



NATIONAL RESEARCH UNIVERSITY
HIGHER SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

Alexander Dobrokhotov

**THE SHORT HAPPY LIFE OF
GOETHE'S FAUST, OR *HIEROS
GAMOS* AS THE CENTER
OF THE TRAGEDY**

BASIC RESEARCH PROGRAM

WORKING PAPERS

SERIES: HUMANITIES
WP BRP 15/HUM/2013

*Alexander Dobrokhotov*¹

**THE SHORT HAPPY LIFE OF GOETHE'S FAUST, OR *HIEROS GAMOS*
AS THE CENTER OF THE TRAGEDY²**

This paper explores the implications of the central episode of the second part of «Faust» - the story of Faust and Helen of Troy's marriage - and shows that the episode contains a more positive concept of the history of European culture than the conclusion of the tragedy.

Keywords: Goethe, Weimar Classicism, poetry, person, Byron, Helen of Troy, Das Ewig Weibliche, holy marriage.

JEL classification: Z.

¹ National Research University Higher School of Economics (Moscow, Russia); Department of Philosophy. A professor in the School of Cultural Studies. E-mail: gumaniora@gmail.com

² This study was carried out within "The National Research University Higher School of Economics' Academic Fund Program in 2012-2013, research grant No. 11-01-0101"

I.

No one doubts that the Goethe's «Faust» carries an important message to humanity. But what exactly that message is about isn't as certain. Despite of the dozens of interpretations and the direct indications of the author himself, disputes are still ongoing. One of the reasons is rooted in the extreme complexity of the tragedy's structure. The ending of the tragedy, which is so full of meanings, doesn't make it any easier either. To get closer to the answers we'll try, as a hermeneutic technique, to focus on the history of Faust and Helena's marriage as the primary source of meaning instead of the conclusion of the tragedy.

Why does Helena become the central concept of the «Faust»? Ironically, this issue remains non-trivial even now, when commentaries on “Faust” could fill up a whole library. Let's try to approach the answer by a close viewing of just one motif in the opening of the third act. The Faust's conception, that leads the development of the third act of the second part, is very clear: to achieve the desired perfection in this world, he needs to connect two spiritual worlds, ancient and modern European, or, as he calls it, the northern world (a romantic–gothic world in a certain sense). It is this exact topic Weimar Classicism had been working on in the last five years of the 18th century. Can I connect these two worlds, and if yes, will it be a fruitful connection? It is important that this time it is not about a love affair, as was the case with Margarete, but about marriage, which is, by law, a deep, natural and fruitful union. Given how ingrained gnostic and alchemical motifs are in «Faust»³, it is appropriate to call this marriage a "holy marriage" (hieros gamos), and its result a Syzygy. In the context of the storyline, it looks less solemn: like Mephistopheles's plot and attempt to finally match Faust and Helena, to give him the desired happiness. All previous plot threads are leading to the central event - to the experiment with Helena. Of particular importance are two disasters related to the "eternal feminine": the tragedy of Margarete and the Homunculus drama. In the first case, the victory of Faust became Gretchen's death. In the second case a triumph of Galatee became a death of the artificial person (which wasn't that unfruitful after all). Union with Helena will be the third catastrophe: the marriage, instead of synthesis, will release energy through decay. But you can hardly call it a failure. Let's try to get a sense of what had happened.

Remarkable is the role of Mephistopheles as a procurer in the third act of the tragedy. He has a hard time to playing the role of mediator, because he – a Northern demon - should be transformed into an ancient creature. This is a difficult syllogism, where Mephistopheles should be a middle term: he has to belong to the northern world where it involves Helena, and the

³ See: Gray R. Goethe alchemist. Cambr., 1952.

