speak to me!' (Kline A., 2003); but the Spirit mocks Faust, who claims that he is Spirit's 'peer' (Kline A., 2003). The Spirit answers: 'You're like the Spirit that you understand Not me!' (Kline A., 2003), hinting that Faust is not ready to understand the supreme Truth expressed in harmony. It is highlighted by the fact that Faust finds his

appearance 'terrible' (Kline A., 2003). Thus, Faust clearly expresses his intention — the desire to cognize harmony: 'How each to the Whole its selfhood gives, One in another works and lives! How Heavenly forces fall and rise, Golden vessels pass each other by! Blessings from their wings disperse: They penetrate from Heaven to Earth, Sounding a harmony through the Universe!' (Kline A., 2003); however, his intention seems delusion, as at this stage he is a subjectivist and his desire to know the truth is arrogant, there can be no harmony in it, according to the story-based idea. Within this work, the motive of harmony is reflected at different symbolic levels/layers — religious (the Archangels chant the harmony of the elements in the prologue in Heaven), cabalistic (the image of the Spirit) and ancient (the relationship between Helena and Faust as a harmonious union of the human and the sublime, which resulted in the birth of Euphorion). Realizing Faust's mental unpreparedness to comprehend the truth, the Spirit leaves his Study.

B) The meeting of Faust and Mephistopheles

It is Mephistopheles' occurrence that goes after Faust's dialogue with the Spirit. The image of Mephistopheles is antonymous to the Spirit's one, not only in terms of its ontological nature, but they represent different symbolic systems. The Spirit expresses one's viewpoints and ideas directly, while Mephistopheles speaks to Faust in a vague and manipulative manner. Thus, when Faust asks Mephistopheles to introduce oneself, he reminds a protagonist that it is a question rather petty for a person 'For one who so disdains the Word' (Kline A., 2003), actualizing the motif of cyclicity, since, as already mentioned within this work, creative and strong-willed work of Faust as an interpreter turns out to be the foundation of the further philosophical research of the character in general and the implementation of the concept of activity in particular.

Mephistopheles helps Faust expand his spatial and emotional aspects of his life. It is considered important to single out two stages within the storyline that includes their interaction — the relationships between Faust and Marguerite, and ones between Faust and Helena. They entail two aspects:

Table 1.

Emotional	Intellectual
Mephistopheles offers Faust to experience love as an emotion. Faust falls in love with Marguerite, but she does not attract his interest as a personality.	Helena is an image of antiquity and classicism. The union of Faust and Helena, of 'low' (mundane) and 'high', is the union that represents harmony. It is also evidenced by the fact that Helena speaks in Homeric verse, Faust's one is rhymed, but when Elena and Faust interact, she switches to a rhymed one as well.

Table 2.

Passive	Active
Within their relationships, Faust is rather interested in Marguerite as an object that he wants to receive; her image is the one of simple femininity. Mephistopheles plays an important role in their relationship, making her literally fall into Faust's hands.	Within relationships with Helena, Faust seeks to achieve her. Faust is an initiator and active participant who is engaged into the process of achieving Helena, an image of the eternal feminine.

Stage 3 – Faust's Transformation

Mephistopheles allows Faust to see a life in various manifestations, presented in the form of different plot levels (mundane or 'low', classical, social); a journey through them leads Faust to the realization of the phenomenon of cyclicity, presented in the text before (when Faust was choosing the First Cause).

It coerces a reader into the introduction of another classification that reflects the compositional originality of the work, which includes such elements as theoretical activity, practical and then Divine ones. Thus, Faust leaves his Study and proceeds to search for the primitive joys of a fast-flowing life — he visits Auerbach's tavern, then moves onto romantic self-assertion (i.e. relationships with Margaret), and a crisis of individualistic consciousness after that. All these experiences make protagonist wonder over the activity in a wide field of social interaction, i.e. creative or constructive, *partum* activity.

Finally, it raises another issue — the choice of means. Faust — the Director strives to achieve knowledge, which he agrees to cooperate with Mephistopheles for. In the course of their cooperation, Faust wants to build relationships with Gretchen, and to be with him, she kills her mother, her brother

dies. At the next stage of his individual's development, Faust sets a new goal — to be beneficial to the society, but in order to achieve it he has to get rid of the whole family and their guest. His goals, seemingly good, are realized in a non-ecological way, as they are achieved through unrighteous means, which brings us back to his meeting with the Spirit, who has declared that Faust is visited by 'An old lynx from hell' (Kline A., 2003). Thus, the character's means of goals' achieving determine their result — Gretchen loses her mother, as a provenance of her family; her brother, as her only male protector; her child, as a continuation of her breed and blood, and, ultimately, she loses her life. Alongside it, the desired construction site, which Faust has set, turns out to be just an illusion — the protagonist goes blind and does not see that it is the lemurs, who are digging his grave. It is under the power of illusion, when he catches that very moment and it would seem that the bargain is upheld, but the outcome of events changes — Faust is saved.

It should be noted that there are many opinions on such a plot twist, however, within this issue that concerns the motive of cyclicity, one of the reasons for such an outcome can be pointed out, and for this, it is necessary to refer to the beginning of the narration, to the

prologue in Heaven in particular. Lord pronounces a crucial line: 'In the green sapling, can't the gardener see the flowers and fruit the coming years will bring' (Kline A., 2003). Therefore, the prologue itself has the basis for the end of the tragedy. Moreover, it should be noted that, as Mephistopheles turns out to be right within this dispute (since Faust does single out that very moment), God has fair reasons to take Faust's soul as well, as at this very moment Faust is thrilled by his 'greatest act of will' (Kline A., 2003) aimed at people's welfare, therefore, God declares 'A good man, in

his darkest yearning, Is still aware of virtue's ways' (Kline A., 2003). Thus, God encourages the very desire, accepting Faust as 'his servant' (Kline A., 2003), whether he is youth or a blind old man. Thus, Der Herr completes the cycle of Faust's individual's development, returning his soul to where it has been sent from. However, the prologue in the theater precedes the prologue in Heaven, showing that Faust is only a representative of all humankind, and this trinity is typical for any person, just as any person has the will to choose a goal to pursue and what means to apply in order to achieve it.

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