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Faust's Wanderings

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Abstract

The figure of Faust, along with the motif of the desire for knowledge, self-knowledge and eternal youth, and finally confrontation with evil personified by Satan, belongs to the archetypes of European culture. The author traces Faust's journey from the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries, when he emerged as a historical figure and became the hero of folk legend, to the present day. At the end of the 16th century, the Frankfurt printer Johann Spiess dedicated a book to him, which became extremely popular. Then Christopher Marlowe and Johann Wolfgang Goethe wrote about him, and finally Thomas Mann. Jackiewicz describes the transformations of this figure in the context of historical and cultural conditions. He is also interested in how Faust was adapted to film art, first in the silent era (by Louis Lumière, Georges Méliès and Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau), and to the researcher's contemporary times. He devotes a lot of space to the analysis of René Clair's film *Beauty of the Devil* (*La beauté du diable*, 1950). He compares Clair's vision with literary prototypes, but above all, he places him in the field of the French humanistic tradition, as well as in relation to Jean Marcenac's novella. **(Non-reviewed material; originally published in *Kwartalnik Filmowy* 1953, no. 10, pp. 40-65).**

Every man should write "Faust"

H. Heine

I

He lived at the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries. His name was Johann Faust. And it is fairly irrelevant whether he was really an eminent physician and daring naturalist or just a charlatan wandering through the cities of Germany during the turbulent era of the Reformation and the Great Peasants' War. What matters is the legend and memory of the people for whom he became the epitome of rebellion and knowledge. The knowledge of the laws forbidden by the medieval God and the clergy. It is significant that the burgher, fairground, and plebeian legend found its hero in him.

In 1587, i.e., seventy years after Luther nailed his 95 theses on the door of the church in Wittenberg and sixty-two years after the bloody crushing of the peasant revolt at the time of intensifying feudal reaction – a certain Johann Spies, a Frankfurt printer, publishes a book about Doctor Faust. A kind-hearted printer who wishes to serve most loyally the appeased Protestantism, but at the same time sees the publication of a book about Faust as a lucrative business venture – he is no longer dealing with a doctor or charlatan but with a powerful sorcerer who has taken possession of ancient manuscripts, and through the power of magic was able to bring Helen, the most beautiful woman of Hellada, out of oblivion. Now it is not enough to fight man, the devil himself must be fought, for only by selling one's soul to the prince of Hell could the German doctor wield such power over nature.

However, let us remember that, admittedly, plebeian Protestantism has been for several decades in the service of the princes, who, through Luther, took over the estates of the church, that the German peasantry fell silent for several decades more, that Thomas Müntzer, who preached equality between people, was executed a long time ago. But faith in the power of reason and criticism has already been awakened in the people, man has challenged the medieval God and overthrown him; although he is still unable to overthrow the feudal lords, he has discovered that they are not untouchable.

And so the work of a Frankfurt printer became the most popular book of the late 16th century. The deeds of Doctor Faust do not deter readers; on the contrary, they increasingly popularise his name. And the devil? The people of the Reformation were not so very afraid of the devil, especially the wise devil.

In 1599, Heinrich Widmann followed Spies's example and deployed against Faust an arsenal of quotations from the Bible and the writings of the Church Fathers. Again – achieving the opposite effect. Books and re-workings of books proliferate and, instead of killing the legend, carry it into the hands of the juvenile Goethe.

Meanwhile, Faust wanders not only through the centuries. In Poland, a shred of legend brought to life Pan Twardowski and the Vistula devil – Boruta. Whereas in England, Faust experienced his first artistic incarnation in the work of Christopher Marlowe.

This is no coincidence. The British Isles lived through the 16th century no less turbulently than Germany. England, under the influence of

Protestantism, breaks with Rome, the national spirit matures, the ideas of humanism take hold in the universities, English merchants embark on half-armed, half-trading distant expeditions; the English defeat the Spanish Armada in 1588, and their attempts to colonise the coast of America begin. The prosperity and importance of the Third Estate grows.

Marlowe, the son of a Canterbury cobbler, creates in this atmosphere. In the 1580s, the Admiral's Men stages his drama *Tamburlaine the Great*. The figure of the ruler bears little resemblance to the virtuous and ascetic heroes of the Middle Ages. Tamburlaine is made to measure for the Renaissance, he has something in common with Machiavelli's *The Prince*. Only *The Prince* was set within the narrow confines of Italian states and *Tamburlaine the Great* within the perspective of an emerging empire. Marlowe's hero not only knocks the crowns off the heads of the minor rulers but challenges the gods and death. *The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus* is born at this temperature. Faust, breaking with theology and devoting himself to magic, cries out:

*A sound magician is a demi-god;
Here tire, my brains, to get a diety!*¹

He continues:

*Shall I make spirits fetch me what I please,
Resolve me of all ambiguities,
Perform what desperate enterprise I will?
I'll have them fly to India for gold,
Ransack the ocean for orient pearl,
And search all corners of the new-found world
For pleasant fruits and princely delicates;
I'll have them read me strange philosophy
And tell the secrets of all foreign kings;
I'll have them wall all Germany with brass
And make swift Rhine circle fair Wittenberg;
I'll have them fill the public schools with silk
Wherewith the students shall be bravely clad.*²

There is a piece of history in these words: the passion for trade and travel of the young English bourgeoisie, for a while still an optimistic idea of enlightened absolutism and the Renaissance-plebeian desire for use.

Having sold his soul to the devil, Marlowe's Faust is not yet able to realise his dreams. He uses his sorcerous power for fairground tricks and to play pranks on the pope. Marlowe's Mephistopheles is admittedly a tragic figure, more sombre than Goethe's, but his devilish cunning has emerged from the juggling booths of the Middle Ages. Marlowe himself doesn't quite know what to do with the wealth of resources his Faust has commandeered. There is also a second reason for this mundane discharge of excessive ambition: the pressure of medieval fears. Marlowe knows that not only God but he himself, as the author, must condemn Faust and, at the end of the tragedy, put such words in his mouth:

*For the vain pleasure of four-and-twenty years
hath Faustus lost eternal joy and felicity.³*

Condemnation did not help. Had it not been for the poet's untimely death, he would have been forced to stand before the Privy Council for spreading atheism.

For Marlowe – even though he provided an account of the hero's other-worldly journeys in favour of elaborate scenes of drollery, even though he cast Faust down into hell – expressed in his tragedy the rebellion that was bubbling in Europe at the time. The rebellion was expressed in Faust's last great monologue so vividly that it is the 'negative' hero – rather than God who condemned him – who generates sympathy and solidarity in the tragedy's audience. Although Faust does not accuse God but himself, although he pleads for even one more day of life for repentance, his despair and fear are so poignantly human, and God is so statuesque and alien in His silence, that the accusation is thrown precisely at God, not in the name of dogmatics, not even in the name of religion, but in the name of one suffering man *who wanted to know and to act*.

Marlowe's *Faust* is very earthly not only in the essential conception of the work, but also in the seeds scattered here and there. Magic demands knowledge of foreign languages and minerals, magic will facilitate the draining of the sea, the plucking of treasures from the earth; or, in the words of Mephistopheles:

*But think'st thou heaven is such a glorious thing?
I tell thee, Faustus, it is not half so fair
As thou or any man that breathes on earth.⁴*

Heaven is alien, distant and elusive. In the clash between the pope and the emperor, Faust sides with the emperor. Mephistopheles conjures up Helen of Troy and Faust finds a moment of happiness with her in the Greek tale.

