

**THE POETICS OF TRANSFORMATION: OVID'S
METAMORPHOSES AS THEMATIC INSPIRATION,
MODEL OF MYTHOLOGIZATION AND POETIC MODEL
IN THE POETRY OF SÁNDOR WEÖRES***

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ABSTRACT

The *Metamorphoses* is one of the most productive and complex intertext in the poetry of Hungarian poet Sándor Weöres. This paper addresses some models of complex rewriting of the Ovidian text in the 1950s, analysing the radical poetic rewriting of the Ovidian metaphors, mythical prosopopeias and the poetic figures of metamorphosis in Weöres' poetry. The epic mythological poems of that decade (*Medeia*, *Minotauros*, *Orpheus*) connect and contrast fragments of the disparate mythic narratives of the characters. The textual and narrative discontinuity and the mixture of epic, lyric and dramatic discourses allow to read these poems as a simultaneous experiment with transformation and interchange of the dramatic functions of the characters, dissolving and establishing the borders of their identity, testing the capacity of the co-reading of contrasting and distant mythologems. Ovid's characteristically ironic move from admiring the beauty to a distinctly rapacious love of having, the reciprocity of the distant characters' narratives and the poetical utilization of the sonority (the metaphorisation of the sound, and the out of control of the own speaking, invoking the voice at the moment it is lost) are very fruitful for the *Echo* (1954).

Keywords: Sándor Weöres; Ovid; *Metamorphoses*; Orpheus; Echo; *Medeia*; literary criticism; classical studies; 1950s literature

Sándor Weöres (1913–1989) is one of most important lyric poets in the 20th-century Hungarian literature. His poetics encompassed a wide range of genres, techniques and innovative poetic forms. He rejected the officially approved subject matter of Socialist Realism to explore such diverse areas as Eastern philosophy, Sumerian, Polynesian and Greek myths, experimenting with poetic discourses of impersonality and rewriting the poetic tradition of European Romanticism. He is distinguished as a very talented translator of nearly every major European poet. From 1949 to 1964, his poetry was suppressed by the communist government of Hungary, with a few exceptions.

Metamorphoses is one of the most productive and complex intertext in the poetry of Sándor Weöres. My paper addresses some models of complex rewriting of the Ovidian

* An earlier Hungarian version of the present study with different emphases see Bartal (2017).

text analyzing the renewal and the interplay of poetic genres in Weöres' poetry in the 1950s. The task of mapping Ovid's presence in the poetry of Weöres is enormous, especially because it is not unreasonable to see Ovid's extensive influence in it through the mediation of adapters. In this field, first of all, we have to speak about Hungarian and Western European humanist, baroque and romantic poetry as well as the painting and sculpture of the Renaissance and the subsequent centuries adapting the most important literary source for mythological subjects with his innovation (like a mythological handbook of fantastic stories). I shall confine my discussion essentially to some of the mythological poems of *The Tower of Silence*, namely *Echo*, *Medeia*, *Orpheus* and *Minotauros*.¹ My paper will not cover the cycle of sonnets in *Firewell*,² titled *Transformations*, written concurrently with the translation of Mallarmé's poems by Weöres and influenced by the overburdened syntax and the French poet's enigmatic metaphors. The *Proteus*, *The Dissolved Hermaphroditus*, *The Birth of Tomorrow*, *Marsyas and Apollon*, *Hephaistos*, *The Hazy Window* form a radical poetic rewriting of the Ovidian metaphors, mythical prosopopeias and of the poetic figures of metamorphosis.

Owing to the temporarily softened censorship in connection to the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, Weöres published his book of poetry titled *The Tower of Silence*. Drawn from thirty years of work this selection contains a series of 100 poems among others, namely *Orbis pictus*, which is in dialogue with the *Orbis sensualium pictus*, the first successful visual textbook for children to learn Latin and German edited by the Czech humanist John Amos Comenius (Jan Amos Komenský).³ The encyclopedic representation of things, phenomena and notions in the *Metamorphoses*, in the humanist pedagogical textbook and in Weöres' *Orbis pictus* share common characteristics thematically and structurally. To get a sense of their complex relationship let's take a look at the poem *Echo*:

"The rings of reflection are dying softly.
Exultantly responding to your every desire.
Is lured to her homeland, coast of nothingness,
wind wagon, fog leg, air bosom."⁴

The echo is a differentiation of one's own sound and words: the self experiences their echoed, corporeal-based voices as the unattainable *object of desire as immaterial* and metaphorically feminine in connection with the mythical story. The echo originates from the coast of nothingness; however, this transformation is a form of annihilation, not tragic, but banal. The metrical structure of this poem mirrors the reflecting of sound: the first and last verse are dominated by spondee, gradually transformed in the first into iambic and in the last one into trochaic. The last verse is constructed by a triad of compound nouns: wind wagon, fog leg and air bosom, the process from moving to static in the first metonymically coherent parts represents the elimination of the own/independent sound. Rhythmically repeated sway is created by a duality of the compound nouns: on the one

¹ See Weöres (1956: 337, 370, 382–386, 390–395).

