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Research interests: history, theory and practice of literary translation

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**Taras Shevchenko Translated and Retranslated by Vera Rich:  
A Lifelong Search for Poetic Perfection**

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*The article deals with the translator's laboratory of Faith Elizabeth Joan Rich, better known by her pen name Vera, which is the direct Ukrainian translation of Faith. The discussion focuses on post-publication self-revisions by Rich of her earlier translations from "The Kobzar" by the Ukrainian Romantic poet Taras Shevchenko (1814–1861) in subsequent printings, as well as on her reprinted and new translations of Shevchenko. The article details the numerous instances of self-editing by the translator, including two versions of the poem "Са́док вишне́вий коло хату..." ("Beside the house, the cherry's flowering..." and "Cherry-trees bloom by the house yonder..."). It also analyses the singability of translations by Rich, and in particular of the verses "Roaring and groaning rolls the Dnipro..." and "O my thoughts, my heartfelt thoughts, I am troubled for you..." The article concludes that in her strategy Rich has developed a holistic approach to translating Shevchenko's "Kobzar".*

**KEYWORDS:** Taras Shevchenko, Vera Rich, Poetry Translation, Retranslation, Self-editing.

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## Introduction

The research aim of this article is to demonstrate and prove that Vera Rich made no exception to Shevchenko's rule of melodiousness while concurrently reproducing the metrical patterns of his poems. Contrary to Peter Fedynsky's approach, in whose unrhymed and non-metrical translation a complete collection of Shevchenko's poetry collection *Кобзар* (*The Kobzar*) was released by Glagoslav Publishers in London in 2013 (Shevchenko, Fedynsky 2013), her translations tend to systematically rebuild the prosody, the cadence, and the imagery of Shevchenko's oeuvre. She was among those few who competed with Shevchenko in the artistic power of verbal expression, and whose translations – starting from her remarkable first collection of Shevchenko's most influential poems *Song Out of Darkness* published in London as early as 1961 – were distinguished by her endeavour to both recreate the source verses' vocal harmony and remain faithful to their semantic integrity (Shevchenko 1961).

The article will be focusing on the metrical and vocal propensities of Rich's three-dimensional interpretations of Shevchenko that aim to rebuild the cadence, the prosody, and the imagery of his oeuvre. Based on post-publication revisions by Vera Rich of her earlier translations from *The Kobzar* in subsequent printings, I will detail the numerous instances of self-editing by the translator, including two versions of the poem “Садок вишневий коло хати...” (“Beside the house, the cherry's flowering...” and “Cherry-trees bloom by the house yonder...”).

The novelty of the conducted research consists in pinpointing that Rich made no exception to Shevchenko's rule of melodiousness, while concurrently reproducing the metrical patterns of his poems, in contradistinction to the mainstream trend towards prosaic and free verse, prevailing in the late 20<sup>th</sup> – early 21<sup>st</sup> century in translations of classical metrical poetry. Having analysed the singability of translations by Rich, in particular of the verses “Roaring and groaning rolls the Dnipro...” and “O my thoughts, my heartfelt thoughts, I am troubled for you...”, the article concludes that Rich has developed in her translation strategy a holistic approach to rendering Shevchenko's poetry collection into English.

### 1. The translator born with a chivalrous heart

British poet-translator, journalist, human rights activist and an ardent advocate of Ukrainian and Belorussian cultural and democratic values, Vera Rich (24 April 1936 – 20 December 2009), was buried according to her will at the foot of *Chernecha Hora* (literally, Monk's Hill) near the provincial town of Kaniv in Ukraine. Since the 11<sup>th</sup> century, *Chernecha Hora* has belonged to Kaniv's Holy Dormition Eastern Orthodox monastery, and it became the burial place of several hetmans of Ukraine. Since 1861 the remains of Ukrainian Romantic poet and artist Taras Shevchenko have been buried there. And from those times the hill has turned into a place of pilgrimage, popularly renamed into *Tarasova Hora* (Taras' Hill) and visited by all Ukrainians at least once in their lives. The history of Romanticism in Europe would have been incomplete without Shevchenko's poetry. Moreover, retrospectively, European Romanticism would have been depleted without

