



Role of Satan in Faust's Individual Fantasy: A Study of Wolfgang von Goethe's *Faust*

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Abstract: After the medieval ages, Literature shifted from morality plays to more fantastic stories across Europe. Writers experimented with varied themes in writing which moved from religious-centric to social and human fantasies. Writers during this period broke the shackles of individual fantasy and made the protagonist express his fantastic imagination. All this began with *Dr Faustus* by Christopher Marlowe and continued with Cervantes *Don Quixote*, John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, Wolfgang von Goethe's *Faust*, Marry Shelley's *Frankenstein*. However, this shift was not that easy for the writers. They needed to break free from the traditional narrative of Satan to provide the space for personal fantasy. This research paper will explore the theme of individual fantasy in Wolfgang von Goethe's *Faust*.

Index Terms - Individual Fantasy, Satan, Morality.

I. INTRODUCTION

Individual Fantasy became a contentious theme of writers in the renaissance and post-renaissance. Very influential writers wrote several works based on this subject: Christopher Marlowe's *Dr Faustus*, Cervantes *Don Quixote*, John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and Wolfgang von Goethe's *Faust*. Most of these works follow individual fantasy, and all of them end up being underachievers. At the end of the play, Dr Faustus begs for a drop of Christ to save his soul; Satan is thrown out of heaven, Faust loses everything, but they do not compromise on their fantasy.

This individual fantasy has a lot to do with the character of Satan and the change in the writer's stance toward Satan. In the early writings of Europe and England, Satan formed a central figure in the morality plays with Jesus as the protagonist. In those writings, no one liked Satan's character; his character did not leave any imprint upon the audience. It was the character of Jesus representing good who mostly stole the show. The neglect of Satan was primarily because of his persistent insistence on following the individual fantasy, as against Jesus, who followed the will of God. So, in this context, individual fantasy would amount to sin. Therefore, to make this concept successful, Satan should get some space.

It all began with *Dr Faustus*, and Cervantes continued the tradition, John Milton, Wolfgang von Goethe, Marry Shelly, and others followed. However, the breakthrough work was *Paradise Lost* by John Milton, where Satan had perhaps the freedom of life to express himself, little wonder that William Blake remarked that "John Milton was of the Devil's party without knowing it."

For Literature, to pave the way for the subject of individual fantasy, breaking Satan's myth as purely devilish needed some change, and John Milton, to a great extent, provided that breakthrough. He had good enough support from Marlowe and Cervantes.

In the eighteenth century, Wolfgang von Goethe wrote *Faust*. To draw the relevance to the subject of this paper, an outline of Faust is necessary. Faust is written in two parts, Part I and Part II. Part I primarily focuses on the restlessness of the scholar, who happens to be Faust. He is not satisfied with his achievements and dreams of learning, that knowledge that will help him conquer the world. This is an individual fantasy, considering the human limitations, a thought of knowledge or idea, which perhaps will upgrade the skill levels of humans, perhaps from mortal to immortal. This leads Faust to fall into the company of Mephistopheles, wherein he makes an agreement with him. The involvement of Margarete, called Gretchen, an innocent peasant woman, falls prey to the plans of Faust and Mephistopheles. The play's first part is mostly referred to as the scholar's tragedy and Gretchen's tragedy. What attracts more here in this part is the Gretchen tragedy, the loss of innocence of Gretchen, the sexual scenes, primarily after the consummation of a potion by Faust, which turns him into a young man, and indulges in an illicit relationship with Gretchen, culminating into the tragedy of Gretchen.

Part II mostly focuses on Faust's activities after receiving Satan's unimaginable powers. Though it opens immediately after the death of Gretchen, Faust has just woken up from a healing sleep and tries to look directly into the sun, only to be forced to look away, blinded. This blindness becomes a significant motif of the play, caused by individual fantasy.

In this part, we find Faust in the Imperial court, drawing the shades of Helen of Troy. He performs an act of financial wizardry where he invents paper money.

Faust also created a pure spirit called Homunculus. He has telepathic talents, and he uses them to interpret the dream unfolding in the mind of the sleeping Faust. The satanic festival "Walpurgis Nights" is celebrated twice, in Part I and then in Part II. In part II, we find Faust, Homunculus, and Mephistopheles have encounters with some obscure mythical figures. The meeting with Helen and finally the engagement of Faust and Mephistopheles in modern warfare, where they supply the strategic and technological innovations to the emperor to secure the victory for the emperor.

Towards the end of the play, Faust turns into a colonial lord who undertakes civil projects. He builds dikes to hold back the sea and a utopian community of autonomous individuals as a social engineer. But the Mephistophelian forces are not absent; they are at work with piracy, slave labour, and infernal flames. The play concludes with the blinding of Faust by Care and later his death. After his death, the soul of Faust is taken away from the grasp of Mephistopheles and thrown upwards. There Margarete (Gretchen) returns to the service of Faust as a heavenly guide and advocate.

In the story, the individual fantasy is at work, and this is only possible by providing space or control to Satan. This was difficult to achieve in the traditional world, where the will of humans is subservient to God only. Here, we find the control of Mephistopheles on everything and every act of Faust.

When we look at any work of art where individual fantasy is the central theme, this fantasy is always sponsored by rebelliousness from tradition and existing structure. The hero begins with rejections of everything he had, beginning with God, surrendering his will to Satan instead of God, surrounding knowledge to Gothic or magical studies. Creating artificial intelligence, thus imaging himself as a creator rather than a creation, in Faust's context, is the creation of Homunculus. Creation of autonomous humans and eventually the freedom of sexual intimation with the women of one's dream.

Most of the characters who have followed the trait of individual fantasy in Literature have remained unmarried. They have also not indulged in a lasting relationship except for the selfless devotion of a male servant. Therefore, Don Quixote, Faust, and Robinson Crusoe remain distinctive products of western society, embodying the most fundamental values of modern culture, which are a rejection of tradition, God, structure and express their fantasies.

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