² Weöres (1964: 75–106).

³ Weöres (1956: 335–351) and Comenius (1669).

⁴ Weöres (1956: 337): *Csengő visszhang gyűrűz, majd lágyan elhal. / Minden vágyadra ujjongva felel. / Honába, semmiség partjára elcsal, / szél-kordé, köd-láb, levegő-kebel.* I would like to express my gratitude for the English translation to Katharina Hirsch.

hand, the first, non-visual, nonlocalizable part, on the other, the corporeal and in-motion of the second. Echo's disappearing, the uncertainty or liquidation of her body-border becomes the voice-body.

Just before retelling it, Ovid condenses the story of the nymph in a half-verse: *corpus adhuc Echo, non vox erat* (Ov. *Met.* III, 359).⁵ The beginning of the episode is focused on the sway of the voice like in the poetry of Weöres. Echo, nominated *vocalis nymphe*⁶ in the Ovidian text (Ov. *Met.* III, 356), mustered up her courage from the monologue transformed by her in a dialogue-like monologue, comes out of the woods to put her arms around his neck, but Narcissus runs from her, then Echo too, struck by the sorrow, has to hide in the forest. Her body refuges, vanishes into the air, only her bones and the sound of her voice are left (Ov. *Met.* III, 397–398). In the story of Narcissus this movement comprises the fluctuation and the provisional fusion of image and voice. As Shadi Bartsch asserts⁷ the links among vision, sexuality, and self-knowledge are key to the ancient Greco-Roman understanding of the self that stress the specular capacity of the actual gaze. Weöres' poetry can serve to highlight the episode when the unaffected boy touches the fountain that no animal or bird disturbed (Ov. *Met.* III, 407–410): the syntagm of 'the rings of reflection' is a contamination of the desire of sexual possession and of the motion on the fountain's surface. The poem *Echo* is influenced by the *Metamorphoses*' narrative complexity namely by metalepses and by the narrative density in the rewriting of the mythological traditions in their metanarrative cross-referentiality. As Gabriele Rosati emphasizes, the action is continually replicated internally through the mediation of *mise en abyme* and the text continually maintains our awareness that we are hearing narratives of events and insists on the function of mediation.⁸

In the 1930s Ovid's reception already underlined the Ovidian invention in the Narcissus' representation: the integration of the Tiresias' prophecy and Echo's episode,⁹ which are determinant modifications for Weöres' interpretation. In default of naming the boy we perceive the interlacement of the multiple narratives, the Hungarian poem takes the subtly brittle connections between stories: the apostrophe addresses first of all Narcissus, and the words of the accursed nymph have three meanings: like the original intention of the boy, according to the interpretation of Echo and by the reinterpretation of his own words transferred "on the lips" of the nymph. A good example of the gradual modification of the meaning is: *Perstat et alternae deceptus imagine vocis / 'huc coeamus' ait, nulloque libentius umquam / responsura sono 'coeamus' rettulit Echo* (Ov. *Met.* III, 385–387).¹⁰

Tiresias is highlighted in Weöres' poetry by the epigraph of his poetry-book *Firewell* (1964) which is a quotation from a pre-romantic Hungarian drama titled *Narcissus or the Killing Self-Love*.¹¹ *Firewell* reinterprets Narcissus and Tiresias as metaphors and alle-

⁵ "Echo still had a body then and was not merely a voice" (translation of Kline [2000]).

⁶ "the nymph ... of the echoing voice" (translation of Kline [2000]).

⁷ See Bartsch (2006: 15–40).

⁸ See Rosati (2002: 271).

⁹ See Bömer (1969: 537–538).

¹⁰ "He stands still, and deceived by the likeness to an answering voice, says 'Here, let us come together'. And, never answering to another sound more gladly, Echo replies 'let us copulate'" (translation of Kline [2000], slightly modified). See Gábor (2015: 270).