Rich's profound perception and masterful reproduction of Shevchenko's poeticalities for Anglophone readers. Her first major book was a selection of 38 of Shevchenko's renowned verses including 9 longer poems ("Bewitched", "The Night of Taras", "Hamaliya", "The Dream (A Comedy)", "The Great Vault (A Mystery Play)", "The Servant-Girl", "The Caucasus", "To My Fellow-Countrymen, in Ukraine and Not in Ukraine, Living, Dead and as yet Unborn My Friendly Epistle", "The Neophytes"), published in London on the centenary of his death, 1961, and entitled *Song out of Darkness* (the book also included a preface by Paul Selver, a critical essay by W. K. Matthew; introduction and notes by Victor Swoboda, a Lecturer at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London). The translator was chosen, translations commissioned, and the edition sponsored by the Shevchenko Centenary Committee in Great Britain. When the book was published (Shevchenko 1961), Rich's work received excellent reviews followed by her being awarded an Honorary Degree in Shevchenko Studies by the Ukrainian Free Academy of Sciences.

According to Rich's own words, such a successful start launched her on her full-time career as a writer / translator, while Shevchenko's poetry became an integral part of her imaginative background (Rich 2006). From that time on, it appears that she did not doubt much as for her main mission in life. And her response to the question "What is a talent you think you have?" from the questionnaire on *Allpoetry* (the world's largest poetry website) fully confirms her confidence: "I think I have a talent for translating poetry... What is more important, the various people who pay me to do it think I have such a talent" (Rich 2009). As for the favourite subject of her professional activities, she did not hesitate with the answer either: "Ukrainian and Belarusian literature" (Rich 2009).

The recognition of her services to Ukrainian literature and her credentials as an accomplished translator of Shevchenko was confirmed on Independence Day in 2006, when President Yuschenko awarded her one of Ukraine's major state honours – the Order of Princess Olga, which is a civil decoration, featuring Olga of Kyiv and bestowed to women for outstanding personal merits. And the following year, a parallel Ukrainian–English gift edition of Shevchenko's selected poems in the original and Rich's translations, together with reproductions of paintings and graphic works saw the light of day in "Mystetstvo" (Art) publishing house, having been financed by the national budget. This volume of over 600 pages was meant to be used by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as gifts of honour to foreign ambassadors, high-ranking diplomats, etc. (Shevchenko 2007a). The book comprises 92 pieces of Shevchenko's poetry with 36 translations specially made for this edition, including his early Romantic poems *Perebendia*, *The Poplar*, *The Russalka*, an excerpt from a longer philosophical poem *The Heretic*, the entire cycle *In the Fortress* (12 poems) and several dozen shorter poems.

## 2. The translator's self-editing and the pitfalls of equimetricity

To comprehend Rich's goals of self-editing, I suggest in this part of the article a detailed comparison of her two versions of Shevchenko's lyrical masterpiece "Садок вишневий коло хати" from the cycle "In the Fortress", dedicated by the author to his fellow-prisoners in St. Petersburg's Citadel and written on 19–30 May 1847.

The 1961 translation by Rich, given below, was published under the title “Evening” and reprinted unchanged in the 2007 edition:

Beside the house, the cherry’s flowering,  
Above the trees the May bugs hum,  
The ploughmen from the furrows come,  
The girls all wander homeward, singing,  
And mothers wait the meal for them.

Beside the house, a family supper,  
Above, the evening star appears,  
The daughter serves the dishes here;  
It’s useless to advise her, mother,  
The nightingale won’t let her hear.

Beside the house, the mother lulls  
The little children for the night,  
Then she, too, settles at their side.  
And all is still... Only the girls  
And nightingales disturb the quiet.

(Shevchenko 1961: 88; 2007a: 345)

Further below a manuscript version of the poem is brought up:

Cherry-trees bloom by the house yonder,  
Above the cherries May bugs hum,  
The ploughmen from the furrows come.  
Singing, the girls now homeward wander.  
And mothers wait the meal for them.

The family sups by the house yonder,  
Above, the evening star appears,  
The daughter serves the supper here;  
Though mother tries to teach her fondly,  
The nightingale has stopped her ears.

Now mother lulls by the house yonder,  
The little children for the night,  
Then she too lies down at their side.  
All hushed. Only girls and the wonder  
Of nightingale’s song breaks the quiet.

