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### **Peculiarities of Wilde's poem "Endymion (For Music)" in the context of Aestheticism and difficulties of translation into Ukrainian**

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**Abstract:** Peculiarities of Wilde's poem "Endymion (For Music)" in the context of Aestheticism and difficulties of translation are investigated. Transforming the character's image of the well-known mythological plot about Endymion, rethinking such "eternal values" as Love and Beauty and creating his famous paradoxes the writer thereby expresses a protest against the Victorian morality. A decorative style, a semantic color function, synesthesia are researched as features of Aestheticism in the poem. The hypothesis about the impact of literary model of Wilde's Endymion on the writer's fate is of particular interest. This article is believed to be the first step to investigate an artistic originality of Wilde's poem "Endymion (For Music)" and difficulties of translation into Ukrainian and opens the prospects for further consideration of Wilde's literary heritage.

**Key words:** Myth, Endymion, The Goddess of the Moon, Transformation, Aestheticism, Paradoxes, Literary model, Literary apocryph, Translation.

The name of Oscar Fingal O'flahertie Wills Wilde (1854 - 1900) is always associated with the movement of Aestheticism. Wilde's Aestheticism became a form of his rebellion against the Victorian morality. The writer promoted his aesthetic theory in such his articles as "Intensions", (1891), "The Decay of Lying" (1889), "The Critic as Artist" (1890) as well as in his novels, illustrating his point of view by artistic images ("The Picture of Dorian Gray" (1890), "Salomé" (1891). Moreover Wilde transformed his personal life in accordance with the principles of Aestheticism. We agree with the researchers V.A. Lukov and N.V. Solomatin ("The phenomenon of Wilde" (2007) that "the writer was "through a literary man", who didn't think himself to be outside literature and arts" [1,p.51]. As a result, Wilde as a "literary man"

developed his own image not by life examples, but according to the literary models “such as the model of Plato (the image of Socrates in the dialogues “Apology of Socrates”); Shakespeare’s model; a model of T. Chatterton and the model of literary character (especially in romantic and neo-romantic variants)” [1,p. 54]. Thus Wilde looked “original and even unique”. The writer began mythologizing his own image with his behavior and appearance. His eccentric manners, non-ordinary clothes shocked the surrounding people and it was widely exaggerated by the yellow press. Moreover Wilde created the myth about himself so called the “auto-myth” or his mythologized biography “De profundis” (1897).

The purpose of this article is to study Wilde's poem Endymion in the context of Aestheticism to show the influence of this literary image of the mythological character on the writer's life.

This problem has never been studied yet and it is of peculiar interest. As for the methods of investigation they are following: Comparative historical analysis of the myth sources and mythopoetic analysis of literary interpretation to characterize the way of interaction of culture, aesthetics, literature and an analytical method.

Wilde's “Endymion (For Music)” (1881) was published in his first collection “Poems” in 1881.

For the writer this ancient Greek myth is an artistic form of reflection of his outlook and the embodiment of his aesthetic ideal. It is so called “a peculiar escape” of the writer from the real world to the world of art, where the main task of the artist is to transform reality by the laws of Beauty (N. Yu. Bartosh [2], I. Small [3]).

As for Aestheticism in the verse “Endymion” Wilde uses mythological images, symbolic details (Endymion, Arcady, and shepherd's crook) to depict denying the existence of an ideal in the real world. So the first Wilde`s contradiction (or so called paradoxe) is found in the reflection of the author's interpretation of *love and beauty*.

The action of the verse takes place in Arcadia, that is a mythical place of the Greek shepherds, idealized by the classical poets [4, p.370]. This is a poetic personification of the earthly paradise (a reminiscence from Drayton's poem "Endimion and Phoebe", 1594): "THE apple trees are hung with gold, / And the birds are loud in Arcady, / The sheep is bleeding in the fold, / The wild goat runs across the wold" [5, p. 69]. Picturesque depiction of the nature is in contrast to the tragedy of love betrayal. Endymion betrays his previous lover and falls in love with the Goddess of the Moon. At the beginning of the poem, the main character appears to be gentle like a dove "he is soft as any dove" [5, p. 69], but at the end of story Endymion is an insidious tempter, who is condemned: "Ah! thou (...) Endymion" [5,p.69]. The Goddess of the Moon also changes her image from a true girlfriend to a seducer: "Tell him that I am waiting where / The rushlight glimmers in the Farm"; " O rising moon! O Lady moon!" / "Be Lady Moon! / Be my loved one" [5,p.69] and then: «False moon! False moon! O waning moon! / Where is my own true lover gone»). [5,p.69].

