

Tatsiana Suprankova

Belarus, Minsk

Belarusian State University

The Belarusian Faust-Concept on the Crossroads of Epochs and Cultures

Abstract

The article is dedicated to the influence of the Faust-concept's topos upon the Belarusian culture. The work accentuates the creations that interpret the Faust-concept's topos, and fill it with distinctive national and universal colour: poems by A. Mickiewicz, stories by J. Barszczewski, poems by Y. Kupala, works by Ul. Karatkievich. The author also considers the impact of the Faust-concept on the European and Belarusian culture of the romanticism and modernism.

Key words: Faust-concept; romanticism; modernism; Belarusian culture and literature.

The Belarusian culture as a part of the European culture has always been open for the intercultural dialogue both with the West and with the East. The reception of the Faust-concept in the Belarusian cultural heritage confirms this. In the XVI century, the folk legend about doctor Faust appears in the German literature and is printed in several editions. The topos of the Faust-concept becomes one of the most popular ones in the western culture. After having gained its final form in the Renaissance epoch, it got spread in many European national literatures (the German folk legend "Historia von D. Johann Fausten", the tragedy by the English playwright

Christopher Marlowe “The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus”; on the territory of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the Polish and Belarusian cultures it is the cycle of legends about Pan Twardowski).

In the Enlightenment period this mythologeme attracted the German sentimentalists, one of the bright representatives of which was J. W. Goethe, who created his “Urfaust” in 1772. But he did not see in it the worthy work, so the great literary artist burnt it, but, as the Russian writer of the XX century M. Bulgakov will write in his Faust-concept “The Master and Margarita”, “the manuscripts do not burn”: after a century, the handwritten copy of the first “Faust” was found. It had been preserved by Luise von Göchhausen, who admired the talent of young Goethe. The edited “Faust”, the first part of it, was published only in 1808. The second one had been being created by the great writer up to his death in 1832. This masterpiece becomes the work of Goethe’s whole life and the literary paradigm, introducing the mythologeme and the philosopheme of Faust-concept into the world literature and culture.

The work by great J. W. Goethe becomes the acme of representing the Faust plot in literature. The great writer created three versions of the work throughout the years of his literary activity: “Urfaust”, the literary “Faust”, known to the public, and, in the co-authorship with the Belarusian composer A. H. Radziwill, – the libretto for the opera “Faust” which enjoyed great popularity in the XIX century. The opera united all the best of the Enlightenment and the romanticism traditions.

“Faust” in music (1808–1833) – the opera by the composer A. H. Radziwill, the libretto to which was written by J. W. Goethe, – in the history of music is referred to as belonging to the period of romanticism. The esthetics of romanticism grew from the depth of the Enlightenment epoch and was its ideological, thematic and genre continuation. The interest to the literary plot of “Faust” by Goethe gave birth to lots of musical interpretations from the moment the work was published – those by Ch. Gounod, L. -H. Berlioz, M.

Glinka, A. Lokshin, M. Mussorgsky and other classics of the world music.

The version by A. H. Radziwill was the first according the time of writing musical work, the result of long years of the composer's and the writer's talents' joined effort, the product of mutual contacts of the cultures. Therefore, the libretto of "Faust" represents the interest as a work of the romanticism drama, as the great philosophic and esthetic embodiment of Goethe's genius. The direction of transformation of certain characters by the author, of changing the accents on them in view of the peculiarity of the libretto genre represents considerable interest. The work is also of great interest, because it sums up the interaction of two cultures (the German and the Belarusian ones) and two epochs (the Enlightenment and the romanticism).

The understanding of the mentality of a different ethnos, the ability to accept and accommodate the experience of a different cultural tradition, to integrate the best achievements of the "own" and the "strange" – all these factors inevitably bring outstanding results. And thus the activity of Prince Antony Henryk Radziwill, the emigrant from the Great Duchy of Lithuania after the third stage of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth separation, became the result of intercultural communication. This story began in 1814, when the two creative geniuses met in Weimar: the poet and the composer, the German and the Litvin, the theoretician of the Weimar classicism and the troubadour of romanticism – Johannes Wolfgang von Goethe and prince Antoni Henryk Radziwill. The work on Faust becomes the most important in the creative activity both for Goethe and for Radziwill.

The epoch coming after Goethe is started by the European romanticism – the literary style, that followed the Enlightenment trends. In the esthetics of the tomanticism, fed from the culture of the Enlightenment and at the same time contesting it, the creative work by Goethe was first of all of great interest. When the second stage of the German romanticism (that of Heidelberg) (Heidelberger

Romantik) is starting to gain its acme, some of the romanticists try to create their own interpretations of the well-known German plot: the romantic Faust (a dramatic fragment) is written by A. von Chamisso in 1803 (still the most fortunate interpretation remains the novelette “Peter Schlemihl”). The folklore collectors Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano included the poem “Doctor Faust” into “The Boy’s Magic Horn” (1806–1808), the further interpretations were represented by the novel “Satan’s Memoirs” (“Memoiren des Satan”) by the famous fairy tales author W. Hauff (1827), drama “Don Juan and Faust” 1828 by Ch.-D. Grabbe. In 1836, the lyric-epic work “Faust” by N. Lenau is published.