Many of these elements will pass two centuries later into Goethe's work. Again, from the fairs, like the legend itself, Marlowe's drama – a favourite spectacle of the German plebs for centuries – will appeal to the youthful poet; from the yellowed pages of the fair stall literature, Goethe will read out a version of the legend. But the God of the Middle Ages will already have been appeased. The most secular of all previous incarnations of the rebellious doctor will find divine understanding. Goethe's God will have been raised on the writings of Voltaire and Lessing, secularised by the French Revolution, and He will be the God of developing European capitalism and socialist utopia. Until He disappears completely in our contemporary film version of *Faust*.

II

A second, much more powerful incarnation of Faust emerges at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries.

Germany is fragmented into a series of states run by absolute rulers. The revolutionary tensions of the Reformation period and beyond did not allow the feudal lords to create a state with centralist power, for it was necessary to break the

forces of the bourgeoisie and peasantry across the land. Therefore, German capitalism is born under more difficult conditions than in France or England. Goethe, while serving as minister of the duchy of Weimar, sets up quarries. But his plans for the economic transformation of the country collide with the interests of the feudal lords and are not realised. Neither the bourgeoisie nor the peasantry, ruined by the Thirty Years' War, have the strength to take the affairs of the state into their own hands. Just across the border, in France, a revolution breaks out. The German rulers stand at the centre of European reaction. In historically backward Germany, the tradition of the Reformation and peasant revolt are still relevant.

The youthful Goethe turns to the writings of medieval alchemists, seeking in them a concise understanding of life in its diversity. Influenced by the heretics of old, he assimilates the idea that evil must exist in order for good to solidify all the more strongly. This lies at the heart of the *Faust* conception: the critical thought of a young capitalism, still optimistic, yet unable to pass quietly by the disasters it has already carried within itself.

The *Sturm und Drang* poetry is born in Strasbourg. Young artists pick up Lessing's calls for battle against the drama of the three unities and learn Shakespearean free drama form. Is this just about poetics? The ideas of the modern Germans, Goethe included, dismantle the old order, if only in the field of poetics. Herder, demanding a national art, calls for complete freedom in art. The *Sturm und Drang* poets seek powerful human creations. They are creating them in excess for the still passive popular masses in Germany. But there is France just beyond Strasbourg.

Goethe takes a negative view of the French Revolution; he is too much of a German of the time and he is a minister to Charles Augustus. But *with his sharp and receptive mind, Goethe embraced the idea of utopian socialism born during the revolution – that higher aspiration of plebeian thought participating in the ideological struggle of the era and, as we shall see, assigned it an honourable place in the philosophical conception of "Faust."*⁵

The idea of *Faust* absorbs the previous incarnations of the legend with its medieval-renaissance atmosphere, multiplying it by the poet's entire life and difficult era.

Like the explorations of the alchemists and the heretical thought of Paracelsus or Müntzer, the idea of the Faustian tale fits the time of the creator of *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*. The doctor's brilliance, his bold rebellion, finds an ally in the ideas of the Age of Enlightenment, in the boiling point of the *Sturm und Drang* poetry, perhaps also in the Napoleonic legend. The wisdom and the cool, somewhat picaresque colour of Mephistopheles's conception adheres to the evil indispensable to the creation of good in the aforementioned critical thought of early capitalism.⁶

But Goethe's *Faust* also absorbs the poet's life experience, his lagging renaissance inclination, his search for a world view, particularly in relation to the developing capitalism, his search for ways out, a philosophical interpretation of the purpose of human life in general, and of the life currently lived in the times that are forming before Goethe's eyes.

To absorb all of this, *Faust* had to become a multi-layered work, just as multi-layered as any epoch is, especially one as groundbreaking as the beginning of the last century.

And here, the scheme of the old legend bears this weight; it bears it, for it encompasses the central issues of human life: *r e a s o n* and *d e e d*. At the same time, Goethe strives to reconcile what Marlowe's legend could not reconcile. The Faust of the author of *Tamburlaine*, created in the childhood years of a bourgeois world, could not transfer his knowledge into the realm of action. Goethe, older historically and informed by knowledge and experience, made use of deed.

Marietta Shaginyan, in her study on Goethe,⁷ emphasises the 'life-like' nature of *Faust*, the fact that the reader, after putting the book down, has the feeling of having passed a great stretch of time with the protagonist, of having passed a whole life. Not just life, one must add, but the history of humanity from the beginning to Goethe's death, or, in other words, one life that absorbed the contemporary as well as nascent history.

III

The duality of Faust's internal attitude is already stated in Marlowe's drama. He is torn between heaven and earth, between the desire to indulge and the desire for power, and through that power to make humanity happy, and the fear of God's wrath. Marlowe's Faust overcomes his fear and, having accomplished nothing, finally brings disaster upon himself. The attitude of Goethe's Faust is more secular. Faust is not afraid of knowing, but the higher knowledge in his initial understanding seems incompatible with the 'spirit of the earth,' with living and acting fully:

*Two souls live in me, alas,
Irreconcilable with one another.
One, lusting for the world with all its might,
Grapples it close, greedy of all its pleasures,
The other rises up, up from the dirt,
Up to the blest fields where dwell our great forbears.*⁸

However, Goethe's Faust goes on to use his high-minded longings for earthly matters, and Goethe's God, unlike Marlowe's God, will not condemn him for this; on the contrary – He will save him from the hands of Mephistopheles. The divine element does not play as central a role in Goethe's tragedy as it does in Marlowe's; it is limited to the framework of the piece. The Easter bells that lead Faust out of his cell and tell him to abandon his suicidal thoughts are the call not of the church but of the festive street. Significantly, this is the first rapture of life:

*And look there, how the eager crowd
Scatters through the fields and gardens,
How over the river's length and breadth
Skiffs and sculls are busily darting.*

*And that last boat, packed near to sinking,
 Already's pulled a good ways off.
 Even from distant mountain slopes
 Bright coloured clothes wink back at us.
 Now I can hear it, the village commotion,
 Out here, you can tell, is the people's true heaven,
 Young and old crying exultingly –
 Here I am human, here I can be free!⁹*

Mephistopheles appears here as the negation of all life but as a constantly losing negation:

*...this great shambling world,
 In spite of how I exert myself against it,
 Phlegmatically endures my every onset...¹⁰*

Goethe's Faust, like Marlowe's, signs the pact without reluctance. Yet, whereas in Marlowe's drama, he experiences frequent hesitations afterward, in Goethe's, he actually seeks no retreat. He is much bolder and much more aware of his desires. Goethe's Faust is not afraid of the desire to indulge and does not consider it a sin. Besides, he is more sophisticated and spiritually rich, experiencing various phases of desire. In getting closer to, as Lukács calls it, the 'small world,' the world of personal affairs, he is helped by the author himself introducing the motif of regaining youth. Owing to this, the character becomes more human and can live his whole life according to its minor and high laws. But the 'great world' dominates. And where it begins, Mephistopheles loses his destructive power. As it is with the case of Margaret. Mephistopheles is able to assist Faust in seducing the girl, in the murder of her brother Valentin, but he has no power over her, over her simple, naïve chastity, nor is he able to elicit from Faust's lips, in a circle of sensual desire, the cry of happiness he has waited for since the moment Faust signed the pact.

