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The Cannibal's Cantations: Polyphemus in Pastoral and Epic Poetry

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The Cannibal's Cantations: Polyphemus in Pastoral and Epic Poetry

Grace Anthony

A DEPARTMENT HONORS THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
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Table of Contents

Introduction: Homer's Cyclops	1
1. Theocritus' Pastoral Polyphemus: Lover of Dreams	14
2. Vergil's Polyphemus: A Common Enemy	39
3. Ovid's Polyphemus: Horror Hyperbolized	53
a. The Love for Lady Milk Turns Sour	53
b. Achaemenides: The Raconteur of Violence	76
Conclusion	86
Bibliography	89

Introduction: Homer's Cyclops

The story of Odysseus' encounter with an inhospitable Cyclops comes from a far-reaching folktale tradition, still extant in more than two hundred versions from various regions of the world.¹ There are two versions of the story, one in which the hero blinds the cannibalistic ogre and is almost recaptured because of a magic ring or an ax, and the other in which the hero injures the monster and says his name is 'myself', which the Homeric tradition changes to 'no one'.² The folktale was overall altered and molded as to fit naturally into Odysseus' adventures on his *nostos*, and these changes would prove to make the Cyclops story one of the most well known in the *Odyssey*. There are numerous themes in this story that have been researched and analyzed (such as the guest-host relationship), but I will primarily focus on how intellectual insight (or a lack thereof) can adjust one's one perception of beauty and brutality. As I focus on these themes of intelligence, aesthetics, and violence, I will also argue that they are truly emphasized by their opposites being highlighted in juxtaposition to them.

In the course of the development of the tale in its Odyssean form, various choices of suppression or elaboration were made by a succession of singers; and that some of these choices were partly determined by some underlying interest in the problem of relating culture to nature, more concretely, in the validity of human customs and the distinction between wildness and innocence.³

Polyphemus as a character proves to be an exemplary juxtaposition that encapsulates both the ferocity and softness of nature and humanity as well. As I analyze his appearance in stories by three different authors after Homer, Polyphemus will prove to be dynamic in other ways as well. In the *Odyssey* he is characterized as a savage cannibal who casually eats six companions of Odysseus without any remorse or displayed conception that he has committed a crime. On the

¹ Reece 1993, 126.

² Reece 1993, 127.

³ Kirk 1970, 168.

other hand, he is also an isolated shepherd that does not seem to enact violence upon his sheep. Homer disperses “lighter” moments throughout the story that prevent Polyphemus’ cave from only being a house of horror: the fluffy flocks, Odysseus’ verbal trick, and especially the conversation Polyphemus has with his ram.⁴ As Odysseus hangs suspended below Polyphemus’ favorite pet, the monster chats with it like an old friend, and just for a moment the Cyclops seems lucid instead of maddened. The story of Polyphemus and Odysseus suggests scenarios that provoke the reader (and the characters themselves) to take a step back and view their situation from an alternative point of view. The motif of sight in this story, since Polyphemus eventually loses his sight, also evokes a theme of intellectual perception. Ironically the monster who is unable to “see” things from Odysseus’ enlightened perspective (basic rules of culture, custom, and even word play) receives the punishment of eternal blindness.

In this thesis I will focus on the parts of the *Cyclopeia* that later authors (Theocritus, Vergil, Ovid) adapt, transform, and change for their own purposes. For the Homer section, I will focus more on scenes that occur prevalently in the texts I have chosen (*Idylls* 6 & 11, *Aeneid* 3, *Metamorphoses* 13 & 14), and less on scenes that do not. For example, Vergil omits many scenes with Odysseus and as well the “lighter” touches in his shortened account of the *Cyclopeia*.⁵ I will also briefly discuss the Cyclopes as a whole, and how they reside as citizens of a sort of “golden age.” For even though it seems that the Cyclopes as a race are generally peaceful, Polyphemus is a “black sheep” among his own kind,⁶ and displays negative repercussions of what happens to an antisocial and immature creature with immense physical might living in a paradisiacal land.⁷

Even though the cannibalistic nature of Polyphemus is repressed in the pastoral representations

⁴ Glenn 1972, 58.

⁵ Glenn 1972, 58.

⁶ Kirk 1975, 85-6.

⁷ Kirk 1975, 85-6.

(*Idylls* 6 & 11, *Metamorphoses* 13), his social and cultural ignorance is highlighted. In tandem with this, Theocritus features a conversation of aesthetics in its constitution of ugliness and beauty. I will discuss briefly moments in the *Odyssey* that subtly remark on this aesthetic, as it becomes a prominent theme in the *Idylls* and both books of the *Metamorphoses*. Odysseus' identity is of course a major theme in *Odyssey* 9; considering the concept of identity as a whole will prove important for different characters in *Aeneid* 3 and *Metamorphoses* 14, as Odysseus recedes into the background and makes room for new heroes. My analysis of *Odyssey* 9, in short, is my point of departure. It is not my focal point, but immensely important to analyze in order to fully comprehend and appreciate succeeding epic and pastoral literature that adopts Polyphemus as one of their own.

The Cyclopes live where they need no agriculture, laws, or trade. They do not work, but live in their own separate dwellings with their families, and do not bother to assemble or participate in any type of communal activities. This island of one-eyed hermits need not any communication or connection with the surrounding world, it is completely independent and self-sufficient. "The vice of the Cyclopes is that they need nothing."⁸ This sort of lifestyle mirrors the golden age that Hesiod described in his *Works and Days*.⁹ The main reason why I bring up the association between the race of Cyclops and the golden age is because of some "negative" implications that arise for people who live without toil, such as cannibalism, "...Hesiod's age of gold, the age of Cronos, the 'vegetarian' age before cooking and before sacrifice, which is described for us in so many texts, is also the period of cannibalism and human sacrifice in at least part of the tradition."¹⁰ In the *Odyssey*, Polyphemus is both a vegetarian and a cannibal,

⁸ Norman 1983, 29.

⁹ Kirk 1970, 164.

¹⁰Vidal-Naquet 1996, 36.

thus exhibiting the eating characteristics of a golden age denizen. Polyphemus gathers wood to make a fire, but does not use it to cook, but presumably just to keep warm; he does not even cook the men, the only meat he has seemed to ever taste.¹¹ So, Odysseus is essentially going back in time to a culture (or a place with a lack thereof) that he knows nothing about. Before Polyphemus eats his first meal of men, Odysseus acts as if Polyphemus lived in the same heroic world as he. The hated man has to quickly learn how to converse with a golden brute in order to escape alive. He has to change his identity in order to survive as an alien in a savage utopia.

It is interesting to note that curiosity instead of necessity impels Odysseus to visit the Cyclopes' island. It is the fact that Polyphemus is not driven by the same cultural norms that Odysseus employs and manipulates that this part of Odysseus' *nostos* is especially exemplary of his cunning.¹² When Odysseus comes first to Goat Island, which lies across from Polyphemus' home, he sees it as an uninhabited version of the Cyclopes island. This apparently angers Odysseus, as he sees it as a waste; he needs the island to be needed, "How, flaunting his need as a provocation, he dealt a cruel punishment to the guardian of the paradise with zero needs, as if to remedy Nature's deficiency Cyclops too will come to know the meaning of need. Cyclops too will learn to work in darkness, as humans work, in blind Necessity."¹³ Norman offers a chilling yet profound analysis of Odysseus' secret envy of Polyphemus and the bountiful islands that face each other, for it incites Odysseus to explore an island when he needs not.

Cook argues that the Goat Island, in its bounty of food, eliminates any necessity for Odysseus to visit its neighboring island; curiosity and a desire for guest-gifts are the sole motives.¹⁴ This curiosity, devoid of necessity, then begs the question of who is actually "in the

¹¹ Vidal-Naquet 1996, 41-2.

¹² Adorno 1992, 131.

¹³ Norman 1983, 31.

¹⁴ Cook 1995, 99.

wrong” within the cave. Both Odysseus and Polyphemus enact violence on one another in *Odyssey* 9, and some level of pity is felt for both characters, even though primarily for the eaten and regurgitated companions of Odysseus. Hutchinson says that the pity that the reader may feel for Polyphemus, in conjunction with his or her fear for Odysseus, becomes all the more surprising because, “Precisely the actual absence of anyone to feel sorry for the Cyclops creates pity in the primary listener.”¹⁵ The audience must decide for themselves who is the hero, and who is the villain, or if there is an undeniable ambiguity, a point, I believe, authors after Homer pursue.

R.J. Clare in a paper about Polyphemus and the representation of monstrosity, calls attention to several points concerning Polyphemus’ conception of his own appearance that I find important, specifically for my analysis of Theocritus’ *Idylls* 6 and 11, and Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* 13. Clare recalls *Odyssey* 1.63-75, when Zeus tells Athena that he denies responsibility for Odysseus’ delayed homecoming because of how he angered Poseidon because of Polyphemus.¹⁶ The four verses (70-73) where Zeus describes Polyphemus qualifies him as more of an hero than monster, and the king of the gods ascribes the same adjective ἀντίθεον to both Odysseus and Polyphemus in this passage.¹⁷ So it seems that both Odysseus and Polyphemus are both mortal yet godlike figures that are only differentiated by their strength and wisdom. When Polyphemus recalls the prophecy from Telemus, who warned him that a man named Odysseus would seize his sight, the Cyclops did not think that the little Noman who entered his cave was that sight-stealer, since he expected someone, “...tall and handsome to come here, clothed in great strength” (*Od.* 9. 513-14).¹⁸ “One may associate the Cyclops’

¹⁵ Hutchinson 2007, 24.

¹⁶ Clare 1998, 4.

¹⁷ Clare 1998, 5.

¹⁸ All translations from the *Odyssey* 9 from here on out are from Murray, 1919.

preconceptions of the mysterious hero Odysseus with his perception of what he himself is. At no point in the proceedings does Polyphemus display any consciousness of his own monstrosity, indeed quite the opposite.”¹⁹ Polyphemus’ ignorance of his own terrifying appearance borders on the brink of being adorable; just as children’s can be “cute” to adults, since their ignorance propels them to act or say something contrary to reality. However in the case of a “child” with superhuman strength and size, a lack of maturity incurs violence.

Polyphemus has never left his island, since his race does not know how to build ships. As if this is not isolated enough, Polyphemus does not have a family like the other Cyclopes seem to have, but is a shepherd who, “...did not mingle with others, but lived apart, obedient to no law” (*Od.* 9. 188-89). He seems to be the Cyclopes with the least amount of social interaction, and therefore has the least amount of practice in dialogue and general human decency (such as not eating strangers). Is it really his fault? Are his characteristics the result of chance and nature, since Odysseus describes him as having been “created a monstrous marvel” (καὶ γὰρ θαῦμα' ἐτέτυκτο πελώριον, *Od.* 9. 190)? The passive nature of the verb leaves us to wonder whether even Odysseus allows some agency to be taken away from Polyphemus. Nevertheless, the cannibalistic Cyclopes’ confident perception of himself (*Od.* 9. 513-14) results in his destruction, since he was too shortsighted to see that someone smaller than him could inflict that much damage. “The Cyclopes may seem ugly and grotesque to Odysseus but, from the perspective of Polyphemus Odysseus is no less grotesque and, ultimately, just as dangerous. In the *Cyclopeia* monstrosity, like beauty, is a quality to be found in the eye of the beholder.”²⁰ I will return to this theme when I discuss Theocritus’ conception of Polyphemus. For in the *Idylls* Polyphemus is a

¹⁹ Clare 1998, 16.

²⁰ Clare 1998, 17.

pastoral shepherd who finds himself painfully in love and insecure of his appearance. But after he cures himself with song, Polyphemus' confidence assumes his customary negligence of customary beauty that the reader finds in the *Odyssey*.

Let us fast forward to Odysseus and his selected men already inside the cave. They have already eaten some of Polyphemus' food offered a sacrifice (*Od.* 9. 231-33). The Cyclops walks in and completely ignores the tiny people, and proceeds with his daily chores. Finally he looks up and casually inquires whom these strangers are who busted into his cave unannounced. Odysseus quickly learns that this creature does not pay heed to any of the gods, and would only spare any of the men, if he decided so himself (*Od.* 9. 275-78). Polyphemus in the *Odyssey* only does what Polyphemus wants, and no source of shame, guilt, or custom directs his thoughts or actions. He attempts to acquire Odysseus' name and the location of his ship, but receives no such information, but only a lie that a means of escape was dashed by Polyphemus' own father (*Od.* 9. 283). Apparently, there is nothing left to consider for the golden age creature, for Polyphemus has decided that his feast can now begin. Polyphemus, without a word or response, goes for two of Odysseus' companions; the silence itself sets the scene for eerie violence. Cannibalism becomes the punishment for the men's intrusion. Odysseus describes his companions seized and dashed to the ground like puppies, as their brains dampen the ground, (σὺν δὲ δύο μάρψας ὡς τε σκύλακας ποτὶ γαίῃ / κόπτ'· ἐκ δ' ἐγκέφαλος χαμάδις ῥέε, δεῦε δὲ γαίῃ, *Od.* 9. 289-90). Hopefully if the brains moistening the earth imply that the men were dashed to the ground head first, then their life (or at the very least their consciousness) is deprived instantly. This is the first example that I wish to show where the *Odyssey* deters from describing violent scenes with blood, while later authors like Vergil and Ovid paint these sorts of scenes red with gore.

The reader is consumed with an creepy feeling concerning the insouciant reaction that

Polyphemus has to the horde of tiny stranger men within his home, particularly because of the violence that follows his nonchalant silence, “The horror lies not just in the act itself, but the way in which Odysseus and his men become subsumed into the monster’s domestic routine”.²¹ Before Odysseus enter the Cyclops’ cave, Polyphemus most likely does the same things every single day, and delights in the simplicity and lawless nature of his solitary existence. This presumption is drawn from the ritualistic manner in which Homer describes Polyphemus’ daily routine of shepherding, milking his sheep, corralling them, and creating cheese. We return back to the theme of what is “right and wrong”. Clare says that even if Polyphemus’ actions are not conventionally correct, his instinctive response to make the intruders part of his routine is consistent with his peculiar mind set.²² Polyphemus prepares, not cooks, himself supper every night, and while there are still living intruders inside his home, they will be consumed raw like everything else he eats.

After the intruders’ brains have wetted his home, Polyphemus cuts the bodies limb from limb in the expected effortless manner that governs all his domestic routines within the cave. Despite the humanistic nature of his routine, Polyphemus is compared to a mountain-nurtured lion as he animalistically feeds upon the men; described as leaving nothing, not even the entrails, flesh, bones, or marrow of the freshly digested men (ἦσθη δ’ ὥς τε λέων ὀρεσίτροφος, οὐδ’ ἀπέλειπεν/ ἔγκατά τε σάρκας τε καὶ ὀστέα μυελόεντα, *Od.* 9.292-3). Unlike the other versions of this well-known folktale, Polyphemus eats his victims raw opposed to being cooked on a metal spit, which by Homeric standards is immensely more barbaric and savage.²³ Just as a lion does not take the time to start a fire and roast his freshly killed prey, neither does Polyphemus expend

²¹ Clare 1998, 14.

²² Clare 1998, 15.

²³ Schein 1970, 74.

such culinary precision. Although, once again, Homer does not employ bloody language, even though it is assumed that blood is flowing everywhere, Papaioannou argues that the Homeric narrator applies realism to make the vision of cannibalism a spectacle from familiar experience.²⁴ Such realism is using similes to portray Polyphemus eating as a lion, or the smashed bodies of the men as squirming puppies. The violence becomes elevated and elegant when it creates not the image that it enacts, but an image aligned with the audience's experiential memories.