(Shevchenko 2008)

This latest version was jotted down by Rich just after her lecture at the Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, held on 19 May 2008. A copy of the handwritten text by Vera Rich (from the personal archive – L. K.) is given in **Figure 1**:

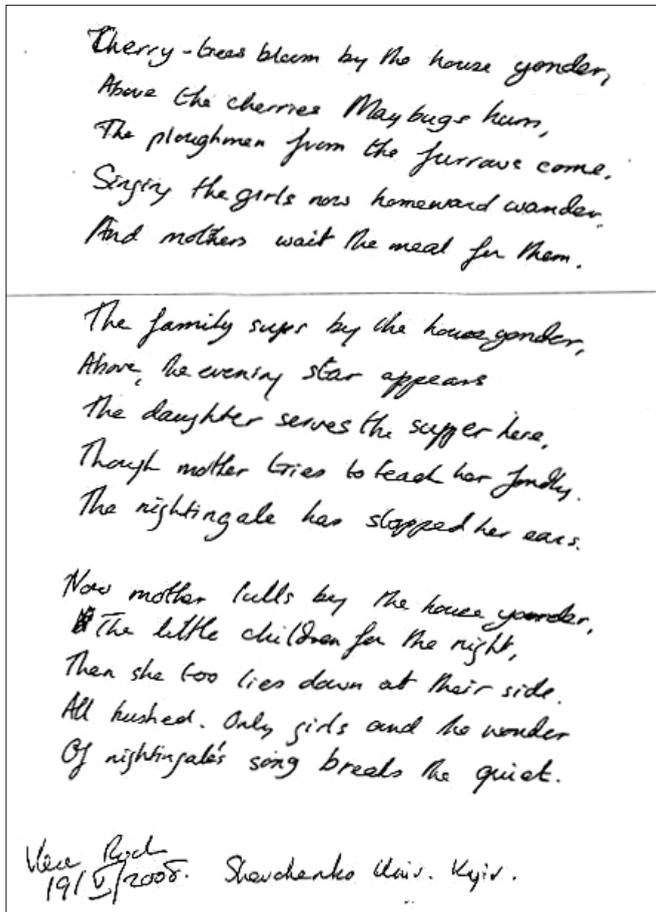


Fig. 1. The manuscript of a new translation of “Садок вишневий коло хати” by Vera Rich (based on the autograph, dated 19/V/2008, from the personal archive – L.K.)

Because the English independent words are eminently shorter than the Ukrainian ones, the entire verse lines should be shorter in English. In fact, the Ukrainian lines are exactly those that look shorter:

Садок вишневий коло хати,  
Хрущі над вишнями гудуть,  
Плугатарі з плугами йдуть,  
Співають ідучи дівчата,  
А матері вечерять ждуть.

Сім'я вечеря коло хати,  
 Вечірня зіронька встає.  
 Дочка вечерять подає,  
 А мати хоче научати,  
 Так соловейко не дає.

Поклала мати коло хати  
 Маленьких діточок своїх;  
 Сама заснула коло їх.  
 Затихло все, тільки дівчата  
 Та соловейко не затих.

(Шевченко 2003а: 17–18)

The poem consists of 3 five-line stanzas with each stanza having the rhyme pattern a-b-b-a-b. Rich strives to fit into the framework of iambic tetrameter with plain, alternate, and enclosing rhymes. She sticks closely to the number of syllables in each line and maintains the alternation of feminine (in which the final syllable is unstressed) and masculine (in which the final syllable is stressed) rhymes: f-m-m-f-m.

Rich fundamentally seeks to attain the equimetricity, or equirhythmicity, in the both of her versions, separated from each other by almost fifty years.

The first version, anyway, reproduces the source text<sup>2</sup> prosody more closely, but somewhat mechanistically. Rich maintains the fifth truncated (missing a final stressed syllable) foot in lines 1 and 4 of the first stanza, though she does not keep it in the third stanza and gives a full trochaic foot in place of the truncated fifth foot in line 1 of the second stanza while keeping the truncated fifth iambic foot in line 4 of the same stanza.

The number of stressed syllables in both versions is reproduced accurately, if not, take into account some minor changes, dictated by the objective linguistic differences between English and Ukrainian. For instance, iambic meter occurs in both versions in place of Shevchenko's pyrrhic meter (consists of two unstressed syllables). However, the prosody of the second version appears to be more dynamic and diverse, with several rhythmical shifts from iambic to trochaic meter, such as those in lines 1 and 4 of the first stanza, or in line 1 of the second stanza, which ends with a full fifth trochaic foot.

