

**MOTIVES OF OVID'S "METAMORPHOSES" IN THE WORKS
BY TARAS SHEVCHENKO**

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The article deals with the role of Ovidius in formation of esthetic principles of Shevchenko's personality. Each metamorphosis written by both poets is an artistic comprehension of the fate of the individual. But unlike Ovidius, which describes in detail the process of transformation, when no single detail is neglected and emotional tension, spiritual torments and lyricism create a credible image, this process is almost absent in the Shevchenko's works. He is interested in the real feelings of his heroines, the causes and the result, not the process of transformation itself. The cause in the works of both poets is the same: inability to stay in the existing state. It can be a punishment for a crime, revenge, unhappy or happy love. Metamorphoses in the works of Ovidius and Shevchenko are generated by the incredible sorrow are the greatest manifestation of emotional tension, which encourages the reader to feel all the intensity of suffering on the one hand and the invincibility of the spirit on the other hand. Artistic images created by Shevchenko by means of transformation, appear in various forms and have many shades. Stylistic comparisons and detailed parabola comparisons perform the function of metamorphoses.

Key words: *antiquity, traditions, reincarnation, plot, image, hero.*

Antiquity became the life-giving source that stimulated the development of European literary process throughout the centuries. Themes, ideas, characters, images, archetypes, artistic devices – all these are reflected in the artistic creation. Myths had the greatest importance for the cultural development of the European nations. Especially it is myths about reincarnation, which first so masterfully were literary worked out by Publius Ovidius Nazon (43 BC – approximately 18 AD).

The role of ancient culture, its representatives, especially Ovidius, in the formation of the leading aesthetic principles of Shevchenko, his personality, development and functioning of antique motives and images in the creative rethinking of Shevchenko are quite thoroughly studied in Ukrainian literature, especially by O. Biletsky, M. Bilyk, V. Janish, Y. Mykytenko, M. Maistrenko, A. Tkachenko and others.

What did attract Shevchenko in the ancient poet? First of all, it is the similarity of their fates, experiences and feelings. In one of the letters he described his life in exile: "Getae, between of which Ovidius Nazon dragged the lees of life, were wild barbarians, but not drunks, and people around me are both" [Shevchenko, 2001, vol. 6: 105].

It is known that the establishment of classicalism in European literatures contributed to the awakening of interest in the antique art in Ukraine. The development of Ukrainian poetry was greatly influenced by Roman poetry, especially by the works of famous lyric poet Ovidius. Shevchenko called him "the most perfect creature of the omnipotent creator of the universe" [Shevchenko, 2001, vol. 6: 105] and appreciated his works. The works of the antique classic accompanied Shevchenko all life. He acquainted himself with them during the studying at the Academy, where the study of all kinds of "antiques" was the essential condition of training and education of artists, and in the library of V. Shyryayev and K. Bryullov. Later Shevchenko recalled that classicist Karl Bryullov "strictly forbade me to take the plot of what else, besides the Bible, ancient Greek and Roman history" [Shevchenko 2001, vol. 6: 339]. Ukrainian exiled poet compared his fate with the fate of the Roman exile Ovidius many times. In Shevchenko's diary we can read: "Augustus, who was a pagan, casting Naso into exile to wild Getae, didn't forbid him to write and draw. A Nicholas, who was a Christian, forbade me to do both. Both were executioners. But one of them is executioner, who was a Christian"[Shevchenko, 2001, vol. 6: 105].

Ovidius entered the literature as a brilliant master of poem, an unrivaled virtuoso of the form, a talented innovator that introduced new genres, new means of artistic representation of reality in the world's treasury of poetry. The recognition came to him during his lifetime, but the fate of the poet was tragic.

