

Анатоль Брусевіч / Anatol Brusevich

Гродзенскі дзяржаўны ўніверсітэт імя Янкі Купалы, Беларусь /

Yanka Kupala State University of Grodno, Belarus

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0007-5147>

e-mail: brusevich@tut.by

Yanka Kupala's creed: the Christian aesthetic code in the motif paradigm of his early poetry¹

Symbol wiary Janki Kupały: chrześcijański kod estetyczny w paradygmacie motyów wczesnej liryki

Сімвал веры ад Янкі Купалы: хрысціянскі эстэтычны код у матыўнай парадыгме ранняй лірыкі

ABSTRACT: The article's aim is to analyse the features of the motif-image paradigm of Yanka Kupala's poetry, which in turn helps to rethink the ideological and aesthetic foundations of his creative method and poetic style, as well as the place and role of this bright representative of Belarusian poetry in the context of European literary traditions. The introduction substantiates the novelty and relevance of the study of Yanka Kupala's legacy, taking into account existing literary trends and current interpretations of the poet's works. The main section draws attention to the peculiarities of the functioning of a number of motifs that played one of the key roles in the formation of Yanka Kupala's worldview and creative consciousness, his artistic principles and unique style. First of all, the problem of the functioning of religious, especially Christian motifs in the early lyrics of the first national poet of Belarus is examined. Also, on the example of individual poems, the ways of their author's realization of some artistic tasks and ideas are shown, the origins of which lie not only in the work of his predecessors – representatives of European romanticism, but are directly related to the aesthetic paradigm of symbolism.

KEYWORDS: Belarusian poetry, Yanka Kupala, poetics, aesthetics, romanticism, symbolism, creative method, lyrical hero.

¹ The article has been translated from Belarusian into English by Anatol Bahdzevich, Associate Professor of the English Philology Chair of Yanka Kupala State University of Grodno, PhD in Philology. He has also performed the translation of the majority of Yanka Kupala's poetry fragments cited in the article.

Yanka Kupala seems to have been studied exhaustively. Both his poetics and aesthetics; the bard's creative path and biography have been divided into periods; the peculiarities of his style and language have been examined in detail; the essence of his relations with other European literatures and cultures has been revealed. However, the field for both research and artistic interpretations of the legacy of the first Belarusian national poet still remains vast. This is caused by the phenomenon of Yanka Kupala, which represents the ability to appeal to the values of all mankind without being confined to a narrow national issue, as it may seem at the first glance. That is why one of the most interesting, important and, by the way, least researched areas in the studies of Yanka Kupala is the connection of the poetics of the Belarusian classic with Western European artistic and aesthetic traditions and styles, especially with that of modernism. It is clear why this topic was ignored in Soviet literary criticism, and only in the post-Soviet era, in the wake of the national revival, did domestic comparative literature studies recall these gaps. Among the Belarusian researchers of Yanka Kupala's legacy, who opened new horizons with their work drawing attention to the bard's place in the artistic space of modernism, symbolism and other non-realistic trends and currents, there are a number of interesting authors. These are Pyotr Vasyuchenka, Valery Maksimovich, Dmitry Sanyuk, Lyudmila Sinkova, Mikhas Tychyna, Ivan Steiner and some other scientists. At the same time, the abovementioned aspect of Belarusian literary criticism still requires further study. In general, each new generation of researchers discovers new horizons in the poetic universe of Kupala's Word. The process is, of course, quite natural, because the work of Yanka Kupala has long gone beyond being an object of imitation, or a subject of study. The poet has become a symbol of sorts that signifies everything Belarusian. History knows more than one such case. Many great poets have become similar symbols: Taras Shevchenko, Alexander Pushkin, our (Belarusian) compatriot Adam Mickiewicz. However, being raised to the high pedestal of the national idea, the figures of these creators are sometimes doomed not only to universal love, but also to ridicule, irony, in other words, to de-canonization. In the case of Yanka Kupala, this destructive process often turns into a denial of traditional Belarusian values, which, of course, cannot be ignored. And in order to protect the poet, and, by extension, everything Belarusian, it is necessary to constantly rediscover our great classic, to restore his heritage, cleansing it of the old Soviet, and of the modern ideological mold of postmodernism. Yanka Kupala's "cleansing" is best started with his earliest works, with the first books, thoroughly considering first of all their motif paradigm (basic and index values of motifs, their relationship and interaction with other artistic elements). It is vital to begin with motifs, and only then to be engaged in aesthetics and symbolism of Yanka Kupala's verse. After