The Belarusian romanticists, whether they wrote in Polish or were trying to write in the Belarusian language which was considered to be a language of peasants then, also absorbed the trends of the world literature. Among those writers one cannot omit the outstanding personality of romanticism Adam Mickiewicz, the poet of several nations, however belonging to his native land of Belarus with his whole heart.

As the poet himself wrote, Litva (the north-western part of modern Belarus) was his motherland, and the first capital city of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania Novogrudok (Navahrudak) was his native city. Wilno, the capital city of his time, was the place where he studied. It was there that he met his real friends, founded youth patriotic organizations of Philomats and Philarets together with them, and was arrested, charged and exiled to Russia together with them by the tsarist authorities in 1824. The writer wished to struggle for the best future of his native land not only with his stylus, but having got out of the prison by chance, he was able to carry on the implementing the dreams of his youth only in his creative work. Almost all his friends will perish in tsarist prisons or in exile, and he will be the only to mourn them and their bitter fate for long years given to him in this world.

As a poet, Adam Mickiewicz did not adhere to romanticism outright. Among the writers he admired as a beginning author were

the Enlightenment representatives Voltaire and Schiller. In Mickiewicz's "Ode to Youth" (1820) the critics noticed the echoes of F. Schiller's creative work.

The literary critic B. Stacheev highlights the congeniality of this masterpiece of literature to the poetics of classicism and at the same time the presence of the ideas of a new trend in it: "Even the contemporary poets of Mickiewicz's time noticed the congeniality with those motives of Schiller's creative work which were later taken on by the revolutionarily disposed romanticists (and not only in Poland). In the perception of the author of the "Ode", the reality was a stream of movement, the struggle of good and evil, the pathetic aspiration to the future day of the humanity, when the whole "boulder of creation" will be renewed. The allegoric images of Youth and Age embodied: the first one – the selflessness, the aspiration of young enthusiasts, their brotherhood and unity, the second one – the cowardly selfishness of egoists. The denial of the old world, which was constrained with the "moldy cortex", the appeal "to suppress the violence by violence" and to lead the earth on the new way, the belief in the inevitable victory of the "world of spirit", brought into the world by "love" and "youth", in the appearance of the "sun of the salvation" after the "dawn of freedom" – these are all the motives, introduced by the "Ode" into the Polish poetry" (Стахеев 1989:480).

The collection of poems "Poetry" (1822), and rather the author's introduction to it becomes the manifesto of the Polish and Belarusian romanticism. Adam Mickiewicz considered that the poetry of the romanticism had its source in the history and in the people's culture. Applying the Philomats' and Philarets' interest to folklore (the romanticists of Heidelberg also considered the people's literature to be the source of inspiration), the poet enriches the Polish literary language with the Belarusian dialectic and low-style lexemes and with the folklore motives in the cycle of "Ballads and Romances". The romantic concept of two worlds is expressed already here in the co-existence of the world of people and the world of spirits and

fantastic creatures, which punishes those breaking the laws of morality.

Adam Mickiewicz regards the Universe and the place of a man in it from the point of view of the people's experience, which was reflected in the folk legends, stories, songs and superstitions. This trend can be easily traced also in the dramatic poem "Dziady" ("Forefathers' Eve"). If we consider the history of creating the poem, we shall see, that both for the classic of the German literature J. W. Goethe and for the classic of the Belarusian and Polish literatures A. Mickiewicz the process of creating of "Dziady" became the main work of his life, and this work was not finished as well. Each part of "Dziady" can be regarded as a separate work, although there is a plot line uniting them all. The history of creation and the composition of "Faust" are very similar to this.

The same way as Goethe does, the classic of the Polish and Belarusian literatures Adam Mickiewicz presents the synthesis of various genres and styles in the poem, and that brings "Dziady" closer to the artistic universalism of "Faust". Therefore, the genre of both works can be defined as a dramatic poem.

Both works begin with the prologue, being the dedication to the friends of youth, and that can be also regarded as an analogy within the composition. "Faust" by J. W. Goethe begins with three prologues, each one of them has its own function. «Zueignung» («Dedication») comes as a first one, and it is written with the ottava rima stanzas: *"Again ye come, ye hovering Forms! I find ye, // As early to my clouded sight ye shone! // Shall I attempt, this once, to seize and bind ye? // Still o'er my heart is that illusion thrown? // Ye crowd more near! Then, be the reign assigned ye, // And sway me from your misty, shadowy zone! // My bosom thrills, with youthful passion shaken, // From magic airs that round your march awaken"* (Goethe 2017a).