¹¹ Ungvár-németi Tóth (1816: 290–324). László Ungvárnémeti Tóth (1788–1820) is an unknown scientist, poet and dramatist despite his unique orientation towards the ancient Greek culture and his innovative, pindaric metrical forms.

gories, in the place of the autoidential presence and the mirroring, the metaphors of denial are the figures/tropes of the desire and balance. Into his famous quasi-postmodern book titled *Psyché*¹² Weöres inserts an extensive, more than 60-page long quotation from Ungvárnémeti: a selection of his two volumes and his abbreviated drama. One of the integrated verses by Weöres is: “Doesn’t speak, doesn’t hear, doesn’t understand because he/it is mute, deaf and cold! Because it’s an empty reflection on water, it hasn’t Being.”¹³ This adaptation of the Ovidian quotation (*ista repercussae quam cernis imaginis umbra est. / nil habet ista sui* [Ov. Met. III, 434–435])¹⁴ clarifies the main context of the Narcissus-motif in the third book of *Metamorphoses* and in the epigraph in Weöres’ volume that is the provocation of self-reflexibility: the recognizability of the self’s essence. Inserting the Ovidian phrase and epigraphing the Tiresias-monologue in his poetry-book Weöres presents this tension between the two functions of the Narcissus’ mirror-motif underlined by Bartsch: on the one hand the false, illusive reflection and the recognition, insight on the other.¹⁵

Connecting Ovid’s treatment of the Narcissus’ myth and the empty, killing and self-closing desire of Echo, Weöres’ poem underlines Ovid’s characteristically ironic move from admiring the beauty of a *figura*, *imago*, or *simulacrum* to a distinctly rapacious ‘love of having’ emphasized by Lynn Enterline.¹⁶ Reading Narcissus’ plot from the mirroring perspective of Echo or Weöres’ *Echo* from the Ovidian text, the poetical utilization of the sonority (the metaphorization of the sound, and the out of control of own speaking) becomes dominant in the Hungarian poem like in the Ovidian rewriting of the story of Medusa, Philomela, Narcissus and Echo.

The epic mythological poems of the 1950s (*Medeia*, *Minotauros*, *Orpheus*) in *The Tower of Silence* connect and contrast fragments of the disparate mythic narratives of the characters. The *Orpheus* engages in dialogue with the tenth and the eleventh book of *Metamorphoses* and the cycle of Rilke (*Sonnets to Orpheus*) and his famous poem, *Orpheus. Eurydike. Hermes*, but at the same time represents and uses the complexity of ‘Orphic tradition’ as intellectual and spiritual ideals. The epic poem of Weöres in five parts is based on the consonant and dissonant narratives of the archetypical poet, Orpheus the *vates*-poet who had the power over death in the early Greek tradition, the founder of mysteries, the prophet who mediates transcendental truths in Pausanias, Plato and Herodotus, the neoplatonic Orpheus who diffuses the doctrines of his spiritual enlightenment in an allegorical language, and the pagan type of Christ in the ancient Christian tradition.¹⁷

The first part of the poem titled *The Playing Orpheus* represents the song in the Underworld metaphorically as the light reordering the sea, the abstract space of the poem. At such moments, we are also asked to consider language not merely as a mode of representation but to discover the performative dimension of the rhetoric beyond thought. The

¹² Weöres (1972: 176–236).

¹³ Weöres (1972: 224; my translation).

¹⁴ “What you perceive is the shadow of reflected form: nothing of you is in it” (translation of Kline [2000]).

¹⁵ Bartsch (2006: 94).

¹⁶ Enterline (2004: 10).

¹⁷ On the spiritual and philosophical aspects of Orphic tradition and the afterlife of orphism see Ghidini (2000).