all, the motif, on the one hand, is the simplest element in the system of the artistic word and it cannot be broken down into even smaller components, and on the other hand the motif is able to contain information from which soon the theme and idea as well as images and symbols grow: that beauty and harmony which we call a literary work. It should be noted that some movement in this direction has begun: we can mention, for example, the monograph *Matyŭnaâ prastora belaruskaj litaratury pačatku XX stagoddzâ* (*The Motif Space of Belarusian Literature of the Early 20th Century*, Grodno, 2009), which is the result of the work of several researchers from Grodno: Ihar Zhuk, Dzmitry Lebyadzevich, Ala Petrushkevich and Alyaxei Pyatkevich. Their book examines the works of writers of the *Nasha Niva* period, including Yanka Kupala. Still, many issues related to the motif-image paradigm of our bard's works still remain beyond the attention of researchers. Not frequently, for example, is the problem of religious, especially Christian motifs' functioning touched upon, which in the meantime played a significant role in shaping Yanka Kupala's worldview and creative consciousness. The reason for this, as in the case of the study of modernist influences on the bard, is very anachronistic: being banned in Soviet times, this topic gradually fell out of the scope of scientists and in the post-Soviet period became seemingly irrelevant. Though some literary critics (such as Irina Bogdanovich, Elena Valchuk, Uladzimir Konan, Yanka Tratsyak, Halina Tychko) have tried to fill this gap, thorough monographic studies on religious motifs in the works by Yanka Kupala have not yet appeared.

From the very first book, *Zhaleyka*, which appeared in 1908, Yanka Kupala proved to be a poet, extremely sensitive to human misery, which is confirmed by the presence of appropriate motifs. However, let's first pay attention to the following fact: most of the works within the book were composed in 1905–1907, an incredibly difficult period for both the Russian Empire and its citizen Ivan Lutsevich (Yanka Kupala's legal name). We remember from history: the protracted economic crisis led to a political crisis and exploded with the first Russian revolution. So, literature, which by its nature cannot exist in isolation from political, economic and other social processes, had to somehow react to the events in the country. And the corresponding reaction followed (representatives of all its trends and artistic directions reacted – from supporters of critical realism and proletarian literature to neo-romantics and modernists). And the above-mentioned *Zhaleyka* by Yanka Kupala is a reaction to the terrible reality of that time – social, national, moral and spiritual, national and personal. If we analyze at least the original lyric poems of *Zhaleyka* (excluding translations, inheritances) and the poem *Adplata kahannâ* (*Retribution of Love*), we can find in them 16 main motifs that form the basis of the so-called "leitmotif nest" – "structural organization of meanings