Marietta Shaginyan rightly points out that virtually all the sorcery of the hell's envoy in relation to Faust's fate is fictional. Mephistopheles can distill wine from a table, he can pass to the clerks the idea of issuing paper money; but in the spiritual duel with Faust, he cannot seize the initiative. He tried to do so with Margaret, yet Faust evaded him. Now, it is Faust who holds the initiative. Love for Helen of Troy, the birth of Helen out of the ancient chaos, pushes Mephistopheles into the background. Faust's merging with the shadow of a Greek myth, his entry into a world of timelessness and abstract beauty, takes place beyond Mephistopheles. He can only organise this or that in accordance with Faust's will.

Only in the war waged with the uprising against the emperor does he have more to say. Yet, again, in accordance with Faust's wishes.

In his capitalist and colonizing activities, Mephistopheles remains relatively the most active:

*Very well our venture went.
 Let him approve and we're content.*

*With only two ships we sailed forth,
 Now twenty scrape against the wharf.
 The story of our deeds is told
 By what comes pouring from the hold.
 Far out at sea your soul is free,
 Who stops to think there, uselessly?
 A ship is caught as you catch fish,
 What's called for's action, spirit, dash,
 And when you've bagged a catch of three,
 You grapple a fourth presently;
 As for the fifth one – well, good night!
 When yours the power, yours the right,
 No questions asked, what counts is what
 You're able to draw in your net.
 If I know maritime affairs,
 What they consist of, first, are wars,
 Then trade, and lastly piracy:
 Inseparable trinity.¹¹*

In this section, Mephistopheles walks hand in hand with Faust and sometimes obeys his orders too zealously, as in the case of the destruction of Philemon and Baucis's cottage. But Faust does not resent him for this, he looks out for further goals that Mephistopheles does not expect. Faust, just as he had to go astray on the territory of sensual love and crime in order to gain the experience and, through these zigzags, arrive at a higher love, he now has to pass through a phase of capitalist and colonising cruelty and ruthlessness in order to see the prospect of new forms of organisation of humanity's life.

Mephistopheles loses because the spirit of evil cannot penetrate the regions of the righteous world. But this just world is born in the land that Faustus has ripped out from the sea with the help of Mephistopheles. It is a real land and a real vision of the future because it is born on the land. On the drained land

*...It would open up to millions space
 In which to work, possess a dwelling place;
 If not entirely safe, yet safe enough
 For men to lead a free and active life.
 Fields green and fruitful! Men and beasts at ease
 Upon this newest earth, a second paradise,
 Whose shelter is the massive looming barrier
 A bold, industrious people raised by their hard labor...¹²*

This utopian vision woven into the Faustian legend, crowning its incarnation born in the period of young capitalism, is the high point of the described wanderings.

Their further realisations will not go beyond the realm of the bourgeois world, and this world will grow old. There will be permanent tones of rebellion and criticism in it, but no longer fully expressed. They will even lack that dras-

tic Faustian-Mephistophelean summons that Goethe posed at the beginning of the utopian vision:

*To round up more and more construction gangs.
Encourage them with smiles, drive them with curses,
Push them, press them, promise them higher wages.
Daily let me have a full report.*¹³

The further incarnations of the legend will only be a negation.

IV

In bourgeois Germany, Faust's fate found its closure in the work of Thomas Mann. His novel, *Doctor Faustus*, published almost simultaneously with the fall of Hitler, took up the Mephistophelean motif. The modern Doctor Faustus, appearing in the novel as a German musician Leverkühn, represents *the genius of coldness and loneliness who desperately seeks a way into the warmth of other people's souls until he gives himself over to the devil.*¹⁴

*When Goethe's "Faust" drew the visions of a free nation from the 'big, wide world,' it was only a utopia at the time – writes György Lukács. It did, however, have a real basis in historical reality as the entire classical German literature and philosophy, from Lessing to Heine, heralded the democratic revolution of 1848. In contrast, Thomas Mann's Faustian novel, represents the conclusion, the epilogue of the whole period after 1848.*¹⁵

The history of imperialist and, later, Nazi Germany left no room for an optimistic version of the legend to be written into its framework. The spirit of cynicism and crime, represented by Goethe's Mephistopheles, took over the world surrounding Leverkühn, had him cut off from the rest of the people in his solitary studio. But the musician's studio became again a condensation of surrounding coldness and disbelief. Goethe's Faust drew strength from himself and the youth of the era. Leverkühn lacked these powers. Although, as in Goethe's Faust, he journeys through the centuries looking for allies, he cannot, after all, embody the past, former ideals in his present. Goethe's Faust, rich in the experience of the past, found in himself and in his era their counterparts. Mann's Faust, in the non-human world of the declining German bourgeoisie and Nazism, did not find these counterparts. So, he surrendered his genius to the anti-human products of formalism. Mephistopheles has defeated man.

Mann's novel is a protest but a powerless one.

V

Since its early days, film art has been interested in the Faustian legend. In 1896, Louis Lumière made a two-part film entitled *Faust*. He was followed by Georges Méliès, who drew on the story of Faust three times. His *Faust and Marguerite* was made in 1897; in 1904, *The Damnation of Faust* and, a year later, his most mature work, *The Merry Frolics of Satan*. Lumière's endeavour, as Méliès's first two films, were more technical experiments. It was only *The Merry Frolics of Satan* from

1905 that was a more complete work, based on the libretto of Gounod's opera, similar, in fact, to Goethe's idea from the first part of *Faust*. *The Damnation of Faust*, whose origins are to be found in Berlioz's symphonic panorama, contains more elements from Marlowe than from Goethe.

Albert Smith, the English film pioneer, also reached for the Faustian theme in 1898, as did American film pioneers. There are records stating that Thomas A. Edison included Gounod's opera in a series of filmed operas.

The first "sound" film based on the opera was produced by Léon Gaumont in France around 1906. A second film of this type was made in Germany in 1910 by Oskar Messter. Here, Margaret was played by the excellent Henny Porten, while Faust was probably played by her father. The running of the film tape was synchronised with the running of the gramophone record with the recorded vocals of Enrico Caruso and Emmy Destinn.

In 1911, Émile Cohl, a pioneer of cartoon and puppet films, made a puppet film entitled *Faust*.

In the silent cinema period, the Faustian legend experienced its apogee in Friedrich W. Murnau's production in 1925-26 (the script was written by the playwright Hans Kayser with subtitles by Gerhardt Hauptmann). Murnau's *Faust* was intended to be the cinematic equivalent of Goethe's work. But, as screenwriter Kayser states, a film devoid of words would be incomprehensible, so it was necessary to draw on other sources and old motifs of the legend and thus to depart from Goethe here and there.¹⁶

Murnau's film covers the story of Faust as told in the first part of Goethe's masterpiece. Only the motif of the protagonist's assumption was taken from part II.