Unlike the myth (in all known versions), where the relationships between lovers are permanent and Endymion is passive, immersed in deep eternal sleep, his life is monotonous, and the Goddess of the Moon visits Endymion every night [6, p 306]) Wilde`s interpretation completely excludes the theme of sleep. His Endymion has an active lifestyle. He enjoys his life immersing in love entertainment. Wilde shows the dynamics of the development of love relationships of the main characters: expectation → languor → sorrow → suffering → jealousy → despair.

As for the ancient myth the beauty of Endymion is the dominant theme in it. In all forms of arts, this mythological image is considered as a symbol of the Beauty and Perfection. However the writer radically transforms a traditional plot of the myth and gives a new fate to Endymion.

Transformed image demonstrates the disharmony of the external form (physical Beauty) and internal spiritual content (a moral Ugliness).

Another Wilde`s paradox in the poem is connected with love. The immortal love and feelings of fidelity depicted in the myth are opposed to frailty of feelings in the poem. Also Wilde`s interpretation shows two kinds of love: "man ↔ woman" and "man ↔ man". The English word "lover" is translated as "beloved". Unlike Slavic languages English does not have a category of gender. The correct translation into Ukrainian becomes possible only due to understanding of the context reflecting Wilde`s transformation of Endymion's image. An analogical translation into Russian made by A. Lukyanov ("Где *mom*, в кого я так влюблѐн?"(Russian) [7] → "Де *moй*, у кого я такий закохануї?"(Ukrainian) [8,p.123-125] also shows that Endymion has left the male lover and falls in love with the Goddess of the Moon. So Endymion is in the center of love triangle. We think that the choice of this myth by the writer was not accidental. According to an ancient myth Endymion is recognized not only as a standard of Beauty, but also as an ideal of

*male love* [9, p.84]. Wilde's Endymion is bisexual too. Later in Wilde's novel "The Picture of Dorian Gray" (1891) the main character also experimentalizes with two forms of love. Moreover Wilde embodied bisexuality in his personal life [10, p. 221-224].

There are obvious coincidences that unite the two Wilde's characters - Endymion and Dorian Gray. First of all, both images have antique reminiscences. Adonis, Paris, Narcissus are mythological prototypes of Gray [11, p. 219]. Both characters are standards of Beauty and symbolize an eternal youth. Both characters have dissolute lifestyles, sexual promiscuity. Their immorality and selfishness cause suffering, ruin other lives. The first Endymion's lover and Dorian's lover Sybil are examples of victims of their immorality. Thus Wilde's images embody the idea of *hedonism*. Endymion and Gray express the disharmony of the external form (Beauty) and internal spiritual content represented as a moral Ugliness. From the point of view of V. P. Rudnev, the contrast between the Beauty of Dorian's body and the disgust of his soul leads to dying like Narcissus, from love to himself" [11, p.219]. In this case we fully support O. V. Akimova's opinion that, proclaiming Aestheticism as a vital credo, Wilde shows its limitations and advocating for the triumph of aesthetic principles, he demonstrates their subordination to morality [12, p. 8]. Thus Wilde's character has a negative experience and becomes the first martyr of Aestheticism.

The immorality of Endymion, which was originally considered by the writer as his protest against the Victorian morality, as challenge of the lack of social freedom for man in the Victorian society leads the character to degradation of his personality. Thus Wilde depicts carnal redundancy, promiscuity, immorality of some representatives of the Victorian society that can be related to the aesthetic category of the Ugliness and opposed to the category of BEAUTY sung in the ancient society. From this point of view Endymion can be considered as Dorian Gray in his early youth. The analyzed poem reflects the beginning of Wilde's creative search as the writer of Aestheticism and his novel constitutes its completion.

Using *an apocryph* (a literary work, created on the basis of another that represents a new view of the world, described in the original work [13]) Wilde conveys the destruction of dominant universally accepted dogmas. It is the most acceptable artistic form of his paradoxes. Wilde as "the prince of paradoxes" [14] "inverted the common concepts" in his poem [15, p. 100, 102] (see Figure 1.). This "equilibrium of thought" expresses the manifestation of Aestheticism where "Beauty is higher than morality, art is higher than reality, and pleasure is the most valuable in the life" [12, p. 7].