The creator of the Weimar classicism uses this euphonic and melodic romance stanza in order to show the readers, how dear to his heart are the symbolic polysemic «schwankende Gestalten» («unclear

images»), which remind him his about youth, friends, who understood him well, and the characters of the adolescent “Urfaust”...

For Adam Mickiewicz, the appeal to his friends who died as martyrs is a tribute as well. The Dedication was introduced by the author only to the III part, although all the rest ones had been already written then and had their own introductions. But only here there is a list of people, to whom this part is dedicated: “To the blessed memory of Jan Sobolewski, Cyprian Daszkiewicz, Feliks Kólakowski – my classmates, cellmates and comrades in exile, who were persecuted because of their love to Motherland and died of their longing for Motherland in Archangielsk, Moscow, St.-Petersburg, the martyrs of the national deed – dedicates the author” (Here and elsewhere further the interlinear translation is done by me – T. S.) (Мицкевіч 1999b:8).

The action itself is displayed in the III part in the typical romanticism style with the important method of introducing the concept of two worlds: at first, the Angel is introduced by the author as a character. The Angel protects the Prisoner from the dark forces and thus supports him. As well as Goethe does, Mickiewicz shows the invisible presence of the spiritual world in the life of his characters, especially when they find themselves at the crossroads of their lives and have to take an important decision (the treaty between the God and the Mephistopheles in the Prologue in Heaven, ghosts in other scenes, the finale of Faust). The Faust motive – discontent with the empirical knowledge and the knowledge got from books, the wish to enter the world of spirits and ghosts – is explicitly present in the talks of the prisoners, who are preparing themselves to the death. They clearly feel the presence of the invisible world and as if see this world in the darkness of the prison cell – just the same way as Faust discerned at once not just a dog in the strange poodle, but Mephistopheles, and as Gretchen (Margaret), being in the prison and having acquired the deep spiritual vision, rejects the temptations offered by Mephistopheles and surrenders to the divine justice.

The Faust motives in „Dziady” by Adam Mickiewicz are easily read in the level of ideas and characterization of characters. Separate stories are inserted, which direct the reader right to Goethe’s masterpiece. In part I, in the ballad “The Charmed Youth”, the poet introduces a fantastic episode: the charmed youth, growing into the wall, talks to the knight of Twardów (to Pan Twardowski). Pan Twardowski is the Polish-Belarusian analog of Faust.

The legend about Pan Twardowski appeared in the XVI century, with a certain German influence, when Johann Spies published «Historia von D. Johann Fausten». Polish-Belarusian character however does not fully follow his German prototype. The anonymous publisher of the German legend set a goal for himself – to teach his contemporary people an important idea, that any treaty with the devil will not bring any good, therefore the finale of the work shows the dreadful description of death – not only of physical one, but of spiritual one as well: should Faust wish to choose the right way at the end of his life, all the attempts will turn out to be vain. The finale of the Polish legend gives the sinner a hope for salvation: the prayer to the Virgin Mary saves the godless man Twardowski at the very moment, when the devil wants to take him to the hell.

Mickiewicz plays ironically with the legend about Pan Twardowski, and rather with its finale, in the ballad „Pani Twardowska” written in 1821, almost simultaneously with “Dziady” from Wilno-Kowno. The romanticist author highlights the treaty between Twardowski and Mephistopheles («*I am Mephistopheles*» (Mickiewicz 2017), – the poet calls his devil the way he is called in the text of the people’s legend and in «Faust» by Goethe). According to the treaty, Twardowski will have to give his soul to Mephistopheles after seven years of service of the latter to him. However Twardowski decides to outwit the wicked one and is not going to visit Rome, where the devil is to take him to the hell. And thus Twardowski is completely sure, that nothing wrong can happen to him, until he gets to Rome, and he is by no means trying to get there. The motive of changing of the treaty we see in «Faust» by J.

W. Goethe. But there it works perfectly well without cheating, and Faust is completely honest with Mephistopheles at the beginning, because he is sure in his victory. Goethe departs from the traditional term of the treaty making up twenty four years, therefore the poet does not indicate the time.