ancient world at the same time. Mephistopheles ingeniously found the point of intersection of the northern and the ancient worlds - it is a " depths of chaos". Which is why he became Phorkyas (an extremely ugly female demonic creature). Becoming an agent of chaos, he starts to connect these two worlds together. His first task was to get Helena out from Hades. The the key part of this section is supposed to be the scene of the Faust's prayers to Persephone. It should be so amazingly well written, thought Goethe, that it would become absolutely clear: Persephone has to yield to the power of poetry and give Helena to Faust, as she did in case with Eurydice and Orpheus. Goethe for some reason has changed his mind and did not write that scene. Therefore, it remains unclear how the heroes still managed to get Helena out from Orkus (an ancient culture out of the sleeping historical memory). Since the previous attempt to "activate" Helena was more than trivial adventure, and was associated with another mythological topos - a mysterious scary world of "mothers". The aggressive evocation of the Helena's image and a naive attempt to capture this ghost gives the episode a dramatic tone. The second attempt - successful and non-violent - works out in an inexplicably easy way. But still all the events take place on the nominally ancient territory, and here you have to play by the rules of the ancient myth, which both Faust and Mephistopheles understand very well. Ancient beauty requires antique symbolic environment. Another condition for the possible Syzygy: a counter-movement by Helena. Achievement in this case is pointless and irrelevant. In order to complete this task Goethe builds a rather complicated and not very transparent composition.

Helena returns to Sparta accompanied by her noisy, talkative retinue, which emphasizes her own majestic calm and silence that befits demigoddesses. Her maid Panthalis always stays next to Helena and carries the function of a conscious, reflective "alter ego" of her mistress. The repatriates find them self in a rather strange situation: the house is empty, but there are clearly the signs of preparations for a sacrificial rite. It is not clear whether it is set up to celebrate her return, or something worse. Helena understands that her husband was not happy with the fact that she lived for ten years away from him with Paris, that she insulted his dignity and provoked the war. So Helena gets the idea that she is to be sacrificed in order to put an end to this epic story. The atmosphere of anxiety starts to heat up from the first moments of the act, and, to a large extent, is staged by Mephistopheles. We are used to the fact that Mephistopheles is a jester, or sometimes a cynical philosopher. But here he acts as a silent, almost motionless, mysterious figure. Helena tries to make contact with him, but he is in no rush to do so. At first he takes the shape of a silent but self-confident fate that silently does its work. At some point, Mephistopheles turns his face to Helena: she sees an ugly, extremely revolting creature. Here we see a very important motif of a game between beauty and ugliness. It is important for

Mephistopheles to be ugly, to remind Helena that she is pure beauty amid the extreme ugliness. This is emphasized by the role of the Helena's suite, namely, the role of the chorus. Chorus comments on the events, but in the way Mephistopheles expects it to do. He expects the chorus to give Helena hints what to do - step by step. To make her realize that she now will be sacrificed and that she has to save herself and her suite. This is not the ancient *objectivity*, but also not a subjective experiences. What we see is an objectivity, distorted and controlled by Mephistopheles in order to create a force field of horror, which would push Helena out of the ancient world into the world of Faust. However, Helena says that the daughter of Zeus could not give into a feeling of fear. And Mephistopheles does understand it. But at the same time, she said that the fear that comes from Phorkyas, that comes from the ancient depths of the night, it is not just fear. Goethe creates an impressive image: a fear that rises up as hot volcanic lava out of some kind of abyss, and it's really scary, says Helena. What we see here is not just a fear but an "ancient horror." "The ancient horror" was a name for a horror imbued by Pan. Pan was the god of nature. He fell asleep at noon, which is why it was the time for shepherds and other people to be quiet in order not to disturb Pan. The only one who could rustle and bawl at this time was Pan himself and only Echo might respond him. People got paralyzed by fear when heard this rustle, this is what was cold a "panic" horror. This horror is not directly connected with chaos. This is the horror of the petrified nature, the horror for the paralyzed being. The emptiness of chaos causes horror, but the senseless fullness of peace causes horror, despair and disgust as well. I would like to stress that this is not just a random parallel. It is important to understand why the ancient world, though being an object of cult worship, is still incomplete. Why can Helena be drawn away from this world to an alternative one. Because the ancient world has such a fullness of being, the fullness of the god Pan, that fills up everything with an existent being, but does not give any sense. This is a huge world, which rotates within itself and is subject to an impersonal fate. But it has no sense. One aspect of ancient tragedy is that within the system itself a meaning cannot be found, and there is no "out" there, everything is closed in one and continuous world. Therefore, the post-ancient Christian world has something to say to the ancient, because it opens up a transcendent meaning. It is strange that none other than the devil, Mephistopheles, is at play with this, but so is his role here.

