

## A JOURNEY INTO FAUST LEGENDS – A STUDY OF FAUST STORY

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Through translations of Literature, efforts are made since centuries, to bring the world together – concept of Globalization, concept of World Literature, as it was developed by Goethe him self, it has been studied, analyzed and the process is still going on to understand, how mutual understanding takes place through peeping through the windows of each other. It would be interesting here to know, how Goethe came to the concept of World Literature - During his China visit in 1827 Goethe composed the famous series of poems Chinese and German Times of the day and seasons. On his acquaintance with the foreign culture and literature, Goethe started developing the idea of World literature.

We recently happened to come across a Hindi translation of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's Faust with the title फाउस्ट एक त्रासदी by Arvind Kumar, published in New Delhi by the Bharatiya Gyanpith in the year 2002. Faust has been translated among other World Languages, in Indian Languages like Hindi, Urdu, Marathi. Günther Mahal's book Faust – Die Spuren eines geheimnisvollen Lebens (first published in 1980 followed by 1995 edition) reports that Goethe's Faust has been translated into fifty Languages of the world<sup>1</sup>. As students of German Literature, we have studied Goethe's Faust during our M.A. programmes and have been having a close access to this play now for three decades or more. Even in the framework of English Literature, students have been studying in Indian Universities works by Goethe among others in translations. Faust is a major play in English translation, which is roundly studied by students of English at large. The available Hindi translation of Faust by Arvind Kumar, made us think on the questions like Who was Faust? Do the Indian author-translators have any access to the sources of information on original Faust-Literature (as called in German Faustdichtung)? We thought, we could, through the Magazine called Shod – Samiksha aur Mulyankann, try to bring to our friends and colleagues treasures of information on the stories of Original Faust (Urfaust). Faust is consid-

ered to be one of the most important World Classics. Abdul-Wahid Lulua's point of departure in his discourse on Problems in Translation of World Classics suits us the best to undertake this study:

The term world classic hardly needs a definition. To my mind, it is a work of literary, or broadly artistic nature which has an appeal to various minds with various cultural and historical backgrounds<sup>2</sup> Mr. Arun Kumar has translated this world classic, which does have an appeal to different minds with different cultural and historical background. Before we start our journey into the Faust Legend, to know, who was Faust, Prof. D L Ashliman's Faust Legends are provided here as sources available in the Internet apart from the sources available to us in book forms to throw light on the Faust Legend.<sup>3</sup> Dr. Faustus Was a Good Man England<sup>4</sup>

*Dr. Faustus was a good man, He whipped his scholars now and then, When he whipped them he made them dance, Out of Scotland into France, Out of France into Spain, And then he whipped them back again!* Doctor Johann Faustus Abstracted from the Faust Chapbook of 1587<sup>5</sup> Johann Faustus was born in Roda in the province of Weimar, of God-fearing parents. Feigning anger at having been summoned against his will, the Devil arrived in the midst of a great storm. After the winds and lightning had subsided the Devil asked Dr. Faustus to reveal his will, to which the scholar replied that he was willing to enter into a pact. The Devil, for his part, would agree: · to serve Dr. Faustus for as long as he should live, · to provide Dr. Faustus with whatever information he might request, and · never to utter an untruth to Dr. Faustus. The Devil agreed to these particulars, on the condition that Dr. Faustus would promise: · at the expiration of twenty-four years to surrender his body and soul to the Devil, · to confirm the pact with a signature written in his own blood, and · to renounce his Christian faith. Having reached an agreement, the pact was drawn up, and Dr. Faustus formalized it with his own blood. Henceforth Dr.

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Faustus' life was filled with comfort and luxury, but marked by excess and perversion. Everything was within his grasp: elegant clothing, fine wines, sumptuous food, beautiful women—even Helen of Troy and the concubines from the Turkish sultan's harem. He became the most famous astrologer in the land, for his horoscopes never failed. No longer limited by earthly constraints, he traveled from the depths of hell to the most distant stars. He amazed his students and fellow scholars with his knowledge of heaven and earth.