The second version reproduces the ST rhyme scheme more accurately. Along with other structural components, the ease and smoothness of conversational intonation is reinforced by the pyrrhic meter. It diversifies Shevchenko's feet, though, and besides the pyrrhic meter also introduces spondee and trochee meters – thereby contributing to a more natural intonation of the poem for Anglophone readers. A clear rhythmic organization of the ST loses the ease of intonation in English, together with a more natural feeling in Ukrainian of the regular arrangement of accents, than in English. That is why Rich tries to avoid the

<sup>2</sup> Further in the article, the term "source text" will be used in its abbreviated form ST – *L. K.*

rhythmic monotony of her previous version, but without violating the dominant rhythmic organization of the ST.

Metric diversification makes the verse more dynamic, especially when two stressed syllables appear side by side, just as they do in the framing end-of-the-line parallel triple construction “by the hóuse yonder” with stressed diphthong [au] and the following stressed sound [’jo]. The second version, thus, turns out to be slightly enriched in its rhythmic and intonational structure, as well as lightly decorated in its figurative language and semantic structure (adding new lexemes, such as the underlined ones: “...tries to teach her fondly”; “...the wonder / Of nightingale’s song”).

There is no unequivocal answer to the question whether semantic development and lexical additions are really an expedient translation technique for rendering Shevchenko’s pithy poetic diction. Yet, some superfluous, “unneeded” words and phrases that explicate the already clear meaning and perform a purely functional role of supporting the regular rhythm occur in both translations (underlined): “the girls all wander homeward” – “the girls now homeward wander”; “above, the evening star appears”; “lulls...the little children for the night”.

The character of rhymes has a great importance for the poetics of translation. Inasmuch as the English phonetic system includes diphthongs and triphthongs, the transplanting of Ukrainian feminine and masculine rhymes into English soil is a quite relative goal, though even an approximate reproduction of their alteration is highly desirable according to the value system of Rich as translator. Only in the second version did she preserve the same sequence of feminine and masculine rhymes in each stanza as in the ST. In the 1961 version, the first and fourth lines of each stanza do not represent a full-fledged end-rhyming, but rather the assonance and alliteration echoing (flowering – singing, supper – mother, lulls – girls). And the feminine accentuation pattern is maintained there only in the first and second stanzas, while in the third stanza it is shifted to the masculine pattern. The masculine rhymes of the first stanza remain the same in both versions: hum – come – them, which is a combination of exact and approximate rhymes. In the second stanza, the third male rhyme becomes semantically, but not formally, altered in the new version: appears – here – hear; appears – here – ears. Thus, in the new translation of this stanza the second and fifth lines represent exact rhyming, and the third line approximate rhyming. In the third stanza, the masculine rhymes undergo no changes in the new version in comparison with an approximate rhyming pattern of the previous version: night – side – quiet.

The brevity of Shevchenko’s poetic line is almost impossible to render in English while preserving the meter and not increasing the number of words herewith – precisely because of the fact that English notional words are chiefly shorter than Ukrainian ones. And that’s why the rhythmically equivalent English translation will contain more words, and consequently, it will prove to be longer even when leaving out such functional part of speech, as the article. This factor will certainly influence the verse melody. It might cause shifts in the syntactic structure of translation and, thus, in the ratio of metric and syntactic units, leading to shifts in intonation patterns, or even transposing the entire verse into another tonality.

Following the metrical pattern of the poem, Rich did not escape syntactic adjustment in both of her versions, where only four lines remain totally identical. Three lines in them differ from each other by one lexeme, but the rest of the eight lines of the second version became substantially renewed lexically and syntactically. And while the 1961 version is, above all, focused on the rhythmic ornamentation and syllable count, the 2008 version sounds more natural and powerful, with energetic syntactic arrangement which allows for more tangible and specific semantic detail.