The first book of poems that was called "The Loves" brought Ovidius the glory of love elegy's master. Although Ovidius considers himself a follower of Gallus, Tibullus and Propertius, on the contrary, his elegies were distinguished by the cheerfulness and the absence of sadness and grieved tone. "The lyricist of tender passion" as the poet called himself does not attempt to convey the fullness and depth of love feeling. For him love is a light feeling, about which he says simply, sincerely and chanted. *Since, like an active soldier, have I spent my time in toils of war, in beauty's tent: and for so sweet a pay all dangers underwent. You see, my Atticus, by what I prove, who would not live in idleness-must love* (Ovidius. The Loves). As you can see, Ovidius speaks about love, but he doesn't tire the listener, doesn't convince of the depths of his feeling, he doesn't bother with sensibility. Wittiness, subtle humour, bright domestic scenes, elegance and easiness of the poem together with the successful psychological observations gave the poet an opportunity to believe that "The Loves" bring him immortality. *Adieu, my sighing elegies, adieu! I'll be no more concern'd with love or you; but what I write my being shall survive, and in his verse the poet ever live.* (Ovidius. The Loves).

Elegies in the collected book "Heroines" were created on the other basis. They are also devoted to love, but "light Muse" gave place more serious one in them. The author adapts poetically myths, uses plots of Greek tragedies, poetries of Catullus that were close to Ovidius, because of their lively spontaneity and passion of feelings. Separation from beloved, longing for him, memories of time spent together, pleas to come back, thinking about death – these are themes of letters of fifteen heroines, written in the genre of elegy, using a new to Roman poetry of that time form of lyrical monologue to Roman poetry. The collected book became a significant literary phenomenon as the artistic presentation of psychology of love, where declamatory style verbally reproduces the complex mental struggle.

Next book of elegies "The Art of Love", which theorists of literature calls a parody-didactical book, is based on the principle of rhetorical manuals, which were very common at that time. Joking the author gives advices to lovers: how to choose the object of love, how to achieve love and how to save it. The narration of complicated "art" is accompanied by effective instructions, domestic scenes, and mythical narratives.

The book of elegies "The Cure for Love", written in the same parody-instructive tone, was a peculiar addition to the "Art of Love". These parody poems marks the end of the first period of creativity of Roman poet. New works of Ovidius proved the transition to more serious "learned" themes and confirmed the brilliant talent of their author.

In the book "The Festivals" each elegy is a completed story about events of the Rome history. Along with the myths there are many stories from the past and contemporary history in the book. This made the work a kind of chronicle and gave it national importance, because all variety of mythological ideas, astronomical references, antique searching; descriptions and stories reduced to the praise of Caesar Augustus.

The sources of poetries collection "Metamorphoses" ("Transformations"), consisting of fifteen books, became Greco-Roman myths about transformation of gods or into animals, birds, plants, stones, stars and etc. The theme of transformation is an integral part of the mythology of ancient peoples. These myths were particularly common among the Romans. Ancient poets often referred to them, but as a rule they made poetic adaptation of one or two stories, while Ovidius has 250. Since the creation of the world, which is the first transformation, and to the newest officially recognized "metamorphosis" of the transformation of Julius Caesar into the comet. Among the huge number of effective narrated stories that turn the work into an exquisite novella, we name some of the most famous: the transformation of Daphne into laurel tree, Narcissus and Hyacinthus – into flowers, Niobe - into boulder, dissolute women- into rocks. The stories about Philemon and

Baucis who have lived all life in love, harmony and have turned into green trees were well-known in Ukraine. Ovidius interchanges sad and cheerful, touching and horrible, excited and ridiculous scenes with unusual easiness in the book "Pygmalion", which is referred to the transformation of the statue into a girl. Love appears in a variety of ways, although it isn't the only theme. Of course, the author possessed the skill of composition, which allowed to create peculiar complete story from some of elegies, eclogues and short stories. The poet finishes his work with the belief that he created the monument, which will not be destroyed neither by the anger of Jove, nor by fire, sword and destroying time. And so it happened. "Metamorphoses" is one of the most famous literary works in the world. At the same time "Sorrows", based on the incredible sadness of the exiled poet, became the highest achievement of Ovidius. *As my state is mournful so is my verse, the writing's appropriate to the theme. Untouched and happy I toyed with youth and happiness, now I regret I wrote about them.* (Ovidius. Sorrows).