The first activities undertaken by Faust in Murnau's realisation are very concrete. Faust calls on the forces of hell to help him fight the spreading plague. But he signs the pact only to regain his youth and enjoy the charms of the world. Unfortunately, from then on, the aspect of enjoyment completely drowns out the protagonist's noble humanistic and humanitarian aspirations. The film's apotheosis of Faust is of a rather banal nature as Margaret, seduced by him, carries him with her to heaven at the moment of her death, and Mephistopheles dies at the hands of Cherubino. The film did not take into account Faust's work for the good of humanity, and although the scriptwriter, citing the sources on which he based the script, does not mention Gounod's opera, the film is closer to the opera than to Goethe's work.

VI

And here we are in our years, the post-war years. In the years of the 'Cold War,' in the time of the atomic bomb and the threat of a new war. At a time when the progressive forces of Western Europe are once again at a crossroads. The legend, loyal to struggling humanity, takes on a new artistic shape: that of film in the age of the radio and the splitting of the atom.

René Clair's film *Beauty and the Devil* is no less characteristic than Marlowe's or Goethe's drama; it is also a reflection of a historical moment with an adjustment made by the political consciousness and individuality of the filmmaker.



Beauty and the Devil, dir. René Clair (1950)

Since we are interested here not only in the philosophical value of the work but also in the broader question of how a new, not-so-long-ago fairground art can realise, within its means, one of the central motifs of world literature, we will devote more time to the film version than to the previously analysed literary works.

VII

René Clair's films make up a significant chunk of cinematic history, be it silent or sound films, like zigzags of art looking for means of expression, its own dramaturgy, and its own vision of the world. René Clair's filmography includes the surrealist *Entr'acte* and the Apache-sentimental *Under the Roofs of Paris*, the optimistic *The Million*, and finally, the fake, Hollywood-esque *The Flames of New Orleans* and, following his own good tradition, the moody and warm *Silence is Golden*. And along the way, a search for a realistic view of man, a picture of the French street and the French people.

*This is certainly not the way we would look at cities and life, writes Jean Marcenac, if it weren't for Clair's films shining with all the brilliance of his name and which, in a way so unusual, so paradoxical, suddenly allow us to see wonder and poetry in the full light of the sun. For there is nothing easier than to show the mystery hidden in the near darkness of old attics and junk rooms. And in all of René Clair's films, from "Entr'acte" to "Bastille Day," I see a poetry that owes nothing to the ageing charm of the night; these films put to the test the durability of poetic elements. Poets do the same with their works, exposing them to the broad winds of reality, to the true, bright, rational light of the sun. René Clair is a man who does not cast the shadows, he is one of the sunniest spirits of our time.*¹⁷

Another critic, Roger Regent, characterises Clair's creative approach in the following way: *He is the direct heir of the great classical writers who only had the word as a means of expression at their disposal. All of René Clair's art has set itself the objective of using the same language to carry their thought further but with the means of expression of the twentieth century.*¹⁸

What made this sunny artist reach for a legend where there is indeed so much darkness?

Here is a statement from Clair himself: *When I started thinking about "Faust," my first intention was to create what musicians call 'variations' on the theme in a more or less arbitrary way. A little later, while working with Armand Salacrou, who agreed to join me on this adventurous journey, I noticed that a similar theme does not subject itself to our wishes and eventually imposes its own style on all those who, oblivious of the risk, dare to take it up. He goes on: A character like Faust takes on a special colour in the context of our times. The powerful current of intellectual activity, which drove the alchemists to search for the philosopher's stone and the secrets of matter, has survived unabated until the age of atomic discoveries. Our contemporaries likewise enjoy the privilege of participating in a strange spectacle where mankind, having sold out its soul to Knowledge, wishes to prevent the condemnation of the world towards which it is pushed by its own discoveries. But who would not like to believe that the trickery of Hell can be overcome, that the Devil is not as strong as he seems, that sometimes his weapons turn against him, and that he can disappear, ridiculous and defeated, in a great plume of flame and smoke!*¹⁹

Clair, in press interviews, made it clear that his film would have *nothing in common with Goethe's "Faust"*²⁰ and that he wanted to bring out of the German legend *the Latin element*.²¹

The film's credits read: *According to the legend of Faust – a man who sold his soul to the devil*.²²

To which devil?

Clair makes it clear that in his work, Mephistopheles is a part of Faust. *At one point, there are two Fausts on the screen, and one of them is the devil*.²³ In this way, the film focuses on the inner contradiction taking place in Faust's soul, hardly spreading it to the world surrounding the protagonist.

In Goethe's work, Mephistopheles transcends Faust, just as Faust himself does at one point (if not quite in the episode with Margaret, then certainly in the later parts), representing not only himself but the path of humanity and historical epochs. In film, the art of the moving photographic image, Faust is still a defined individual, a unit – and only here and there does he briefly become a clear symbol while still retaining his own profile.

The fantasy in the film also appears to be more modest, beginning with Mephistopheles, who appears in the guise of the old Faust, up to the complete elimination of God, witches, devils and angels. Clair, in the already quoted conversation with Marcenac, explains his attitude towards fantasy on screen. He is opposed to unreal creatures in film, where photography conflicts with the far-reaching conventionality that we acknowledge without objection in theatre or cartoon film.

In Clair's film, every frame is, in this sense, realistic. At the beginning, we hear the voice of Mephistopheles-the ghost. But the ghost is not on the screen. When he does appear, he has the appearance of a student or Faust. Faust regains his youth, passing from one real character to another. When Mephistopheles asks Lucifer for advice, we hear only Mephistopheles's voice, who appears in the form of the old Faust; the gold transforms into sand: on the screen we see real gold and real sand. The storm destroys Mephistopheles's work. It is, visually and acoustically speaking, an ordinary storm we know from our own experience.

As for the dramatic structure, Clair introduces a bold innovation. Faust, unlike in the work of Marlowe or Goethe, sells his soul with great difficulty. At first, Mephistopheles gives him youth and power on credit. This is because Clair is of the opinion that in both dramas, signing the pact too quickly relieves dramatic tension. What he forgets, however, is that the viewer is kept further in suspense, waiting for the final outcome of the pact.

Clair's innovation in relation to Marlowe's and Goethe's dramas is also the restriction of the setting to a small Italian principality. It seems paradoxical: while in Marlowe's and especially Goethe's play, one senses at almost every step the author's struggle with the limited capacity of the theatre stage, and finally, in Goethe's, the author's resignation, mainly in the second part of "Faust," from the drama's stage character, the film makes almost no use of its spatial possibilities. The reason for this lies in the above-mentioned individualisation of Faust's case in the film, in Clair's resignation from Goethe's broad representativeness of the hero. Goethe's drama, as far as the issue of space is concerned, cries out for film. In contrast, the film, in the sense of taking advantage of the changing locations of the action, could easily fit on stage.

In Clair's work, we also notice a significant shift in time: from the Renaissance to the first half of the 19th century. This shift was caused by the film's special emphasis on scientific discoveries and their consequences for humanity. The first half of the last century is quite characteristic of this issue and is more closely linked to our contemporary times than the Renaissance.

It is time to move on to a detailed analysis. Since the Polish viewer is unfamiliar with the film, I will include content-related explanations in the analysis in addition to ideological and aesthetic aspects.