Mickiewicz's Mephistopheles manages to trap Twardowski in the inn with the symbolic name "Rome" («*The name of the inn is "Rome"*») (Mickiewicz 2017)). And here the very competition begins which is supposed to show who will outwit whom. The Mickiewicz's romantic character does not want to give up in any case: he demands fulfillment of the tree last wishes, and Mephistopheles cannot refuse, since this clause is present in the contract. The last wish of the smart nobleman is to marry Pani Twardowska, while the husband is going to be in the hell. The main heroine appears at the end, as «*deus ex machina*»: there is no description of this woman, but Mephistopheles disappears forever as soon as he sees the fearsome lady. Mickiewicz humorously replaces the motive the Holy Virgin's patronage, which was present in the legend, with the rescue of the husband by the wife. In Goethe's "Faust" the heavenly patronage and forgiveness of Margaret saves the main character in the finale (this is however only the typological similarity, because the second part of "Faust" was only being finished by Goethe at the time Mickiewicz wrote his ballad).

The ballad „The Charmed Youth” is introduced by Adam Mickiewicz as a song of a youth that became a rock, the Old Man sang it many times with his grandson. Now the grandfather asks the young man to sing this song just by himself. The main plot of this work is formed by the dialogue between the young man growing into the fortress wall, and Pan Twardowski, who is now a complete opposite of the roisterer and drunkard we met in "Pani Twardowska". Here, the character is called "a knight", and he is telling the young man about the battles of Olgierd and Jagiello and answering his questions. Thus we see the Belarusian Faust-Twardowski who got over many hardships and suffered a lot, but wishes to pass the young

man a lot of knowledge. Therefore, it is clear, why the Old Man asks his grandson to sing this song: the young generation should not forget its past in order to be capable to create its future.

There are many features in this small ballad which bring it closer to the motives of “Faust” as well. Twardowski confuses the epochs on purpose, speaking about the grandson of Olgierd Jagiello, who is then, after two hundred years later, “*He is fighting and winning now*” (Мицкевич 2017a:202). Jagiello was not Olgierd’s grandson, but his son. And there were many different rulers two hundred years later in the XVI century (here the intention is rather to mention the offspring of Olgierd and Jagiello). This century is the time of life of Faust and Twardowski, although both authors always very skillfully experiment with the chronotope in their works (Walpurgis Night, the whole second part of “Faust”, the time of the rite on the Forefathers’ Eve, the prisoners’ time in the cells in “Dziady”).

The symbolism of the mirror is present in the works both by Goethe and Mickiewicz. In the moment of his rejuvenation, Faust sees a dim woman’s image in the mirror. As Mephistopheles will joke afterwards, “*Thou’lt find, this drink thy blood compelling, // Each woman beautiful as Helen!*” (Goethe 2017a). The mirror reveals to Faust the secrets of the future, it is the way of self-exploration by the character who was born anew in the Witches’ kitchen. The young man (who can also be identified with the lyrical subject), looking at the mirror, will turn into the wall. The knight Twardowski (, *Who am I? Oh, the whole world, fear me, // My sabre and my word // Of great strength and yet the greater glory, // I am the knight of Twardow!*” (Мицкевич 2017a:202) – this noble title gives Mickiewicz to his character now) wishes to break the spell and has already taken the saber in order to break the mirror, but the young man asks to take the mirror and to give it to him.

The young man hopes, that thus he will be able to break free, but it was not the right time to do so, and he becomes a part of the wall. The symbolism of the wall is also very important for

Mickiewicz. When in Paris, he wrote the poem echoing Horace's «Exegi monumentum...», where the topos of the monument is present. The poet in this poem and in the ballad from “Dziady” (and, as it follows from his “Monument”, with all his creative work!) builds the wall protecting him from the enemies, some kind of a magic fortress. His alter ego – the charmed youth – gets inside it.

The dramatic poem „Dziady” is an outstanding original work, in which Adam Mickiewicz joined the best achievements of the European romantic tradition with the traditions of his native land. The poet starts the creative competition with the genius of the German literature Goethe and gets influenced by different ideas and motives, including the Faustian ones.

The Belarusian writer Jan Barszczewski, who wrote in the Polish language, being the standard literary language then, in contrast to A. H. Radziwill and many other his compatriots, who emigrated after the separation of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, chose the hard fate of the poet of his Motherland. The collection of stories “Nobleman Zawalnia, or Belarus in Fantastic Stories” was published in that very moment, when the chauvinistic policy carried out by the tsarist authorities of the Russian Empire, did not allow even the usage of the word “Belarus”.

Jan Barszczewski manages to glorify the original character and the beauty of his native land and to remind of its glorious past through the system of artistic images. Many of the issues related to the self-determination of the Belarusian people have both the national and international character. Typologically, they are close to the spiritual aspirations of the representatives of the Polish, Russian, German and European romanticism in general. It is possible to draw analogies with the creative work of J. W. Goethe, and first of all with his dramatic poem “Faust”, especially regarding that the figure of Pan Twardowski was popular in people's imagery, and it was it that the famous contemporary to Barszczewski writers Adam Mickiewicz and Tomasz Zan referred to in their creative work.