Vergil and Ovid will skip over Odysseus' brilliant plan to restrain his anger and construct a weapon from the shepherd's olivewood staff. Both authors omit Odysseus' seemingly congenial wine offering to the Cyclops in order to dull his wits, and neither do they include Odysseus' famous pun of finally telling Polyphemus that his name is "Nobody". However, I will still mention some of these sections here, since even if they are not elaborated on, some of these scenes are subtly alluded to in *Aeneid* 3 and *Metamorphoses* 14. The wine that Odysseus receives from the priest Maron as a gift for saving his family, "... is extraordinarily potent even for Greek wine which, as we know, was more potent than wine can be. This sacred wine requires not the usual dilution of three to one, but twenty to one."²⁵ Needless to say, Polyphemus becomes incredibly inebriated, especially because Odysseus hands him a full cup to drain not once, but three different times. But Odysseus senses like Polyphemus is sufficiently drunk, or in other words, "When the wine had got round the wits of the Cyclops" (*Od.* 9. 362), the wily hero enacts his clever pun, and calls himself Οὔτις. This is a monumental lie for Odysseus to utter, since he negates his existence by doing so. Odysseus disregards his pedigree, place of origin, and descriptive epithet, which are factors that encompass any epic hero's identity, "A man who has lost the opportunity-or the right-to delineate his own being in this way had almost ceased to

²⁴ Papaioannou 2005,101.

²⁵ Norman 1983, 20-21.

exist.”²⁶ Although we eventually find out that Odysseus reclaims his identity by divulging the three factors I just mentioned, for a moment, Odysseus’ instinct of survival supersedes his pride. Humility results in survival, “...he saves his life by making himself disappear.”²⁷ Ironically, the moment Odysseus does call himself “Nobody”, he disappears from Polyphemus’ sight forever. For when the Cyclops wakes up, it is to the sizzling of his own single eyeball. But the boorish oaf does not understand the pun in the slightest, but when he is drunk and still has his single eye Polyphemus merely tells Outis that his guest-gift shall be the privilege of being eaten last among his companions, “...it is the very playfulness of Polyphemus-his gift to eat Odysseus last- that makes this scene so forceful and the Cyclops so repulsive.”²⁸ Perhaps the lush giggled at his own sick joke, before passing out from being heavy with wine; damned forever to the clouded haze that Odysseus and the wine drowned him in.

After becoming immensely intoxicated, Homer describes the Cyclops as lying asleep on his back with a bent neck.

φάρυγος ἐξέσσυτο οἶνος
ψωμοί τ’ ἀνδρόμενοι· ὁ δ’ ἐρεύγετο οἰνοβαρείων

And from his gullet came forth wine
And bits of human flesh, and he vomited in his drunken sleep.
Od. 9. 373-74.

He eats Odysseus’ companions but soon after pukes them up after becoming too heavy with wine. As they transform into vomit, the men become morsels chewed in vain, for Polyphemus will only become blind because of his action instead of satiated. Homer’s description gives no verb that indicates the human morsels and wine being specifically mixed together, but merely says that these contents were rushing out and being disgorged at the same time. The image of

²⁶ Stewart 1976, 40.

²⁷ Adorno 1992, 125.

²⁸ Reece 1993, 139.

these coinciding together in the pit of the giant's stomach is left up to the imagination of the reader. Homer does not mention the appearance of blood in the vomit. This is when Odysseus shoves his freshly made weapon under some ashes until he burns hot, and with the help of his friends, plunges it into the Cyclops' eye. Just as Odysseus sacked Troy, a 'city drowned in sleep and wine' (*Aen.* 2. 265), the hero "sacks" Polyphemus when he is drunk and vomiting in his sleep.²⁹ Although the description of Polyphemus' eye being burned and charred is quite violent, and it is also one of the few occurrences where Homer mentions blood, I will not discuss it here. Despite Vergil's and Ovid's primary focus being the most gruesome and gory sections of this text, they do not refer to this section.

Odysseus could have easily killed Polyphemus instead of blinding him. He could have made him suffer a painful death, by stabbing him in the liver (*Od.* 9. 299-301). But Odysseus suppresses the angry passion that compelled Polyphemus to eat his guests before thinking of the consequences. If Odysseus killed the ogre, which would assuredly been a cathartic release for Odysseus after having to witness his friends being masticated, him and the rest of his living companions would have died in there with the rotting corpse since the immense stone door was immovable for humans. Instead, the hero blinds Polyphemus and devises a clever plan to escape by hiding himself and his friends underneath the bellies of Polyphemus' only companions, sheep. Vergil and Ovid do not include this exemplary scene of cunning Odysseus' part. They also do not include the dialogue between Polyphemus and Odysseus as he escapes by boat; a plan that faltered in cunning, since it allowed the Cyclops to officially curse Odysseus, and induce the wrath of Poseidon. Polyphemus raises his hands to the sky and prays to his father that Odysseus get home later than expected, lose all his companions and boats, and find trouble in his house;

²⁹ Papaioannou 2005, 91.

such is Odysseus' fate (*Od.* 9. 532-35). Luckily, Odysseus and his men escape two different rock hurlings that just barely miss crashing their vessel, as Odysseus' taunts allow Polyphemus to follow the sound of the hero's voice with pieces wrenched from mountaintops. Despite Odysseus' companions begging him to shut up and restrain his pride, his divulgence of his name is important since this is when Odysseus regains his identity as a hero with far-reaching fame. Ironically, the Cyclops' name that means "Much-Fame" grants "Nobody" with more *kleos* than any other mythological creature in the enchanted realm of Odysseus' *nostos*.³⁰ On the other hand, the later texts that I will analyze push the famed Odysseus into the background and bring Polyphemus to the forefront; so that he can aid other characters (for example, Achaemenides and Galatea) gain literary *kleos* as well.

Homer adapts two elements of a folktale and adapts it into his own story that becomes one of the most memorable in the *Odyssey*. He adds gory details for the sake of imagery, and not for descriptive embellishment. In the *Odyssey* the gruesome story ends with a quasi-happy ending, with the remaining alive companions of Odysseus escaping after they stabbed Polyphemus' eye with a charred olive wood stake. Odysseus has proven to have conquered one of his greatest accomplishments of wit and cunning, and still manages to recover his identity despite its ramifications, "Like the heroes of all true novels after him, Odysseus loses himself in order to find himself..."³¹ Polyphemus too in the *Idylls* will have to lose his sanity in order to regain it again, and Achaemenides in the *Aeneid* and *Metamorphoses* will have to lose his desire for life before gaining an unbreakable appreciation for it.

Polyphemus is a dynamic character that various authors after Homer can use to define intelligence, idiocy, love, hate, beauty, ugliness, madness, sanity, and violence. Even if

³⁰ Cook 1995, 94.

³¹ Adorno 1992, 113-4.

Polyphemus himself does not personally reflect all these qualities, his mere existence allows other characters to reflect their own unique characteristics in juxtaposition with the Cyclops’.

Odyssey 9 initially makes Polyphemus gain the fame his name endows, but other authors compound this *kleos* by having his character live on in other stories that reflect yet alter his Homeric self. Not only does Polyphemus become popular, but Vergil and Ovid also use the Cyclops’ literary fame to create Achaemenides. Although Homer does not indicate that any of Odysseus’ companions were abandoned in Polyphemus’ cave, Vergil integrates a character that is initially forgotten, but ironically becomes “well known” when Ovid continues his story.

Theocritus will use Polyphemus to confront and overcome love as a sickness, and assess his own physical aesthetic and rationality along the way. Ovid will delve into the emotional reception of violent language, while also reinforcing the discussion of beauty that the *Idylls* propose.

Enemies and lovers come and go, beauty is fleeting, but the effects of violence seem to last forever. Since Polyphemus commits the heinous deed of cannibalism in the *Odyssey*, and becomes blind because of it, the Cyclops will never be able to escape the crime that made him so famous. Overall Polyphemus, through all these authors and various literary genres, proves that identity, whether emotionally or physically, depends on innumerable factors. “Reality” is a fickle conception, and changes constantly depending on the characters that appear or disappear in one’s own life story.

1. Theocritus' Pastoral Polyphemus: Lover of Dreams

Polyphemus, as he is portrayed in the *Odyssey*, is famous for being a cannibalistic and violent Cyclops. Homer proves to us that Polyphemus is an isolated monster lacking perspective³² who deals with the uncomfortable situation of finding strangers in his home by eating such strangers. Ironically, Odysseus blinds the one-eyed Polyphemus so that he loses visual perspective as well. Polyphemus is more or less devoid of human characteristics; he is more monster than man. However, the Polyphemus whom Theocritus presents in *Idyll* 11 and 6 is a relatable character situated within a pastoral background. In *Idyll* 11, Polyphemus is a young lovesick shepherd, who finds a remedy through song to cure his emotional pain of being rejected by a nymph named Galatea.³³ In *Idyll* 6, a sort of sequel to *Idyll* 11, the remedy of song proves somewhat productive, as Polyphemus confidently ignores Galatea, and in return she actually seeks the affections that he no longer lends. Although the text is lost, Theocritus owes the general story line of 'Polyphemus in love' to Philoxenus. "The details of Philoxenus' version cannot be discerned...the theme however, with its combination of the pathetic and the grotesque, naturally commended itself to Hellenistic taste."³⁴ Overall, Theocritus integrates multiple facets from the Homeric tradition from which Polyphemus as a character becomes immensely well known. But Theocritus skillfully adapts this famous monster to become relatable

³² From now on when I refer to Polyphemus' general "perspective" (or lack thereof), I am referring to his intellectual, cultural, and/or emotional perspective (opposed to his visual perspective).

³³ Galatea means "Lady of the Milk" (Hunter 1999, 222).

³⁴ Gow 1952, 118.

along with other human characters he portrays. He intrigues the reader when they realize that he is integrating a younger version of the famous mythological character into his pastoral setting, not only to be plagued by the disease of love, but also by the inescapable literary debt that the *Odyssey* unwittingly prescribes.

When first reading *Idylls* 6 and 11, the cannibalistic Cyclops as pastoral character might seem strange, but Farrell argues that it was inspired. The Homeric Polyphemus is a shepherd who lives on Sicily, which was also the setting for several of Theocritus' herdsmen in the *Idylls*, and the native land of the author as well.³⁵ I believe that the simple-minded nature of the Cyclops also assimilates him with the other characters in the *Idylls* as well. William Empson explains that the “trick” of pastoral literature is, “...to make simple people express strong feelings (felt as the most universal subject, something fundamentally true about everybody) in learned and fashionable languages (so that you wrote about the best subject in the best way).”³⁶ Since Polyphemus is famously known for his lack of intelligence (particularly in comparison to Odysseus' cunning), his emotions in the *Idylls* become all the more profound and relatable because they are utterly sincere. Moreover, not only does the reader relate with the emotions of an obtuse shepherd, but one with a literary history of murderous tendencies. Therefore the reader's empathy becomes just as profound as the Cyclops's sadness, with Theocritus' constant yet gentle reminders that this is a character that is not customarily pitied, but feared. However I will point out that several examples in the *Idylls* propose intellectual progression on Polyphemus' part are juxtaposed with reminders of Polyphemus' simple-minded nature. The point of this juxtaposition could be to envelop the reader in the new pastoral idea of the Cyclops while reinforcing the stereotypical Homeric characteristics that, after all, give weight to such

³⁵ Farrell 1992, 242.

³⁶ Spofford 1969, 24.

allusions.

Overall, Theocritus develops his own story that veers off from the traditional conception of Polyphemus, so that at first glance *Idyll* 6 and 11 seem to contain a completely altered character. There is no physical violence; the reader can hardly recognize Polyphemus without humans in his mouth. “The Polyphemus to be described is not yet himself as he will appear in the *Odyssey*, but a young man, a figure understandable in terms of ordinary human behavior.”³⁷ Although Theocritus does not portray a cannibalistic Polyphemus, as other authors such as Vergil and Ovid do after Homer, he still reminds the reader of the Cyclops’s epic background throughout both *Idylls*, “...inevitably the character’s literary past clings to him like karma from another life...”.³⁸ Theocritus does not allow Polyphemus to shake this “karma” by simply having the monster love instead of kill. Despite Polyphemus shunning physical violence and curing his emotional pain by song, this seemingly laudable behavior cannot save Polyphemus from his impending encounter with Odysseus.

There are various examples within both *Idylls* that foreshadow Polyphemus’ doomed fate of blindness. “A central irony, both comic and tragic, of *Idyll* 11 lies in our knowledge of what is to come: some of what the Cyclops sings (the arrival of a stranger, the loss of his eye etc.) was indeed to prove all too true.”³⁹ Along with the apparent focus on sight (or lack thereof) and allusions to Homeric literature overall, the language of ‘pursuing’ and ‘fleeing’ that Theocritus uses to describe Galatea and Polyphemus’ relationship mirrors the more violent dynamic between Odysseus and Polyphemus. Even when the Cyclops compliments Galatea, he slips in a few complaints that have to do with the sea nymph ‘departing’ or ‘fleeing’ from Polyphemus

³⁷ Spofford 1969, 26.

³⁸ Farrell 1992, 242.

³⁹ Hunter 1999, 219.

(οἴχνη εὐθὺς ἰοῖσ', *Id.* 11.23). Even when Polyphemus metaphorically compares Galatea to one of his beloved pets (ῥις), he does so by essentially calling himself a predator that incites fear by just looking at him, “You flee like a ewe that has seen the grey wolf” (φεύγεις δ' ὥσπερ ῥις πολὺν λύκον ἀθρήσασα, *Id.* 11.24).⁴⁰ Just as Odysseus flees in *Odyssey* 9, Galatea flees as well. Hunter aptly explains a point, to which I will return to frequently, that “...the Cyclops is trapped in the language, not just of Homer, but also of Odysseus”.⁴¹ The language of a character Polyphemus hates just as much as he loves Galatea consumes him. One perspective to take when reading *Idylls* 6 and 11 is to imagine Theocritus depicting the Homeric Polyphemus when he is in his own element of existing without boats of strangers visiting. This solitary Cyclops has no threat to contend with (Odysseus), but merely his own obsessive thoughts. Since this obsession is manifested in love instead of a cannibalistic frenzy, the lack of violence is natural yet bizarre. Now the reader can toy with the psychology of Polyphemus as a character without the imagery of wine and human flesh spewing forth from his mouth. When in love, Polyphemus is still doltish, yet sincere and relatable.

While Polyphemus is not physically destructive in the *Idylls*, he is still portrayed as harboring maddened emotions as opposed to expressing them with actions. It seems logical that a monster lacking insight of customary social convention (who in previous literary tradition acts violently and believes he is justified in eating intruders) can be expected to harbor deranged emotions associated with heartbrokenness. Therefore as a pursuer of someone who always seems just out of reach, Polyphemus loves Galatea with legitimate madness (ὀρθαῖς μανίαις, *Id.* 11.11). Gow and Hunter say that the adjective (ὀρθός) in this context means ‘true’ or genuine’.⁴²

⁴⁰ All the translations from the *Idylls* from here on out are from Hopkinson, 2015.

⁴¹ Hunter 1999, 219.

⁴² Gow 1952, 211. Hunter 1999, 227.