VIII

The beginning of the film coincides, in terms of the setting of the problem, with the dramas discussed. Faust, an eminent scientist, has a sense of the abject failure of his work to date. In a moment of weakness, Mephistopheles appears and offers his services to the scholar. In the film, the moment of weakness is linked with the 50th anniversary of Faust's work at the University. Faust makes an examination of his conscience, looking back on all his scholarly activity. The introduction of the jubilee to the film and the rector's laudatory speech highlight the existing contrast between the internal state of the scholar and the external brilliance of his name. This aspect has been presented by Clair observably, therefore more strongly, than by Marlowe and Goethe.

Clair strives for a far-reaching condensation of the material and, from the beginning, avoiding long stage dialogues, carefully works out episodes, individuates and contrasts characters with each other, seeks variety in the forms of narration. This can be seen in the scene of temptation. Mephistopheles' voice deepens Faust's doubt, the mood full of tension and solemnity. Suddenly, Antoine, the professor's servant, appears in the studio. An amusing misunderstanding ensues. When Faust replies to Mephistopheles offering his services: *It is not yet time*, Antoine, who cannot hear the devil's voice, assures him: *But yes, sir, it is time. Dinner is served*. Faust, brought back to reality, replies that he is not hungry. And he hears the devil's voice again: *You are hungry for knowledge, are you not, my good-hearted Faust!*²⁴

This comedic interjection opens a series of such interjections, and Clair's discreet, clever humour, well known to us from his other films, spreads not only to the respective moments but also to the characters. Faust himself, who is taken absolutely seriously throughout the scene in question, shown in a dramatic struggle with the tempter and himself, at the moment when he refuses to sign the pact with Mephistopheles, hears the cry of the devil, who has taken on Faust's own form: *Oh! You feel that pain in your leg! – and he explains: It's my gout. Whenever a storm is brewing...*²⁵

These moments contrast with the gravity of the situation, dilute the tension, but do not reduce it; they simply make the situation more real, individualising Faust as a flesh-and-blood man. Clair and co-writer Armand Salacrou place great emphasis on the character's *c o r p o r e a l i t y*. While Goethe, giving Faust his youth, used it mainly in the thread related to Margaret, Clair notes all, even the physiological effects of regaining youth. On the screen, we can see how the old Faust, having assumed the form of a young man, stretches his bent legs

with surprise, takes off his spectacles, which are now getting in his way, runs up and down the stairs a few times, enjoying his muscular fitness, gazes with delight at his reflection in the pond, feeling the hunger he has not felt for years.

The rejuvenated Faust retains his old knowledge and talent, but a youthful desire to use life drowns out those aspects. In Goethe's drama, it happens fairly similarly at the beginning, but in time, thought and reason will take over in Faust, whereas in Clair's film, the emotional aspect will dominate until the end.

Clair's Faust obtains his youth on credit. He is more cautious than the Faust of the dramas. He is more sceptical, and the author is no less sceptical than him. *Poor devil* – says Faust in the temptation scene – *do you think you will frighten me? I am Faust, your equal! And I can be your master.*²⁶

Mephistopheles looks less menacing in the film than in the drama. He says at the beginning: *I am not Lucifer; I am only his humble helper.*²⁷ He gives a lot to Faust but fails to profit from it himself. Faust beats him in intelligence and boldness.

Mephistopheles suffers his first defeat at the trial arranged for Faust, who is reincarnated as the young man Henry. The trial concerns the disappearance of the old Faust. Henry is accused of murder. Mephistopheles hopes that in the face of imminent death, Henry-Faust will sell his soul. But Henry decides to confess the whole truth before the judges. Mephistopheles, not wanting the affairs of hell to be publicly revealed, impersonates the old Faust again, and now for a long time. In this way, Henry is acquitted, and Mephistopheles must admit: *You have conquered me, I admit. Now you, free, will enjoy the charms of youth while I am condemned to cure old rheumatisms.*²⁸

Mephistopheles, in the guise of the old Faust, is a kind-hearted, lively old man. He likes to eat and drink well, he likes women and comfort. There is a duality of demonic and good-naturedness in his character. The demonic aspect derives from his dramatic role, whereas in his respective insignificant actions, in his appearance, in his movements, in everything earthly, Mephistopheles arouses sympathy, a little cordial, even a little pitiful. But it must not be forgotten that Mephistopheles is, after all, Faust, the dark side of Faust's soul. The demonic element, moreover, is provoked by Henry. He, having come into contact with the splendour of the court and the duchess, and with the help of the devil, provokes Mephistopheles into devilish deeds. Alongside all this, there is plenty of the 'vital' element in both Henry and Mephistopheles: youth, lyricism, a strong desire for happiness in the 'small world' of personal affairs, of the girl's kisses, of her closeness, of the desire for laughter and joy.

Only understanding the duality of the characters, as a duality existing in one man on different paths of life, will allow us to fully understand Clair's concept.

Henry-Faust has a conflict to resolve: quiet joy at the side of the pure, simple Margaret, the gypsy of the travelling circus, or the splendour of the court, the love of the Duchess, scholarly work, and power. He is pushed into a decision towards fame and power by Mephistopheles. The alternative way out is opened by Henry himself. The meeting of Margaret occurred without Mephistopheles's participation. Margaret and her world is a region inaccessible to Mephistopheles, alien and hostile.

The Devil, after failing at the trial and with the permission of his master, Lucifer, offers to help Henry make gold from sand. The prince demands the gold

from Mephistopheles. This ruler has been introduced instead of Goethe's emperor and, like him, is a puppet on a throne, unable to rule, unable to bring the state out of ruin without resorting to the help of a devilish advisor. However, while in Goethe's drama, Mephistopheles is the creator of paper money, in Clair's film, only Faust can create gold. Mephistopheles, having accepted a commission from the ruler for the precious metal, addresses Henry with the words: *Do you know that you are far more learned than I am? I have read your works. You were already close to realising the Great Work.*²⁹

However, when Henry still decides not to cede his soul to Mephistopheles – he gets the credit a second time. He makes gold with the help of the devil, and through this, he gains his fame. The prince grants him the title of chevalier and Henry gets a magnificent laboratory at his disposal. But all this does not give him as much happiness as the love of the duchess. Here, Clair's outlook diverges clearly from Goethe's and, let us be clear, becomes trivialised. Just as Henry's affection for the duchess dominates his thirst for knowledge and for unravelling the hitherto unknown mysteries of nature, so too does his affection for Margaret save him from the ultimate defeat, but it will also be tantamount to abandoning all activity.

While Goethe's Faust gave a cry of happiness in the face of a vision of a new and just world, Clair's Henry gives a similar cry at the moment when Mephistopheles promises him a meeting with the duchess. It should be noted that this moment is of particular importance as it follows immediately after Henry's humanistic speech about the prospects of science opening up to humanity and ending with the words: *Soon no one will suffer hunger. Soon wars will be impossible. Long live Progress!*³⁰

Mephistopheles, in Goethe's drama, kills Faust after he gives the cry of happiness, while in the film, he uses him to make Henry sign a pact. In Marlowe's and Goethe's works, Faust signed the pact in order to gain, above all, knowledge and the ability to act, whereas in Clair's work, it was his affection for a woman that was the deciding factor. However, it would be an exaggeration to claim that Henry sold his soul for this reason alone. But more about that later.

When Mephistopheles hears Henry exclaim: *I am the luckiest man in the world!*³¹ – he suddenly throws him into misery. Henry is convinced that the splendour with which Mephistopheles dazzled him was only a dream. The devil does not dispel his illusions. *Give me back my happiness. I will pay any price for it,* cries Henry, and, without hesitation, pays with his own soul.