The most memorable and bright in the collection of stories is the female Mourner's character, which symbolically joins all the stories. The female mourner used to be an important figure in the traditional funeral ceremony of the Belarusians and in other cultures as well, as the morphology of the traditional funerary customs shows.

The well-known ethnographer Yefim Karsky in his comprehensive study „The Belarusians” highlights, that the very custom of mourning is rather ancient and existed on our lands from the pagan times. Further, the author refers to the motive of mourning the dead husbands by Olga and Yaroslavna as to an essential duty of wives. But after that the scholar points out, that there were also professional mourners, who were not the relatives of the deceased and who were invited by them: *“Thanks to their innate talent, these female mourners preserve the traditional style of mourning and partly the contents of the ancient lamentations and pass their knowledge to other female mourners”* (Карский 1916:310). Ye. Karsky analyses the sacred role of the mourner in the funeral as follows: she accepts the inner state of the people that have suffered a loss and renders the manifestations of the family grief, the professional mourner uses special phraseology and thus expresses the feelings of the deceased's relatives, experiences their emotions and expresses the feelings the cannot render.

The character of the Mourner, who is presented as a poor orphan (the motive of her personal loss is thus underlined) is the leitmotif of Jan Barszczewski's “Nobleman Zawalnia, or Belarus in Fantastic Stories”. It is the image of the Martyr Belarus, who is mourning her unwise children and seeks to tell the Sons of Happiness and the Sons of Patience the truth about their land and their fate, but they are blind and deaf, they do not want to see her and to listen to her. This mysterious image reveals itself only to the Son of the Tempest and to the suffering Ghost, who wander around the world seeking for happiness and better life.

The topos of the Mourner is related to Goethe's Ewige Weiblichkeit (Woman eternal), originating from the Jewish and

Christian mysticism. And as Faust is justified for his search for the truth and pursuit of people's happiness by the pleading of the former sinner Margaret, so the Mourner helps those few, who do not ignore the misery of the native land.

Betrayal is the important motive in „Nobleman Zavalnia”: it is presented as relations with the Necromancer, the White Magpie and the contract with the devil. This is especially relevant for the stories “Fire Spirits”, “Twardowski and His Apprentice” and “About the Necromancer and the Dragon, which Hatched from the Egg, Laid by the Cock”. The unfaithful sons of Belarus conclude the contract with the evil forces and thus call the Evil forth to our land. In the story “The Grass-Snake's Crown”, the main characters the gentleman's servant Karp and the hunter Semion conclude the agreement with demons on purpose, in order to make their bread easily. In other stories, the Belarusians become the servants of the White Magpie, and that can be also understood as the contract with the evil forces.

There is a noteworthy description of the Necromancer in the story “About the Necromancer and the Dragon, which Hatched from the Egg, Laid by the Cock”: *“There appeared a strange man in our manor, no one knows where from. I remember his appearance, face and clothes till today: short, thin, always pale, with a big nose, like a beak of birds of pray, the bushy eyebrows. His sight was desperate like that of a madman. His clothes were black and somewhat strange, entirely different from those of priests and gentlemen. No one knew, whether he was a layman or a monk, he talk to the gentleman in an unknown language. Later it turned out, that he was a Necromancer who taught the gentleman to make gold and other satanic skills”* (Баршчэўскі 2017:27). The remarkable detail is, that such characters do not live among the local people. This phenomenon comes from the outside. They are opposed against the regular village people in their appearance, manners and behaviour.

If we recall the main character of the Faust-concept, Mephistopheles, we should note that he is also rather peculiar, and this peculiarity is first of all the outer one (frequently, this character

comes in different appearances, but these metamorphoses are merely the external ones). The implicit metamorphoses happen to those, who trust such characters, as, for instance, Faust does or Barszczewski's characters do. But as a rule, all the contracts with the evil forces have a very tragic end. The fantastic world of Belarusian folk stories and legends, introduced by J. Barszczewski into his stories, is close to the scenes from "Faust" "Witches' Kitchen" and "Walpurgis' Night", which Goethe also wrote basing on the folk stories and popular beliefs.

Jan Barszczewski, considering the problems of national character in his works, managed to gather all the best of the world classics experience, in order to become understandable to his contemporaries who were the primary addressees of his works, and to the world culture. The author of the "fantastic stories" introduced the topos of the Faust-concept, which was always present in the creative works of the romanticists, into his creative work in a very peculiar way.

The XX century which was marked by the change of the new philosophical paradigm and worldview of modernism, started with the unseen before belief in the scientific and technical progress, when the human knowledge reached deep and far in the exploration of the environment and of the profound processes in our mental life. But very soon this optimistic belief will turn to be the incredible pessimism, introduced by the World War I. For the cultural development of the 1900–1910s, the anticipation of the wars and global catastrophes of the new century is characteristic. The beginning of the war in Europe brings about the rise of the new cultural potential and the foundation of new artistic schools. The Belarusian literature develops then in the context of the European one and is closely related to it. It has all the same trends, topics, images, its own worldview and the way of understanding itself in this world, playing with the archetypes, toposes and motives of the previous epochs.