So, Helena nobely resists the first assault of Mephistopheles. But then Mephistopheles skillfully provokes a scandal, and the whole ladies retinue is screaming in horror, denouncing the Phorkyas outrage, which shocked them almost more than the threat of sacrifice. Helena's reaction to this is as follows: «Ihr habt in sittlosem Zorn / Unsel'ger Bilder Schreckgestalten hergebannt, / Die mich umdrängen, daß ich selbst zum Orkus mich / Gerissen fühle,

vaterländ'scher Flur zum Trutz»⁴. The key word here is «Orkus». This mess, chaos, scandal reminds her of the threat of chaos. It is interesting which word Phorkyas uses to address these characters. «Gespenster!», she says⁵. It is not clear whether they are aware that they are ghosts. Some ambiguity persists almost to the end, because Helena and her retinue immediately gets into the context of the actual events of the story line, being embodied at the moment of her return to Sparta. On the other hand, some textual signals are given to help us understand that they do feel like ghosts, trapped in this world, and that what Mephistopheles's Phorkyas reminds us. «Gespenster! - says Phorkyas, - Gleich erstarrten Bildern steht ihr da, Geschreckt, vom Tag zu scheiden, der euch nicht gehört.»⁶ Indeed, they also came from Hades. Mephistopheles, of course, could not resist making hateful comments about humans. He goes on saying that people are just like you, ghosts, they are a pretty doubtful of reality themselves, they are just as reluctant to part with the sunshine of the world, but nobody stands up for them, and no one will be saved from the end ahead of them. Here Mephistopheles makes a good move in his chess game: he says that the real people share the fate of the helpless ghosts and fall into nothingness. And you - real ghosts – will get the protection of some powerful personas and a chance to be saved, so it would be wise of you to take the advantage of the situation. But once again Helena isn't fooled. She recognizes the evil demon in Mephistopheles, and says it directly. Helena acts indeed like a visionary, first, because she is a divine being, and secondly, because she, being ultimate beauty, knows as no other about the dual form of beauty. She also sees a dark demonic side of it, and has a very sharp eye for it. Do not forget that Helena is the transformation of Gretchen, the second in order of importance incarnation of «anima», the feminine principle. Gretchen, too, despite all her simple-minded "ingénue" immediately felt the devil in Mephistopheles, she also had the gift of visionist, but in her case due to her virginity, purity. Baucis will later also reveal the same gift of a visionist (just as helpless and nakedness).

However Helena still follows Phorkyas, although not for the same reasons as her scared "chorus." Whatever the reasons for her choice (and those are not clear), it is not an effective solution. Some commentators have suggested that in this way Goethe emphasizes the ancient love for life, for Helena chooses salvation from the whole army of killers headed by Menelas. But the complexity of the intrigue structure in the introduction of the third act gives us a hint that it's all about the logic of the holy marriage between Helena and Faust, the ancient and modern European culture. The supreme achievement of the antiquity – the very personification of beauty - is persecuted and killed by this very ancient world. Some dark depths of antiquity expel or

⁴ Lines 8834 – 8837.

⁵ Line 8930.

⁶ Line 8930 – 8931.

destroy its own meaning and its historical justification. Sensing the approach of danger, and once again remembering that her beauty has always brought misery to people and to the world, Helena graciously hears Mephistopheles' story about the kingdom of the newcomers from the North right nearby, where they are ready to save her. Even if you do not deal with the further history of Syzygy, enough has been said to get the right to see a semantic focus of «Faust» on the subject of Helena of Troy.

II.