In the part following the signing of the pact, the scriptwriters, as if sensing that Henry's thirst for knowledge and scholarly activity has been too stifled so far, bring this motif to the fore. Henry, with the constant help of Mephistopheles, dreams of submarines that will exploit the depths of the seas, of flying machines that will overcome mountains and oceans, of means that will discover the causes of disease. He finally says: *We will extract the secret of matter. We will use the energy that every particle of dust contains.*³²

This monologue is the equivalent of Goethe's vision of a just world. But, characteristically, it has not been used in the latter sections of the film in further development of the character and fate of Henry-Faust. What is more, while Faust's vision in Goethe's work goes beyond the area accessible to



Faust, dir. Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau (1926)



Faust, dir. Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau (1926)

Mephistopheles, in Clair's film, Mephistopheles conducts a parallel monologue of denial alongside Henry's. When Henry speaks of submarines that will serve to exploit the depths of the seas, Mephistopheles adds that these boats will serve, *above all, to drown entire fleets*. Flying machines will *demolish the best-fortified cities*, medical advances will serve to *spread the most terrible epidemics to your neighbours*. And when Henry ends his monologue with a belief in the possibility of splitting the atom, Mephistopheles concludes: *In this way, man will possess the absolute power of destruction*.³³

We are approaching the climax. Already in the monologue in question, Henry has gone beyond the narrow circle of his "individuality" and has become a symbol of the man of the age of invention. Yet only in the monologue. The pictorial counterpart not so much to his vision as to Mephistopheles's contradiction will be the portrayal of Henry's future in a mirror during a court ceremony. Clair carefully avoids pathos throughout the film, particularly at the decisive moment. The reason Mephistopheles chooses to show Henry's future is that he is naïve, not very clever, but also... drunk. The visions he evokes have the character of a grotesque montage. Henry sees himself as the duchess's lover, then, with Mephistopheles, as a fellow murderer, as an inconvenient prince, then as a ruler, as the lover of other women, and eventually as the only man in a land ravaged by himself. The final vision is that of Faust's second old age and his damnation.

Clair, in this way, follows Marlowe in depicting "the tragic story of Doctor Faustus." Only in Clair's vision, Faust was able to use his power and was rightly condemned.

We are at the climax, the strongest and most optimistic point in the entire work. Henry turns away from the mirror. Mephistopheles sincerely sympathises with him, but *fate is fate, you cannot avoid it*.

Yet Henry reverses his fate. He walks away. In a moment, according to the prophecy, the duchess is to enter, and Henry will meet her... But Henry leaves. Mephistopheles calls out desperately: *Henry! Henry! Where are you going? You have to stay here...*³⁴ The duchess enters the drawing room, but instead of Henry, she encounters Mephistopheles. Fate has been reversed.

But Henry's victory has become incomplete. Henry did not accept the fate that had been assigned to him, according to Mephistopheles's previous contradictory monologue. But he also could not and did not even try to realise his strength and the power of his genius to carry out what Mephistopheles had contradicted.

Henry orders him to destroy everything he has accomplished with his help. Mephistopheles, fulfilling the pledge given to Henry – to be obedient to his orders – asks Lucifer to grant this wish. Gold turns to sand, magnificent laboratories start to deteriorate. The people are searching for the culprit.

The people appear for the first time in the artistic rendition of the legend, but, unfortunately, as an ignorant and blind mob who wants to retaliate for the loss of its easily obtained gold. However, the fact that it is the people who – having found in the street the pact with Faust's signature – inflict punishment on Mephistopheles in the guise of an old scholar makes them a rather accidental but rightful instrument of justice.

Mephistopheles's flight from the crowd, his futile appeal for Lucifer's help, his mortal fear, a human, not a devilish fear, once again emphasises – in the

closing section of the film – that we have “two Fausts on the screen.” While one of them – Henry – is victorious, albeit half-heartedly, but close to Goethe’s conception, the other one dies, as he did in Marlowe’s drama. Only God is replaced by Lucifer, a symbol of destruction yet powerless against the wrath of the people.

Meanwhile, Faust-Henry returns to Margaret. The girl faithfully awaits him, faithfully accompanies him as he walks away from the devil’s fate. Margaret has much in common with Goethe’s creation; she has the same purity, an instinct for goodness, a distrust of Mephistopheles. When the devil urged her, like Henry, to sign the pact, she replied with touching naivety: *It’s impossible... I can’t write.*³⁵

In the last frame of the film, Henry leaves the city with her along the sunny road following the wagons of the travelling circus.

IX

A dramaturgical analysis of the film has shown, contrary to the claims of its director, a fairly close relationship with the earlier artistic implementations of the legend. Despite these connections, Clair’s ideological and artistic concept is thoroughly original. This is where its strength and weakness lie. The strength lies in its critique of capitalism and imperialist wars, in its critique of the anti-humanist use of knowledge and technical invention of our age, whereas its weakness lies in the ‘strike of genius’ declared by the film *Faust*, in that, as the film makes clear, all scientific activity leads to disaster.

By individualising the hero of the legend to pursue his own very personal issues, Clair – as the Italian critic Guido Aristarco rightly points out³⁶ – has abstracted him from time and place: he has made him capitulate in the face of problems troubling every contemporary human being.

One feels the influence of the French moralists in Clair’s film. In the irony, in the relativism, one can hear the burning scepticism of Montaigne; there is something of Rousseau in Henry’s walk down the sunny road in the company of Margaret; and there is also Rabelais’s passion for life, transformed by later French literature right through to the serene Colas Breugnon.

Clair’s film, in this respect, occupies a worthy place in classical French thought. The compromise then is the result of the situation in which the progressive filmmakers of the West found themselves, the situation at the turn of the times. The old world is subject to their harsh critique; it is familiar to them, a sharp, h u m a n i s t t h o u g h t is enough to combat it. Reaching out into the new world requires c o u r a g e not only of thought but also an active attitude to life, as we see in Goethe.

To sharpen the ideological outlook, an ideological commentary on “Satan’s Charm” was undertaken by the French writer Jean Marcenac in a novella of the same title [*La beauté du diable racontée, suivie d’un entretien avec René Clair sur le problème de Faust* – translator’s note] written after seeing Clair’s film.³⁷

Marcenac, in the afterword to the novella, writes: *If I have even emphasised certain aspects slightly more strongly here, I am sure that I have not distorted anything. “La Beauté du Diable” is a reflection of our anxieties and hopes. And I have tried to give these anxieties and this hope the name they have in our epoch.*³⁸

At the outset, it must be said that Marcenac's novella, as a commentary on the film, fulfils its objective.

Yet, elsewhere, the author writes: *In telling this story, I have tried to convey the images I had before my eyes and the dialogue I heard.*³⁹

Unfortunately, the writer did not succeed in these attempts. Marcenac, in his literary text, by reconstructing the film through the authorial account, failed to convey Clair's imagery – that most evocative element of the film.

Clair, by filming the legend – which in previous works had been framed in a dramatic, dialogical form – gave it a new pictorial shape. Marcenac, recreating the film in the form of a novella, should have used this almost ready-made, visual, plastic material.