Reproduction of the ST rhythmical features is limited by the possibilities to reproduce its syntax, and since English words are in general shorter than Ukrainian ones, the ST rhythmical cadence might be altered in translation while its meter is being maintained. As for this poem, the ST rhythmic pattern is rendered somewhat better in the second version thanks to the return to end-of-line, or the rheme, position of the frame repetition “by the house yonder” (Ukr. “коло хати”) in the first line of each stanza, which is an important symbolic framing of the poem that organizes its intonation. This rearrangement allowed Rich to move the adverbial gerund “singing” to the beginning of the fourth line in the first stanza: just in place of the ST inverted predicate “співають”, etc. All in all, several other syntactic and semantic adjustments took place in the 2008 retranslation. And the most consequential changes were made in lines 4 and 5 of the second and third stanzas in the new version. In both stanzas Rich resorted to paraphrases and additions, so she managed to consistently reproduce Shevchenko’s rhyme scheme in all three stanzas (ababb), almost always keeping an appropriate regular number of syllables in the lines of each stanza (9-8-8-9-8), except for the first line of the second stanza in both versions (10-8-8-9-8) and the last line of the second stanza in the second version (9-7-8-9-8), and except for the entire last stanza in the first version, too (8-7-7-8-8).

In English poetry rhymes are based on consonants in contrast to Ukrainian poetry, where they are based on vowels. This difference also triggered difficulties for Rich, which she coped with quite well by improving the rhyme based on consonants: yonder [ˈjɔndə] – wander [ˈwɒndə]; yonder [ˈjɔndə] – fondly [ˈfɒndli]; yonder [ˈjɔndə] – wonder [ˈwʌndə].

In Shevchenko, a dulcet intonation manifests itself in terms of endearment, or words with diminutive suffixes (“зіронька”, “соловейко”, “маленьких діточок”), which are a characteristic feature of the Ukrainian language. Barring the terms of endearment, we will not encounter in this poem any other words expressing the author’s evaluative modality. He seems to dissolve in the depicted world, and a serene and benign countryside appears as if by itself: from a landscape-wide panorama canvas in the first stanza, to miniepic sketches of folk life in the second and third stanzas. And because of that, it is important not to shift considerably in translation from the ST epic view point to a sort of intimate lyrical voice and tone. Additional expressive words and phrases introduced by Rich in the second version (such as “fondly”, “the wonder of nightingale’s song”) compensate for the terms of endearment, and the overall epic tonality of the ST non-personified voice remains preserved.

Still, the epic flavour in the speaker’s voice has been slightly weakened in Rich’s versions. For instance, the ST word combination “садок вишневий” (approx. “an orchard

of cherry-trees”) with inverted epithet “вишневий” was metonymically paraphrased into a subject-verb predicative construction with direct word order: “the cherry’s flowering” (version 1) and “cherry-trees bloom” (version 2); the ST adverbial phrase “над вишнями” inserted between the subject and the predicate (“хрущі над вишнями гудуть”) became transposed into a prepositional word group (underlined): “Above the cherries May bugs hum”; the ST inversion of the predicate in line 1 of the third stanza “Поклала мати коло хати” is not kept in any of the versions either, though the later translation preserves the ST inversion of the predicate in line 4 of the first stanza (“Співають ідучи дівчата”), having replaced it with the adverbial gerund “singing” (“Singing, the girls now homeward wander”).

The intra- and interlinear assonances and alliterations create a unique melodiousness of the original verse cementing its lines in a single unit: Садок ВИШНЕВИЙ... – Хрущі над ВИШНЯМИ гудуть; ...матері ВЕЧЕРЯТЬ ждуть – Сім’я ВЕЧЕРЯ... – ВЕЧІРНЯ зірнька... – Дочка ВЕЧЕРЯТЬ подає; ЗАТИХЛЮ все... – ...соловейко не ЗАТИХ. The 2008 translation takes from the previous version several lexical-semantic modulations (based mostly on consonants), which intend to convey the ST intralinear assonances and alliterations, as in line 3 of the first stanza: “Плугатарі з плугами йдуть” – “The ploughmen from the furrows come”. However, the intralinear rhyme (as in the line “А мати хоче научати”) and most of the abundant interlinear lexical and phonetic alternations remain undelivered to the English reader. And yet, the later translation partially manages to render the ST interlinear instrumentation including phonetic alternations (mainly based on lexical repetition), which can be observed between lines 1 and 2 of the first stanza (“Cherry-trees bloom...” – “Above the cherries...”), lines 1 and 3 of the second stanza (“The family sups...” – “The daughter serves the supper...”), lines 1 and 3 of the third stanza (“Now mother lulls...” – “Then she too lies...”). Of course, we can talk about approximate phonetic correspondence, at the most, because the sound reproduction in translation does not presuppose using exactly the same sounds.