The rest of the story of the Syzygy Faust and Helena develops on the territory of Arcadia (Arkadien), where their child Euphorion is born as a symbol of the sacred union, where the ancient world with the outer beauty gets merged with the Roman-Germanic medieval-modern European world with its ethics, music, psychology and individualism. The image of the Euphorion is generally taken up by the interpreters of «Faust» in connection with the personality of Byron: this connection is authenticated by Goethe. Yet «Faust», as a multilayered symbolic system, requires first of all a correct placement in the semantic context for each of its images. Let's have a look at the figure of Euphorion from this point of view. «Faust» as an artistically whole system is built of narrative lines, which form a kind of semantic framework. Each line represents the history of development of a particular motif or concept. Let's call it an *infra-storyline*. The infra-storyline is a motif, the episodes of which add up to a separate plot built into the main plot. (For example, the development of the principle of eternal femininity through the images of Margarete, Helena etc. is built into the integral plot of the development of Faust's personality). The character of Euphorion is presented in the third act of the second part (lines 9574 - 9944), but in fact is included in several infra-storylines of the tragedy. At least in the following: 1) the history of Faust's relationships with women, 2) Mother and Child storyline, 3) the story of Faust's attempts to master the elements and space, 4) the genesis of poetry, 5) the experience of creating a "perfect man." Goethe's choice of the name for the newborn is entirely intentional. In Greek mythology Euphorion is the extraordinarily beautiful winged son of Achilles and Helena, carried over to a magical island after the death of his mother. While trying to escape harassment from Zeus, «father of gods and men", Euphorion was singed by the lightning. The semantics of this name seems to be the following: the verb *euphoreō* means to bring something good, to give a good harvest; *euphoria* (besides the well-known meaning) is fertility, fertility; *euphoros* is rapidly spreading, quickly transferring, healthy, strong, fruitful, fertile. All this mythological, historical, and linguistic semantics (including the motif of the rapid

spreading) matches the Goethe's conception very well. Euphorion has already appeared in the text of the tragedy, namely at the feast of the imperial court, where Plutus, i.e. Faust himself was sitting in a moving carnival wagon. The chariotdriver of the wagon was a charming boy who was not identified by any name, but obviously meant fertility and richness of poetry associated with the wealth of nature. We would probably not know that it was Euphorion if Goethe himself did not tell it to Eckermann. "We then talked of the "Boy Lenker."

"That Faust is concealed under the mask of Plutus, and Mephistophiles under that of Avarice, you will have already perceived. But who is the 'Boy Lenker'?"

I hesitated, and could not answer.

"It is Euphorion," said Goethe.

"But how can he appear in the carnival here," I asked, "when he is not born until the third act?"

"Euphorion," replied Goethe, "is not a human, but an allegorical being. In him is personified poetry, which is bound to neither time, place, nor person. The same spirit who afterwards chooses to be Euphorion, appears here as the 'Boy Lenker,' and is so far like a spectre, that he can be present everywhere, and at all times." [1829 - Wed., Dec. 30.]⁷ This perhaps could have been anticipated with appearance of Ariel in the beginning of the second part. The character of Ariel is semantically close to the image of Euphorion: a light, airy deity with an emphatic adolescent youth. There are also similarities to Hermes. Euphorion is the embodiment of the hermetic forces of information transferal. Poetry is the highest form of the interpretation the god's will and give it to people, so Goethe constantly compares Euphorion to Hermes. As often happens with Goethe, he points to it and at the same time slightly veils the situation. The chorus compares the birth of Euphorion and Hermes.⁸ The similarity to Hermes is also pointed out in the high level of activity of the boy, his neglect of the rules of conduct, but at the same time he also inherits the high-ranked qualities of Hermes. In the text he is described with the word "mercurial" or with other words like volatile, fast, mobile, unstable. That emphasizes once again Euphorion's extreme instability, his mobility and desire to ignore all kind of limitations. In alchemical codes Mercury was often designated as the target of Syzygy, or "The Chemical Wedding", which produces a thin, volatile substance. Euphorion is growing up rapidly and interacts actively with his environment. When he plays, he pushes himself from the ground and jumps up high. The trampoline effect starts working: every time the ground starts to push him

⁷ Conversations of Goethe by J.P. Eckermann. Trans. by John Oxenford. 1906. Digital production by Harrison Ainsworth – <http://www.hxa.name/>. 2006. <http://www.hxa.name/books/ecog/Eckermann-ConversationsOfGoethe-1829.html>

⁸ Lines 9644 - 9678.