I am skipping, for the moment, already discussed above, the philosophical outlook of the film with its positives and distortions. Instead, I am concerned with the detailed elements of its cinematic production. Clair gave Faustus and Mephistopheles concrete bodies and had them act physically, showing them through the image; the dialogue, in relation to the artistic vision, became a subservient element in the film. The Latin style of René Clair's work comes to the fore precisely in the image underpinned by appropriate dialogue.

The lyricism of the Faust-Henry character, for example, is expressed in the excellent scenes after regaining his youth, by Henry's at first tentative and then increasingly energetic movements, by the admiration expressed by, perfectly chosen for the role, Gérard Philipe. The lyricism is deepened by the folk-fair images of the performances of the travelling circus and the plebeian fun in the full glare of the sun.

The individuation of the demonic and, at the same time, grotesque Mephistopheles is achieved by Clair thanks to the film's second great performance, that of Michel Simon. Transforming himself into the old Faust, he gives his body frivolous, almost dance-like movements and gives the mask an expression that is a little sly, a little rogue.

Confronting two worlds – the world of Margaret, the travelling circus, the street crowd with the world of the court, the princely couple, and the gold – Clair resorts to two different styles of stage design, costumes, lighting, and space arrangement. Margaret's world is sunny, spacious, full of air, colour, movement, and landscape. The world of the court is characterised by banality, staticity, whiteness, enclosed interiors lit by artificial light.

The film's dialogue, precise and flexible, full of subtle transitions, harmonises with the image. It is both a dramaturgical element and a commentary revealing the face of the narrator in a very discreet manner. I have already mentioned some of the dialogue: Faust's misunderstanding with Antoine about the dinner, Margaret's naive answer as to why she cannot sign the pact. There are many more such witty moments. Such as in Mephistopheles's conversation with the prince: Mephistopheles: [The prince] *believes in the devil? The devil! Speaking between ourselves, we know very well that the devil does not exist. But, shhh! There's no need to talk about it...*⁴⁰ Or, in a similar conversation: the Minister: *What does it take for you to make gold?* Professor (Mephistopheles): *A little sand and a little genius. ... I know where the genius is, so all I need is sand...*⁴¹

These qualities did not pass or did pass in a very residual form to Marcenac's novella. In this respect the attempt to transfer Clair's work to literature failed.

X

Marcenac more precisely defines the place and time of the action than Clair in his film. The action is set in the Duchy of San Poverello in Italy in 1834. We are in the post-Napoleonic era in the period of feudal reaction. Marcenac's Faust, as in Clair's film, is not only disillusioned by his hitherto futile activities but considers himself a traitor to the ideals of progressive scholars. Here is an excerpt of his internal monologue, conducted at the instigation of Mephistopheles: *You are an excellent example of herd morality! You will not be burned like Giordano Bruno and a few others... You have so skilfully quenched the fire that burns within you that no pyre will take up any more of it! You are Professor Henry Faust, the pride of this city, which fetes you today because you have impeccably conducted yourself for fifty years and sat politely in your laboratory while Bonaparte paced the world and his generals carved out kingdoms for themselves. You were a wretch, Faust, and today, they thank you for muzzling your genius.*⁴²

Such an exacerbating of the issue, expanding and updating it characterises the entire novella. Marcenac drowns out the "personal" element of Clair's concept of Faust by putting a very clear emphasis on scientific activity. By doing so, he gains a stronger insight into the central problem but impoverishes the character of the individual features with which Clair had equipped him.

Marcenac's retelling of the story of the cinematic Faust quite clearly makes a reference to our times. Mephistopheles states: *What I propose to you, as you know, is not terrible. Ah! If, like me, you could see the scholars of the future! In less than fifty years (!), scholars like you in America won't be making such a fuss. They will allow themselves to be locked up in cities that will be called nuclear cities.*⁴³

The updating of the commentary also comes strongly to the fore in arranging the trial against Henry. In Clair's film, the prosecutor accuses Henry of killing Faust for the purpose of robbery; in Marcenac's novella, the alleged robbery was carried out by a foreign state that wanted to snatch from Faust the secret of gold-making.

When Henry, having sold his soul to the devil, dreams of submarines, aeroplanes, and splitting the atom – the author of the novella takes on the role of Mephistopheles and, addressing Henry directly in an extensive monologue, dispels his humanist illusions. This procedure is an example of Marcenac resigning from an illustrative, dramatic interpretation of the issue and resorting to journalism. The matter is laid out directly and emphatically, though to the detriment of the artistic form. The journalistic tone is, at times, close to vulgarisation. In the aforementioned monologue, when Marcenac enumerates the works that Henry will complete to the doom of mankind, we come across the conclusion: *For such is the curse that hangs over science, if the scholar has not a pure heart, and if his soul no longer belongs to him; if he has sold it to the devils and the bankers in Wall Street.*⁴⁴

Without questioning the legitimacy of the allusion, its inartistic angle must be emphasised. It is at odds with the metaphorical nature of the legend, with the subtle working out of the issue in the film. For neither the author himself nor the reader treats Marcenac's novella as a work in its own right in relation to Clair's vision.

However, as I said before, the intellectual interpretation of the work is carried out correctly in the novella.

The first clash between the Henry of the film and the author of the novella occurs when Henry, changing the course of his fate as shown to him in the mirror, orders Mephistopheles to destroy his work. Accordingly, Marcenac writes: *Unfortunate! Now you order Mephistopheles to destroy the factory, the machines. This is madness! Order the destruction, and you will be right, of all that can serve the war because you could not evade working for the war! But preserve everything that is a work of peace and progress: what good and simple folk will take into their hands as an instrument of tomorrow is not cursed.*⁴⁵

The above words are polemical not only with Henry but also with Clair, still within the plot of the film. But towards the end of the novella, at the moment when Henry leaves with Margaret, feeling that such an ending has already quite clearly twisted the issue, Marcenac decides on Henry's meeting with Stendhal. This is not present in the film. Henry tells him his story and hears in reply: *Let me tell you that I am not satisfied in the way I would have wished. The devil gives you omnipotence, and when you manage to get happily out of the hands of the rascals in whose service you nearly entered, you give up everything to amuse yourself by wandering in these beautiful surroundings in the company of this young woman. You must admit that this is too easy when there are still so many scoundrels left in the world; who knows whether one should not think of helping good people to fight against them. In the conclusion of your story, you forget about the social aspect of the issue, my young man. To put it in colloquial terms, I am afraid you have been fooled.*⁴⁶

The scene of Henry's meeting with Stendhal is tacked on and naïve when the author of "The Red and the Black" speaks of his 1950 fame. Stendhal's nonchalant remark about Goethe is blatant, and the incongruity of dates is glaring when Stendhal in 1834 says that Goethe had begun to write the story of Faust, which he had, in fact, already completed two years before.

As far as the meaning of the words quoted is concerned, they express a valid thought and remain a sharp criticism of Clair and Henry. In his commentary, Marcenac is philosophically closer to Goethe than to Clair. He is more historical, more disturbing and critical. And while he irritates with his lack of artistry, he makes the viewer take a clear stance not only in relation to the cinematic work.