In the beginning of the XX century, when the modernism develops in the European culture, the Belarusian culture is seeking for its identity. Having understood its peculiarity, the important part of which is the use of the native language and reaching for the people's traditions, the literature of the Belarusians, as a part of the culture, aspires both to be national and to stay open to the world. The examples of this are the typological congeniality of the literary works dedicated to the war theme (H. Barbusse, M. Harecki, E. Hemingway, E. M. Remarque), search for new genre forms by the poet and translator M. Bahdanovich, as well as certain analogies in the field of loaning of the toposes, allusions, motives from the creative works by the authors of the world classics, which set the example of form and contents for each writers' generation.

Yanka Kupala, being the talented writer of the epoch and the founder of the new Belarusian literary language, aspires to elevate it to the world rank, to open the Belarusians to the world and to get them acquainted with the world classics. The scholars studying his literary heritage W. Konon, A. Danilchik, W. Charota highlight the typological and contact closeness of Ya. Kupala's work to the literary heritage of the great Italian writer Dante Alighieri. The outstanding reviver of the Belarusian tradition was a great enlightener as well, therefore the works of the genius of the German culture J. W. Goethe were understandable for him, and the scholars I. Naumenko, G. Tychko, A. Burov confirm this.

Both Yanka Kupala and J. W. Goethe are attracted rather by the complexity of the architectonics of the literary work. The artist does not just make the central point of his attention the real human world, but attempts to comprehend the super-reality and to reflect the events which sometimes do not depend on people. Therefore, there is the Universe and the inner world of a man, macrocosm and microcosm, the search for the truth by a man and the general human problems and the attempts to solve them in the centre of his plots. These are the characteristics of his dramatic poems "Eternal Song" and "Dream on

a Barrow”, the significant distinctive feature of which is the synthetic character of the genre.

Just the way Dante in “The Divine Comedy” creates the grandiose image of the Universe, the action in which embraces the whole geocentric picture of the world known at that time and the way Goethe makes us go “*From Heaven, across the World, to Hell!*” (Goethe 2017a) in order to clinch the bet between the God and Mephistopheles in Heaven, and so Kupala, as well, in order to reveal the universal laws of life of the humanity, leads his readers through the world, created with the Belarusian folk legends and inhabited by mermaids, the Black One in “Dream on a Barrow” or by abstract generalized characters (Life, Fate, Trouble etc.) in “The Eternal Song”.

The same way as “Faust” is characterized by the artistic universality, so is the fusion of styles and trends (Neo-romanticism, Expressionism, existential motives), which blend harmonically in dramatic poems, close to the Belarusian poet’s creative work. The characteristic feature for both literary artists is the essential parallel description of the real and of the mythological world (the two worlds concept in the romanticism), when the supernatural forces interfere with the life of the characters. Thus, we can compare the third “Prologue in Heaven” in “Faust” by J. W. Goethe to the first act “Baptism” of “The Eternal Song” by Ya. Kupala.

The superior forces (the God and the Life) consider a person’s position in this world, expressing the hope for his dignity, aspiration to perfection, wisdom and power. At the same time the forces of evil (the personified Fate, Trouble, Famine, Cold, the same way as Mephistopheles) wish to lead the best representatives of the mankind (Faust and the Peasant) through a trial in order to prove the opposite. And having shown such an irrational first stage of the action to the reader, the authors take us to the human world. But the reader should always remember that both the evil and the good forces are constantly present in the lives of Faust, Sam, the Peasant and struggling for their souls.

The same way as Faust, the main character of the poem “Dream on a Barrow” Sam considers the sense of his life, expresses discontent with it. After the key monologue Faust soon meets Mephistopheles, and Sam will see the Black One in his dream, who guards the treasure (the symbol of the heritage, remaining after the ancestors), and does not believe, that a man can find his destiny and become happy. Therefore, Sam goes through numerous trials on the way to his goal: the struggle with the forces of evil, the experience of gaining the knowledge, the fire in the village, the loss of his dearest ones (this motives are present in two parts of “Faust” as well: in the stories with Margaret and Helen of Troy, in the scenes “Walpurgis Night” and “Classical Walpurgis Night”, the fire at the emperor’s palace, the reflections about the ways of progress and the aspiration to it in the final part).