more he jumps higher and higher. His parents start to worry and forbid him to do this. But Euphorion likes it; he likes to take off from the ground. Here is where the tragedy starts: he cannot fly because he doesn't have wings unlike his mythic prototype, so free flight is not for him. Goethe as a person who went through a long aesthetic journey understands very well that poetry can not exist without a canon, without being embedded into the modern time, without applying many conditions. In the world of poetry a free flight is forbidden. Helena forebodes the tragedy and says: Euphorion must understand that he violates a sweet union that was so hard to find, the perfect unity of the "mine, yours and ours", which is put in danger by Euphorion.⁹ Here we see the motif of the forbidding of free flight. It literally mentions the violation of laws and customs. Those are, by the way, two different forces. Law is the product of an intelligent and legal will, where a custom is an impersonal tradition. In the drafts of "Faust" the death of Euphorion is portrayed a bit more logically than in the final text, as it is often the case with drafts of Faust. They are more logical, more detailed. In the draft there is a castle surrounded by a magic line beyond which is forbidden to cross, since behind it is real life. Everything is allowed to Euphorion, including flying and jumping, except for crossing this line.

Of course, he crosses it with some kind of magic sword in his hand, gets in the middle of real life and likes it very much. Out there he gets to some feast of local farmers, gets involved in a drunken brawl (though nobody can do anything to him since he is a divine being). But someone happens to have a consecrated sword, which Euphorion has no protection from, and he dies. Here we see an interesting motif, which disappeared in the Faust, but that is important for German literature, namely, leaving the purely intellectual space and entering into real life, the Homunculus syndrome. Like Homunculus Euphorion here wants to break through the circumscribed sphere of reality. In the canonical version of the Faust, Euphorion, bouncing higher and higher, gets overexcited and begins to act very boldly. The episode of the game with beautiful girls who surround him is rather important. Despite the fact that Euphorion's gender is determined, he is often portrayed with androgynous images in the works of Goethe. Be that as it may, his attitude toward the feminine is functionally the important. Euphorion is handsome, he is the embodiment of poetry, everybody loves him, he is surrounded by songs, dances and roundelays. Euphorion begins to behave in a very permissive way with the girls, grabs one of the girls (or rather, a young girl - Mädchen - as it appears to be an alchemical match for the teenager Euphorion), but then he runs into a resistance, his rudeness and arrogance met unexpectedly strong push back. The girl says: "Laß mich los! In dieser Hülle / Ist auch Geistes Mut und Kraft. [...] Ich versenge / Dich, den Toren, mir zum Spiel!." Then she burns up and disappears into the

⁹ "Wie du zerstörest / Das schön errungene / Mein, Dein und Sein." Lines. 9732 – 9734.

sky saying: "Folge mir in leichte Lüfte, / Folge mir in starre Gräfte, / Hasche das verschwundne Ziel."¹⁰ But this is what Euphorion cannot do. He remains with the ashes, with nothing. Here we see the continuation of the motif of the fusion of the alchemical elements. Euphorion became offensive towards the sacred elements, insulted something that in Faust is considered as a sacred substance, the feminine principle of nature. The right way to compound the potencies of the forces of nature is through creative, voluntary marriage bonds, through the creation of outer worlds. Euphorion though is choosing the way of poetic voluntarism, and by this takes the first step towards his own death. He takes his last jump off a cliff, experiences euphoric flight, and crashes. As the heroes of the third act are virtual images taken from Hades, Euphorion, of course, does not die, but leaves what he has been doing and goes to Hades. Helena immediately goes after him with the words: "Daß Glück und Schönheit dauerhaft sich nicht vereint."¹¹ What remains is their clothing, which symbolizes the empty cultural shells void of spirit. However, Mephistopheles reminds that the clothing must be preserved, they are important as a source of residual force for the Earth's culture. He gives Helena's dress (that later turns into the cloud) to Faust: "Halte fest! / Die Göttin ist's nicht mehr, die du verlierst, / Doch göttlich ist's. Bediene dich der hohen, / Unschätzbaren Gunst und hebe dich empor :/

Es trägt dich über alles Gemeine rasch / Am äther hin, so lange du dauern kannst."¹² Leaves himself a costume and lyre of Euphorion: "Noch immer glücklich aufgefunden! / Die Flamme freilich ist verschwunden, / Doch ist mir um die Welt nicht leid. / Hier bleibt genug, Poeten einzuweihen, / Zu stiften Gild - und Handwerksneid ;/ Und kann ich die Talente nicht verleihen, / Verborg 'ich wenigstens das Kleid."¹³ So Goethe, as we can see, is sure that even empty robes left over from antiquity, are important to us, because they are able to raise a spirit of culture. The story, despite the Helena's irreversible departure, is not over. Goethe continues to believe that it is necessary to synthesize the two main substrate cultures - ancient and modern European - but, on the other hand, the Faust project ends up with a catastrophe. Somewhere a mistake was made, despite the "golden age" and the happy "The Chemical Wedding," that did take place.