The poet, drawn into a court intrigue, was exiled from Rome to outskirts of Roman Empire to the city Tomis (now Constanta, Romania) by the personal order of Emperor Augustus. There he spent his last nearly 10 years. All that he lived through and about what he recollected and dreamed, what he thought together with the remarkable poetic talent are represented in the five books of "Sorrows" and four books of "Letters from the Black Sea". "My true character is in my songs," the poet assured and sang about himself. The sincerity and simplicity, sad and severe tones with the help of which he conveys his deep human suffering made his "Sorrows" an immortal work and gave examples of new lyrical genre to Roman literature. This genre is a subjective elegy, not related to the theme of love [Tkachenko 2004: 32].

The artistic legacy of Ovidius generously supplies European literature and art with its themes, motives, feelings and images. Antique classic taught medieval Europe language of love. Like Vergil, he became the hero of legends. In the Renaissance epoch the stories of Ovidius were converted countless times into novels, operas and ballets. In Ukrainian literature the image of the famous Roman poet closely associated with the name of Shevchenko.

In the XVI - XVIII centuries, along with Horatius, Ovidius was the most popular in Ukraine. The works of Roman literature classics were widely studied, translated and used since the XVI century. Students of Kyiv and Lviv schools already read Virgil, Horatius and Ovidius in the original [Kharlampovich 1898: 307]. At the beginning of the XVIII century a prose translation of eight books "Metamorphoses" of Ovidius were made (as to the author of the translation, the scientists argue, naming Dmitry Rostovsky and I.Maltsev, a Latin school teacher, directed by Dm. Rostovsky [Pachowsky 1961: 71].

"Sorrows" and "Letters from the Black Sea" gave the world literature a new, unknown previously theme of loneliness. The works of Ovidius' days of exile are the cry of the exiled poet's soul in world literature, which suffered from terrible spiritual torments in order to not only survive, but also to stay a human. "My complaint will be known throughout the world," - wrote Ovidius (Ovidius. Sorrows). Indeed, the theme of loneliness will become one of the most common in the lyric, and the fate of Ovidius sometimes will be repeated by the exiled poets, victims of cruel tyrants, dictatorships and different regimes. But most significant, the most powerful parallel of the fate of Ovidius was the one of the XIX century Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko, who during his exile several times compared himself with the ancient poet and was well knowledgeable about his sad poems. The common motives of mournful elegies by Ovidius and "slave" lyrics by Shevchenko, pierced through by sorrow, pain, grief, which are the most tragic, not only in Ukrainian, but probably in the world literature persuade of it.

Shevchenko not only studied the works of ancient authors, but he also critically interpreted them, taking into consideration his own views toward literature and creative activity, this is proved by many points of his works, including the Russian novels, "Diary", letters, where the Antiquity is organically included to the writer's and his characters' speech, stories, etc. But especially Shevchenko adored Ovidius' "Metamorphoses" and

widely used "transformation" in his works, adding an accusing and social meaning to them and a national color.

In the ballad "The owl" a woman becomes an owl in the incapable children's imagination. She is running bare-headed, yelling and weeping, mad with grief, her only son was drafted into the military. *And oft by night, disheveled quite And bare of head she goes Through all the village, singing loud Or wailing out her woes. The people scolded her... you see, She kept them from their sleep, And all along their hedges prim She trampled grasses deep. By day, the children, armed with sticks, After the widow howl Along the street, and mockingly They call her - "Owl! Owl! Owl!"* (Taras Shevchenko. The owl). It should be pointed out that in the days of Shevchenko, recruited peasants were shackled to avoid them escaping. The drafting of young men into the army was considered to be a long term hard labor in exile, where a subhuman torture awaited them.

In the ballad "The poplar" a girl didn't outwear the separation from her beloved and became a poplar. *So the dark-browed maiden wept, Sang amid her sobbing, And — a wonder — in the plain She turned into a poplar. Through the oak-grove the wind whines, Through the field roams, playing, Sets the poplar by the roadside Bending, deeply swaying.* (Taras Shevchenko. The poplar). Let's point out that there are Ukrainian folk songs about a girl turned on a poplar by a soothsayer. There is a typical social conflict in the center of the work: mother forces her daughter to marry the old reach man (forced marriage motif is spread in many Ukrainian folk songs). As we can see, it is a perfect example of the interaction of Ukrainian folklore and ancient elements.