based on the semantic proximity of quite independent motifs, but of those open to the variable redirection of semantics from the most relevant meaning to its periphery and vice versa" [Zhuk et al. 2009: 13]. These are the motifs of social inequality, national revival, artist's mission, respect for labour, peasant life, oppression, homeland, love, drunkenness, freedom, solidarity, empty rhetoric, return home, wedding, poverty and stupidity. Thus, each poem in the collection *Zhaleyka* has its "leitmotif nest", and the central motif in each "nest" is one of the motifs mentioned above, the meaning of which for a poem is the most applicable, most relevant. However, in each poem (each "leitmotif"), in addition to the basis, there are also peripheral motifs, which reveal, according to I. Zhuk, "meanings 'added', attached to the very practice of their historical existence – depending on aesthetic, cultural and regional features of artistic application" [ibidem]. By the way, some poems of the collection *Zhaleyka*, in addition to the basic, dominant motifs have a good dozen peripheral motifs that saturate the work with many additional meanings. It should be noted also that the same motif in one poem can be the main, contain the primary meaning of the work, and in another – act as a peripheral motif, as a carrier of an additional meaning. In general, the reconstruction of the motif paradigm of works of art allows a deeper understanding of many aspects related to the figure of the author. After all, if, for example, we look closely at the motifs of *Zhaleyka*, it becomes clear that in 1905–1907 Yanka Kupala was primarily concerned about social issues. As V. Rahoisha notes,

the motifs of social justice in the works by Yanka Kupala, beginning with the first poem *A Peasant*, were outlined in the desire to «humanize» the peasant, to make him a full citizen, and after that – to call him for the struggle for his social rights [Ragojša 2010: 25].

It can be added that this interest in social issues testifies to the influence of the ideas of Polish positivism literature on Yanka Kupala. No wonder the Belarusian poet admired the works of Maria Konopnitskaya, one of the brightest representatives of this trend. Meanwhile, the fascination with positivism did not absorb the Belarusian bard as much as, for example, the ideas of romanticism or modernism. The wave of social involvement gradually subsided, exposing the importance of other motifs – national revival, the artist's mission, love. And, of course, religious motifs, especially Christian ones. By the way, we can't deny the existence of anti-clerical motifs in the legacy of the writer too (grabbing them Soviet literature science at one time created the image of Yanka Kupala as a poet-theomachist). However, this circumstance also prompts reasoning: how did the poet come to 'god-fighting', what were the reasons, how it all started? As a result, it becomes clear that there has always been the reverse of the medal – clearer, more distinct, more beautiful:

Christian values, which have become a major component of ethics, aesthetics and other worldview fundamentals of Yanka Kupala's creative work. There are several sources from which the mentioned values originate. The first source is upbringing: Ivan Lutsevich was born into a Catholic noble family, which means that from an early age he was attached to the good Christian and noble traditions that shaped the character of the future bard. We cannot but mention the credo of the nobility: God, honor, fatherland. This is what was in the blood of every nobleman, cultivated, passed down from generation to generation and could be destroyed only by physical death – an example of the tragic fate of Yanka Kupala himself. So from the first poems it was clear that their author was a devout Belarusian Catholic nobleman. Thus, in his debut work *Modlitwa (Prayer)*, written in 1903 in Polish, the young poet in godly humility addresses the Virgin Mary, sincerely asking for mercy and intercession:

Próżno się duch mój w męce krwawi
 I próżno myśl znękana targa
 Z rozpaczą nieustanną!
 Już litość ziemską mnie nie zbawi
 I nie pomoże jenk lub skarga –
 Ku tobie ślę mój wzrok, Przeczysta!
 Królowa niebios, Matko Chrysta!
 Panno!..

[Kupala 1995, 1: 307].

(My soul in vain is painfully bleeding
 My mind in vain is tortured
 In desperation eternal!
 Compassion in vain I am, desperate, pleading
 Complaints and yells will be worthless –
 To you, the holy Queen of Heaven, Christ's Mother,
 I frankly my gaze uncover!
 Madonna!..)²

As for Yanka Kupala's early Belarusian-language poems, they fully correspond to the above-mentioned spiritual credo. After all, they do not just tell about the miserable fate of Belarus and its unfortunate inhabitants, but above all they sing about love for their homeland, glorify human dignity, are full of Christian patient faith in the inevitable victory of justice. These motifs are found, for example, in such poems as *Gèta kryk, što żyve Belarus'* (*This is the Cry that Belarus Lives*), *Â muzyk-belarus (I am a Belarusian Peasant)*, *Z pesen' nâdoli (From the Songs of Misery)* and a number of other works.