It is noteworthy that both versions preserve the ST enjambment in the final lines (“Затихло все, тільки дівчата / Та соловейко не затих”). The carry-over of a part of syntactic unit to the next line helps furnish the reader with an important feeling of conversational intonation characteristic of Shevchenko’s poetic diction.

### 3. Treasuring the melodiousness and singability of translation

The Romantic precept of musicality lies at the heart of Shevchenko’s poetry. It is symbolically reflected in the title of his first poetic collection, *The Kobzar* (1840), as well as in its further revised and enlarged lifetime editions (1844, 1860, and 1861). After the book was first published, Shevchenko himself became known as the *kobzar*, meaning a “wandering minstrel” and *bandura* (or *kobza*) player, usually in an elegiac mood of melancholy and grievance but sometimes cheerful and playful. Moreover, he started signing several of his narratives by the pen name *Kobzar Darmohray* (Kobzar the For-Free-Player). Shevchenko was fond of singing, and he has earned the fame of a man of three talents: painting, rhyming and singing.

Most lyrics created by Shevchenko easily lend themselves to being set to music, and dozens of them became popular songs, of which many are considered great jewels in the treasury of Ukrainian musical art. Ukrainian composers began setting Shevchenko's texts to music during his lifetime. By and large, over 250 works of various musical forms and genres including songs, choral works, and operas have been created based on poetry by Shevchenko to date. And altogether over 120 composers have contributed to writing music for it. A pool of qualified composers, conductors, and ethnomusicologists should be mentioned among them, those who have generated through their works the Ukrainian model of musical Romanticism, and in particular Mykola Lysenko (1842–1912) should be noted in the first instance as the author of 92 compositions with lyrics by Shevchenko, including pieces of different genres and forms.

Translations by Vera Rich sound easy-flowing and singable; now and then they seem congenial to the melody of Shevchenko's lyrics, as for instance in the opening lines of the "Introduction" to the ballad "*Причинна*" ("Bewitched") with its reverberating, ample prosody. These lyrics, or to be more precise, the three beginning stanzas from the "Introduction", better known by the first line as "*Реве та стогне Дніпр широкий...*" ("Roaring and groaning rolls the Dnipro..."), have become a popular solemn hymn for Ukraine. Shevchenko's words were put to music by the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Ukrainian composer Danylo Kryzhanivsky. The music was first published as a song, together with Shevchenko's lyrics in 1886, but even earlier, immediately after its first public performance, it turned into an extremely popular song among Ukrainian people who would at mass gatherings traditionally sing it standing – as a national anthem. Below follows the first stanza of the ST:

Реве та стогне Дніпр широкий,  
Сердитий вітер завива,  
Додолу верби гне високі,  
Горами хвилю підійма.  
(Шевченко 2003с: 73)

Rich's translation of this beloved national Ukrainian song starts with the words:

Roaring and groaning rolls the Dnipro,  
And angry wind howls through the night,  
Bowing and bending the high willows,  
And raising waves to mountain heights.  
(Shevchenko 2007a: 73)

In **Figure 2**, I will demonstrate the singability of Rich's rendering of this lyrics by easily putting the first verse of its English version to the famous music of the above-mentioned Ukrainian song known as "*Реве та стогне Дніпр широкий*" (Михалко 2009: 80):

**Реве та стогне Дніпр широкий**  
Roaring and Groaning Rolls the Dnipro

Слова Тараса Шевченка  
Lyrics by Taras Shevchenko

Музика Данила Крижанівського  
Melody by Danylo Kryzhanivsky

Повільно  
Slow



Ро-ринг and groa - ning rolls the Dni - pro, And ang - ry wind howls throu'the  
Ре-ве та сто - гне Дніпр ши - ро - кий, сер-ди-тий ві - тер за-ви-  
night, Bow-ing and ben-ding the high wil - lows, And rai-sing waves to moun-tain heights.  
ва, до-до-лу вер-би гне ви - со - кі, го-ра-ми хви-лю пі-дій - ма.

Fig. 2. “Roaring and groaning rolls the Dnipro...” put to music  
(based on Михалко 2009: 80)

The Romantics raised the popularity of a distinct national form of historical song, the *dumas*, eulogizing Ukraine’s heroic past. This cult folklore genre was extolled by Shevchenko as one of the principal genres of his poetic works. Suffice it to mention here his first poetry collection, “The Kobzar”, published in St. Petersburg in 1840, which included the poem “Думи мої, думи мої, лихо мені з вами...” (“O my thoughts, my heartfelt thoughts, I am troubled for you...”) that served as a kind of epigraph (NB: the *duma* in Ukrainian means both a genre of historical folk-song and a solemn thought). Later it would turn into an epigraph not only to this particular edition but also across the entire poetic heritage of Shevchenko.