Euphorion is one of the causes of the accident. He violated sacred taboos. One of the elements of his mistake was a voluntary subjectivity; going beyond all limits. His mythological prototypes are Icarus, Phaethon and Mercury. But there is also a historical prototype of Euphorion. As we know it from Goethe's conversations with Eckermann, it was Lord Byron. These two great minds both understood that even though they are the geniuses of different ages with different

¹⁰ Lines 9800 – 9810.

¹¹ Lines 9940.

¹² Lines 9949 – 9953.

¹³ Lines 9955 – 9961.

cultural missions, still they are equally great. Not surprisingly, they were keeping a jealous eye on each other. Byron became what is called a cult character in the early 19th century. Goethe understood it as a manifestation of the kind of personality that he called demonic. Another "demonic" manifestation of this era that also interested Goethe was Napoleon. Goethe compared himself with Byron and Napoleon because, in a certain sense, he was also a man who made himself and his world: a world with a much bigger potential than required at the end of the 18th century. (Besides in his "Sturm und Drang" period he was a typical "demonic" figure.) Despite all this during his Weimar Classicism period Goethe chooses a different mode of life and work: a mode of connecting the opposite, but not crushing the worlds by the will of an individual. As to Byron he was was a successor of the Napoleon's modus, but perhaps a more interesting version to Goethe than Napoleon himself and his other followers since both Byron and Goethe were connected by the special role they played in the fate of European poetry. In B. Russell's "A History of Western Philosophy" we can find a well-drawn matrix of the characters, were his contemporary would place the demons we are interested in. This is what he writes about the Byronic type: "in their conscious thought there is criticism of the government of the world, which, when it goes deep enough, takes the form of Titanic cosmic self-assertion, or, in those who retain some superstition, of Satanism. Both are to be found in Byron."¹⁴ And further: "To Carlyle, Goethe and Byron were antitheses; to Alfred de Musset, they were accomplices in the wicked work of instilling the poison of melancholy into the cheerful Gallic soul. [...] To Musset, it was only after Napoleon that Byron and Goethe were the greatest geniuses of the century. [...] In Germany, feelings about Napoleon were more divided. There were those who, like Heine, saw him as the mighty missionary of liberalism, the destroyer of serfdom, the enemy of legitimacy, the man who made hereditary princelings tremble; there were others who saw him as the Antichrist, the would-be destroyer of the noble German nation, the immoralist who had proved once for all that Teutonic virtue can only be preserved by unquenchable hatred of France. Bismarck affected a synthesis: Napoleon remained Antichrist, but an Antichrist to be imitated, not merely to be abhorred. Nietzsche, who accepted the compromise, remarked with ghoulish joy that the classical age of war is coming, and that we owe this boon, not to the French Revolution, but to Napoleon. And in this way nationalism, Satanism, and hero worship, the legacy of Byron, became part of the complex soul of Germany."¹⁵

It is hard to recognize in this portrait the chariotdriver-boy or the elfish son of Faust and Helena, but it is Euphorion. No wonder that the future Euphorions of the XIX century - the romanticists

¹⁴ Russell B. A History of Western Philosophy. Simon and Schuster, N. Y., 1945. P. 747.

¹⁵ Ibid. P. 751-752.

Carlyle, Nietzsche –related themselves to Goethe as to their spiritual father. Carlyle before many realized that in order to foresee the future of the XIX century one should look at these three figures: Napoleon, Byron and Goethe. But at some point, Carlyle says the following phrase: “Close thy Byron; open thy Goethe.” For late Carlyle the cult of Goethe was typical. Nietzsche, being a typical Euphorion, also thought a great deal about the phenomenon of Goethe. And post-Dilthey German Goetheism clearly demonizes genius in the same sense in which he spoke of the demonic as the productivity of a higher order.