² Henceforward (unless otherwise stated) the poetic translation has been performed by Anatol Bahdzevich.

The second source of Christianity and religiosity in Yanka Kupala's work is the poet's education and self-education, during which he had various relationships with interesting people, including priests. Alena Valchuk writes about it:

There is no doubt that Kupala, taking an active part in the expansion of the Belarusian Renaissance cause, was in contact with clergymen. The paths of their destiny could have crossed when the poet, while in Vilna, worked in the editorial office of the newspaper *Nasha Niva* [Val'čuk 2012: 38].

Under the influence of such contacts, such works as *Maâ malitva* (*My Prayer*), *Prarok* (*The Prophet*), *Pad kryžam* (*Under the Cross*), *Caru neba j zâmlî* (*The King of Heaven and Earth*) and some other poems were probably born.

The third source of religious motifs in the poetic heritage of the bard is the influence of previous and surrounding literary traditions, especially those of romanticism and modernism. Both romantics and modernists, as we know, professed the rejection of the material world (earthly, low, primitive) in favor of the ideal world (heavenly, high, perfect), using in their art, among other elements, Christian spiritual concepts, symbols, images. In Yanka Kupala's poetry (if you take only poetry and do not take into account other genres) there are more than thirty different motifs related to the biblical and Christian cultural and philosophical paradigm: God, unbelief, vagrants, faith, sin, spirit, spirituality, soul, serpent, cross, prayer, evil spirit, hell, prophet, resurrection, temple, church, thorns and some others. Of course, thinking about those or other motifs, it is necessary to pay attention not only to their existence, but also to their frequency. Surprisingly, of all the religious motifs in Yanka Kupala's poetry, the motif of the cross is the most common (for comparison, the pagan motif of Kupalle (St. John the Baptist's Day in Belarusian tradition; the holiday's name was taken by I. Lutsevich for his pen-name – Kupala) in Yanka Kupala's lyrics occurs only twice: in the poems *Na Kupalle* (*On the Kupalle Day*) and *Zaklâtaâ kvetka* (*The Enchanted Flower*). As for the cross, it is known to be one of the oldest symbols in the history of culture, used in various religions, but primarily associated with Christianity, where it symbolizes the self-sacrifice of the Son of God and signifies victory over death, evil and sin. It should also be mentioned that the Belarusian cultural canon was formed largely on the basis of Christian worldviews, as evidenced by many folklore and literary sources. Many Belarusian fairy tales and legends are connected with the image of the cross, as well as various Belarusian idiomatic units, for example, such idioms as “nescî svoj kryž” (“to bear one's cross”) – “patiently endure life's difficulties, trials” [Lepešaŭ 1993b, 2: 87], “âk z kryža znâty” (“as though removed from the cross”) – “very weak, exhausted” [Lepešaŭ 1993a, 1: 449], “legčy kryžam” (“to lie on the cross”) – “to do one's best to achieve something”

[Lepesaŭ 1993a, 1: 563] etc. Proof that the word “cross” has many meanings in the Belarusian language and evokes many associations, are many poems by Yanka Kupala: *Sârod magil* (*Among the Graves*), the already mentioned poem *Pad kryžam* (*Under the Cross*), *Sel'skiâ mogilkî* (*Rural Cemetery*), *Sâdz' tut, pad kryžam...* (*Sit Here, under the Cross...*), *Kryžy* (*The Crosses*). In the latter, the motif of the cross is reproduced as many as 15 times, showing all possible meanings and sense-making paradigms associated with this ancient symbol of human civilization. Because:

Чуць мы божы свет убачым
 І да самай да магілы
 Ўсё, як ёсць, крыжамі значым,
 Ці то міла, ці не міла.
 [Kupala 1996, 2: 31].

(Holy world we hardly enter
 To the instant of the tomb-stone
 Sign of cross we use forever
 Good or bad things to be shown.)