At daybreak they ventured into his room. Bloodstains were everywhere. Bits of brain clung to the walls. Here they discovered an eye, and there a few teeth. Outside they found the corpse, its members still twitching, lying on a manure pile. His horrible death thus taught them the lesson that had escaped their master during his lifetime: to hold fast to the ways of God, and to reject the Devil and all his temptations. Dr. Faust and Melanchton in Wittenberg Germany<sup>6</sup> It is not true, as some claimed as early as the middle of the sixteenth century, that Dr. Faust grew up in Wittenberg and earned a doctorate of theology there, that he lived near the outer gate and had a house and garden in a street named Schneegasse (which never existed), and that he was strangled by the devil in the village of Kimlich, a half mile from Wittenberg, in the presence of several scholars and students. However, he did spend time in Wittenberg and was tolerated there for a while, until he became so crude that they tried to imprison him, and then fled to another place. While in Wittenberg he approached Philipp Melanchton, who read the book to him, scolding him and warning him that if he did not immediately desist from his evil ways he would come to an evil end, which did indeed happen. He did not repent. Now one day at ten o'clock in the morning Master Philipp was leaving his study on his way downstairs to eat when Faust, who was with him at that time, and whom he had vigorously scolded, said to him: "Master Philipp, you always approach me with rough words. Someday, when you are about to sit down to a meal, I am going to cause all the pots in the kitchen to fly up the chimney, so that you and your guests will have nothing to eat."

Thereupon Philipp answered him: "Desist from such talk! I — on your art!" And he did desist. Another old God-fearing man also tried to convert him. To show his thanks, Faust sent a devil to the man's bedroom to frighten him as he was going to

bed. The devil walked about in the room, grunting like a sow. The man, however, was not afraid. Armed with his faith, he ridiculed the devil: "What a fine voice you have! You are singing like an angel who was not allowed to remain in heaven because he wanted to be God's equal and was thus thrust out for his pride and now wanders through people's houses in the form of a sow!" With that the spirit, not wanting to be in a place where he was ridiculed because of his apostasy and his wickedness, returned to Faust and complained to him how he had been received there.

Dr. Faust's Hell-Master-Germany<sup>7</sup> According to legend, there is a book, named Dr. Faust's Hell-Master, which teaches the art of controlling spirits, even of making the devil subservient to oneself. It is said to be buried beneath a thorn bush behind the Chemnitz Castle, on the road to the Kuch Forest. Many advocates of the black art have unsuccessfully attempted to find this book. The theme of Faust is the striving of human being for the knowledge, individual happiness and sensible social activity<sup>8</sup>. While Faust was an unmistakable, one of its kind, genius personality in the original edition, he became, after the French Revolution, representative of the mankind and an ideal of the striving, developing human being. His path of development through different life spheres – through the bourgeois existence of Gretchen, the demonic witch's sabbath and the classical Walpurgis night, the medieval empire's court and the antique world – ends similarly as Wilhelm Meister practically for the betterment of general human beings<sup>9</sup>. For Helmut Koblighk, the Faust-Theme has apparently been from the beginning not only a theme of literary history (Literaturgeschichte); however a theme of the history of thought (Geistesgeschichte). He gives a brief account of history of ideology, history of literature and history of thought with references to different treatments to Faust-Theme from *Historia von D Johann Fausten* (1587) to Thomas Mann's 360 years later compiled novel *Dr Faustus* (1947) down to Goethe's (in sixty years compiled) work. As Günther Mahal correctly observes in his book *Faust – Die Spuren eines geheimnisvollen Lebens*, anybody thinking of Faust, is bound to speak of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.<sup>10</sup>

Johann Faust, born in 1480 in Knittlingen, died in Staufen near Breisgau in 1540, possessed knowledge in natural and medical sciences, theology among others, has also been mentioned by Philipp Melanchthon, Martin Luther and Ulrich von Hutten in their works.<sup>11</sup>

He was, however, more famous for his jugglery and fortune-telling. A story in Latin around 1570, about his life, which is now missing, is supposed to have spread over every where.<sup>12</sup> Faust is described to be a learned fellow, thirsty of knowledge, a darer hungry of experience, an erotic, who never feels satisfied, are some of the qualities attributed to Faust by the scholars<sup>13</sup>. In Günther Mahal's study we still find that according to Mahal, this historical Faust is to be described in a few words attributing some qualities. This intelligent and unsatisfied man with normalcy of life from simple life conditions confines him self to the devil – whereby he can get knowledge, undertake magic journey to the farmers, knights, who lets Greek heroes appear, grapes grow in the midst of winter – the devil, his servant, ditches him at the end and mocks at his death at midnight – and tears him to pieces in the hell<sup>14</sup>. Günther Mahal sounds uncomfortable to accept Faust as a myth. Hardly nine documents were available on the life of the legendary character of Faust<sup>15</sup>. Very meager material in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century could be available on the historical character of Faust. From 1540 to 1870 authors did not even accept that Faust really lived<sup>16</sup>.