Further I will cite both the source and target texts of the poem in extracts – and exactly in the form in which it has gone into folklore tradition as a national folk-song, put to music by the 20<sup>th</sup>-century Ukrainian composer Mykhailo Verykivsky (Михалко 2009: 54):

Думи мої, думи мої,  
Лихо мені з вами!  
Нащо стали на папері  
Сумними рядами?...  
Чом вас вітер не розвіяв  
В степу, як пилину?  
Чом вас лихо не приспало,  
Як свою дитину?...  
Думи мої, думи мої,  
Квіти мої, діти!  
Виростав вас, доглядав вас –  
Де ж мені вас діти?..  
В Україну ідїть, діти!

В нашу Україну,  
 Попідтинню, сиротами,  
 А я – тут загину.  
 Там знайдете щире серце  
 І слово ласкаве,  
 Там знайдете ширу правду,  
 А ще, може, й славу...  
 Привітай же, моя ненько!  
 Моя Україно!  
 Моїх діток нерозумних,  
 Як свою дитину.

(Шевченко 2003b: 124, 126)

O my thoughts, my heartfelt thoughts,  
 I am troubled for you,  
 Why have you ranged yourselves on paper  
 In your ranks of sorrow?  
 Why did the wind not scatter you,  
 Like dustmotes, in the steppe?  
 Why did ill-fate not overlie  
 You, her babes, while she slept?  
 O my thoughts, my heartfelt thoughts,  
 Children mine, my flowers!  
 I have reared, watched over you, –  
 Where to send you now?  
 Go to Ukraina children,  
 Our Ukraina dear,  
 Like poor orphans trudge your way,  
 While I shall perish here.  
 There a true heart you will find,  
 A word of kindness for you,  
 There sincerity and truth...  
 And even, maybe, glory.  
 Bid them welcome, my dear mother,  
 Ukraina; smile  
 On these thy children still unwise,  
 As on thy own true child.

(Shevchenko 2007a: 141, 147)

And again, I will demonstrate the singability of Rich's version by putting the beginning verse to the popular melody arranged by Verykivsky (Михалко 2009: 54) in **Figure 3** below:

**Думи мої, думи мої**  
 O My Thoughts, My Heartfelt Thoughts

Слова Тараса Шевченка  
 Lyrics by Taras Shevchenko

Обробка мелодії М. Вериківського  
 Melody arranged by M. Verykivsky

Не швидко Not fast

Ду-ми мо - ї, ду-ми мо - ї, ли-хо ме - ні з ва - ми!  
 O my thoughts, my heart-felt thoughts, I am troubled for you,

На-шо ста-ли на па - пе - рі сум-ни - ми ря - да - ми?..  
 Why have you ranged your-selves on pa-per in your ranks of sor - row?..

Чом вас ві-тер не роз - ві - яв в сте-пу, як пи - ли - ну?  
 Why did the wind not scat - ter you, Like dust - motes, in the steppe?

Чом вас ли-хо не при - спа-ло, як сво - ю ди - ти - ну?..  
 Why did ill - fate not over - lie You, her babes, while she slept?

Fig. 3. “O my thoughts, my heartfelt thoughts, I am troubled for you...” put to music  
 (based on Михалко 2009: 54)

The 2007 translation of the poem, shown here, is a recension of the 1961 edition. The prior text has been subjected by Rich to editor’s changes in several places. A characteristic feature of both versions is that the translator inserts into the first line and the line-refrain an epithet “heartfelt”, which pinpoints the author’s contextual usage of the Ukrainian multi-meaning word “думи” (plural of “дума” that simultaneously means a sublime and solemn historical song and, figuratively, a ponderous and melancholic thought). Shevchenko himself imbues this word with a sense of intimate reflection on the destiny of his Ukrainian verses, as dear to his heart as only real living creatures could be. The speaking persona in the poem, who addresses his literary creations as his own children, cares about them as a father, and, as Rich aptly suggests in line 2 for the source phrase “лихо мені з вами”, he *is (very much) troubled* for the songs from his heart. Shevchenko intercalated an emphatic particle “ж” in the above-cited set phrase (“лихо ж мені з вами”) in the second edition of *The Kobzar*, which saw the light of day in the town of Chyhyryn in 1844, with the addition of the poem “Гайдамаки” (“The Haidamakas”).