Theocritus immediately imparts that Polyphemus is not a normal lover; instead of courting Galatea with tokens of love (like apples or roses), he goes insane. Just as in the *Odyssey*, where Polyphemus does not greet the strangers within his cave by the general customs of the guest-host relationship (but eats them raw instead), Polyphemus does not treat this specific “relationship” with Galatea very appropriately either. Obviously, Theocritus conveys Polyphemus’ manner of loving to be so absurd, that the *Idyll* is centered around finding a proper cure for the Cyclops’ madness.⁴³ Instead of wounding others physically, Polyphemus is the one who bears a hateful wound in his heart received from Aphrodite herself, fixing her arrow within his liver (ἔχθιστον ἔχων ὑποκάρδιον ἔλκος / Κύπριδος ἐκ μεγάλας τό οἱ ἥπατι πᾶξε, *Id* 11.15-16). “If *eros* is ‘by definition’ the pursuit of the one who flees (11.75), a longing for what is absent, then it is bound to hit particularly hard upon a Cyclops.”⁴⁴ Therefore desire in Polyphemus’ case extends itself violently whether through love (of Galatea) or hate (of Odysseus). Theocritus recognizes this double-edged sword of desire, and fills Polyphemus’ song with maddened obsession that mirrors multiple elements of his soon to be foe. “The Cyclops’ all-consuming passion (ὑποκάρδιον...ἥπατι) is described in an echo of Odysseus’ killing of Eurymachos, ἐν δέ οἱ ἥπατι πῆξε θοόν βέλος (*Od.* 22.83); even when Kypris tortures Polyphemus, the real enemy is in the background.”⁴⁵ It is striking that this specific example does not even pertain to Book 9 of the *Odyssey*, which contains the encounter between Odysseus and Polyphemus. Theocritus references Homeric literature as a whole, but specifically includes many other allusions to *Odyssey* 9 itself with Odysseus looming invisibly in the background.

Along with these Odyssean references, Theocritus specifically highlights the pending

⁴³ Walker 1980, 72.

⁴⁴ Hunter 1999, 221.

⁴⁵ Hunter 1999, 228-9.

existence of Polyphemus' single eye in ironic juxtaposition to its inevitable loss. For example, in the first segment where Polyphemus begins to sing about Galatea (*Id.* 11. 19-29), three different verbs associated with "seeing" occur.⁴⁶ Two of them are participles: the first is in the present tense that describes Polyphemus "gazing out at the sea" (ἐς πόντον ὄρων, *Id.* 11.18:), and the second is in the aorist tense that describes him falling in love with Galatea after "having looked" at her (ἔσιδόν, *Id.* 11. 28). The third verb is an aorist infinitive, describing Galatea as whiter than curd "to look upon" (ποτιδεῖν, *Id.* 11: 20). In all of these scenarios (even when the Cyclops gazes out to the sea) Polyphemus' single eye, or perhaps just his imagination, is enraptured with the sight and thought of Galatea. If there are any negative implications that Theocritus wishes to associate with Polyphemus' eye (in specific accordance to the *Odyssey*), then the reader may already feel disaster lingering between the relationship of the sea nymph and Cyclops. For as Polyphemus' single eye proved integral to keeping Odysseus and his men locked in the cave, its removal resulted in freedom and escape. In *Idyll* 11 where Polyphemus is young and in love, his single-minded resolve to capture Galatea's affections is tinged with violent connotations resulting in the obsessive gaze of his single eye.

Polyphemus first words begin with compliments of Galatea (*Id.* 11.19-22). Along with the curd metaphor (11.20), he says she is softer than a lamb, more skittish than a calf, and sleeker than an unripe grape (*Id.* 11. 20-21). "First Polyphemus attempts to bind the sea creature to himself with similes appropriate to his world..."⁴⁷ Besides the lamb metaphor, these comparisons unsurprisingly are visual observations. Already, Polyphemus shows that when he makes complimentary comparisons, he can only do so from his own limited experience.

⁴⁶ I am not counting the "seeing" verb from Polyphemus' lamb/wolf complaint (*Id.* 11. 24) among these three, because it is describing the lamb looking and not Polyphemus.

⁴⁷ Brooke 1971, 75.

Polyphemus is certainly sincere in his fawning compliments of Galatea, having her surpass objects that are firmly established in the Cyclops' everyday routine (curd, sheep, grapes, etc.), "Yet these qualities in her so far transcend the object to which they are compared that they suggest the limitations of comparison itself. Galatea is softer than the softest thing Polyphemus can imagine..."⁴⁸ Therefore, even in Polyphemus' first attempt of persuasion, his comparisons become all the more unpersuasive (particularly if the reader never believes that Polyphemus has ever really touched or seen Galatea; I will elaborate on this later). Polyphemus truly attempts to love and observe Galatea, a being with different attributes from that of his own world. But he cannot help but observe these differing qualities not as they exist in themselves, but how they exist in comparison to personal facets of his life. I do not mean to assert that this manner of comparison is necessarily a negative attribute, especially since the Cyclops' tactic seems fair considering his lack of worldly experience. However in relation to what else will unfold in the poem, it is exemplary of Polyphemus' simple-minded nature as a whole, and his nature will prove to be incompatible with Galatea.

Several scholars have analyzed whether Galatea is a figment of Polyphemus' imagination, since she never actually appears in the *Idylls*, but only through Polyphemus' descriptions.⁴⁹ One of the few instances where Polyphemus mentions "seeing" Galatea is when she appears when sweet sleep holds him (γλυκὺς ὕπνος ἔχη με, *Id.* 11.22), and departs when sweet sleep releases him (γλυκὺς ὕπνος ἀνῆ με, *Id.* 11.23).⁵⁰ The Cyclops does not necessarily understand the concept of dreaming, so he becomes confused by Galatea's visage that is only

⁴⁸ Payne 2007, 73.

⁴⁹ I will adopt this view, but only to highlight the sight themes associated with Polyphemus as a character in the *Odyssey*, not to assess the validity of Polyphemus' feelings.

⁵⁰ Once again, the reader is reminded of the *Odyssey* book 9 when Odysseus has already sharpened the olive-wood stake into a weapon, and is telling his companions that they shall all attack Polyphemus when 'sweet sleep should come upon him' (ὅτε τὸν γλυκὺς ὕπνος ἰκάνοι, *Od.* 9.333).

apparent when he is asleep. If we regard Galatea as only a figment of Polyphemus' dreams, then she is an imaginary being conjured by Polyphemus' mind to such a point that he regards her, and his love for her, as real. "Since the reader cannot enter Polyphemus' dreams any more than he can enter the ocean into which he peers by day, we once again miss the spectacular female presence that lies at the heart of the fiction."⁵¹ Despite Polyphemus confessing that he fell in love with Galatea the first time they met gathering hyacinth flowers with his mother Thoosa, Walker asserts that this memory is most likely associated with a different memory of a childhood female friend, since the Galatea that Theocritus presents in *Idyll* 11 and 6 never leaves the Mediterranean.⁵² Is Polyphemus in love with an imaginary friend? Even with his physical sight still intact within the *Idylls*, the Cyclops still seems like he is observing his surroundings not from his single eye, but from his unfettered imagination. For a moment, the new pastoral (opposed to cannibalistic) Polyphemus speaks as if his sensory delusions and infatuation with Galatea have already blinded him. Once again, the seafaring Odysseus seems to linger in the background as the dream-Galatea runs in and out of the ocean to visit Polyphemus' dream, consorting with the enemy and obfuscating the Cyclops' reality.

Regardless of whether Galatea is imaginary, Polyphemus justifies to himself that the reason she flees (γινώσκω, χαρίεσσα κόρα, τίνος οὔνεκα φεύγεις, *Id.* 11.30) is because of the ugly attributes of his facial appearance, more specifically, his single eye (εἷς δ' ὀφθαλμὸς, *Id.* 11.33). It is interesting to note that Polyphemus, a character generally known to lack personal insight, acknowledges the physical attributes of himself that are the monstrous and unappealing. Polyphemus realizes that in comparison to a lovely girl (χαρίεσσα κόρα, *Id.* 11.30) such as Galatea, he can be considered "ugly". To add to the sight motifs present in this text, Polyphemus

⁵¹ Payne 2007, 77.

⁵² Walker 1980, 76.

calls her κόρα, which besides “girl” can mean “the pupil” of an eye. Throughout the song in general, Polyphemus attempts to compensate his physical appearance with his physical possessions. Sandwiched in between the two most prominent self-conscious moments about his ugliness, he brags about all his sheep, and the vast amounts of milk and cheese they produce (*Id.* 11. 34-37), which reminds the reader of Odysseus and his men gazing in wonder at the contents of the monster’s cave before the gruesome encounter (*Od.* 9.218-23).⁵³ Just as the animals and the food they produce enchant Odysseus and his men to stay within the cave, Polyphemus uses these same resources to persuade Galatea to enter his cave, despite his unappealing features.

After bragging about his goods, Polyphemus now moves onto the tactic of using gifts, and the natural scenery of his island to persuade the nymph. Besides attempting to convince Galatea with his cheese and sheep (*Id.* 11. 34-37), Polyphemus says that he has collared eleven fawns and four bear cubs to presumably be pets for Galatea, “...Polyphemus’ world is a place where wild things, the fawns and bear cubs he keeps as gifts for the nymph, are bound (μαννοφόρος 41); conceivably she could be fettered too (40-41)”.⁵⁴ Even when Polyphemus tries to solicit the sea nymph with his earthly assets, Polyphemus’ language suggests that wishes to have Galatea as his own possession and tamed pet, instead of a wife.

After it seems that Polyphemus wishes to trap Galatea inside his cave along with his the fawns and cubs, he actually describes how pleasant it will be for to spend the night in his cave (ἄδιον ἐν τῶντρῳ παρ' ἐμὶν τὰν νύκτα διαξείς, *Id.* 11. 44). Polyphemus entices her with the cave idea by saying that there are laurels, cypresses, ivy, grape vines, and cold water that drips down from the snow of Mt. Etna (*Id.* 11. 45-48). Hunter comments that some details about the cave are taken from attributes of the Cyclops’s cave in the *Odyssey* (*Od.* 9. 183 the laurels) but that the

⁵³ Hunter 1999, 233.

⁵⁴ Brooke 1971, 76.

rest actually comes from *Odyssey* 5 where Odysseus is trapped in Calypso's cave (*Od.* 5.64 cypresses, 5.69 vines, cool water 5.70).⁵⁵ Not only is Polyphemus unpersuasive to the reader because they are reminded of Odysseus stuck in the Cyclops' cave in *Odyssey* 9, but also because the reader imagines Odysseus stuck in a cave not by a mythical creature who hates him, but by one who loves him in *Odyssey* 5. "So here, the combination of phallic cypresses, Dionysiac ivy, good wine and refreshing water makes clear what the Cyclops has in mind (cf. 44)."⁵⁶ Polyphemus describes aspects of his cave that he personally would find attractive if Galatea was wooing him. He concludes his subtle sexual fantasy with, "Who would choose the sea and waves instead of these things?" (τίς κα τῶνδε θάλασσαν ἔχειν καὶ κύμαθ' ἔλοιτο, *Id.* 11. 49). Polyphemus believes it is his physical appearance that he must compensate for, since he does not seem to pinpoint any other reason for why Galatea would reject him. Instead of asking her why she does not choose *him* instead of the sea and its waves, he asks why Galatea would not leave her home for "these things", all the possessions and features that encompass Polyphemus and his lifestyle. Polyphemus is already protecting his heart from the imminent rejection, for it is less painful to believe it is his property that she rejects instead of him.

The Cyclops ends up essentially courting himself with song instead of Galatea. He does not understand what would please Galatea, if she lived on land with him. Polyphemus, always content with his solitary way of living, hardly realizes that his wealth might not be enough to charm a sea-nymph, disinterested in the appeals of on-shore living. For someone who lives by himself and relies on no one else to sustain and be happy, conceding to his desire for something that is unattainable proves to be a completely foreign feeling. The gods have bestowed the Cyclopes with a blessed lifestyle devoid of intense labor; Polyphemus is used to only fulfilling

⁵⁵ Hunter 1999, 236.

⁵⁶ Hunter 1999, 236.

his simple desires, not those of anyone or anything else except his sheep. For example, when Odysseus proclaims his own desire to receive guest gifts Polyphemus in *Odyssey* 9, Polyphemus reacts to this foreign desire by disregarding it and eating the wanderer's companions. In the *Odyssey*, when Polyphemus encounters a desire that is different, or opposes that of his own, he employs violence to restore order back into his daily routine since his uncultured mind can not rationalize any other route more effective. But in a pastoral setting within the *Idylls*, Theocritus allows the reader to witness this Homeric Cyclops tackle foreign desires with exhaustive effort. Even if the process is just as unintelligent, it is not evil or violent.

In *Idyll* 11, Galatea, not Odysseus has disrupted Polyphemus' daily routine. At the beginning of the *Idyll*, he thinks everything else is less important, even his beloved sheep returned home without their master (*Id.* 11. 11-13). In *Odyssey* 9 Polyphemus takes control by killing the factors that slightly disrupted his routine (the tiny men who barged into his cave). But, Polyphemus cannot use violence to subjugate her, since he claims to love her. He cannot kill her, so he needs to find a way to integrate her into his routine. "...the only way he can possess Galatea is by domesticating her and fitting her into the pastoral pattern of his own existence (see 34-37)."⁵⁷ Unfortunately he is unable to imprison her, for she is too quick to be caught. Essentially, Polyphemus' boasts are his attempts to convince Galatea, something out of his control, to become subdued and domesticated like all the other entities in his life. The only element that is missing is her, and perhaps if she understood how well he took care of his possessions, she would want to be his favorite one. But, she will not be convinced. Polyphemus will realize that Galatea is a creature with a nature unlike his own, as well as an entity outside of his control.

After Polyphemus cannot fathom why Galatea would choose her own home instead of

⁵⁷ Brooke 1971, 78.

his, he gets immensely self-conscious again, justifiably so. In his heightening desperation Polyphemus raises the stakes, and in doing so he slips further into an altered reality he creates with song. Polyphemus is going to attempt a second time to compensate for his unappealing physical appearance. Although Polyphemus is wary of being very hairy (λασιώτερος, *Id.* 11. 50), he compensates this physical fact by claiming he has logs of oakwood⁵⁸ under ash (ὑπὸ σποδοῶ, *Id.* 11.51), which recalls the moment when Odysseus sticks his olivewood stake under the ashes (ὑπὸ σποδοῦ, *Od.* 9.375) before piercing the weapon into the Cyclops' eye.⁵⁹ After promising her wood fires, Polyphemus declares his burning passion for Galatea, and then offers both his soul and his single eye to her, the latter his most dear possession.

καίόμενος δ' ὑπὸ τεῦς καὶ τὰν ψυχὰν ἀνεχοίμαν
καὶ τὸν ἕν' ὀφθαλμόν, τῷ μοι γλυκερώτερον οὐδέν

And in my burning love for you I would yield up my soul
And my single eye, I have no dearer possession than that.
Id. 11. 52-53

This declaration is momentous; Polyphemus is willing to be blind as long as Galatea concedes to live with him. The participle that means “burning” recalls the moment in the *Odyssey* when Polyphemus' eyeball is burning (γλήνης καιομένης, *Od.* 9. 390).⁶⁰ Except instead of his eyeball boiling from the heat of the olive wood stake, he (or even his heart) is burning from his passion of Galatea. In both situations Polyphemus is a passive recipient of literal and metaphorical “burning”. Unfortunately, the reader has discovered that even without Odysseus in the story, Polyphemus is destined for darkness.

Not only does Polyphemus offer up his eye, but he also offers up his soul, the emotional

⁵⁸ Most likely to keep them warm at night, since oakwood burns the hottest and longest, as far as Polyphemus knows (Gow 1952, 217).

⁵⁹ Brooke 1971, 77.