12 of the Introduction to Marlowe's Doctor Faustus by William Modlen reads as follows: The Tragical History is rather a series of detached scenes than a regular play, and shows many traces (§ 16) of the primitive elements from which the Elizabethan drama was evolved. It forms, in fact, a connecting link between the old Miracle Plays and Drama proper. Still it contains many passages of great power and beauty, especially the famous address of Helena of Troy and the despairing agony of Faustus' last night on earth. The vacillation of the magician is drawn with great force. At one moment he is puffed with pride of intellect and eager to barter his soul for more of that knowledge which is power; at another, quailing at the thought of his final doom and listening in terror to the warnings of the Old Man and his own Good Angel<sup>18</sup>. This story is about a man, who enters into a pact with the devil.

Apparently the character of Johann Faust was enriched with the characteristics of Paracelsus; most probably the motive of religiously motivated striving for knowledge emerges from this source. The first literary presentation of this metamorphosis of the literary character was published in 1587 in *Historia von D. Johann Fausten* by the publisher Johann spies of

Frankfurt. This folksbook contains the story of a man, who enters into a pact with the devil; (...) <sup>19</sup> Most interestingly, we find that the Motive of Pact with the devil makes the spirit of 16<sup>th</sup> century story, which could not have been possible earlier. The man, who enters into a pact with the devil, takes speculations for granted. He follows the one, with the help of whom he could satisfy his thirst for knowledge and no other material motivation – eventually Faust repents and is taken away by the devil<sup>20</sup>. The folksbook was translated in many languages. Goethe is reported to have read a short version of 1725 by Doctor Nikolaus (Nicolas in English) Pfitzer of Nuremberg.

The first literary version of Faust (bet. 1587 & 1593) is the English version by Christopher Marlowe. Goethe got acquainted the first German translation (translated in 1817) of Marlowe's Faust in the year 1818. Lessing got fascinated by Faust - theme prior to Goethe. Lessing published in his 17<sup>th</sup> literary letter in the year 1759. A draft of Faust-Drama was published in 1786 by the Lessing Assets, when Goethe was intensively busy with writing his Faust. Goethe was highly impressed by Lessing's idea that a thinking, lonely young man was a perfect victim of the devil due to his thirst for knowledge. 1791 Friedrich Maximilian Klinger (a storm & stress author) wrote a novel called Faust's life, deeds & journey into hell<sup>21</sup>. Faust is compared here with the inventor of art of book printing. He enters into a pact with the devil to >overcome the injustice on earth<. The work ends with Faust's desire to die. The folksbook and the puppet show are supposed to be the main source of reference for Goethe. In the introduction written by William Modlen to Marlowe's *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* – Text of 1604<sup>22</sup> it is stated that the story in Faustus spreads over twenty-four years, and the same scene shifts from Wittenberg to Rome and Innsbruck<sup>23</sup>. William Modlen's introductory note adds to the information that Marlowe's Doctor Faustus is based on the German story of Dr. Faustus or Faust, a real person, who lived in the early part of the sixteenth century<sup>24</sup>, who was believed to have sold himself to the Devil. In his introductory note, Modlen discusses the author's intention of *Historia von D. Faust* (*History of D. John Faust.*), generally called as *Faustbuch*, referring to Prof. Henry Morley's introduction to *Faustus*, where following remarks and information show us the stage of development from the *Faustbuch* to Marlowe's *Dr Faustus*<sup>25</sup>: ... by stringing together in-

cidents of magic associated with the fabulous career of a man who had died some fifty years before [1538], (...). The writer's desire was to warn against presumptuous sins; to attack, through Faust, the pride of intellect that sets God at defiance; and through stories of Faust's magic to pour, now and then, protestant scorn on the Pope<sup>26</sup>. In 1587 came in England Ballad of the Life and Death of Dr. Faustus, the Great Conjuror, - Marlowe's Faustus is, as Modlen informs, based on the English Translation of Faustbuch with the title The History of Damnable Life and Deserved Death of Dr. John Faustus and the German Legend<sup>27</sup>. In his introductory note, Modlen perceives Marlowe's Mephistophilis (in German spelled as Mephistopheles) not as the cynical spirit of evil drawn by the genius of Goethe, but a more commonplace drudge of the Infernal Powers, though not without signs of remorse and passion (...) <sup>28</sup> It is only since Goethe wrote his Faust, that queries related to Faust-Research have been made. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing and Jacob Michael Reinhold Lenz worked in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century on Faust stuff. As Günther Mahal writes: Faust in Literature, who was revered as >Black magi-

cian<, is at the centre of many stories, those sound unheard: a wonder-man emptying the sack full of sensations; a spider-man jumping over the boundaries of countries, an exceptional image ignoring the laws of Physics and Morals. (...) <sup>29</sup>.