We have reached the end of Faust's journey. He has absorbed man's longings, accompanied him through the ages, become enriched with his experience, carried his struggles, experienced his triumphs and falls. He accumulated in himself all the best that man had achieved over hundreds of years, he portrayed various forms of evil. He did not get rid of the devil, although he did get rid of the medieval God. But he triumphs over the devil in all incarnations, even in those where he seemingly loses. He rubbed up against evil, bent under its weight, but, victorious, he has carried his unblemished, lush, bold humanity to our days.

He stood at the centre of a time not yet closed by any date. He was able to reverse his fate.

True, for now he reversed his fate only for himself, not for humanity.

But humanity is by now doing it for him.

Transl. Artur Piskorz

- ¹ C. Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus*, London 1965, p. 52.
- ² Ibidem, p. 53.
- ³ Ibidem, p. 108.
- ⁴ Ibidem, p. 67.
- ⁵ N. Wilmont, *Goethe*, Moscow 1951, p. 129.
- ⁶ G. Lukács discusses this problem in his study "Faust i Mefistofeles," in: *Twórczość*, August 1947.
- ⁷ M. Shaginyan, *Goethe*, Moscow – Leningrad 1950.
- ⁸ J. W. Goethe, *Faust: A Tragedy*, New Haven 2014, p. 40.
- ⁹ Ibidem, pp. 34-35.
- ¹⁰ Ibidem, p. 49.
- ¹¹ Ibidem, p. 408.
- ¹² Ibidem, p. 422.
- ¹³ Ibidem.
- ¹⁴ H. Mayer, *Literatur der Übergangszeit*, Berlin 1949, p. 169.
- ¹⁵ G. Lukács, *Thomas Mann*, Berlin 1950, p. 65.
- ¹⁶ Kayser's statement and further information about the film can be found in H. Heining, *Goethe und der Film*, Baden-Baden 1949.
- ¹⁷ J. Marcenac, *Urok szatana*, Warszawa 1951, pp. 50-51.
- ¹⁸ R. Regent, "Rene Clair – Classique du cinema", in: *L'Ecran*, April 1951, pp. 12-18.
- ¹⁹ According to J. Marcenac, op. cit., pp. 48-49.
- ²⁰ *L'Ecran*, 21.11.1949.
- ²¹ *L'Ecran*, 17-24.08.1948.
- ²² *La Beauté du Diable* (Film script), Paris, p. II
- ²³ According to J. Marcenac, op. cit., p. 54.
- ²⁴ *La Beauté du Diable* (Film script), op. cit., p. 4.
- ²⁵ Ibidem, p. 9.
- ²⁶ Ibidem, p. 6.
- ²⁷ Ibidem.
- ²⁸ Ibidem, p. 28.
- ²⁹ Ibidem, p. 35.
- ³⁰ Ibidem, p. 46.
- ³¹ Ibidem, p. 47.
- ³² Ibidem, p. 53.
- ³³ Ibidem, pp. 52-53.
- ³⁴ Ibidem, p. 64.
- ³⁵ Ibidem, p. 74.
- ³⁶ *Cinema*, 15.03.1950.
- ³⁷ J. Marcenac, op. cit.
- ³⁸ Ibidem, p. 58.
- ³⁹ Ibidem, p. 57.
- ⁴⁰ *La Beauté du Diable* (Film script), op. cit., p. 32.
- ⁴¹ Ibidem, pp. 39-40.
- ⁴² J. Marcenac, op. cit., p. 7.
- ⁴³ Ibidem, p. 10.
- ⁴⁴ Ibidem, pp. 32-33.
- ⁴⁵ Ibidem, p. 37.
- ⁴⁶ Ibidem, p. 45.

Aleksander Jackiewicz

Born in 1915, died in 1988; Polish film scholar, film critic and author. He took Polish studies and journalism in Warsaw. In 1939, Jackiewicz published his first novel, *Człowiek i jego cień* [A Man and His Shadow]. During WWII he fought in horse artillery units. After demobilisation he worked in a mine in Zagłębie Dąbrowskie. For refusing to sign the Deutsche Volkliste he was imprisoned in the Racibórz prison camp and subsequently went through several labour camps. Then he fled to Vienna, where he lived to see liberation. Jackiewicz worked there at the Polish Repatriation Mission and later lectured at the University of Vienna. Between 1946 and 1947, he served as a cultural attaché. Having returned to Poland, he was a civil servant and then became a lecturer and researcher at the University of Warsaw, in the Faculty of Journalism at the Higher School of Political Science, and then at the Łódź Film School. Initially, his main area of interest was literature, but gradually he became preoccupied with film studies. In 1953, he began working at the National Institute of Art which, in 1960, was transformed into the Institute of

Art, Polish Academy of Sciences. Jackiewicz was associated with this institution until the end of his life. There, he supervised the renowned Film Studies Department. Jackiewicz had a strong influence on the direction of research and he created an integrated and creative community; he also ran doctoral seminars. He was close to French humanities. Especially those strands of it in which the boundaries between literature, philosophy and art theory, in contrast to more disciplined Anglo-Saxon thought, were fluid. Jackiewicz was involved in popularising film through discussion clubs as well as radio and television programmes. In addition to hundreds of magazine reviews, he wrote more than a dozen books on film, including *Latarnia czarnoksiężska* [*The Wizard's Lantern*] (1956, 1981), *Film jako powieść XX wieku* [*Film as a 20th Century Novel*] (1968), *Niebezpieczne związki literatury i filmu* [*The Dangerous Liaisons of Literature and Film*] (1971), *Antropologia filmu* [*The Anthropology of Film*] (1975), *Fenomenologia kina. T. 1: Narodziny dzieła filmowego* [*The Phenomenology of Cinema. Vol. 1: The Birth of the Film Work*] (1981), the four volumes of *Moja filmoteka* [*My Filmotheque*] (1983–1989) as well as fifteen novels.

Słowa kluczowe:

Faust;
Johann Wolfgang Goethe;
René Clair;
szatan;
archetyp

Abstrakt

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Wędrowka Fausta

Postać Fausta, wraz z motywem pragnienia wiedzy, samowiedzy i wiecznej młodości, wreszcie konfrontacji ze złem uosobianym przez szatana, należy do archetypów kultury europejskiej. Autor śledzi wędrowkę Fausta począwszy od przełomu XV i XVI w., kiedy to zaistniał jako postać historyczna i stał się bohaterem ludowej legendy, po współczesność. W końcu XVI w. frankfurcki drukarz Johann Spiess poświęcił mu książkę, która zyskała ogromną popularność. Potem pisali o nim Christopher Marlowe i Johann Wolfgang Goethe, wreszcie Tomasz Mann. Jackiewicz opisuje przeobrażenia tej postaci w kontekście warunków historycznych i kulturowych. Interesuje go też, jak Fausta przyswoiła sztuka filmowa, najpierw w epoce niemej (u Louisa Lumière'a, Georges'a Mélièsa i Friedricha Wilhelma Murnaua), po czasy współczesne. Sporo miejsca poświęca analizie filmu René Claira *Urok szatana* (*La beauté du diable*, 1950). Porównuje wizję Claira z pierwowzorami literackimi, ale przede wszystkim sytuuje ją w polu francuskiej tradycji humanistycznej, a także wobec noweli Jeana Marcenaka. **(Materiał nierecenzowany; pierwodruk: „Kwartalnik Filmowy” 1953, nr 10, s. 40–65).**



Faust, dir. Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau (1926)