⁶⁰ Hunter 1999, 237

center that makes Polyphemus every part of who he is as a person. Desperation overwhelms Polyphemus; even in a moment where he is forced to analyze multiple facets of what he could offer as a lover, his perspective of their improbable relationship is still muddled. “The passive type of love now envisaged by the Cyclops is wholly unrealistic, since it is precisely as blind and unseeing as Polyphemus would have himself become at Galatea’s hands; it is a love that obfuscates and destroys, not one that creates and enlightens.”⁶¹ Polyphemus, in other words, is willing to ‘sell his soul to the devil’ (or Galatea), in order to be loved by her. This is a vulnerable moment of the *Idyll* for Polyphemus; he has replicated the language of the most painful moment of his Homeric self yet to come. Not only this, but since his mind is clouded by his obsession of Galatea, he offers to let her burn his most dear possession, more dear than the possessions and home he has attempted to woo her with. Odysseus incurred the wrath of Poseidon for burning Polyphemus’ eye, which greatly affected his travels home long after Odysseus left the Cyclops’ island. But, Polyphemus is so despondent at this moment of *Idyll* 11, so embarrassed of his physical appearance, that he will allow Galatea to alter it in simple reciprocation of his love. “He means that though he is ugly, he is devoted...The fires of love are treated with grotesque literalness because he is a grotesque creature and is about to give further examples of his naiveté”.⁶² Unfortunately, no matter how much Theocritus depicts Polyphemus as more of a man than monster in the *Idylls*, the way Polyphemus deals with love (opposed to eating people) is still drenched in clumsy savagery.

Even though I said that Polyphemus does not deal with foreign desires in the *Idylls* with violence or evil, he still offers Galatea to be violent to him. She will never appear and enact such a violent deed, but the fact that he resorts to the thought of it shows Polyphemus’ desperation. In

⁶¹ Holtmark 1966, 255

⁶² Gow 1952, 217.

this anguish, he alters his tactic and attempts to be more of an active, instead of passive lover. Now that Polyphemus has reached his ultimate emotional low of the song, painfully analyzing himself when he would not have done so otherwise, he acknowledges the natural differences between Galatea and him; most obviously, where they both respectively live. “The perceptive reader will appreciate that Galateia and Polyphemus are doomed by incompatible life-styles. At 54 f. it is apparent that Polyphemus is beginning to realize the problem...”⁶³ Polyphemus wishes that his mother would have begotten him with gills (ὄτ' οὐκ ἔτεκέν μ' ἅ μήτηρ βράγχι' ἔχοντα, *Id.* 11. 54) so he could kiss her hand and bring white snowdrops or red poppy petals (*Id.* 11. 55-7). Instead of realizing that it would be impossible to show Galatea snowflakes underwater, Polyphemus corrects himself instead by noting that poppies grow in the summer and snowdrops in the winter, so he could not possibly bring both things to her at the same time. “...he enters the nymph’s world, kisses her, and brings to her the flower which she originally came seeking in his.”⁶⁴ Here, Polyphemus is at his most romantic. He is willing to leave his dear homestead, and also offers to bring the only thing from his island she assuredly finds desirable, at least according to his childhood memory.

After he corrects himself, Polyphemus says that he shall learn how to swim immediately (νῦν μάν, ὦ κόριον, νῦν αὐτίκα νεῖν γε μαθεῖμαι, *Id.* 11. 60). Polyphemus seems to deem his previous wish of being born with gills as unrealistic or unsatisfactory, for he begins the next option of joining her world with “now truly.” Perhaps he comes to this conclusion because of the seasonal discrepancy between snowflakes and petals, or because he is pained by the completely unrealistic fantasy of being able to breathe underwater. At least Polyphemus understands one thing about the ocean; one must have gills to live there. But this really is the only thing he

⁶³ Schmiel 1975, 33.

⁶⁴ Brooke 1971, 77.

knows, since it does not even occur to him that Galatea may not understand what seasons or snowflakes are. Even though Polyphemus has pulled himself up from his emotional low-point in his song by attempting to be less selfish as a lover, his intellectual flaws still persist.

I have pointed out instances that foreshadow the imminent burning and blinding of Polyphemus' single eye, or that recall Odysseus from another part of the *Odyssey*. However, when Polyphemus mentions he will learn how to swim, this statement does not necessarily recall any scene specifically, but the overall ominous presence of Odysseus. Polyphemus' statement (that he will learn to swim) is ironic since the reader knows he will never learn to swim (simply based on inference from the *Odyssey* when he is unable to pursue Odysseus in the water). His follow up statement is even more ironic, since Polyphemus claims he will learn how to swim, if *some stranger* came to him sailing in a ship (αἶ κά τις σὸν ναὶ πλέων ξένος ὃδ' ἀφίκηται, *Id.* 11.61). Whenever Theocritus includes some form of τις in this *Idyll*, he is most likely be alluding to Odysseus' pseudonym Οὔτις from *Odyssey* 9.⁶⁵ This specific inclusion of τις in line 61 most obviously implies Odysseus because of ξένος. Besides the apparent perverted theme of the guest-host relationship in book 9 of the *Odyssey*, the first word that Polyphemus utters to Odysseus and his company is ξεῖνοι (*Od.* 9. 252). This vocative address in the *Odyssey* seems immensely hostile, especially with the foreknowledge of how Polyphemus will treat such "strangers". But here in *Idyll 11*, τις ξένος carries a positive tone with Polyphemus' hope that a swimming instructor could sail to him and aid him in watery acclimation for the purpose of being closer to Galatea. In *Idyll 11* Polyphemus goes back and forth by gaining some personal insight, then falling back into his stereotypical ignorance plagued by the looming karma from his Homeric

⁶⁵ Previously in the song, Polyphemus claims he can play his pipe like *no one* of the Cyclopes where he lives (*Id.* 11. 38: σὺρίσδεν δ' ὡς οὔτις ἐπίσταμαι ὃδε Κυκλώπων), but this seems to be the only time when it is not used in allusion to Odysseus.

source. When Polyphemus mentions prescience of some stranger (Odysseus) sailing to his island, he wants to learn from such a stranger so that he may know someday how pleasant it is for her kind to dwell in the deep sea (ὡς εἰδῶ τί ποχ' ἀδὸ κατοικεῖν τὸν βυθὸν ὑμμιν, *Id.* 11:62).

Polyphemus proves that he is willing to walk away from the world that spent a good portion of the song bragging about. The seemingly selfish Polyphemus from *Odyssey* 9 softens with his sadness, he would drop everything and go anywhere if only to be with Galatea.

For the next ten lines, Polyphemus still daydreams about Galatea engaging in the Cyclops' daily routine of shepherding and milking his sheep. Even after his willingness to enter the sea, Polyphemus still fantasizes about a life with the same exact routine, but with a loving woman at his side to keep him company and enjoy all the chores he does. Besides his obvious emotional suffering, Polyphemus says that he is even physically suffering: his feet and head throb, and he is becoming thinner each day (*Id.* 11. 69-71). But by line 72, Polyphemus finally understands that his wishes will not come true, and capitulates that perhaps he let himself go a bit crazy in his obsession for this one sea-nymph, "Oh Cyclops, Cyclops, where have your wits flown?" (ὦ Κύκλωψ Κύκλωψ, πᾶ τὰς φρένας ἐκπεπότασαι, *Id.* 11. 72). After his vocative address to himself, he repossesses his identity. He says he would have more sense if he went back to his usual activities such as tending to his sheep (*Id.* 11. 73-74). "Polyphemus achieves his return to reality by constructing in song a fantasy double of his own pastoral existence as an alternative to erotic fantasy."⁶⁶ Polyphemus recognizes that his infatuation for Galatea has exceeded to a point of irrationality. Even if just for a moment, the Cyclops has gained perspective. Although Polyphemus would prefer a life with Galatea as his wife, the emotional pain of being rejected surpasses his longing for her; he is now able to move on.

⁶⁶ Payne 2007, 79.

Polyphemus' sheep become his companions once again; his possessions compensate for Galatea. Although the nymph never appears, Polyphemus at least persuades himself to accept that the life he aggrandized is the one he prefers rather than the one enveloped in infatuated madness for the sake of a volatile woman. The cured Cyclops finally asks himself, "...why do you pursue someone who flees?" (τί τὸν φεύγοντα διώκεις, *Id.* 11. 75). Holtsmark encourages us to compare this line with that of 19, where Polyphemus asks Galatea "Why do you reject someone who loves you" (ἽΩ λευκὰ Γαλάτεια, τί τὸν φιλέοντ' ἀποβάλλῃ, *Id.* 11.19). "Not only are the two lines metrically similar, but Theocritus most likely wanted to stress the Cyclops's emotional development from the beginning to the end of the song.⁶⁷ Polyphemus has just intelligently concluded something he would not have otherwise in the *Odyssey*, it is pointless to chase someone who does not want to be caught. Polyphemus gains perspective of someone else's wishes besides his own. Not only this, but he has realized that in attempt to overrule someone else's desires by means of his own. Since Galatea does not return his affections, he realizes that his infatuation may not only hurt another person (emotionally or physically), but himself most of all.

Polyphemus has finally concluded that he will stop pursuing Galatea, for he resolves that she does not wish to be pursued. While Odysseus will wish to flee in fear of his own life because of Polyphemus' savage nature, Galatea flees Polyphemus because she presumably fears and detests his savage appearance. Despite coming to the insightful conclusion that it is painfully pointless to pursue the uncatchable, this personal perspective will only exist in the *Idylls* when Polyphemus' heart is damaged instead of his eye.

"The cardinal point of the poem's concluding section is illuminated by the metaphorical application of a time-honored theme in Greek literature: that of the possible-impossible pursuit and the individual's recognition of his ability or inability to cope with it. His

⁶⁷ Holtsmark 1966, 257-58.

failure to assess his own limitations, and the consequent pursuit of what for him is impossible, can only have disastrous results.”⁶⁸

Polyphemus has accepted his inability to capture Galatea’s approval. He even believes he could find another Galatea (another girl in general) who is even prettier (*Id.* 11.76). He claims that there are other girls who apparently engage his affections during the night (*Id.* 11. 77). The fact that other women flirt and play with Polyphemus at night could also be another delusion, since it is at night when sleep takes over Polyphemus, and Galatea appears to him. “...the Cyclops cures himself of his obsession with Galatea through an act of the imagination; that is, he sings himself into a state of reasonable content with himself and his pastoral life.”⁶⁹ It is reassuring to know that the Cyclops has healed himself through song, even if she was just a dream all along. The point is that even if someone is as naive as the infamous Polyphemus from the *Odyssey*, they can cure themselves of heartbreak, no matter how captivating that dream girl is.

After Polyphemus consoles himself that he is attractive to some women besides Galatea (even if these affections are illusory, he does not notice or care), he concludes his song with a comforting statement, both to himself and his reader, “It’s clear that on land I too am a somebody” (δῆλον ὅτ' ἐν τῷ γᾶ κήγών τις φαίνομαι ἤμεν, *Id.* 11. 79). Polyphemus has gained back lucidity and confidence. Even though he forfeited his mental sanity, and even offered his soul to Galatea, Polyphemus convinces himself that he is someone worth being pursued as well. “The Cyclops’ clarifying discovery is the insight that no inherent fault in himself is responsible for Galatea’s rejection, but rather that it is their irreconcilable natures.”⁷⁰ Polyphemus recognizes that continuing his pursuit of Galatea already enacted disastrous results for himself emotionally, and his song has helped him realize that he too is ‘a somebody’. After having thrown away his

⁶⁸ Holtsmark 1966, 257.

⁶⁹ Walker 1980, 76.

⁷⁰ Holtsmark 1996, 258.

identity (offering up his soul and single eye), Polyphemus has regained it again; he has stopped pursuing that which is impossible to attain. This idea of pursuit and regaining one's identity in *Idyll 11* mirrors the journey of Odysseus, as he becomes more aware of his ability to cope with difficult situations in his pursuit of Ithaca; he assesses his own limitations adequately enough to complete his *nostos* safely. Upon escaping the Cyclops' island in *Odyssey 9*, Odysseus proves that he had the mental competence to focus his rage, and assess his surroundings in order to escape without being eaten. After the Odysseus throws away his identity (his name) in the cave, he reclaims and validates that he is *more* than just a 'somebody'. He sails away, gazing at the island that opposed and perverted the customs and laws from his own world. Like a blurred mirror image, this moment reverses and reflects Polyphemus at the end of *Idyll 11*. When he eventually stands up to walk back home after he reclaims his own identity as a 'somebody', maybe Polyphemus gave one last glance at the sea that concealed his lover in a watery world, forever fated to confound the Cyclops in both pastoral and epic settings.

Leaving *Idyll 11*, let us direct our attention to *Idyll 6*, a hypothesized sequel to *Idyll 11*. Instead of Theocritus addressing the poem to his friend Nicias as he did in 11, the *Idyll* begins with an address to Aratus explaining that a friendly singing contest has sprung up between two characters named Daphnis and Damoetas. Daphnis plays the role of a friend of Polyphemus, and Damoetas assumes the voice of Polyphemus in response. Just as it was difficult to recognize Polyphemus without his physically violent tendencies in *Idyll 11* in comparison with *Odyssey 9*, the reader may find it hard to recognize the newly confident Polyphemus in *Idyll 6* in comparison with 11. He is now playing 'hard to get' and spurns Galatea's rather violent means to get his attention. Apparently, the song he sang in *Idyll 11* has cured Polyphemus of his lovesick obsession. *Idyll 6* is almost half as short as *Idyll 11*, but Theocritus still implements multiple

allusions to the *Odyssey* and to Polyphemus' sight overall.

Daphnis begins his song by notifying Polyphemus that Galatea is throwing apples at his sheep and calling him rude names (*Id.* 6. 6-7). But despite these hostile actions and words, Polyphemus does not see her (*Id.* 6. 8: *νῦν οὐ ποθόρησθα*, "...probably 'see', as in 22, rather than 'look at', as in 25").⁷¹ Already a word having to do with 'seeing' is in association with Polyphemus and the object of his (seemingly previous) desire. Daphnis then demands Polyphemus look again (*πάλιν...ἴδε*, *Id.* 6. 9) as Galatea now pelts his dog. But even as the dog is barking (perhaps in pain from being struck), he looks towards the sea (*εἰς ἄλλα δερκομένα*, *Id.* 6.11) just as Polyphemus does (*Id.* 11.18) when he begins his song directed toward Galatea in *Idyll* 6. Either Polyphemus in *Idyll* 6 is purposely not looking in Galatea's direction because he is consumed by his act of indifference, or as Hunter asserts, Galatea's existence is as "ephemeral" as in *Idyll* 11⁷²; meaning her visage does not exist in this poem either. "Daphnis describes things, such as the barking dog, as though the Cyclops was already literally blind, and not just 'blind' to what Galatea is doing."⁷³ Daphnis accusations of Polyphemus not seeing Galatea pelting his sheep and dog evokes two types of blindness that Theocritus has associated with Polyphemus in his *Idylls*. Not only does the language subtly recall Polyphemus' lack of sight in relation to *Odyssey* 9, but also Theocritus's reinforcement of Galatea's "ephemeral" qualities recalls Polyphemus' incompetence of personal and social assessment.

After Daphnis finishes his part of the song after further elaborating on Galatea's reversed role of flirting and pursuing Polyphemus, Damoetas responds by playing the role of the Cyclops. Polyphemus defends himself saying he did 'see' her pelting his flock; she did not 'escape his

⁷¹ Hunter 1999, 250.

⁷² Hunter 1999, 244.