It should be noted that Helena, unlike Faust, is not responsible for the disaster with Euphorion. Faust, oddly enough, does not have many significant female characters. Most of them are just supporting, comic or satirical, but there are only three fundamentally important ones, which goes for (symbolizes) three stages of the Eternal Feminine: Margarete, Helena and the Mater Gloriosa. The last one is also a protector of Faust. Helen of Troy might be seen as a second step of the incarnation of the anima after Gretchen. She, being a middle stage of the triad, embodies the idea of nature or transformed beauty. One of the Goethe’s main ideas is disposed in her image, namely, the refusal to sacrifice material or spiritual. None of these principles should be absorbed by the other; the material and spiritual need to connect. But how? How to embody the spiritual so it becomes individual at the same time; and that material, while staying a thing, would represent an idea? The answer to this question (that was formulated this way not only by Goethe at that time) is art. Ontologically, if we follow Goethe, art is in the center of everything; in the center of art is Helena as an embodiment of beauty. This is how the desired synthesis comes true. But beside this Helena is the next step in regards to Gretchen: a "potentiated" beauty Gretchen, who in the first part of the tragedy was an embodiment of moral beauty. Their self contained perfection gets disturbed almost in an equal way: a fatal encounter with Faust, a maternity inclination being put asleep, a fratricidal war, lost of the fruit of love. But they did accomplish their role in the tragedy. They secured the connection between the romantic and ancient worlds (because here we are talking about these two elements of synthesis, which will be completed in heaven) just by their existence, and not by any action. Both action and the sense of guilt are associated with the masculine element of the syzygy. To understand Euphorion’s guilt, we must cast a prospective view on Faust’s salvation. Infant souls who vouch for Faust say that they would gladly accept this creature Puppenstand.¹⁶ Puppenstand means “pupa”. It indicates the spiritual state of Faust, who begins his evolution. Faust was revived, but so far he is only a “pupa”, that has a long way to mature and develop. This means that the final salvation has not yet happened; some work has to be done. He has to work his way up. Homunculus at the time

¹⁶ Freudig empfangen wir / Diesen im Puppenstand (11981– 11982).

completed his spiritual evolution very quickly, but without undergoing a physical evolution, since he wanted to escape directly into the world, he did get enough physical flesh for his sublimated intelligence. Therefore he should have hatched properly. At the end he had to break his shell, get dissolved in the natural elements, and begin his natural evolutionary path again. Euphorion also failed to properly hatch, he came out of his shell directly into the open air space and was killed. (Euphorion, as the Homunculus, is associated in the imagination of Goethe with a spherical shell, which symbolizes their self-containment.) Faust went through the physical and historical evolution, but in the end he failed because he didn't go through the spiritual evolution that drove him into a trap. But salvation, as we can see, is just the beginning of a new life. While Homunculus ended up in the sea, which is the cradle of life and Euphorion died prematurely as soon as he emerged into the air, Faust after being saved is immersed in the ideal environment of infant souls, which is a kind of substrate material for his psycho-spiritual growth. It is worth emphasizing that despite all functional symmetry of the images of Euphorion and Homunculus, Euphorion's story has a stronger emotional tint. It is not difficult to see that the main antagonists in Faust are the virtual egos of the author, the paths that Goethe could but didn't choose to take himself. Euphorion's path is decisively rejected by the Olympic mind of Goethe, but the heart of a poet, and the intonation of the tragedy conveys its pulsation, is not so categorical. One of the most intriguing images of the tragedy becomes clearer if you put it in the context of the main event of this work: the birth of the perfect man. Euphorion in this case is not only a symbol of poetry, but also an image of a spirit, who broke loose from the earth and the feminine nature: a kind of antithesis to Homunculus and one of the doppelgänger of the Faust.

Thus, we were able to see that if the personal story of Faust ends with the last lines of the tragedy, the spiritual history of Europe, which occupies Goethe's mind just as much, gets its conceptual design. It is not in the final false utopia of building a dam but in the history of Helena and Euphorion, which is not so hopeless.

Alexander Dobrokhotov.

National Research University Higher School of Economics (Moscow, Russia); Department of Philosophy. A professor in the School of Cultural Studies.

E-mail: gumaniora@gmail.com. Phone: +7(495)772.95.90*2703

Any opinions or claims contained in this Working Paper do not necessarily reflect the views of HSE.