first person is presented belonging to the darkness and to the dawn at the same time, his dishuman movement is organized by the wave-motion of water, wing and light and receives bacchic significances: *Énekem, a láng, / robogó, szertenyilalló: a sötét, néma víz tereit / fűrtösre tépi*.¹⁸ As so often in the *Metamorphoses* the job of demiurge seems to be interchangeable here with that of (metamorphic) poet: the manipulation of the space tends to read as mimicry of the ekphrastic manipulation of rhetorical space.¹⁹ The song has the power of penetrating the medium of the dark water, maybe of the audience (the society), it can transform it, but the metaphor of *cluster* signs at the same time that he or it will become victim of the Bacchic horde. The opening lines are influenced by the Roman poetic tradition characterizing Orpheus like Musaeus and Linus, *vates* inspired by the nature, and swelled by Ovidian visual illusionism, stressing the relationship between art and nature.²⁰ The flexible narrative techniques and the indefinite chronology of *Orpheus* evoke the Ovidian time-structure of *Fasti* and *Metamorphoses*, the second part of Weöres' poem, titled *The Killed Orpheus*, anticipates the narration of the katabasis of Orpheus because the sequential ordering of the mythological events is reordinated by the timeless nature of death, the central topic of the poem. *Orpheus* is constructed by multiple voices, by fragmented monologues in the first person, shaped by typographic arrangements of metrical dramas. The voices are separated by horizontal and vertical arrangement. The first person attributed to Orpheus in the poem is extended to his song: *A halál dobja pereg, én forgok a táncban örökre, / az ének*.²¹ Maurice Blanchot with *Sonnets to Orpheus* emphasizes that Orpheus is the act of metamorphosis: "not the Orpheus, who has conquered death, but he who always dies [...] he is we ourselves, bearing the anticipated knowledge of our death, knowledge which is dispersion's intimacy. If the poem could become a poet, Orpheus would be the poem: he is the ideal and the emblem of poetic plenitude. Yet he is at the same time not the completed poem, but [...] the origin of the poem, the sacrificial point which is no longer the reconciliation of the two domains, but the abyss of the lost god, the infinite trace of absence."²²

The metapoetic interpretation of Orpheus' song in Ovidian²³ and in Weöres' text is amplified by the juxtaposition and tension of different genres (epic, elegy, epigram, eclogue) and by the experiment of how the stories of the classical tradition can be renarrated in completely different ways. The generic multiplicity within the formally epic framework is particularly fundamental to the Ovidian poem: the name of Orpheus in Ovidian text is a sign of a literary genre-debate.²⁴ The tension of genres (gnoma, epigram, elegy, dramatic monologue) in *Orpheus* is based on the dichotomy of the song's dynamism and mobility and the fixing look. The contrast of the normative and the metaphorical discourse in this poem is not only a varied landscape of the traditions colligated by the name Orpheus but are forms of metamorphosis as well as phenomenon of the cultural

¹⁸ Weöres (1956: 382). "My song, the flame is rattling (scuffling), twinging: shreds the spaces of the dark and mute water to clusters" (my translation).

¹⁹ See Hardie (2002: 129).

²⁰ On the Roman poetic tradition of Orpheus see Wheeler (1999: 65).

²¹ Weöres (1956: 384). "The snare drum of death playing, me, spinning in the dance forever, / the song" (my translation).

²² Blanchot (1982: 141–142).

²³ See Acél (2011) for the detailed explanation on the metapoetic reading of *Metamorphoses*.

²⁴ See Acél (2011: 66, 75).

policy in Hungary in 1955. Ten years later, Weöres' sonnet *Marsyas and Apollon* in the cycle of *Transformations* represents the force of the aggressive power in the same way: Apollon is characterized by his timeless, inflexible and impersonalized look on the victim and on the celebrating mass.

In his epic mythological poems of the 1950s Weöres limited the use of the mythological person's proper name to the title, appearing in the text's deixis and personal pronouns. This is a way of allegorisation articulated by Walter Benjamin,²⁵ this type of allegory is a fragmentary form of representation over the unity of the artistic symbol. The story of Pygmalion in Ovidian text is one of the episodes of the Orpheus' mourning song. This metapoetic significance is reinterpreted in Weöres' poem: she, the unnamed Eurydice, is represented as an artwork of Orpheus, but she is visible only in her fragmentation, transformed from the infertile marble to a living, waving but immediately broken pottery. The dancing move of sherds is rewritten by the dance of Orpheus as the dynamic sign of passing. The allusion is recognizable here to the 18th sonnet of the 2nd part in Rilke's *Sonnets to Orpheus: Tänzerin: o du Verlegung / alles Vergehens in Gang*.²⁶ Weöres' poem is intensively developing the links between the illusionist aspects of poetic creation and metamorphosis underlined by Hardie.²⁷ In the song of Orpheus in book X in *Metamorphoses* for the lover (Ov. *Met.* X, 17–39), the quest for presence becomes an impulse to construct an artistic monument embodying the lost. For Orpheus Eurydice is the furthest that art can reach, it has to endure its measurelessness, emphasizes Maurice Blanchot,²⁸ a work can be produced only if the measureless experience of the deep is not pursued for its own sake.