The main characters of Ya. Kupala’s poems Sam and the Peasant, the same way as Faust, and as the biblical Job, begin representing the whole mankind, in order to undergo the trial. However, the attitude of Goethe’s character, expressed in the finale of the poem, in Faust’s monologue, is different: *“Yes, I’ve surrendered to this thought’s insistence, // The last word Wisdom ever has to say: // He only earns his Freedom and Existence, // Who’s forced to win them freshly every day”* (Goethe 2017b).

Conversely, Ya. Kupala’s attitude is rather pessimistic. It is understandable, since he was the writer of a different epoch, when the belief in the human mind clashed over the terrifying examples of use of the products of this mind against the man himself. The poet feels keenly the crisis, which was so well-known to the representatives of the modernistic literature. Therefore, his characters experience tragedies in life and often fail the trial. In contrast to Faust they are more often the defeated ones.

But through the characters of Sam and the Peasant Kupala wants to show the features common to the whole nation of the Belarusians of the beginning of the XX century and common to all mankind problems in general: *“I am tired of sleeping under the ground, // I*

wish to know and to hear: // What is going on in the world? // How do my sons live? // Is there enough bread until the new harvest? // Does the earth bring enough crops? // Or, maybe, they do not see any mercy from the world and from the heaven // As I did not see it then” (Купала 2017:30).

Typologically, the finale of the poem “Dream on the Barrow” is close to the end of the First Part of “Faust”, and that also corresponds to the plot of “Urfaust”: both Faust and Sam undergo numerous sufferings and lose their beloved ones. By the way, Kupala’s character, after his “Walpurgis Night” (the scene “In the Castle Courtyard”), comes back to the real world, where he faces both his own and other people’s troubles. The character of Goethe’s Margaret can be traced in the fate of several characters – that of the Mermaid, the Mad Woman and the Wife. And so the tragedy of Sam ends with the suspense: on the one hand, he stays at life after the trial both in the real and unreal worlds; on the other hand, the things, not without the evil forces’ will, went the way that did not give us any hint about the next choice of the character.

Among the writers of the second half of the XX century, who themselves highlighted the natural impact of J. W. Goethe’s creative work on theirs, one should first of all mention Uladzimir Karatkevich. He was also one of the first critics of the Belarusian translation of “Faust” by Wasil Syomukha. In Karatkevich’s essay “Faust of Ours Now”, which was first published in the fifth volume of “Maladost” journal in 1978 (two years later after the translation had been published), the writer defines the goal of his study as follows: *“this essay is not going to consider how much this thing is worth, but just share some ideas concerning the translation of “Faust”, our Belarusian “Faust”* (Караткевіч 1991:417). Being an excellent connoisseur of the national and world literatures, Karatkevich notes, that it was extremely important for the Belarusian readers to get the translation of the famous masterpiece in their native language.

The Belarusians already knew the Russian translations by M. Cholodkowski and B. Pasternak, which were printed in our printing houses as well. But still the publishing of the world literary masterpiece recreated in the Belarusian language was a matter of great importance, and the following reflections by the writer bear witness to it: *“For many years, I knew, that the man I am speaking today about, had been translating one of the greatest poems on the earth into Belarusian. I knew Wasil Syomukha from long ago, when he was an editor of one of my works and scrupulously tried to improve it. <...> The translation of “Faust” is rather an extremely difficult thing, almost impossible. To go after Goethe would be a very dangerous path. Not everyone can breathe his noble and the high air of mountain peaks.*

And there is one more reason for anxiety. I would take the risk of saying, that translation of such a work indicates the maturity of literature, shows, that its stream is uninterrupted. The literature cannot live the full life, without Shakespeare, Dante, Goethe in its language. We have got the first one. We still have not got the second one. The third one has just appeared.

And here is the translation, I have read it to the last page. I have a sigh of relief: we managed to do it. And I say farewell to all the dreams of my young years to do it myself. The hard work has been done perfectly well, and after that there will be simply no need in all your attempts... (Karatkevich 1991:407). However, not having translated the poem, the writer did something different – namely, created his own, Belarusian Faust, a peculiar and original one.

The classical author of the Belarusian literature Uladzimir Karatkevich in the course of his long and fruitful creative activity worked in different literary genres. He is a fascinating author of novels, a profound lyrical poet, an experimenting playwright. He both wrote the works of his own and assessed the work of other literary artists. As a literary critic, he wrote a number of articles dedicated to the work of Skaryna, Kupala, Kolas, Byron, Goethe etc. He feels the involvement of the Belarusian literature into the world

literary process perfectly well and seeks to breathe the *noble and the sublime* air of Goethe's mountain peaks, to admire the verse sound of the world classic and to make him *ours*. For Karatkevich in his critical works, the latter always means the accurate and thorough translation of the text from the language of its original and the transformation of certain toposes, ideas and motives in his own creative work.