⁷³ Hunter 1999, 245.

notice' (εἶδον.../ κοῦ μ' ἔλαθ', *Id.* 6. 21-22). Both those aorist verbs concerning Polyphemus' defense of sight are the beginning word(s) of these two lines. Although Hunter asserts (and I agree) that Galatea might be a figment of Polyphemus' imagination or memory, it seems important to note that Polyphemus claims to be seeing Galatea in this instance when he is awake. There is no reference that he is dreaming, or even that this event is taking place at night (such as when in *Idyll* 11 Polyphemus claims he has alternate female suitors).⁷⁴ Nevertheless, Polyphemus fully believes that his observations of Galatea are valid. He swears by his sweet single eye with which he wishes to see (verb in optative mood) to the end of his life (οὐ τὸν ἑμὸν τὸν ἕνα γλυκύν ᾧ ποθορῶμι / ἐς τέλος, *Id.* 6. 22-23). This is a primary example that shows how drastically different Polyphemus' attitude towards Galatea has become. Instead of offering his single sweet eye for her to burn as in *Id.* 11. 53, he swears by the same sweet eye he hopes to have until he dies. Although I have asserted that there is no direct reference to the night or to the fact that Polyphemus is dreaming, I believe that the several uses of the adjective γλυκός that appears in reference either to Polyphemus' eye (*Id.* 11.53) or sleep (*Id.* 11. 22-23, *Od.* 9.333) reinforces the sweet ignorance Polyphemus usually resides in. Sleep is sweet for Polyphemus since he believes that the images he sees at night are indistinct from his waking reality; even when Polyphemus awakens and opens his sweet single eye, the dream's images in his mind's eye melds with those of his physical eye. In the *Odyssey*, the darkness of night will become Polyphemus' reality; a reality that is just as murky as the lack of insight Polyphemus seems to exhibit, no matter the author. Overall ignorance is bliss, ignorance is sweet. Theocritus seems to use this adjective to associate Polyphemus' blindness to reality (since he can not differentiate

⁷⁴ Although the time of day that the narrators sing this story can be completely negligible with concern to the time of day that the reader encounters Polyphemus, it seems fair to note that Daphnis and Damoetas sing during the middle of the day (μέσῳ ἄματι, *Id.* 6.4), so probably noon.

his dreaming state from being awake) and his impending physical blindness.

After Polyphemus swears that he definitely saw Galatea, swearing by Pan⁷⁵ and his eye, Theocritus' allusion to the actual loss of Polyphemus' eye becomes more clear as the Cyclops wishes the same evil fate that the prophet Telemus bestowed upon him, who presaged Odysseus blinding Polyphemus in the *Odyssey* (9.507-16). In *Idyll* 11 Polyphemus unconsciously referenced his Homeric self, fully displaying his ignorance as a character despite differing story lines. This was appropriate since Polyphemus was emotionally stuck in his obsessive pursuit of Galatea. But since Damoetas impersonates Polyphemus in *Idyll* 6, this impersonation allows unconscious allusions to become conscious references.⁷⁶ Now, Polyphemus exhibits (even if only a facade) control over himself and confidence. But just as Polyphemus did not fully comprehend Telemus' prophecy in the *Odyssey*, because he expected Odysseus to be someone who looked more like a Cyclops instead of a puny man, in *Idyll* 6 Polyphemus disregards the prophet purposely.

Polyphemus in these three stories (both *Idylls* and the *Odyssey*) is continuously forced to assess his physical appearance when he would not have done so otherwise, since he never seems to think he should change or be anything different than himself. Although Polyphemus was forced to consider his shagginess and single eye as aesthetically displeasing before in *Idyll* 11, he consoled himself by the fact that other pretty girls would return his affections. But in *Idyll* 6 he only regards his physical appearance in positive ways. Gow says Polyphemus referencing his looks in this *Idyll* implies a contrast with his wealth, which Polyphemus repeatedly used in *Idyll* 11 as an "attractive" compensation for his appearance.⁷⁷ But even in *Idyll* 6, Polyphemus never

⁷⁵ The Homeric Cyclops would never swear by a deity, thus Theocritus seems to be further distancing this Cyclops from the one in *Idyll* 11 and *Odyssey* 9.

⁷⁶ Payne 2007, 98.

⁷⁷ Gow 1952, 125.

brags about his possessions or the positive attributes of his island as compensation. He does mention that his flocks and cave exist; he mentions sheep in reference to Galatea pelting the former at the beginning of the poem, and he mentions both when he describes Galatea in a jealous frenzy.

ἄ δ' αἰοῖσα
ζαλοῖ μ', ὃ Παιάν, καὶ τάκεται, ἐκ δὲ θαλάσσης
οἰστρεῖ παπταίνοισα ποτ' ἄντρα τε καὶ ποτὶ ποιίμνας.

And hearing this
she is jealous, by Paean, and mopes,
and is in a frenzy as she gazes on my caves and flocks from the sea.
Id. 6. 26-8

Now Galatea is maddened in respect to her jealousy, and Polyphemus is obsessed with his own devious genius of manipulating Galatea into such a hysterical envy. He will go so far to test whether her jealousy is legitimate by keeping up his blasé act until she sends a messenger (*Id.* 6. 31-2). And even if she does, he will lock his doors until she swears to make a fair bed with him on the island.

αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ κλαξῶ θύρας, ἔστε κ' ὁμόσση
αὐτά μοι στορεσεῖν καλὰ δέμνια τᾶσδ' ἐπὶ νάσω

But I shall lock my doors until she swears
that she will make my fair bed herself upon this island.
Id. 6. 32

Hunter remarks that it is somewhat humorous that Polyphemus threatens to lock someone *out* of his cave, when his more famous Homeric self locks the Greeks *in*.⁷⁸ Polyphemus is a very flat character; when he commits to an idea, he will attach himself to it with ideas and actions that lack the subtle finesse of an effective manipulator. In the *Idylls* he is like a child when he exhibits his intentions and emotions with pure abandon. In *Idyll 6* the Cyclops does not feel the

⁷⁸ Hunter 1999, 256.

need to justify his appearance or lifestyle. This time, Polyphemus does not risk being heartbroken until the sea-nymph decides to fully reside on land with him.

Idyll 6 is highly centered around the theme of appearance overall (which includes the sight motifs in distinct allusion to *Odyssey 9*), but Theocritus seems primarily concerned with appearance in the discussion of what is beautiful or ugly. The adjective καλός occurs frequently throughout the poem (*Id.* 6. 11, 14, 16, 19, 33, 36, 43), and Daphnis even says, “Truly, Polyphemus, ugly things often seem fair to love” (ἦ γὰρ ἔρωτι / πολλάκις, ὃ Πόλυφαμε, τὰ μὴ καλὰ καλὰ πέφανται, *Id.* 6. 18-9). Perhaps Daphnis means that even Polyphemus can find himself beautiful, despite the general consensus that he is not, or on the other hand, that Galatea’s response to Polyphemus’ disenchantment is in itself ugly.

καὶ φεύγει φιλέοντα καὶ οὐ φιλέοντα διώκει
καὶ τὸν ἀπὸ γραμμᾶς κινεῖ λίθον.

She flees him who loves her and pursues him who does not,
trying every move
Id. 6. 17-18

Whether it is ugly appearances or actions that Daphnis refers to, Polyphemus is oblivious and remains completely enthralled in his narcissistic conception of beauty. “For indeed, not even my looks are as bad as they say” (καὶ γὰρ θην οὐδ' εἶδος ἔχω κακὸν ὡς με λέγοντι, *Id.* 6. 34).

Polyphemus goes on to say he caught his own reflection when he was looking into the sea (*Id.* 6.35: ἐς πόντον ἐσέβλεπον), and is rather pleased with the reflection of his fair beard and single eye (*Id.* 6.36: καὶ καλὰ μὲν τὰ γένεια, καλὰ δέ μευ ἅ μία κώρα).⁷⁹ Whenever Polyphemus gazes out or looks into the sea in both *Idylls*, he sees something beautiful. In *Idyll 11* it is Galatea who

⁷⁹ Polyphemus also mentions that his teeth reflect whiter than Parian Marble, “6.37-8: “ὀδόντων: any mention of the Cyclops’ teeth will evoke the use to which he was to put them in *Odyssey 9*” (Hunter, 258). Besides the pelting of Galatea and the violent nature of her angry state, this is one of the few violent allusions in *Idyll 6*.

seems beautiful, but now in *Idyll* 6 it is Polyphemus' own reflection that he deems fair. "The very insubstantiality of Galatea (is she any more than an εἶδωλον or *imago*?) and the Cyclops' own confident pride make him an apt subject for such delusion."⁸⁰ All this language that Theocritus employs concerning appearance, seeing, and subjective beauty fits comfortably with Polyphemus' character as whole. Whether he lacks perspective in *Idyll* 11 with respect to his detrimental lovesick obsession for Galatea, or is blindly self-involved in *Idyll* 6 with respect to his deranged manipulation, Polyphemus is as blind as the doomed fate that Telemus forebodes.

Overall, Polyphemus in the *Idylls* is a more relatable character that deters from violence, and pulls himself out from insanity by his own rationality. He recognizes the irreconcilable natures that differentiate Galatea from himself, and accepts that his nature as a land-dwelling, hairy, one-eyed Cyclops is sufficient. Although this Polyphemus is much different from the one we find in *Odyssey* 9, Theocritus does not disregard his Homeric qualities completely. Polyphemus is still shown as a "predator" who seeks someone who does not wish to be pursued, but he still never catches his main prize (Odysseus and Galatea). Language concerning sight is emphasized, which recalls Odysseus' act of violence against the Cyclops. Polyphemus is still obsessed with his possessions, but wants to share them with Galatea in the *Idylls* instead of killing Odysseus' men for eating his food in the *Odyssey*. Polyphemus' lack of perspective is still reinforced, as Galatea's existence proves to be imaginary. The Cyclops cannot recognize the difference of reality between when he is sleeping and when he is awake. Although his eye is closed when he sleeps, his dreams of Galatea seem as real as day. Ironically the darkness that covers his eye when he is asleep will mirror the fate that Odysseus will bring to fulfillment. Polyphemus' imagination creates a love for Galatea without even having to see her. Despite the

⁸⁰ Hunter 1999, 257.

negation of cannibalism or outright violence in the *Idylls*, Theocritus still reflects the intellectual deficiency of the Cyclops that deters Polyphemus' full participation in reality. Although the *Idylls* end "happily" so that the Cyclops regains his wits and decides to cease his courtship of Galatea, he is still overly confident in his own appearance and resources. He regains back his identity as an isolated shepherd, but perhaps this identity is not the most favorable. Polyphemus does not reacquire an identity that would change his decision of cannibalism when Odysseus eventually comes to visit his island. Nevertheless, Theocritus offers one of the most positive representations of Homer's Cyclops. Within a pastoral setting, Polyphemus does not have to be a murderer.

2. Vergil's Polyphemus: A Common Enemy

Removed from the Trojan War, which came down to a quarrel between the Greeks and the Trojans, the *Cyclopeia* resides in a fantastical realm while also illuminating human aspects regarding violence and anger that exist in the real world. In the *Odyssey*, Odysseus and Polyphemus both believe they are in the right and that the other party committed a wrong. As a result, violence ensues with several of Odysseus's companions being devoured then spewed forth, and the Cyclops' single eye being scorched and blinded. The *Cyclopeia* is a story that delves into the goriness of death without falling into the most massively pernicious category of

humanity's violence: war. When Vergil decides to include his own version of the Homeric Cyclops story within the *Aeneid*, he decides that the enmity that was once held between the Greeks and Trojans must be dissipated. Before Vergil creates his own epic war later on in the *Aeneid*, he can help the emotional baggage from the Trojan War in the *Odyssey* become obsolete; humanity persists through otherworldly suffering. In Vergil's Version, Achaemenides, a companion forgotten by Odysseus on the Cyclops' island, survives three months living in a monster's homestead, but is saved by being forgiven by previous enemies instead of being killed by them. Vergil's addition and Ovid's continuation of the character Achaemenides makes Aeneas more heroic in the eyes of the readers. Besides, Achaemenides who starts off as a forgotten 'nobody' can become a 'somebody' by his addition to this famous story.

Vergil's *Aeneid* describes the beginning of the Roman people and their cultural morals, and may have created Achaemenides as a means to show Roman virtue in the midst of cultural strife and contention. "There is no prior evidence for the story; it is likely a Vergilian invention. Odysseus brought none of his men home with him to Ithaca; all died somewhere or other on the journey. Vergil gives Aeneas a chance to save one".⁸¹ Since the story is thought to contain some uncomfortable parallels with the Sinon episode in Book 2 of the *Aeneid*, the authenticity of Achaemenides' tale and the kindness that Aeneas bestows him makes the scene of reconciliation between the two warring parties even more significant. Aeneas not only saves a former enemy, but also saves him from one of the most popular and terrifying monsters from the Odyssean narrative. "Doubtless Vergil is already moving away from the anti-Greek atmosphere of *Aeneid* 2, and toward the reconciliation that will gather pace later in the epic; and the formal balance serves to underline this aspect of the episode's function."⁸² In order to naturally have literary

⁸¹ Fratantuono 2007, 89.

⁸² Harrison 1986, 146.

former enemies become allies in a new story, Vergil uses a terrifying monster to offer perspective to their previous hatred.

Vergil offers a dramatic and brief turnaround from the Sinon story in *Aeneid* 2. With this method, he can allow his readers to stir up hostile emotions concerning the national pride of becoming Roman and the subsequent resentment towards the treachery of the Greeks with their final trick to destroy Troy. Vergil can then mold this volatile emotion from Book 2 and quickly transform it by Book 3 into a collective and compassionate outlook of a pious founder who can overlook his denunciation of the Greek's trustworthiness by saving Achaemenides from torturous death. The nationalism is still kept intact despite fraternizing with a previous enemy, because Achaemenides actually warns Aeneas of Polyphemus' encroachment so that they both escape alive. Achaemenides becomes the perfect character to save; his very existence is reminiscent of Odysseus and Sinon, but his actions and veracity in coalition with the real horror he experienced makes his rescue all the more legitimate for Aeneas' heroism. Overall, this addition of Achaemenides to the *Cyclopeia* creates a dynamic between the Greeks and the Romans for Vergil to mend.

Vergil begins his story about Achaemenides with Aetna. It is a fiery, violent force that thunders with terrifying crashes (*Aen.* 3. 3.571). It vomits rocks, rocks described as the torn up entrails of the mountain (*interdum scopulos avulsaque viscera montis / erigit eructans, Aen.* 3.575-76). Vergil is setting the scene by essentially introducing Aetna with the characteristics of Polyphemus. "The Cyclopes Polyphemus is the living version of Etna."⁸³ They are both horrific and powerful forces of nature. While Aetna roars, so does it seem that Aeneas and his men hear the screams of Polyphemus as they suffer the night with monstrous horrors (*immania monstra /*

⁸³ Fratantuono 2007, 90.

perferimus, *Aen.* 3.583-4). But, they cannot see where the sound is coming from (*nec quae sonitum det causa videmus*, 3.584). Just as Aeneas and his crew cannot see what is heard at night before encountering Achaemenides, they can only listen to the unseen horrors from an abandoned companion of Odysseus. Not until the end of Achaemenides tale do the Trojans both see and hear the real monstrosity that resides on the island, not Aetna, but the eye-less Polyphemus. When Aeneas and his men first perceive Aetna, and thus the Cyclopes' island, they are as unseeing as Polyphemus. But the next day when the sun shines for them, as it does not for Polyphemus, they gain a new perspective of a former Greek enemy. Aeneas, as he listens to Achaemenides' tale, recedes from his physical sight and into his own mind in order to imagine the vantage of the storyteller. With a new outlook resulting from compassion, he perceives Achaemenides differently, although the Greek's physical appearance has not changed from the beginning to the end of his story.

Morning comes, and so does Achaemenides. The Trojans can immediately apprehend the desperation in Achaemenides' appearance before he even speaks. After all, he has been stranded on the island for three months. Aeneas and his crew gaze at him (*respicimus*, 593), and form their first impressions. He looks starving, dirty, and unshaven; his clothes barely cling to his body fastened with thorns (3.590-94). If it weren't for his size and two eyes, he probably would have looked like a Cyclops with his rugged beard and voracious hunger.

His squalid appearance is part of his terrible ordeal, his struggle for existence among the monsters. He asks the Trojans not for life so much as for the restitution of his humanity—even death if it be from human hands. Everything is here designed by Virgil to accent the uncanny and awful character of Polyphemus—*monstrum horrendum informe ingens*—and the terrible homelessness of Achaemenides, the human abandoned to the inhuman.⁸⁴

Aeneas describes the approach of Achaemenides by first outlining his lamentable appearance of

⁸⁴ Otis 1970, 73.

squalor and starvation before he mentions that he was a Greek sent to Troy with initial hostile intent. However, this is just an afterthought mentioned to the reader so they can be reminded of enmity before it is soon crushed.