In addition to the cross, the most frequent religious motifs include God, spirit, prayer, faith and prophet, which came in Yanka Kupala's poems primarily from the poetry of Polish romanticism, which, however, originates in the depths of Belarusian folk culture. No wonder literary historians draw attention to the similarity of artistic and aesthetic paradigms of the first people's poet of Belarus and the first Litvin (Belarusian and Polish) romantic A. Mickiewicz. However, parallels can be drawn not only between them. You can find points of contact with other romantics, for example, with Juliusz Słowacki, the second largest star of Polish romanticism after A. Mickiewicz. Let us recall the following lines by Yanka Kupala from the poem *Smutna mne, Boža!* (*Sad I Feel, Heaven!*):

Смутна мне, Божа! Куды я ні гляну,
 Куды ні мчуся з маркотнай душою,
 Бачу, што шчасця зары не дастану,
 Бачу, што вечна не знаць мне спакою.
 [Kupala 1996, 2: 211].

(Sad I feel, Heaven! Wherever I stare
 Wherever I dash with the sole full of sorrow
 I see no happiness light over there
 I see no peace and I see no tomorrow.)

And such lines, written 70 years before the above-mentioned work, we can find in poetry of a representative of Polish literature:

Smutno mi, Boże! Dla mnie na zachodzie
 Rozlałeś tęczę blasków promienistą;
 Przedemną gasisz w lazurowej wodzie
 Gwiazdę ognistą.
 Choć mi tak niebo Ty złocisz i morze,
 Smutno mi, Boże!

[Słowacki 1909: 3].

(I am sad, Savior! For me in western skies
 You poured out a radiant rainbow array;
 In azure waters you quench before my eyes
 The fiery star of day...
 Though You gild the sky and sea for me yonder,
 I am sad, Savior!)

[Słowacki, online].

It should be noted that J. Słowacki, as one of the greatest Polish poets and mystics, had a great influence on the work of the next generation of writers: the post-novelist Adam Asnik, the symbolists Tadeusz Miciński and Antoni Lange, and a number of other modernists from Young Poland. And Yanka Kupala fits into this interesting paradigm very harmoniously: not only as an interpreter of A. Asnik's poems, but first of all as an exponent (albeit inconsistent) of certain artistic tendencies of European symbolism. The ideology of this trend, incorporating a number of philosophical views (from the ideas of Plato to the theories of Arthur Schopenhauer and Friedrich Nietzsche) and aesthetic principles embodied in the works of the most famous representatives of belles lettres of the XIX–XX centuries, found a lot of supporters, as well as antagonists outside the region of its origin (its birthplace was France). Yanka Kupala was undoubtedly one of the former, as he mentions it, for example, in his letters to Leo Kleinbart. P. Vasyuchenko draws attention to this fact, he also identifies some of "Kupala's assimilated techniques of symbolist writing – poetic cipher, variability of interpretations, transcendental search, associativity, understatement, obscurity" [Vasûčënka 2009: 11]. As for the so-called poetic cipher by which the Symbolists coded widely known images, filling them with new content, new reality, it was often not just a reception, but a whole strategy aimed at achieving the main creative goal – to get closer to the Absolute, to eternal, pure, transcendent Beauty. As for the rest: using the same variability, associativity, ambiguities, obscurity, recourse to certain plots, images, motifs, etc., – it can be considered as a set of tools, whose task is to work for the implementation of this strategy. However, as the history of thought shows, the Absolute can be understood in absolutely different ways: "The Absolute for religion is God, for Fichte it is "I"; in Hegel's philosophy the role of the Absolute is the universal intelligence (absolute spirit); for Schopenhauer it's freedom, for Bergson – intuition" [*Filosofskij slovar'* 1986:

3]. It is clear that for every artist of the word, who to one degree or another professes the ideas of symbolism, the Absolute acquires its unique forms and is filled with its special content and meaning. For Yanka Kupala, Belarus is such an Absolute. Let us make it clear: not just a country, a homeland, but something boundless, ideal, timeless, which should be strived for, despite any obstacles. Of course not everyone is able to approach the transcendent. It is within the power of only the Chosen ones. After all, will everyone be able "Ŭsû Belarus' – neabnâtnu, âk mora, // Ŭbačyc' u âsnym, âk sonca, svâtle" ("The whole Belarús, like the sea, vast and splendid, // To see in the shining sunlight on the sky") [Kupala 1997a, 3: 30] (this is how Yanka Kupala's realization of the poet's elevation above ordinary people looks like, endowing him with the functions of a priest, prophet, demiurge – an idea that will be adopted by the Romantics and the Symbolists). By the way, the identification of the Absolute with Belarus in the poetry of the Belarusian bard is born from the Christian idea of identifying the Absolute with God. This happens through the deification of the Motherland, which in turn grows out of the awareness of its exceptional value:

Хоць гарыста яна, камяніста яна,
 Вераб'ю па калена, што сею, расце,
 Дый люблю ж яе я, шкода хаткі, гумна:
 О, такіх няма, мусіць, нідзе!
 [Kupala 1995, 1: 194].

(Though so hilly it is, it is covered with stone,
 What I plant, knee-high to a sparrow that grows,
 Still I love dear land, little hut of my own:
 Such ones nowhere nobody knows.)

The poem *Gëta kryk, što žyve Belarus'* (*That's an Outcry that Belarus Lives*), quoted above, is a vivid evidence of Kupala's appeal to the aesthetics of symbolism: every word here is filled with a unique, sacred meaning, depriving the content "of concreteness, accuracy and transparency" [Lâvona-va 2002: 384]. Every true admirer of the Belarusian Fatherland can recite this monologue, in which the lyrical hero affirms the highest value of the homeland, like a prayer. As a result, Belarus becomes a promised land, a paradise on earth ("To ž to raj, dalibog! – zahl'paecca duh... (That's the heaven, my God! – The heart is jumping away...") [Kupala 1995, 1: 195]), and Belarusians are the Chosen people. At the same time, Belarus, as in other poems by Yanka Kupala, merges with the image of God (the Absolute). Why does Belarus live? For she is Love ("A vot âk ne lûbìc' gëta pole, ì bor, // Ì zâlëny sadok, ì kryklìvuû gus'!" ["How can fail I to love dear field, and the woods, // Small green garden aside, and the loud voice of goose!"]) [Kupala 1995, 1:

195], which is eternal, not subject to time or death. And if she dies suddenly, she must be resurrected like Christ. This idea, for example, sounds in the poem *Žydy* (*Jews*):

Вы ўскрэснеце, жыды, услед за Беларусяй, –
 Сцяг ваш і нашая паходня будуць жыць,
 Хоць наш магільнік кветкай апрануўся,
 Хоць згубны мор над намі гібеляй імжыць!
 [Kupala 1997b, 4: 70].

(You will resurrect, oh Jews, with Belarus together,
 The flag of yours and our flare will survive,
 Though our graves are blooming with the heather,
 Though plagues are dooming over us, we strive.)

Drawing a number of analogies between the two peoples, their past, present and possible perspective, the author of the poem comes to interesting conclusions that indicate the influence of romantic and symbolic worldview. One cannot ignore, for example, another attempt to elevate the idea of the Fatherland to the Absolute by justifying the Jews who crucified Christ (note that the crucifixion of the Christian God is justified by a Christian poet, which looks strange at least, but only outside the ideology of symbolism):

Таго ж Хрыста прыбілі вы да крыжа,
 Бо ён вам ворагам для Бацькаўшчыны быў.
 [Kupala 1997b, 4: 70].

(You crucified the Savior in old days
 As he was for your dear Fatherland a foe.)