The brightest transformation of the world Faust-concept, including that of Goethe, we can find in "The Legend about the Devil and about Satan's Lawyers" (1961) and in the story "The Boat of Despair" (1968). The main character of the legend goes the whole way long from the devil to a Man, from Mephistopheles to Faust: Rohach – alias Andrei Rohach, alias magnate Andronik Rahinski, alias king Andronik I. Gervasy Vylivakha also has something from both Faust and Mephistopheles.

In the article "Faust of Ours Now" Uladzimir Karatkevich points out the importance of Mephistopheles' character and remarks that Wasil Syomukha managed to recreate this character excellently: *"In general, Mephistopheles is a success of the translator. Like in Goethe's work, one keeps feeling, that Goethe as if admires his character a little. Yes, he did a lot of bad things at the end (after all, he should live up to his reputation), and yes, he is bitter. But in spite of all, he struggles against the God, and this means, that in some things he is close to the personalized man. Impudent, daring, merry, angry... and surprisingly attractive. He is a really ironic, crafty, sophist, cynic – and yet the creature which creates the good. The lord of very strange, but fully natural dialectic: to live in order to negate. The part of the darkness, which gave birth to the light"* (Карацкевіч 1991:419).

It should be pointed out that the main thing Rohach learns despite the wish of Satan and the hell is just the same as the Mephistopheles' evil, from which the good is created. It is him in the legend that brings about the light, turns from demon into a Man, seeks to make the world a better place. Therefore, the author of the

Legend plays so brightly with the contrast of the beginning with its hell and gloomy pictures from the earth, where there is the infernal fire of wars, and of the end, when he describes the heaven on the earth, which can be created by a person, who really cares for his Motherland.

Considering the successes of the Belarusian translation, Karatkevich notes that the character of Mephistopheles is the brightest and the strongest one: *“In fact, he is that very scepticism, the negation of the old, the touchstone of the human thought and the booster of the human progress, and that is why the necessary part of ourselves”* (Караткевіч 1991:411). If we consider the culmination point of “The Boat of Despair”, we shall see that thanks to this very principle Gervasy Vylivakha becomes a winner over the Death: *“Do unexpected things, do the unusual things, do them the way no one does – and then you will win. Even if you are weak, as a gnat in the middle of hostile sea. Because only fools always think according to the common sense rules. Because a man is only then a man, when he dares to break the dull predestination and does not care about the “eternal” law”* (Караткевіч 2017).

The theme of double-gangers plays an important part in the legend and was inspired by the romanticism. This motive is relevant not only for the main character, but also for the woman he loves: Dubrawka, alias Queen Agatha, – *“the hand of the light and the hammer in darkness, the double-gangers in their human embodiments”* (Караткевіч 2013:71). When Gervasy encounters his beloved Birch Tree in “The Boat of Despair”, her image seems to be very well known to him.

Direct allusions to J. W. Goethe’s “Faust” are present in the description of the Satan’s study in the legend. They learn this work at the universities of hell as well, and the *“positive image of Mephistopheles is represented there in a wrong way”* (Караткевіч 2013:80). The concept of death and resurrection, which is a central one for Goethe, is present in Karatkevich’s work as well. Rohach

personifies into a human, Gervasy gets to the kingdom of death and then comes back to the earth (paradise) with his beloved woman.

The author also plays with the symbolism of the numbers. The main character of “The Boat of Despair” Gervasy is thirty two years old. According to the Bible, this is the age of the spiritual maturity of the man, the age of achievement the important results in life. That is why, Goethe leads his Faust through the rejuvenation – in order to turn him from the man who is sixty years old into a person who is thirty years old, so that he could accomplish and understand a lot of things. At the end of the trial Vylivakha gets forty more years of life (it is also the sacral number), similarly as Faust does. Another remarkable moment is that both Goethe and Karatkevich place the action in the XVI century, the Renaissance epoch, when the world stood at the dawn of the New Age.

Thus the epoch of romanticism facilitated the arrival of the Faust-concept topos into the Belarusian literature and encouraged the cross-cultural dialogue. For the composer Antoni Henryk Radziwill this was the collaboration with J. W. Goethe, for Adam Mickiewicz. Tomasz Zan and Jan Barszczewski – the interpretation of stories about Polish-Belarusian Faust-Twardowski. The next stage of interest to the Faust-concept was modernism, when the motives of the Faust-concept turned to be to be typologically close to the creator of the modern Belarusian language and the Belarusian mythology, to the representative of the national revival Ya. Kupala. In the second half of the XX century, after W. Syomukha translated “Faust” into the Belarusian language, Uladzimir Karatkevich pointed out the importance of this event for the national literature and presented the reception of the Faust theme in his works. The topos of the Faust-concept with its unique national and international connotations managed to introduce new form and new motives into the creative activity of our contemporaries and to introduce the Belarusian literature into the world literary process.

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