Achaemenides sees (*vidit*, 3.596) the Trojans from far off, who have landed on the shore, by their garb and weapons. At first Achaemenides hesitates from fear for a moment, then rushes down to them with tears and prayers (3.597-99). He begs them to take him to any land whatsoever, for that would be enough (*hoc sat erit*, 3.602). He does not delay long in confessing his Greek heritage; he knows this would be one of the only reasons why they would not save a haggard man from an uncultivated island. He even offers the crew, if they believe him to be too wicked by virtue of his Greekness, to scatter his dismembered body into the ocean (*si sceleris tanta est iniuria nostri / spargite me in fluctus vastoque inmergite ponto*, 3. 604-05).

Achaemenides would rather be torn up by the Trojans and mixed into the ocean, then be torn up by a Cyclops and mixed in their belly. For even if Aeneas kills Achaemenides before departing from the island, Achaemenides would still be grateful for dying at the hands of fellow humans (*si pereo hominum manibus periisse iuvabit*, 3.606). Although this is a bleak thought, it is a human one. After living three months with monsters, even the sight of former war enemies becomes welcome because they are humans. Achaemenides' appearance and words show to the Trojans that he has experienced fear and violence far beyond his experiences at war; that dying by the hands of men (like he potentially could have months prior) instead of by Polyphemus would be a comforting notion.

Achaemenides finishes begging and clings to the Trojan's knees. Anchises, Aeneas' father, without much delay is the first to comfort Achaemenides and assure him of safety. Only then does the Greek begin his story: he is a companion of unlucky Ulysses, and was compelled to

join the Trojan war because of his father's poverty on Ithaca (3.613-15).

hic me dum trepidi crudelia limina linquunt
 immemores socii vasto Cyclopi in atro
 deservere

Here my comrades, when running away from the grim gateway,
 thoughtlessly left me in the Cyclops' vast cave.
Aen. 3. 616-18⁸⁵

Achaemenides does not specifically mention the Greeks' departure by boat or Odysseus' name divulgence, but their evacuation from the cave itself with no reference to the sheep. Instead, Achaemenides delves right into describing the cave of Polyphemus, a dark and immense residence with gore and bloodstained feasts (3. 618-19). Achaemenides not only had to suffer through the trauma of watching his friends being eaten, but also feel the lost desperation of watching them reach "safety." Immediately the Trojans are captivated with Achaemenides' descriptive language of a torture chamber. Already, Vergil is painting red the impending scene of cannibalism. While Homer deters from images with too much blood, Vergil will have Achaemenides bathe his story in it.

The retelling of the horrors officially begin when Achaemenides utters, "I myself saw" (*vidi egomet*, 623). He uses *videre* again three lines later to emphasize that he, Achaemenides, saw not only the murder, but the cannibalism as well. His ocular testimony grants validity to his story; even though Aeneid is narrating the story to Dido, quoting Achaemenides, it is the abandoned companion whose credence is legitimate. Since Odysseus will never actually appear, Achaemenides becomes the man of suffering, for he is the only one in the *Aeneid* to have actually experienced and witnessed the fantastical and much-famed horror that previously only resided in the *Odyssey*.⁸⁶ Achaemenides portrays these horrors sufficiently while also hastily,

⁸⁵ All translations of *Aeneid* 3, and later on of *Eclogue* 2, from here on out are from Fairclough, 1916.

⁸⁶ Horsfall 2006, 427.

since him and the Trojans have not escaped the Cyclopes just yet. The fear is still palpable in his voice; he focuses on the some of the most gruesome moments from the Homeric *Cyclopeia*, forming appalling images for his audience's ears and imagination. "He stages a portrayal of a monster's grotesque, cannibalistic performance, in other words, a visual, exotic fascination, a vision that relates little if at all to human experience."⁸⁷ Papaioannou says that in doing this, Vergil creates a spectacle from the fact that the Trojans cannot actually experience the man-eating Cyclops. They perceive Polyphemus in their own image, relying on Achaemenides horrific descriptions. Just as they could only hear monstrous bellows and Aetna's rumblings, but still had the facility to imagine the sight of some sort of terrifying cause.

Instead of Polyphemus smashing the men against the ground as in *Odyssey* 9, the Cyclops in *Aeneid* 3 smashes the men on a rock while lounging amidst the cave (*medio resupinus in antro/frangeret ad saxum*, 3.624-5). The image of Polyphemus smashing the bodies on a sharper and rougher surface, such as a rock instead of hard-packed ground, can evoke a more painful and violent representation. Polyphemus, by languidly relaxing as he murders, is more of an apathetic killer in the *Aeneid*. Instead of merely stating that the bodies have moistened the ground (*Od.* 9. 290), Achaemenides says the spattered ground swam with gore (*sanieque aspersa natarent/limina*, 3. 625-6). The reader automatically imagines a greater quantity of disgusting carnage within the cave by imagining the ground being spattered instead of moistened (what the court is exactly spattered with can either be more bloody bits or other human anatomy) and by envisioning these spattered courts as swimming, perhaps even drowning, with blood instead of merely being dampened by brains. It is ironic to also note that Polyphemus' *liminia* can do something that Polyphemus cannot (*natare*). The Cyclopes do not know how to build ships or

⁸⁷ Papaioannou 2005, 100-101.

sail, nor do they know how to swim. But, for a moment, Polyphemus like his father is ruler of an ocean, the ocean of blood created by the blood of Odysseus' and Achaemenides' companions.

It is now time for the feast. The *Aeneid* forgoes the terrifying lion simile that Homer ascribes to the dining Polyphemus. However, Vergil introduces a scary concept in the cannibalistic scene by having Achaemenides describe the body parts as quasi-living.

vidi atro cum membra fluentia tabo
manderet et tepidi tremarent sub dentibus artus.

I watched while he devoured their limbs
all dripping with black blood clots,
and the warm joints quivered beneath his teeth
Aen. 3.626-7

The verb *mandere* that Achaemenides uses to describe Polyphemus chewing his food denotes animalistic mastication appropriately ascribed to vultures and monsters.⁸⁸ By animating action into the joints instead of merely stating the different body parts that Polyphemus eats, the creepiness of their movement only ironically reassures the sad reality of the companion's death. Even though the companions are supposedly dead by this point, the description of the joints as warm *and* quivering insinuates that the bodies still seem alive in between the teeth of the giant. This implication of being eaten alive allows the reader to empathize with Achaemenides' paralyzed state of fear. Overall the *Aeneid* rendition of this eating passage can be thought of as more violent than the scene in *Odyssey* 9. Instead of imagining Polyphemus as a lion crouched over the men, the reader sees a close up view of bloody matter pulsating in the chewing teeth of Polyphemus.

Despite Vergil's omission of Odysseus' general presence in the *Aeneid*, Vergil still allows Achaemenides to grant Odysseus as a hero for the blinding of Polyphemus. For even

⁸⁸ Horsfall 2006, 429.

though Odysseus may be generally loathed by the Trojans because of his (alongside Achilles) immense role for the destruction of Troy, Vergil still makes sure to include one of Odysseus' most heroic moments in the *Odyssey* employed by his cunning and overall intelligence.

haud impune quidem nec talia passus Ulixes
oblitusve sui est Ithacus discrimine tanto

But not unpunished! Ulysses did not stand for this,
nor did the man of Ithaca forget who he was at this dreadful time.

Aen. 3.628-29

Achaemenides refers to the moment when Odysseus checks his emotions and rationalizes the detrimental consequences of murdering the Cyclops without devising an escape out of the cave (*Od.* 9. 299-306). Odysseus did not forget whom he was, the hero made intelligent because of his sufferings, and made sure to exact appropriate revenge with an assured chance of survival. This is the only moment, besides the beginning of Achaemenides' speech, where Odysseus makes an appearance in Vergil's *Cyclopeia*; after this he disappears into the background as he vanishes from Achaemenides' sight having been deserted. But, we assume his plan was a viable one, because these two lines insinuate actions afterward that makes Polyphemus lay in endless length throughout the cave. The story skips immediately to Polyphemus being sated by his feasts and drowned in wine. Vergil does not say that Polyphemus has made three separate meals out of six different men, but just that he is full from not a single, but plural feasts (*expletus dapibus*, 3.630).

Vergil forfeits three of Odysseus' most exemplary scenes of cunning; the offering of the sparkling wine, the *outis* pun, and the elaborate sheep escape. As for the construction of the olive wood spear, Vergil shortens the entire scene by saying Odysseus and his crew blinded Polyphemus with a pointed weapon (*telo lumen terebramus acuto/ ingens*, *Aen.* 3.635). Vergil chooses to stress or discard certain passages in order to tell his own story in his own way.

Horsfall, in specific reference to the wine scene, argues that Vergil omitted these certain scenes

because of “independence and abbreviation,” but also believes Vergil’s curt reference to the wine, using *mero* instead of *vino*, proves the author’s haste in overlooking the importance of Odysseus’ wine offering for the development of Polyphemus’ eventual doom.⁸⁹ But it also seems convincing that Vergil wants to keep Odysseus out of this story as much as possible. “In Vergil the emphasis seems to fall on the hero’s suffering, while the hero’s mental keenness is suppressed.”⁹⁰ Vergil may not want to include too many scenes exhibiting Odysseus’ cunning so that the parallels of Achaemenides with the Sinon episode are not so forcibly recalled back to deviser of the Trojan horse scheme. Remembering Odysseus in the *Aeneid* serves to add familiarity and pity for Achaemenides, “Odysseus, the arch-enemy of the Trojans, now becomes a sympathetic figure, *infelix* Ulysses (3.626-9), since he faced the same peril as the Trojans and voiced civilized man’s outrage at the cannibal’s lawlessness (3.626-9).”⁹¹ The dichotomy in the *Cyclopeia* between Odysseus and Aeneas is fastened by the mutual suffering that Achaemenides endures and prevents the Trojans from undergoing. Odysseus is not necessarily supposed to be either the hero or the villain in this section of the *Aeneid*. Vergil paints Odysseus as less intelligent than he was in the *Odyssey* by merely not including his most brilliant moments. In *Aeneid* 3 he is a Greek leader that is so caught up in his intelligent scheme of escape, that he fails to remember the presence of a companion that a Homeric reader fails to recall as well. So, Vergil has created Achaemenides to become an atypical ally, thus fulfilling Polyphemus’ purpose as a common enemy. The Trojans have just heard Achaemenides describe the atrocity of cannibalism; already Polyphemus has become a hateful yet feared bane of existence.

Polyphemus is not only full with his meal of men, but also buried in wine (*vinoque*

⁸⁹ Horsfall 2006, 431.

⁹⁰ Papaioannou 2005, 88.

⁹¹ Galinsky 1975, 230.

sepultus, 630). The Cyclops is stuffed and drunk, ready to pass out into all encompassing sleep. Just as in the *Odyssey*, Achaemenides describes Polyphemus with a bent neck lying on his back, “... in his sleep vomiting gore and morsels mixed with blood and wine...” (*saniem eructans et frustra cruento/ per somnum commixta mero*, *Aen.* 3. 632-3). Here the same verb used for Aetna discouraging rocks from its mouth is assigned to Polyphemus as well. Vergil keeps the language relatively the same as Homer’s description of the vomiting scene, however instead of using two different words that connote “vomiting” as Homer did, Vergil uses two words for blood. The morsels (*ψωμοί τ’ ἀνδρόμεοι*, *Od.* 9. 374) that were described as human in the *Odyssey* are now merely *frustra*. In the *Odyssey* the wine (two words are used, emphasizing his drunkenness) and morsels are the only contents that Homer focuses on. Whereas Vergil makes *saniem* and *frustra* the direct objects, the former seeming to be only a bloodier, less congealed form of the latter. These objects are mixed with even more blood, and finally Vergil mentions the wine. Red washes over the scene. The vomit is pictured as more liquid and bloody, opposed to being humanly chunky; especially since *commixta* makes it seem as if the food has been digesting inside the Cyclops’ stomach longer than it was in Homer. There had to be enough time for the food and wine to sit and mingle inside his belly, becoming one single concoction, opposed to merely having a coordinating conjunction (*τε*) join the wine and morsels. After Polyphemus has thoroughly vomited in his sleep, Achaemenides describes making a circle around Polyphemus before piercing his single eye with the spear. And so at last, says Achaemenides, “We gladly avenged our dead companions” (*et tandem laeti sociorum ulciscimur umbras*, 13. 638). Justice has been paid.

Achaemenides then implores the Trojans to escape while they can, before they too encounter the miserable fate his companions had. Achaemenides finally utters Polyphemus’

name for the first time, saying it is not only this specific Cyclops that the Trojans should flee from, but also a hundred others that dwell and roam the mountainous island.⁹² Their flight becomes all the more urgent as Achaemenides finally describes what it was like to live for three months on that wretched island. Unlike the Trojans who only hear the cries of the Cyclopes, Achaemenides watches out for and trembles at the resounding steps and voice of the monsters (*prospicio sonitumque pedum vocemque tremesco*, 648). He lives in the woods with the wild animals, and becomes a barbaric vegetarian as he sustains off of berries, shrubs, and roots; an unfortunate way of life (*victum infelicem*, 649). But this feral living does not suit Achaemenides, since living like prey on an island full of predators is the basest way to exist as a human. His surrendering to the Trojans becomes fully sincere, for he reiterates why he would prefer being killed by them than by such a heinous creature.

His request is all the more legitimate after he finishes his story. And right as he does, the Trojans see (*videmus*) the infamous Polyphemus appears over the mountaintop, seen but not seeing. They see Polyphemus moving to the shore with his beloved sheep to wash the wound that was once his eye. The Trojans do not need any more proof that this Greek is no Sinon, but a clearly deserving suppliant (*supplice sic merito*, 667). Polyphemus perceives (*sensit*, 669) the men quickly rowing away and gropes around himself, trying to find them in vain. In his frustration, he bears a might roar (*clamorem immensum tollit*, 672) that Aetna joins in to harmonize, while the water and all of Italy empathize with the Trojans in their fright. The rest of Cyclopes, as they did in the *Odyssey*, come flocking to Polyphemus' aid and eerily watch the Trojans and Achaemenides sail away, witnessing an escape that they previously ignored when Odysseus tricked Polyphemus with his pseudonym. Aetna and the Cyclopes become one single

⁹² Horsfall 2006, 435.

terrifying force of nature, each one with a single savage eye (lumine torvo, 677) Vergil associates them to juxtapose the natural world with that of the Odyssean mythological one.⁹³ With Achaemenides' help, the Trojans witness a part of reality that they would have never endured otherwise in day-to-day experiences. They can witness the horrific effects of nature, such as violent volcanoes that cannot be stopped or fought, but only fled from. Polyphemus and the Cyclopes are the same; even if the Trojans cannot exact revenge for their impiety like Odysseus did, the next best thing is saving a fellow human. Not only are they saving a fellow man from death, but the manner of death Achaemenides fears is one that only resides in the world of mythological fantasy. Like watching a gruesome horror film, but being able to turn the television off afterwards, the Trojans catch a glimpse of a horrific alternate reality, but flee before they must experience it for themselves.

It is clear that Vergil does not want to disrespect the Homeric tradition, nor conjure up feelings of animosity and revenge as attributes of Roman ancestry. Vergil does not paint Odysseus in a negative light, but actually has Achaemenides praise his previous leader in seeking vengeance for the devouring of his companions. Vergil also disregards Odysseus' desire to enter the cave, since Achaemenides, "...tactfully bypasses a discussion on the motive behind the presence of the Greeks in the cave of the Cyclops, only to appear ironic as this silence obviously aims at keeping accountability away from Ulixes".⁹⁴ The *Aeneid* does not mention the unnecessary curiosity for Odysseus to enter the cave in the first place, nor to stay there for the sake of guest-gifts undeterred by the complaints from some of his imminently dead companions. Despite the opportunity for Vergil to show a famous Greek hero's flawed characteristics in multiple ways, Odysseus' only fault in the *Aeneid's Cyclopeia* is his forgetfulness. Despite the

⁹³ Fratantuono 2007, 90.