Goethe is supposed to have written the first scenes in the early 70<sup>s</sup>. In his letter to Goethe Friedrich Wilhelm Gotter informed of Doctor Faustus. Luise von Göchhausen, a maid in the court collected the manuscripts of Goethe. Erich Schmidt discovered them in 1887 in her assets and published them, those became famous as Urfaust, which has two main parts namely The Tragedy of Gretchen and The Tragedy of Educated<sup>30</sup>. Goethe took up the work on Faust in Italy again. Goethe's journey to Italy (1786 – 88) served as a major motivation to Faust by Goethe. 1790 Goethe published Faust Fragment. Schiller inspired him in 1808 to publish First Part of the Tragedy of Faust (Faust, der Tragödie erster Teil). Goethe started in 1824 work on Part Two of the Faust Tragedy under the inspiration of Eckermann and finished it in 1831, short before his death. Unfortunately it was published only after Goethe's death.

## REFERENCE

1. Ibid. This should be noted here that this information is now fourteen years old.
2. Abdul-Wahid Lulua: Problems in Translation of World Classics. In: Literature in Translation. – From Cultural Transference to Metonymic Displacement. Pramod Talgeri / SB Verma (Ed). Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1988. pp.61.3 Courtesy : <http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/faust.html>. Faust Legends by Prof. DL Ashliman (Univ. of Pittsburg) Source: Abstracted from *Historia von D. Johann Fausten* (Frankfurt am Main: Johann Spies, 1587).4 Courtesy: <http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/faust.html>. Faust Legends by Prof. DL Ashliman (Univ. of Pittsburg). Source: Henry Bett, *Nursery Rhymes and Tales: Their Origin and History*, 2nd edition (London: Methuen and Company, 1924), p. 72.) 5 Ibid. 6 Courtesy: <http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/faust.html>. Faust Legends by Prof. DL Ashliman (Univ. of Pittsburg) Source: J. G. Th. Grässe, *Sagenbuch des Preußischen Staats*, vol. 1 (Glogau: Verlag von Carl Flemming, 1868), no. 453, pp. 391-392. Philipp Melancton (1497-1560), humanist, classical scholar, theologian, and professor at the University of Wittenberg, was an important associate of Martin Luther in the protestant reformation. 7 Source: Joh. Aug. Ernst Köhler, *Sagenbuch des Erzgebirges* (Schneeberg and Schwarzenberg: Verlag und Druck von Carl Moritz Gärtner, 1886), no. 277, p. 229. 8 Beutin, wolfgang and others (Ed): deutsche Literaturgeschichte von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart. 5. überarbeitete Aufl. J B Metzlerverlag. Stuttgart, 1994. pp. 199. 9 Ibid. 10 Günther Mahal: Faust – Die Spuren eines geheimnisvollen Lebens. Rowohlt Taschenbuchverlag. Reinbeck bei Hamburg, 1995. P.p. 9. [The original German sentence reads like this : **Fällt der Name Faust, so stellt sich bei jedermann sogleich auch Goethes Name ein.**] 11 Kobligk, Helmut: Grundlagen und Gedanken – Drama. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Faust – I. 19. Aufl. Moritz Diesterwegverlag. Frankfurt am Main, 1997. Pp. 5 12 Ibid. 13 Refer here among others to Günther Mahal. 14 Ibid. Pp. 11-12 All the original German quotations are produced here in translation – both of us have partly translated quotations from original German into English. We have been having access to primary German original works and original German reference materials. 15 Ibid. 16 Ibid. Pp. 14 17 Ibid. Pp. 14 18 William Modlen: The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus – Text of 1604 by Christopher Marlowe. Surjeet Publications. New Delhi, 2005. pp. vii. 19 Kobligk, Helmut: Grundlagen und Gedanken – Drama. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Faust – I. 19. Aufl. Moritz Diesterwegverlag. Frankfurt am Main, 1997. Pp. 5. All the original German quotations are produced here in translation – both of us have partly translated quotations from original German into English. We have been having access to primary German original works and original German reference materials. 20 Ibid. 21 The original German title reads as **Fausts Leben, Taten und Höllenfahrt**. 22 William Modlen: The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus – Text of 1604 by Christopher Marlowe. Surjeet Publications. New Delhi, 2005. pp. vii. 23 Ibid. 24 This is in contradiction to Günther Mahal's above statement (Refer to Footnote 8.) **From 1540 to 1870 authors did not even accept that Faust really lived.** 25 Ibid. 13-15. pp.. 26 Ibid. 13-15. pp. xviii. 27 Ibid. 28 Ibid. Pp. xix. 29 Ibid. Pp. 12. All the original German quotations are produced here in translation – both of us have partly translated quotations from original German into English. We have been having access to primary German original works and original German reference materials. 30 Gretchenragödie as the tragedy of Gretchen is called in German & Gelehrtenragödie as the tragedy of educated is called in German.