The line “On these thy children still unwise” contains a minor revision of its 1961 version, which read: “On these my children, still unwise” (Shevchenko 1961: 10). The possessive pronoun “my” is hereby substituted with the pronoun “thy”, as had actually been done by the author himself in the manuscript collection “Poetry of T. Shevchenko. Volume I”, produced in February-April 1859. Originally Shevchenko had corrected the pronoun “my” into “thy”, but he eventually returned to the text published in 1840 and 1844 editions of *The Kobzar*. It is most likely that Rich was well acquainted with the history of

Shevchenko's self-editing of this poem, while his corrections influenced her own editorial alteration and made her opt in favour of the intermediate version.

In comparison with the 1961 text, in the 2007 edition Rich replaced the Soviet artificial name of the country *Ukraine* (which is linguistically inaccurate and politically undesirable given the fact that it had been imposed by the Kremlin on the English-speaking community after World War II). Having returned to its phonetically correct spelling, she transcribed the country's name *Ukraina* according to its sound.

## Conclusions

Shevchenko's poetry is still able to speak to the widest possible audience by virtue of the music of his verse. For Vera Rich, Shevchenko was, very much likely, a genius in the Gnostic sense: as earthly embodiment of divine light. I wonder what other translator would have willed that their urn should be laid to rest near the grave of a Romantic poet from afar just because they have translated his verses? It is even more unusual for English language native speakers, which is the dominant language in our contemporary world. In this regard, the kind of attitude that Vera Rich showed towards Shevchenko and, in broader terms, towards the entire Romantic epoch in Ukrainian and Belorussian literature, reminds me of a neoclassical poet's homage to Greek and Roman classics. This comparison seems all the more appropriate that Rich obviously cherished and refined classical English verse forms both in her original poems and translations.

In the year of her death, 2009, filling out a questionnaire on *Allpoetry*, Rich provided a straightforward answer to the question "If you could visit any place in the world... where would it be?": "The grave of Taras Shevchenko at Kaniv..." (Rich 2009: 5) By that time she had been struggling with cancer and had already made her decision to be buried near the place where Shevchenko rests. On April 15, 2011 her desire was put into effect, and an urn of her ashes was entombed in the Cossack cemetery in the outskirts of Kaniv, near Chernecha Hora (Monk's Hill).

A close reading and comparative metrical analysis of the two versions by Vera Rich of Shevchenko's lyrical miniature "Садок вишневий коло хати" (the one first published in 1961 and the other recited from memory and handwritten right there in 2008) show the translator's lifelong search for poetic perfection and the highest attainable equirhythmicity of her renditions from Shevchenko.

Rich viewed the poems that comprise the complete collection of Shevchenko's poetry, *The Kobzar*, as a single whole work with the cross-textual repetitive alternations of words, images, verses, and lines, important for the author, following in the track of interchangeable segments, which echo each other in various poems. She consistently professed a three-dimensional approach to fidelity in translation, which includes fidelity to meaning, verse, and style. In this way, Rich competed with Shevchenko in the artistic power of verbal expression in each of her translations.

Favouring accuracy in semantic detail and faithfulness to the ST verse form, its rhyme and rhythm, Rich treated her translations as poetic works in their own right, also remembering

about the need to introduce the reader to the ST historical background and its national colour by using concise and eligible notes. The readers of *Allpoetry* enthusiastically responded to her works as to a lyrical delight. The readers' comments on each of her translations were effusive and describe how moved they were (Shevchenko 2007b; 2009a; 2009b), and so it was no wonder that Rich won the *Allpoetry* gold trophy for her translation of *The Poplar*, which happened to become her last poetic work submitted for the contest. Among the many praising reflections, one of the regular readers left perhaps the most opportune comment on this prize: "A well-deserved gold – apt that the final crown of Vera's work is a translation of a Ukrainian poet" (Shevchenko 2009b). All those rave reviews were the best proof that Rich managed to strike a chord with English-speaking readers and attract their attention to Shevchenko – one of the greatest Romantic poets of the world, along with William Wordsworth, Lord Byron, Adam Mickiewicz, and Aleksandr Pushkin.

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