⁹⁴ Papaioannou 2005, 88.

fact that Odysseus was Achaemenides' leader, Aeneas' act of saving the abandoned companion from the Cyclops' island, "...establishes a definite link between Greek and Trojan heroes, who overcome their enmity".⁹⁵ Instead of Vergil making the Trojans seem like a superior race by degrading a Greek hero, this author only assigns the fault of forgetfulness to Odysseus. This tactic portrays Aeneas as a forgiving hero who does not take the time to recount (as he tells Dido his story) any hatred towards the Greeks or revel in an opportunity to exact revenge on a former enemy by leaving him to die on Polyphemus' island. Instead, a shared feeling of fear towards the Cyclopes, shared by both the Greeks and eventually the Trojans, governs the bond of savior and saved.

While Vergil includes more gory and calamitous elements, he also adds a significantly positive note. Despite Achaemenides' misfortune of being abandoned on an island, Vergil creates a tragic character that ironically exists as the only companion of Odysseus to remain alive because of Aeneas' rescue. The cannibalistic scene in the *Aeneid* has evolved and changed the identity of the devoured comrades through an altered portrayal of them being eaten and vomited. In the *Odyssey*, the scenes associated with being eaten and vomited align more with realistic images that the audience can relate to. When Homer compares Polyphemus to a lion, it is easier to imagine the men as animals instead of humans. When Polyphemus vomits them back up, mixed with wine instead of gore, it is more natural to imagine a drunken man throwing up food and wine instead of picturing blood coming forth from his mouth as well. But in the *Aeneid*, the eaten companions' identity becomes more associated with gore and horror. The reader does not imagine Polyphemus as a lion eating his food, but as giant cannibal eating human beings. When Polyphemus throws them back up, his cannibalism is even more reinforced because Vergil

⁹⁵ Galinsky 1975, 230.

describes wine *and* blood mixed together in the vomit. The companion's identities have been changed as to elicit an unnatural occurrence not easily comparable to everyday occurrences. Vergil does not want his audience to believe any part of what Achaemenides suffered through was normal, lest they not understand the depth of the Trojan's clemency. Achaemenides' tattered clothes and shaggy hair also underlines the horrific nature of Polyphemus; when someone lives with uncultured monsters, it is not surprising that he or she acquires the appearance of one. Below we will see how Ovid will also change the vomit's identity as well as Achaemenides'. For Vergil, the more gruesome way Polyphemus eats the men and vomits them back up is more important to include than recalling every moment from Odysseus' misadventures on the Cyclopes' island. Aeneas and his amended relation to Odysseus by means of Achaemenides become more important than Odysseus' mistakes. Achaemenides earns heroic recognition in being saved by a new hero of utmost importance, Aeneas. Vergil embellishes the *Cyclopeia* by having Achaemenides relate the story with more color, blood, and overall horror. The limbs of his companions become the sacrificial substitute for what Achaemenides believed could have happened to him, but did not, thanks to Aeneas and Anchises. The gorier the story becomes, the greater the hero Aeneas seems to be in saving Achaemenides.

3. Ovid's Polyphemus: Horror Hyperbolized

Ovid portrays both the Theocritean, Homeric, and Vergilian Cyclops in the *Metamorphoses*. The former resides in Book 13, the latter in Book 14. Overall, Ovid adopts the

Hellenic authors' depictions of Polyphemus, but adds his own personal touches. These innovative additions in *Metamorphoses* contrast the Theocritean Polyphemus with that of the Homeric one. When we first encounter Polyphemus in Book 13, we think of Theocritus' lovelorn Cyclops, but Ovid then juxtaposes those pastoral characteristics with murderous ones, more reminiscent of his Homeric self. "His larger goal, in terms of the emotional manipulation of his audience, is to intensify the later intrusion of violence... Ovid exploits his reader's memory to intensify emotional engagement with the text at hand."⁹⁶ This manipulation is especially handy in Ovid's transition from his Theocritean Polyphemus in book 13, to his Vergilian/Homeric Cyclops in book 14. I will begin with *Metamorphoses* 13, where Polyphemus is still in love with Galatea, and even though he will not be eating anybody, he will still be violent.

3. A) The Love for Lady Milk Turns Sour

When Ovid noticeably alters the Cyclops story, it is usually in response to Vergil. Vergil introduces an abandoned companion of Odysseus to the Polyphemus story in his *Aeneid*; Ovid replicates the storyline of this character in *Metamorphoses* 14. Ovid includes a rival named Acis for Polyphemus in book 13, just as Vergil creates a rival for a human shepherd in *Eclogue* 2 that mirrors the storyline of the Theocritean Cyclops from *Idylls* 6 and 11. Vergil adapts two types of stories (pastoral and epic) from two different Greek authors, and in turn Ovid replicates these adaptations in two separate episodes of his *Metamorphoses*.⁹⁷ Since Ovid's story of Acis, Galatea, and Polyphemus combines poetic elements, mostly from pastoral and epic traditions, "...the episode clearly confronts the reader with a variety of different, even antithetical

⁹⁶ Tissol 1997, 110-11.

⁹⁷ I will not include scholarship concerning *Eclogue* 2 in this paper, since Polyphemus is not a character. But I will still include references to the text to clarify certain choices Ovid makes in response to Vergil.

generic motifs which nevertheless stand in unity as its own constitutive elements.”⁹⁸ Just as Theocritus fluidly incorporated the epic Polyphemus into his pastoral poetry, Ovid integrates the pastoral Polyphemus into his ‘mini-Aeneid’ (fusing Vergilian with Homeric) within the *Metamorphoses*. Although all these amalgamated elements could potentially confound the reader, Ovid’s exploitation of the reader’s memory complements his own imaginative adaptations that offer new meanings to older texts. As for the pastoral story of Polyphemus and Galatea, which is based on a text with multiple moral conclusions and general commentary of the human condition, Ovid rejects a comfortable resolution for Polyphemus, and perhaps this is a part of his innovation. Polyphemus does not cure himself through song, nor is he able to feel the domineering confidence of being pursued by someone who has previously scorned him. Instead, the reader can learn a lesson about what humanity should *not* to do when faced with infatuation and jealous rage.

The most noticeable change of the story of Polyphemus and Galatea (*Met.* 13.738-897) is that Galatea is the narrator of the story, not Theocritus, Daphnis, nor Damoetas. Instead of just an invisible maiden that was only mentioned and hardly present in the *Idylls* is given a voice in the *Metamorphoses*. “What is the experience of a nymph who receives the unwelcome attentions of an amorous Cyclops? Such a question has no place in Theocritus 11, but Ovid introduces it at the beginning.”⁹⁹ Scylla combs Galatea’s hair, and the sea nymph complains how jealous she is of Scylla, who can refuse suitors easily. But as for Galatea, she is not allowed to shun the Cyclops’ love without grievous consequences (*non nisi per luctus licuit Cyclopi amorem / effugere*, *Met.* 13.744-45). Already the reader is informed that Polyphemus will most likely not cure himself through song in the *Metamorphoses*. Right after Galatea utters *effugere*, the thought that no

⁹⁸ Farrell 1992, 240.

⁹⁹ Tissol 1997, 113.

escape exists from his violent love, she can no longer speak as tears restrain her words (et lacrimae vocem inpediere loquentis, *Met.* 13. 745). Scylla persuades Galatea to continue her tale, especially since she is trusting (sic sum fida, *Met.* 13. 748). Galatea begins by describing a beautiful sixteen year old boy with a fresh beard growing in, “Ironically, Acis is in this respect is not only unlike Ovid’s Polyphemus, but like the Polyphemus of Theocritus, who is also described as just getting his first beard.”¹⁰⁰ Instead of falling for the young Polyphemus in *Idyll* 11, who was also just sprouting a beard, Galatea has opted for the handsome boy (pulcher, *Met.* 13. 753) born to Faunus and a river nymph. Ovid has created a rival that is far superior to Polyphemus in beauty, and is even born from a nymph mother like Galatea. Already, Polyphemus is set up for failure.

In this quasi-pastoral replication of *Idylls* 6 and 11, the reader will realize that not only is Galatea real, but that Polyphemus is almost as savage as he was in the *Odyssey*. As Galatea narrates her tale of woe, her presence that was lacking reinforces Polyphemus’ violent nature that also seemed lacking in the *Idylls*. Ovid still portrays Polyphemus as being just as emotionally lost and pathetic as he was in *Idyll* 11 before he cures himself with song. It is understandable that Galatea would prefer Acis to Polyphemus. But Galatea hateful descriptions of Polyphemus (lasting roughly twenty lines) provoke a certain level of pity for the ignorant Cyclops since he loves someone who hates him just as much as she loves another. “The story of Acis and Galatea deals with the subject of hopeless passion which ultimately destroys what it seeks to achieve, namely reciprocal love.”¹⁰¹ Galatea literally is unable to tell what emotion is stronger, her love for Acis or her hate for Polyphemus.

nec, si quaesieris, odium Cyclopi amorne

¹⁰⁰ “While Acis becomes a standard element in the story after Ovid he is not found in earlier versions” Farrell 1992, 243.

¹⁰¹ Griffin 1983, 196.

Acidis in nobis fuerit praesentior, edam
par utrumque fuit

Nor, if you should ask me, could I tell which was stronger in me,
my hate of Cyclops or my love of Acis;
for both were in equal measure.
Met. 13. 756-58¹⁰²

Even though Polyphemus is still pitiable, he is not the same harmless dimwit who resides in the *Idylls*, “There is however a contrast between Theocritus' mild treatment of Polyphemus and Ovid's portrayal of a violent Cyclops. Ovid here reflects the Homeric model”¹⁰³ and amplifies violent elements that Theocritus made delicate in his interpretation, so that Polyphemus will not seem in his natural place in a pastoral setting. Since Ovid adds a rival for Polyphemus to contend with, the violence is more naturally brought out. By the end of Galatea’s story, Polyphemus will resort back to his “love of slaughter,” “ferocity,” and “insatiable thirst for blood” when he murders Galatea’s Acis (caedis amor feritasque sitisque inmensa cruoris, *Met.* 13. 768).

As Galatea begins describing Polyphemus, she uses words that recall the Homeric Cyclops (*Met.* 13.759-61): he is savage (inmitis), inhospitable (visus ab hospite nullo/ inpune), and despises the gods (dis contemptor). She juxtaposes these familiar characteristics with that of Polyphemus’ intense love that recalls his Theocritean self. He burns with passion, and even forgets his flocks and cave (uritur oblitus pecorum antrorumque suorum, *Met.* 13.763). Galatea then describes his physical appearance, but of course with distaste. She imagines him using a pool as a mirror, as he begins fixating on the image he sees, eager to please. This recalls the end of *Idyll* 6 when Polyphemus finds his reflection pleasurable in the reflection of a pool. In the *Metamorphoses*, just like an infatuated girl getting ready for a date in front of the mirror, Polyphemus brushes and cuts his hair, gazes at his himself, and practices facial expressions that

¹⁰² All translations from *Metamorphoses* 13 and 14 from here on out are from Miller, 1916.

¹⁰³ Griffin 1983, 190.

seem the most enticing (*Met.* 13. 766-67). But this anxious excitement does not please Galatea, it disgusts her. She describes his hair as coarse and his beard as shaggy (*rigidos capillos*, 766: *hirsutam barbam*, *Met.* 13. 765). The reader realizes that besides his single eye, Polyphemus is most self-conscious about being too hairy in the *Idylls*. In the *Metamorphoses* Galatea uses two different negative adjectives when referring to Polyphemus' hair, reinforcing that his suspicions were true. The reader no longer merely wonders whether Galatea dislikes the Cyclops' physical appearance, she clearly states it.

These unconfirmed suspicions of Polyphemus in *Idyll* 11 complement the unconfirmed state of Galatea. Her beauty is ambiguous, and so is Polyphemus' ugliness. Yes he is aware that his looks might be a factor that Galatea dislikes, but there is still a sense of uncertainty in the *Idylls*. Theocritus retains Polyphemus' simple-minded nature, but since he "cures" himself by the end of the song, Polyphemus seems enlightened in comparison to his Homeric self. Since his bodily aesthetic and intelligence are more ambiguous, his savagery is as well. Since neither Galatea, a verbal rejection on her part, nor even a lover of hers appears, Polyphemus' only "rival" is his own thoughts and obsession with an imaginary being. I label his thoughts as a "rival" because his infatuation with fleeting visions of Galatea creates a foreign and uncomfortable feeling that Polyphemus wishes to overcome. He wants to swallow Galatea into his lifestyle. Since he cannot, and he concludes that he needs to stop fighting the natural state of his lifestyle (chores), he surmounts his "rival" thoughts. He relies on himself to overcome a challenge. Polyphemus still experiences madness, but nothing dies in the process within the *Idylls*, especially since there is no physically apparent rival for Polyphemus to kill. It seems that without ostensible objects standing in front of his single eye, then his violent tendencies are subdued.

In *Metamorphoses* 13, Galatea's beauty is no longer imaginary. As Galatea's beauty becomes more real, so does Polyphemus' ugliness and foolishness. His confirmed ugliness highlights his ignorance and hubris. Not to say that because he is ugly, he is stupid, or vice versa, but that his idiocy and his unappealing physical appearance highlight one another. With a physical rival in sight, and the beauty of Galatea and Acis clearly on display, Polyphemus' murderous tendencies that were latent in the *Idylls* become actualized. Polyphemus, even though he will still sing to Galatea covering almost all the same categories present in the *Idylls* (compliments, complaints, possessions, his home, and his appearance), there will never be a moment of realization that he has lost his wits. Right when we expect him to cure himself, he gets up without any self-consolation, and instead spots the lovers in their embrace and remains in his envious insanity. Polyphemus' sexual frustration and rage are real, Galatea and her new lover Acis are real; Ovid does not leave room for speculation when he casts Galatea as the narrator.

Just like Theocritus in *Idyll* 6, Ovid also mentions the prophecy of Telemus. Put into the mouth of Galatea, another reason why she seems to dislike Polyphemus is when he mocks the warning from Telemus that Ulysses will snatch his single eye from him. Polyphemus calls the seer stupid, and refers to Galatea when he claims that someone else has already snatched his eye. Galatea is not only disgusted by Polyphemus' irreverence towards a valid prophecy, but also because his disregard is based on Polyphemus' confusion between the loss of his actual eye, and the loss of his control over what pleases his eye: Galatea. She might also be disgusted by the sexual affiliation contained within *rapere oculos* common in Roman erotic elegy, "Combing the figurative application of the elegiac *rapere oculos* with its physical application to Polyphemus, unrecognized by him, Ovid's ironic pun achieves a simultaneously grisly and hilarious effect."¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ Tissol 1997, 20.

Galatea, in only the first 25 lines of her speaking, is displeased with Polyphemus appearance, ferocity, disregard to the gods (and prophets), and his ignorance of basic puns.

Galatea has finished describing her cringe-worthy pursuer, and now recalls where she was when Polyphemus begins his song. He carries a pinewood staff, big as a ship's mast, which recalls the *Odyssey* (9.319-24) when Odysseus blinds Polyphemus with his staff (olive-wood instead of pine), as well as *Aeneid* (3. 659) where Polyphemus (post-blinding) also uses a pine-wood staff.¹⁰⁵ When the staff is introduced in this book of the *Metamorphoses*, it reminds the reader of its epic nature as a weapon and its pastoral utility as a common tool for a shepherd. Since, "Weapons, violence, and assault are the implements of desire in the world of the *Metamorphoses*"¹⁰⁶ Polyphemus' staff evokes not only a pastoral and epic tool, but also a perverted romantic one. Just like his simple staff, the Cyclops' thematic role in book 13 consistently diverges, while ironically remaining cohesive. Ovid depicts Polyphemus throughout *Metamorphoses* 13 as straddling both his pastoral and epic background, and even a simple reference to the Cyclops' staff demonstrates this goal.