However, similar paradoxes, which a poet, novelist and theorist of symbolism Andrei Bely calls “the combination of the purpose of knowledge with something that is beyond knowledge” [Belyj 2012: 28], can be seen in the works of representatives of romantic art, where the same symbolism originates. A. Mickiewicz’s dramatic poem *Dziady* is quite revealing in this respect, where pagan mythology, folk ideas, Christian dogma, and philosophical principles of romanticism are combined. The language of this work is so suggestive that it becomes almost unattainable for rational comprehension. We can mention at least the image of the Song of Conrad from the third part of the poem, who emerges as a vampire from the grave to first bite the souls of fellow countrymen, turning them into the same bloodthirsty creatures, and then in a brutal way to destroy the enemies of the Fatherland, ignoring even the God himself (“Z Bogiem – i choćby mimo Boga!” (“With God – even in spite of God!”) [Mickiewicz 2005: 118]):

Potem pójdziem, krew wroga wypijem,
Ciało jego rozrąbiem toporem,
Ręce, nogi gwoździami przybijem:
By nie powstał i nie był upiorem.

[Mickiewicz 2005: 118].

(And then I'll drink the foeman's blood in pails!
I'll cut his body open with an axe,
I'll fix his hands down and his legs with nails,
Lest he should rise and claim a vampire's tax.)

[Mickiewicz 1968: 162].

As we can see, the idea of absolutization of the homeland can be traced in the poetry of the first Belarusian romantic (A. Mickiewicz), which will later be reflected in the poems of the first Belarusian national poet: Yanka Kupala highly appreciated A. Mickiewicz and his work, which, eventually, served as a model for many Belarusian authors. In addition, in the abovementioned third part of *Dziady* there is a very original image of Young Poland, given into the hands of Herod, as well as the image of the Rzeczpospolita with its people, merging with the image of Christ and accepting a martyr's death on the cross to save Europe. It is quite probable that the mythologemes mentioned, introduced by A. Mickiewicz into the fabric of the dramatic poem, could have inspired Yanka Kupala to create a famous image of Young Belarus:

Падымайся з нізін, сакаліна сям'я,
Над крыжамі бацькоў, над нягодамі;
Занімай, Беларусь маладая мая,
Свой пачэсны пасад між народамі!

[Kupala 1997a, 3: 99].

(Go ahead, fly from depths, future falcon-born race
Over ancestors' crosses and misery;
Take your place, Belarus, new-born country of grace,
Honoured place among nations in history.)

It should be noted that the romantic image of Young Belarus, known from the poem of the same name, gradually acquires a number of additional meanings in Yanka Kupala's poetry, becoming over time a complex symbol that reflects not so much the dream of restoring Belarusian statehood, but first of all the thorny way to this starry dream:

З плеч зрывалі убory злацістыя,
Разрывалі карону-вянок,
Разбівалі пасады ей нячыстыя
Ї пад жалезны хавалі замок.

Накладалі ёй сковы сталёвыя
 Надзявалі жабрачы убор,
 У намітку ўбіралі цярнову
 Яе коску, сатканую з зор.
 [Kupala 1997a, 3: 109].

(They threw off golden dress from her shoulders,
 Broke apart her wreath-crown evil ones,
 They cracked off her bride-throne by the boulders
 And they locked it behind iron bars.

They handcuffed her and shackled her totally,
 They outfitted her with beggars alike,
 Thorn-kerchief hid forever and hopelessly
 Lovely plait which was woven of stars).