The landowner's adulterate daughter became a lily after her death. She didn't commit any offence to people, but she was cursed by them because of her father's actions. *Why did to me from childhood days The people bear ill-will? And why was I when but a maid By those same people killed? And yet today why do they prize My presence in their rooms, Call me a queen, can't feast their eyes Enough upon my blooms? Why do they now my praises sing And hold me in esteem? And then the Lily began to weep, Her tears the purest dew... The story of my human life, The woes I suffered then...* (Taras Shevchenko. The lily). The girl's turning into a lily is the basis of the ballad. It can be assumed that this motif was inspired directly by the Ovidius' metamorphoses.

Two competitresses became poplars standing on the tomb of the boy, they poisoned. *Beside the grove in the open field On the very tomb Are there two poplars tall and neat Bending one another. With no wind they're swinging Like battling in the field, They are sisters sorceresses These two lonely trees.* (Taras Shevchenko. Beside the grove in the open field). The plot of the work - folk motives of rivalry in love, poisoning the faithless boy by his girlfriend and her turning into a poplar. So, a situational basis of the metamorphosis completely differs from the one in the ballad "The poplar", where this motif is also available. Among the prototypes of the ballad are Ukrainian folk songs "Oh, don't go, Hryts, to the vechornytsi..." (vechornytsi – is the meeting of youth in evenings), "Two poplars in a field...", "Sough in the valley."

In one of the elegies a girl turns into a viburnum on her beloved's tomb, feeling sorrow for him. *If the black-browed died And I'm dying too. Then bring my soul There where my darling; Put me as a red snowball On my darling's grave.* (Taras Shevchenko. The thought ("Violent wind, violent wind"). The beginning of the poem, reminder of wind, which is the intermediary between separated lovers, has parallels in the folk songs ("Blow the violent wind from the deep ravine...", "Blow the wind, that way...") and written poetry "Cry of Yaroslavna" in "The tale of Igor's campaign". In an ironic thought, written in Orenburg, Shevchenko reinterprets the last part of "Metamorphoses" by Ovidius about resettlement.

The transformation theme, rooted in pre-class folklore, animistic vision of the world nature, fills an important place in the folklore of all nations, especially in Antique and Slavic. The ballad legacy of Ukrainian nation is full of turning people into plants, animals, birds, stones, etc. Scientists believe that this is so-called national version of the world's stories, which were included to the Ukrainian creative treasury, or as a result of a

fundamental rehashing of borrowed plots, or more often as a result of the fact that the same conditions of social life of various nations have created similar phenomena.

"The metamorphosis of the Shevchenko's poetry, - remarks a researcher of the connection of the Shevchenko's works with antiquity of M. Maystrenko, - is organically included in the artistic universe system of the poet and his visual thinking, which absorbed a centuries-old ethic and aesthetic experience of Ukrainian people and its poetry" [Maystrenko 1992: 110].

The metamorphosis theme is worked up by Ovidius and Shevchenko differently. This can be explained by many factors, first of all by different epochs and social status of the poets, different levels of poetic consciousness, also by the poets' original poetic individuality, their conceptions of the world and differences in ideological and aesthetical system, peculiar to each of them. Afterwards, as O.Beletsky correctly stressed, it is a case of parallels, rather than borrowings and imitation [Biletsky 1960: 321].

The myths about transformation and Hellenistic aesthetics were the source of inspiration to Ovidius' "Metamorphoses". The interaction and close connection between Ukrainian national folklore and ancient elements – to Shevchenko's works.

Ovidius' "Metamorphoses" is the desire of the author to create a poetic image of world evolution, define the place of human in it, and engrave a difficult inconsistent world of ancient human, his attitude to nature, philosophical and aesthetic views. Every Shevchenko's work about transformation raises moral and ethical problems of the times of serfdom and independence and recreates the inner world of Ukrainian woman, a bondwoman. "The poet's mighty, light and humanitarian temper was revealed in the ballad "The poplar" – said Ivan Franco."And when the poet managed to wake our sympathy by depicting the tree-orphan in the steppe, it was changed by depiction of the state of poor, abandoned girl. Shevchenko placed in his ballad a greater focus on waking this very sincere human emotion, rather than on waking fear and frightening" [Franco 1980: vol. 28, 86-87].