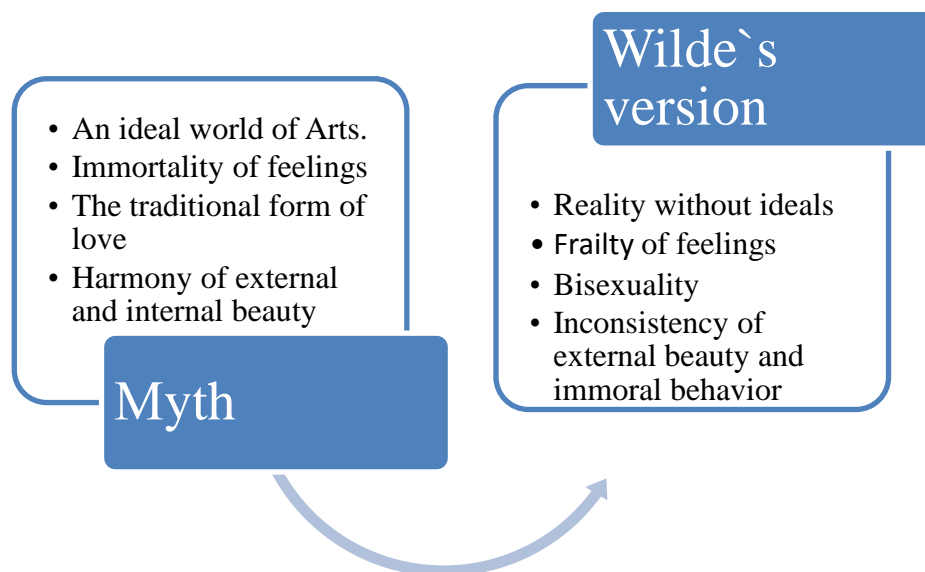


Fig.1. The literary apocryph is a form of reflection of the Wilde`s paradoxes.

The peculiarity of the writer's paradoxes in the “Endymion” is that, firstly, they are based on the contrast between concepts from the sphere of moral and ethical relations and aesthetics; then secondly, they have an anti-Victorian orientation and reflect the author's perception of his contemporary epoch.

The poem “Endymion” is known for other features of Aestheticism. Firstly, it is a *decorative style*. From the first lines of the work “THE apple trees are hung with gold, / And the birds are loud in Arcady” [8, p. 69] Wilde tries to prove that “there are no such forms of beauty and harmony in reality that the artist can create beauty only in arts” [12,p.7]. Therefore he depicts “scenery” for “a comprehensive aesthetic picture of beauty, which manifests itself in describing of the environment, clothing, appearance of Endymion” [16, p. 9] to force the reader to leave everyday reality and plunge into the world of romance and fantasy” [17, p. 76]. So, the outside entourage is described with an exquisite diligence: the landscape of ancient Arcady with flowering gardens, various plants (lily, violet, daffodil) and the earth which is rich in all kinds of animals (sheep, wild goat, little fauns), details of Endymion`s portrait: “brown and curly is his hair”, “the lips vermilion”, the color and material of his garment: “the purple shoe”, “the goat-skin wrapped about his arm” and “a shepherd's crook” as a key detail of a shepherd`s image [8,p.69]. Wilde's pays a special attention to a variety of colors (gold, silver, purple, hazel, brown crimson, violet, vermilion), which emphasizes the unique Wilde`s understanding of the world beauty. We share O. R. Posudievskaya`s opinion that Wilde “carefully choosing colors, affects intensively the readers` imagination and contributes to the creation of a keen sense of aesthetic

pleasure, which will appear as the main value of the contemporary being for the writer” [17, p.76].

Secondly, another feature of Aestheticism is *a semantic color function*. The change of color in the context of Aestheticism has a semantic meaning and emphasises the changes in the state of mind or the character`s fate. The change of “gold”, dominating in the beginning of the verse, into “silver” [8,p.69], meaning “truth” according to Symbolism [18, p. 434-435] is associated with the process of “enlightenment”: Endymion`s lover sees the real state of affairs, his betrayal. However, such explanation is traditional and evident. From the point of view of Aestheticism the change of the color: from warm “gold” → to cold “silver” possibly states the departure of the character into the illusory world of the Goddess of the Moon which symbolizes the relativity of being and the author`s negation of a modern reality.