Thus, Yanka Kupala's Belarus, before taking its "svoj pačèsny pasad" ("its place of honour and fame"), must first lose it, then go through the cross, martyrdom, contempt, betrayal, darkness and finally accept death: "Pasad zaručal'ny magilaj // Pucina slâpaâ havala" ("The bridal attire was hidden // Behind the malicious dark tomb-path") [Kupala 1997a, 3: 20]. This modification of A. Mickiewicz's image of the Motherland-Christ, made by Yanka Kupala, as well as the multiple appeals of the first Belarusian poet to other motifs, plots and themes of the first Litvin romantic, confirms the genetic connection of romanticism with new non-realistic trends, in particular, with symbolism, and secondly, it testifies to the natural continuity of worldviews between different generations of artists born within the same cultural canon. This is the Belarusian canon, which closely intertwined the mysticism of the East and the rationalism of the West, ancient pagan beliefs and the millennial history of Christian traditions. The values of the latter have undoubtedly organised the former components, giving integrity and harmony to the whole system. That is why, in the end, the lyrical hero of Yanka Kupala puts everything in its place, sincerely pronouncing what the Belarusian cultural canon dictates to him:

Хрыстос васкрос!..К табе, о Божа,
 І я ў дзень гэты просьбу шлю:
 Хай Беларусь, мая старонка,
 Ўваскрэсне к вольнаму жыццю!
 [Kupala 1997a, 3: 52].

(Has risen Christ! To you, my dear Lord,
 I want to send my prayer too:
 Let Belarus, the land of my heart,
 Rise to the freedom, to the new!)

And this is no longer a cry or a shriek, which previously symbolized confusion in front of the world and fear for the future of the Fatherland, but a calm dialogue with the Absolute, always sensitive to those who want to be called people.

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STRESZCZENIE: Celem niniejszego artykułu jest analiza cech paradygmatu motywiczno-obrazowego liryków Janki Kupały, co z kolei przyczynia się do przemyślenia na nowo podstaw ideowo-estetycznych jego metody twórczej i stylu poetyckiego, a także miejsca i roli tego przedstawiciela białoruskiej sztuki werbalnej w kontekście europejskich tradycji literackich. Przede wszystkim badany jest problem funkcjonowania motywów religijnych, zwłaszcza chrześcijańskich we wczesnych lirykach pierwszego narodowego poety Białorusi. Również na przykładzie poszczególnych wierszy ukazane są sposoby realizacji przez ich autora szeregu pomysłów artystycznych, których źródła nie tylko tkwią w twórczości jego poprzedników – przedstawicieli europejskiego romantyzmu, lecz także są bezpośrednio związane z paradygmatem estetycznym symbolizmu.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: Janka Kupała, poetyka, estetyka, romantyzm, symbolizm, bohater liryczny.

АНАТАЦЫЯ: Мэтай дадзенага артыкула з’яўляецца аналіз асаблівасцяў матыўна-вобразнай парадигмы лірыкі Янкі Купалы, што ў сваю чаргу садзейнічае пераасэнсаванню ідэйна-эстэтычных асноў яго творчага метаду і паэтычнага стылю, а таксама месца і ролі гэтага прадстаўніка беларускага вербальнага мастацтва ў кантэксце еўрапейскіх літаратурных традыцый. Найперш даследуецца праблема функцыянавання рэлігійных, асабліва хрысціянскіх матываў у ранняй лірыцы першага народнага паэта Беларусі. Таксама на прыкладзе асобных вершаў паказаны спосабы рэалізацыі іх аўтарам шэрагу мастацкіх ідэй, вытокі якіх ляжаць не толькі ў творчасці яго папярэднікаў – прадстаўнікоў еўрапейскага рамантызму, але непасрэдна звязаныя з эстэтычнай парадыгмай сімвалізму.

КЛЮЧАВЫЯ СЛОВА: Янка Купала, паэтыка, эстэтыка, рамантызм, сімвалізм, лірычны герой.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR / O AUTORZE

Anatol Brusevich / Анатоль Брусевіч – Białoruś, Grodzieński Uniwersytet Państwowy im. Janki Kupały, Katedra Filologii Białoruskiej; doktor nauk filologicznych, docent; specjalność naukowa: literaturoznawstwo; zainteresowania naukowe: poezja białoruska, poezja polska, polsko-białoruskie związki literackie.

Adres: Кафедра беларускай філалогіі, вул. Ажэшкі 22, 230023 Гродна, Беларусь.

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