Each metamorphosis written by both poets is an artistic comprehension of the fate of the individual. But unlike Ovidius, which describes in detail the process of transformation, when no single detail is neglected and emotional tension, spiritual torments and lyricism create a credible image, this process is almost absent in the Shevchenko's works. He is interested in the real feelings of his heroines, the causes and the result, not the process of transformation itself. The cause in the works of both poets is the same: inability to stay in the existing state. It can be a punishment for a crime, revenge, unhappy or happy love. Metamorphoses in the works of Ovidius and Shevchenko are generated by the incredible sorrow are the greatest manifestation of emotional tension, which encourages the reader to feel all the intensity of suffering on the one hand and the invincibility of the spirit on the other hand. Artistic images created by Shevchenko by means of transformation, appear in various forms and have many shades. Stylistic comparisons and detailed parabola comparisons perform the function of metamorphoses.

Shevchenko invoked the metamorphoses along his creative career and they were always the poetic means of exposing social evil of unfair autocratic serfdom regime, which kills all the best in people. Rising of inner hatred of cruelty, depravity and inhumanity of the existing regime exacerbated social orientation of works and sometimes it forced Shevchenko to direct his attention to the life-giving source of ancient literature, history and myths. The Shevchenko's admiration for the Roman poet was a lifelong.

МОТИВИ ОВІДІЄВИХ «МЕТАМОРФОЗ» У ТВОРЧОСТІ ТАРАСА ШЕВЧЕНКА

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У статті розглядається роль Овідія в формуванні естетичних принципів особистості Шевченка. Кожна метаморфоза і у Шевченка і у Овідія стає художнім осмисленням долі окремої людини. Але на відміну від Овідія, який детально змальовує процес перетворення, коли з його уваги не випадає жодна

дрібниця, а емоційна напруженість, душевні страждання і ліризм створюють правдоподібну картину, у Шевченка він майже відсутній. Його цікавлять реальні переживання своїх героїв, причини і результат, а не сам процес перевтілення. А причина у обох поетів одна і та ж: неможливість залишатися в наявному стані. Це може бути кара за злочин, помста, нещасливе кохання або, навпаки, щасливе. Метаморфози і у Овідія і у Шевченка, породжені неймовірною тугою, – найбільший прояв емоційного напруження, який спонукає читача відчувати, з одного боку, всю силу страждання, а з іншого – непереможність духу. Художні образи, які створює Шевченко засобом перевтілень, виступають в найрізноманітніших формах і мають велику кількість відтінків. Функцію метаморфоз виконують порівняння з виразним стилістичним забарвленням та розгорнуті порівняння-параболи.

Ключові слова: античність, традиції, перевтілення, сюжет, образ, герой.

МОТИВЫ ОВИДИЕВЫХ «МЕТАМОРФОЗ» В ТВОРЧЕСТВЕ ТАРАСА ШЕВЧЕНКО

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В статті розглядається роль Овідія в формуванні естетических принципів личности Т. Шевченка. Каждая метаморфоза, и у Т. Шевченко и у Овидия, - это художественное осмысление судьбы отдельного человека. Но в отличие от Овидия, который подробно описывает процесс перевоплощения, обращая внимание на каждую мелочь, а эмоциональная напряженность, душевные страдания и лиризм создают правдивую картину, у Т. Шевченко они практически отсутствуют. Его интересуют реальные переживания героев, их причины и результат, а не сам процесс перевоплощения. Невозможность оставаться в нынешнем состоянии – главная причина перевоплощения у обоих поэтов. Это может быть наказание за преступление, месть, несчастная любовь или, наоборот, счастливая. Метаморфозы и у Овидия и у Т. Шевченко, рожденные невероятной тоской, – величайшее проявление эмоционального напряжения, которое побуждает читателя почувствовать, с одной стороны, всю глубину страдания, а с другой – непобедимость духа. Художественные образы, которые создает Т. Шевченко посредством перевоплощений, выступают в самых разнообразных формах и имеют большое количество оттенков. Функцію метаморфоз выполняють порівняння з виразительной стилістической окраской и развернутые сравнения-параболы.

Ключевые слова: античность, традиции, перевоплощения, сюжет, образ, герой.

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