Finally, *synesthesia* is another feature of Aestheticism. In order to enhance the aesthetic pleasure of the beauty Wilde uses synesthesia to make the reader see the colors (gold, silver, purple, hazel, brown crimson, violet, vermilion) or ”... light blinks on the farm”, hear the sounds (“sheep bleating in the fold”), even feel “cold and chill” atmosphere of the world, which is created in the verse [8, p.69]). This poem is addressed to an elite reader, oriented on an educated person who is able to comprehend the symbols and accept Wilde`s interpretation of the ancient myth. The search for harmony and beauty in poetry makes the author merge words and music. It is interesting to note, according to the subtitle of the Wilde`s work “For music” [8,p.99] the English writer intended to put this verse to music. Thus, Wilde created a song that is “a synthetic musical and poetic form of art” [19, vol. 2, p. 217]. Moreover, Wilde`s landscape becomes a background for the reproduction of the emotional state of the character, conveying its ever-changing momentary mood. Depending on the emotions of the characters, the landscape also changes like in Romanticism and Impressionism. So, waiting for the date with Endymion the nature looks kind: “birds sing loudly” [8, p. 69]. Disappointment, bitterness of betrayal and cooling of feelings are embodied in the following lines: “Dew is cool, / And birds do not sing in Arcady, ... / Even the tired daffodil / Closed its golden petals” [8,p.69]. The treachery of the Goddess of the Moon, that has stolen Endymion is compared with the treacherous assault of a predatory wolf on sleeping sheep at night: “The grey wolf prowls about the stall” [8,p.69].

Wilde's verse is distinguished by change of main characters` mood and feelings. There are three emotional appeals addressed to the Goddess of the Moon illustrating the change from benevolence to hate: “O rising moon! O Lady moon!” → “O risen moon!”, “O holy moon!” → “False moon! O waning moon!” [8,p.69]. Thus the triad “Rising”→ “risen”→ “waning moon” conveys “the dynamics of changes of the relation to Lady Moon`s image.

Like Hugh Donald Barclay's poem "Endymion or The Boy Who Cried For The Moon" (1877) Wilde's verse has distinctive features of neomythologism, which become apparent in the interpretation of the ancient myth about Endymion, the creation of an alternative variant of the mythological character's fate in the Victorian society.

Thus the peculiarities of the poem are:

- An artistic manifestation of Aestheticism represented by a cult of Beauty, pleasure, emphasizing the prevalence of art over reality;
- Presentation of the writer's paradoxes based on the contrast between concepts from the sphere of moral and ethical relations and aesthetics;
- An artistic protest against the Victorian morality;
- Rethinking of "eternal values" (categories of Love and Beauty) in the context of Aestheticism (Wilde's beauty is deprived of an ethical basis);

Finally, the literary model of the Wilde's Endymion as an ideal of male love had largely influenced the writer's fate, who built his life in accordance with the principles of Aestheticism proclaimed by him in his books.

As for difficulties of translation, different language structure of English and Ukrainian (as analytical and synthetical languages) causes the translation problems. We have already mentioned above about difficulties of gender transfer. The category of gender is quite important when translating from English into Ukrainian and often requires clarification by the translator: ("Moon" → "Леді Місяць"). Moreover, the presence of obsolete words to emphasize the antiquity of the events also causes difficulties in translating. For instance, an obsolete word "**doth**" was used in the past as the third person singular of the present tense of the verb "do": *he/she/it doth* = *he/she/it does*. Other obsolete words in the poem are following: "**shoon**" is *dialect*, mainly Scottish a plural form of "shoe"; the word "thou" means an old-fashioned form of "you" and "hast" denotes "old second person singular form of the verb "have" ("Ah! **thou hast** young Endymion, / **Thou hast** the lips that should be kissed!" [8, p.70]. To achieve an adequate translation into Ukrainian, a number of translation transformations have been used. The most typical grammatical transformations are following: *Addition*: "And he is soft as any dove" → "І *саме* він ніжний, як голуб"; *Substitution*: "O rising moon" → "О, місяцю, **що сходиш**"; "O risen moon" → "О, місяцю, **що зійшла**"; "O waning moon" → "О, місяцю, **що убиває**"; "Be my lover's sentinel" → "Будь на варті у мого коханого"; *Omission* "...my own true lover" → "мій коханий"; "The sheep lie bleating" → "Вівці бекають"; *Inversion* "And brown and curly is his **hair**" → "А його **волосся** каштанове та кучеряве"); and lexical ones (*Transcription*: "Endymion" → "Ендіміон";

*Concretization*: “... the falling dew” → “свіжа роса”; “The birds are loud” → “І птахі гучно співають”; “The apple trees are hung with gold” → “Яблуні наливаються золотом”).

Thus this article is believed to be the first step to investigate an artistic originality of Wilde`s poem “Endymion (For Music)” and difficulties of its translation into Ukrainian and opens the prospects for further consideration of Wilde`s literary heritage.

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