The composition of Weöres' text starts from the oxymoron of *mute song* and goes to the silence of the closure: Orpheus is singing like a fish. The power of Orpheus is confronting the fate as the prewriting, unchangeable plot of individuals, and the poem alluding to Orpheus' song is a chain of episodes in *Metamorphoses*, but not linearly narrated. The metamorphosis is the essence of the unsettled, labile identity generated by fragmented texts, mutable motives and metaphors.

In comparison with the tragic, melodramatic descent of Orpheus to the Underworld in Vergil's fourth *Georgics* (Verg. *Georg.* IV, 453–527), Orpheus' mourning and katabasis in *Metamorphoses* is restricted to an extract, and book X centers on a chain of exempla of metapoetic self-representation, interpretation, and of the limits, opportunities and scope of the performative artistic representation and illusion. Weöres' poem is structurally analogous with book X, it has a four-line dramatic *Prologue* that offers different interpretations of Orpheus' figure to the audience and introduces the four titled parts, each one narratively subordinate to the former. The transformation has narrative-dramaturgical function as well as the rhetorical change of the narrators does, the continuity and discontinuity, even multiplicity of their voice, and the morbidity of the metaphors. Metamorphosis at the end of each single part of Weöres' poem (*Medeia*, *Orpheus*), like in Ovidian work, marks often ending episodes, or merely a transition, as Feldherr pointed

²⁵ Benjamin (2019).

²⁶ "Dancer: O transporter of all fading away / in very transition" (translation of Hunter [1993]).

²⁷ Hardie (2002: 173–222).

²⁸ Blanchot (1982: 170).

out,²⁹ and readers are continually confronted with the question of whose voice we are listening to, where the limits of single individualities are. Applying the visual iconography of the figures described, and the narrative continuity of the first person belonging to different, unnamed characters, the Hungarian poem is mounting / setting up Orpheus and Eurydice, and Hermes will be constructed metonymically by their bodies, which strongly recalls the orphic, winged, bigender dragon in *Rhapsodies* called Phanes or Erikepaïos.³⁰

The *Minotauros* is a text-labyrinth where sexual aggression, textual and bodily fragility plays such a central part. Ovid responds to Vergil's ekphrasis by enlarging the significance of the labyrinth for his own poem. The etymological play connecting the verb *labor* with the *labyrinth* perfectly characterizes the form of the Ovidian poem, its fluid movement from tale to tale and the clever, if tenuous, transitions from one book to another. This labyrinthine movement derives in part from the interlacement created by the interruption of a tale with an intervening story and from the recollection of a myth already recounted through similarities of theme or plot line. The mirroring aspect of rhetorical space emphasized by the description wittily collapses the distinction between Maeander as river and as river god, the labyrinth and the 'confused clues to direction' of Daedalus, the artist (Ov. *Met.* VIII, 162–168). Weöres' labyrinth is a mirroring, *unpredictable* rhetorical space, now inner maze of female body, insulted and raped, now expanding mythological labyrinth full of violated corpses like an allegory of the Ovidian text. The changing implications of metamorphosis invite contrasting readings and open interpretative possibilities, so the complex, enlarged imagination of the mechanical intercourse of Minotauros and Pasiphae or Ariadne isn't tragic throughout, it is interrupted with a surrealistic, partly humorous vision.

The *Medeia* of Sándor Weöres is one of the poet's epic mythological poems of the 1950s, connecting and contrasting fragments of Medea's disparate mythic narratives of Euripides, Apollonius of Rhodes and Ovid. The textual and narrative discontinuity and the mixture of epic, lyric and dramatic discourses in a widened context of Medea's mythologems allow to read the poem as a simultaneous experiment with interchanging the dramatic functions of the characters, dissolving and establishing the borders of their identity, and, in a paradox way, with metaphorizing the closure, the marginalization and the isolation of the Self. The *Medeia* is constituted by a double time structure: on the one hand, the homogeneous time of the dream and the non-existence connecting to the *inseparability* of the poem's speakers and to the visual dominance. On the other hand, in the time structure of the unidentified first person singular unified center, the remembrance of the voices results in variable histories. The three dominant types of the speakers' narratives are the magic powers of the enchantress penetrated by the voices of the victims, that of the orphic Medea calling into question the function and effect of poetry and song, and the various mythologems of dragons.

²⁹ Feldherr (2002: 169–170).

³⁰ See Kotwick (2014: 78, 82) and Kirk, Raven, Schofield (1998: 24).

Conclusion

The main goal of the current study was to explore some characteristic Ovidian intertexts in Weöres' poetry in the 1950s and to analyze the nature of these intertextual dynamics. The radical poetic rewriting of the Ovidian metaphors, mythical prosopopeias and the poetic figures of metamorphosis were inspired by the European paintings and sculpture of the 16th and 17th centuries too, but my paper concentrated on textual interferences. Although the Ovidian tradition have been dominant in Weöres' poetry since his university years, my examination addressed the middle section of his poetic career, because of the complexity and systematization of his poetic experiment with the mythological traditions in metanarrative cross-referentiality.

My first case to be studied was Weöres' *Echo* from *Orbis Pictus*, a series of 100 poems inspired by *Orbis sensualium pictus* of John Amos Comenius. The Ovidian metaphorization of the sound, and the out of control of the own speaking, invoking the voice at the moment it is lost were fruitful inspirations for Weöres who combined his meditation-poem about the nature of killing and empty desire, about the balance and the not tragic, but banal annihilation with brilliant metric solutions and several visual metaphors of the own, uncontrollable sound. Narcissus and Tiresias become crucial metaphors and ironic allegories in further Weöres' works tinged by pre-romantic poetic allusions, like in the epigraph of his poetry-book *Firewell* and in his famous quasi-postmodern book titled *Psyché*. These texts present the tension between the two functions of the Narcissus' mirror-motif underlined by Bartsch: the false, illusive reflection and the recognition, insight on the other.

The epic mythological poems of the 1950s (*Orpheus*, *Minotauros*, *Medeia*) connect and contrast fragments of the disparate mythic narratives of the characters. Accumulating the fragments of consonant and dissonant ancient narratives of the archetypical poet *Orpheus* they represent the song metaphorically as the light reordering of the abstract space of the poem and consider language not merely as a mode of representation but to discover the performative dimension of the rhetoric beyond thought. *Orpheus* is constructed by multiple voices, by fragmented monologues in the first person, shaped by typographic arrangements of metrical dramas. The metapoetic interpretation of Orpheus' song in Ovidian and in Weöres' text is amplified by the juxtaposition and tension of different genres (epic, elegy, epigram, eclogue). The contrast of the normative and the metaphorical discourse in this poem is not only a varied landscape of the traditions colligated by the name Orpheus but is a form of metamorphosis as well as phenomenon of the cultural policy in Hungary in 1955. The *Minotauros* is a text-labyrinth where sexual aggression, textual and bodily fragility plays such a central part. Weöres' labyrinth is a mirroring, *unpredictable* rhetorical space, now inner maze of female body, insulted and raped, now expanding mythological labyrinth full of violated corpses like an allegory of the Ovidian text. In *Medeia* the three dominant types of the speakers' narratives are the magic powers of the enchantress penetrated by the voices of the victims, that of the orphic Medea calling into question the function and effect of poetry and song, and the various mythologems of dragons.

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VZOR MYTOLOGIZACE A BÁSNICKÝ VZOR V BÁSNICKÉ TVORBĚ
SÁNDORA WEÖRESE**

Proměny představují jeden z nejproduktivnějších a nejkomplexnějších intertextů v básnickém díle maďarského básníka Sándora Weörese. Tento článek se zabývá některými postupy komplexního adaptování Ovidiova textu v 50. letech 20. století a analyzuje radikální básnické adaptace Ovidiových metafor, mýtické prosopopeie a básnická zobrazení proměny ve Weöresově poezii. Epické básně této dekády s mytologickou látkou (*Medeia*, *Minotauros*, *Orpheus*) propojují i staví do kontrastu zlomky nesourodých mýtických příběhů o těchto postavách. Textová a narativní diskontinuita a míšení technik epických, lyrických i dramatických umožňují číst tyto básně jako experiment s transformací a zaměňováním dramatických úloh postav, odstraňováním a vytvářením hranic jejich identity a zkoumáním možností souvztažného čtení kontrastujících a vzdálených mytologemat. Ovidiův charakteristicky ironický posun od obdivování krásy k výrazně nenasytné lásce majetnické, vzájemné výpůjčky mezi příběhy o různorodých postavách a básnické využití sonority (metaforizace zvuku a ztráta kontroly nad vlastní řečí s touhou po hlase v momentu, kdy je ztracen) jsou velmi plodné v *Echo* (1954).

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