It seems as if Galatea watches Polyphemus ascend to the top of a wedge-shaped hill that is surrounded on all sides by water (*Met.* 778-79). Instead of Polyphemus longingly gazing out over the sea (ἐξ πόντον, *Id.* 11.18), thinking of Galatea, the place where he sits juts out into the sea (in pontum, *Met.* 13:778). In this moment, the physical placement of where he sings is more pronounced than his eye. This can highlight the physical placement of Galatea in close enough proximity to perceive his whereabouts and to perfectly hear and remember his entire song. Yet, she is at a distance great enough (procul) to be as absent from the Cyclops' sight as she seemed in the *Idylls*. How far away she is from him, and whether this distance feels safe is still uncertain

¹⁰⁵ Tissot 1997, 117.

¹⁰⁶ Parry 1964, 270.

since she claims all the mountains and waves perceive his piping as well. She hides under a rock (*latitans ego rupe, Met. 13. 786*) resting in Acis' embrace (*Acidis in gremio residens, 13.787*), perhaps concealed under the same rock that Polyphemus uses to kill Acis. Galatea is both scared and relaxed in this moment; her safety and happiness are conflicted. We do not know whether Acis is jealous or anxious as he listens to monstrous singer confess his love to the woman in his lap. Neither do we know if the couple sits still in fear, or mocks the brute's ode. The only thing that seems clear is that Galatea listens attentively enough to remember (*Met. 13. 788*).

Polyphemus begins his song, as he does in *Idyll 11*, by complementing Galatea. But like the other components that are borrowed from Theocritus, Ovid lengthens each section to the point of exaggeration. Violence fades from the story between 13.789-869, as Ovid focuses on expanding recognizable elements from the *Idylls* and *Eclogue 2*.¹⁰⁷ Instead of using four different comparative adjectives to describe Galatea with nature or animals, Polyphemus implements fourteen. These heaping of words, or *coacervatio*, destroys the *pathos* of the situation as Polyphemus' sincerity is diminished by his fixation with quantity over quality.¹⁰⁸ Polyphemus seems more desperate as he keeps piling on more and more compliments; his anxiety produces hasty drivel instead of succinct eloquence.

Instead of prefacing the compliments by asking Galatea why she rejects someone who loves her, Polyphemus jumps right in. Instead of a question, at the end of his long list of compliments, he simply says, "If only you would not flee" (*si non fugias, Met. 13: 797*). The verb in the present tense and subjunctive mood suggest that Polyphemus could still believe that there is a possibility that Galatea will stop running away from him.¹⁰⁹ Yet this possibility does

¹⁰⁷ Tissol 1997, 117.

¹⁰⁸ Galinsky 1975, 195.

¹⁰⁹ Allen 1975, 280.

not comfort Polyphemus, for after he concludes his compliments he proceeds to the complaints; the thirteenth holding the most resemblance to Polyphemus' single complaint in the *Idylls* concerning Galatea's absconding.

et, quod praecipue vellem tibi demere possem,
non tantum cervo claris latratibus acto,
verum etiam ventis volucrique fugacior aura

What I would most of all that I could take from you,
swifter not only than the stag driven before the baying hounds,
but also than the winds and the fleeting breeze.
Met. 13. 805-807

She is not only faster than an animal of prey being hunted by predators, but swifter than the winds and breezes themselves. "The recurring atmosphere of violence in Ovid's pastoral scenes, however frequently it may be assuaged by moments of humor, or even burlesque, reminds one repeatedly of the hunt to the death of bears, stags, and other beasts."¹¹⁰ Polyphemus' hunting language corresponds with Corydon's description of his desire for Alexis in *Eclogue* 2. Corydon compares himself to a predator and Alexis as prey in his elaborated food chain.

torva leaena lupum sequitur lupus ipse capellam
florentem cytisum sequitur lasciva capella
te Corydon o Alexi

The grim lioness follows the wolf, the wolf himself the goat,
the wanton goat the flowering clover,
and Corydon follows you, Alexis.
Ecl. 2. 63-65

So too in *Metamorphoses* 13, Polyphemus' desire for Galatea is an insatiable hunger that grows the longer he has to chase her. Instead of his quenchless thirst for blood (13. 668), he has a voracious craving for Galatea. Since her love is not reciprocated, desire veers from the romantic, and becomes animalistic in his frustration to acquire prized prey that always runs away.

¹¹⁰ Parry 1964, 272.

Before this final admonishment, Ovid includes twelve other negative comparisons that do not appear in the *Idylls*. For example, “.... more violent than fire, sharper than thorns, more savage than a bear with her cubs, deeper than the sea...” (acrior igni / asperior tribulis feta truculentior ursa / surdior aequoribus, *Met.* 13. 802-04). It is interesting to note that Polyphemus uses more negative adjectives to describe Galatea than she employed in description of him. He makes it seem as if a sea nymph is more feral than he is. The humor resides in Galatea’s complete power over a man-eating giant, the thought of Galatea has complete power over him, and this power terrifies him. The only adjective that they both use to describe each other is *inmitis*. However Polyphemus does not merely call her *inmitis*, but more *inmitis* than a trodden snake (13. 804). Polyphemus compares her negative attributes to that of natural things, but Galatea neatly says that he is terrible to even the forests (ipsis / horrendus silvis, 13. 759-60). Overall he compares her to natural elements and animals both positively and negatively. But in his complaints, she is compared to four different animals opposed to two in his compliments. She is negatively compared to some form of water three different times; the element she and Odysseus are regularly associated with, and the element that baffles Polyphemus the most. As for Galatea’s relation to fire and rocks, these recall the primary weapons or means of violence utilized in *Odyssey* 9. Polyphemus’ weapon (besides his hands and teeth) is the rock that he throws at the Greek’s escaping boat. Odysseus’ weapon is the olivewood staff, burning red with heat, which burns and blinds Polyphemus. While complaining about the negative attributes of his crush, Polyphemus more or less recalls his Odyssean adversary.

Polyphemus now seems frustrated by the thirteen things he finds wrong with Galatea. He segues to the talking about himself and his possessions with a mixed counterfactual condition.

at bene si noris, pigeat fugisse, morasque
ipsa tuas damnes et me retinere labores

But, if only you knew me well, you would regret that you have fled from me;
you would yourself condemn your coy delays and seek to hold me.

Met. 13.808-09

Although Polyphemus is about to describe all the things that he believes defines him, and would thus allow Galatea to know him well, his statement holds the subtleties of a threat. For, he will prove to both afflict (*pigere*) and condemn (*damnare*) Galatea for under estimating his maddened infatuation that he has made perfectly obvious. As Galatea tells her story, she may not regret fleeing Polyphemus, but regrets not knowing the extent of his murderous inclinations. Right before Polyphemus spies the two lovers together, Galatea describes her and Acis as neither knowing nor fearing such an occurrence (*cum ferus ignaros nec quicquam tale timentes / me videt atque Acis*, 13. 873-74). If only Galatea knew Polyphemus well, and took all the necessary precautions, perhaps Acis could still be in her arms.

Polyphemus begins tempting Galatea (13.810) with *sunt mihi*; the dative of possession highlights one of the prominent tactics Polyphemus uses throughout the rest of his song. Polyphemus apparently believes, specifically with this introductory phrase, that if Galatea knew how rich he really is, then she would get over how much she hates him. While this ploy seems pathetic by showing a Polyphemus who is actually comfortable with a “gold-digger” as his companion, the reader must remember the Cyclops’ lack of maturity. If we imagine him as a toddler who has an endless amount of toys, but has never been known to play with other children, then the reader as an on looking parent grins at the paramount act of their child finally sharing. Polyphemus’ possessions are extremely important to him, and his wish to divide all of them with Galatea is poignant. Obviously, Polyphemus is not a toddler in *Metamorphoses* 13, but a monstrous being who either reminds the reader of his violent self in the *Odyssey*, or of his lovesick self in the *Idylls*.

The next two words in this same line are *pars montis*; his property apparently spans across a whole side of a mountain. Later in the story, he will use a piece from (most likely) this very same mountain to throw at Acis (*partemque e monte revulsam*, 13.882). Farrell argues that these two similar phrases emphasize both the pastoral and epic genre that Polyphemus belongs to. *Pars montis* denotes the pastoral sense because in the *Idylls* Polyphemus explains where he lives and his possessions, and *partemque e monte revulsam* recalls the *Odyssey* when Polyphemus wrenches and hurls the summit of a mountain at Odysseus' escaping boat (*Od.* 9. 481, 537-38).¹¹¹ Polyphemus naturally resides in an epic setting within the *Odyssey*, he adopts a convincing pastoral identity in the *Idylls*, but the genre of his character within *Metamorphoses* 13 remains torn. Polyphemus straddling this line creates ambiguity, and this ambiguity casts Polyphemus as a creature unnatural to both worlds. If Polyphemus is merely a stranger to the caves that Ovid hosts, then Ovid successfully distorts the *xenia* relationship that Polyphemus perverted in *Odyssey* 9.

Polyphemus goes on to talk about his cave (13.810-12), the different fruits that grow on his property (13.812-20), his sheep and their byproducts (13. 821-30), and pets as presents (13.831-37). In general, Ovid lengthens and expands upon sections found within the *Idylls* (such as possessions, pets, physical appearances), but also adds or eliminates certain details that differentiate them from similar elements in the *Idylls* and *Eclogues*. For example, Theocritus does not have Polyphemus mention fruit in the *Idylls*, and recalls the hyacinth flower twice; Vergil has Corydon talk about more types of flowers than fruit in *Eclogue* 2 (45-55). Ovid chooses one element (fruits) from these ten lines of *Eclogue* 2 to utilize, and ignores the other element (flowers) to align more with Theocritus' version. Other times, Ovid disregards details

¹¹¹ Farrell 1992, 260.

from *both* Theocritus and Vergil, or even passively mocks such details. In *Idyll* 11 (34) and *Eclogue* 2 (21), Polyphemus and Corydon specifically state that they have a thousand sheep. But in *Metamorphoses* 13, when Polyphemus mentions how many sheep he has, he says, “If you were by chance to ask how many I have, I would not be able to: it is a poor man’s business to count his flocks...” (*Met.* 13. 823-24). Apparently the Theocritean Polyphemus and Vergil’s Corydon acted like poor men in giving their desired lover a specific number. The Theocritean Polyphemus acquires eleven fawns and four bear cubs (*Id.* 11. 40-41) for Galatea, and Corydon catches two young goats in a dangerous valley for Alexis (*praeterea duo nec tuta mihi valle reperti, Ec.* 2: 40). But Polyphemus in *Metamorphoses* 13 only catches two bears, since he believes that these cubs are not easy pets or common gifts such as deer or goats (*Met.* 13. 832). Ovid seems to be mocking Vergil more than Theocritus since he retains the bear cubs as worthy pets even though the Theocritean Polyphemus boasted of fawns too. By contrast Corydon’s only pet gifts are goats, and he apparently put himself in danger for their acquisition; the Ovidian Polyphemus chuckles at the human shepherd's feeble attempt. Ovid retains the confident air that Theocritus displays in *Idyll* 6, which surpasses that of Corydon’s confidence specifically pertaining to the pet presents. Corydon apparently knows already that his crush already deems his gifts as worthless (*sordent tibi munera nostra, Ec.* 2. 44), whereas Polyphemus directly commands Galatea not to despise his gifts (*nec munera despice nostra, Met.* 13. 839). Overall, Ovid is consistently playing with his pastoral literary predecessors, and testing the memory of his reader. For the more they remember, the more ironic and humorous his allusions become at the expense of Theocritus and Vergil.

Polyphemus’ obsession with his own appearance is the last section that most resembles the *Idylls* and *Eclogues*. After this section, the reader will not recognize the lovesick shepherd,

but rather the epic monster with murderous proclivity. In this passage, Ovid includes more Homeric references, seemingly so to ease the reader out of the Polyphemus' precarious pastoral setting within *Metamorphoses* 13. Just as in *Idyll* 6, Polyphemus is enamored by his own reflection that he sees in some form of water that serves as a mirror.

certe ego me novi liquidaeque in imagine vidi
nuper aquae, placuitque mihi mea forma videnti

Surely I know myself; lately I saw my reflection in a clear pool,
and I liked my features when I saw them.
Met. 13. 840-41

If Scylla was unsure about the magnitude of Polyphemus' aesthetic self-preoccupation, then the Cyclops in his own words (that lasts 13 lines) confirms yet another odious characteristic that Galatea deemed detestable in the beginning of her story.¹¹² In *Idyll* 6 Polyphemus believes his beard, single eye, and teeth are all handsome characteristics. In *Eclogue* 2 Corydon does not mention any specific physical feature, but just that when he saw his appearance on the reflection of the still sea, he does not believe he is unsightly whatsoever. Corydon even claims that his beauty exceeds that of Daphnis, if Alexis were the judge (*Ecl.* 2. 25-27). Ovid combines discussion of his shagginess and one eye in addition to an impious comparison with a deity. Overall, Ovid's Polyphemus that Ovid portrays is fixated with his size, and demands Galatea to notice.

adspice sim quantus; non est hoc corpore maior
Iuppiter in caelo nam vos narrare soletis
nescio quem regnare Iovem

Look how big I am! Jupiter himself up there in the sky has no bigger body;
for you are always talking of some Jove or other as ruler there.
Met. 13. 842-44

Besides the comparison with Vergil's Corydon, Ovid intensifies Polyphemus blasphemy when

¹¹² Tissol 1997, 120.

he makes him doubt Jupiter's very existence, which recalls the Cyclops' traditional Homeric disregard for Zeus Xenios in the *Odyssey*.¹¹³

Besides his obsessions with his size, Polyphemus believes his shaggy beard and the sheer quantity of hair on his body are attractive masculine qualities (*barba viros hirtaeque decent in corpore saetae*, 13. 850). Tissol argues that Polyphemus' vanity reaches its peak at this point when Polyphemus' claims that his physical features that Galatea finds defective are actually beautiful.¹¹⁴ It makes sense that this would be the case, since Theocritus has Polyphemus conclude *Idyll* 6 with newfound appreciation of his beauty. However, Ovid intensifies this vain confidence by making Polyphemus offer Galatea specific evidence as to why his shagginess and single eye are fair. Just as when Polyphemus compares Galatea's beauty to animals and plants in *Idyll* 11, since these natural realities are all he really knows, he does so with himself in *Metamorphoses* 13 as well. For example, he is not *turpis* with his vast amount of hair, since a tree is ugly without leaves, and a horse is ugly without a mane (13. 847-48). Polyphemus also essentially describes the positive characteristics of his cave (described at the beginning of his song, when he says his immense amount of hair overhangs his stern face and shades his shoulders like a grove (*coma plurima torvos / prominent in vultus umerosque ut lucus obumbrat*, 13. 844-45). His hair overhangs (prominent), just like his caves have the characteristic of being suspended, and it also offers shade (*obumbrat*) to his shoulders, just as his cave does not feel the sun even in the midst of summer (*vivo pendentia saxo / antra quibus nec sol medio sentitur in aestu*, 13.810-11). Unfortunately, Polyphemus does not realize that that he is correlating his physical appearance with his home, both of which Galatea finds highly inadequate.

Last but not least, Polyphemus finally mentions his eye. But, unlike in the *Idylls*,

¹¹³ Farrell 1992, 251-52.

¹¹⁴ Tissol 1997, 120.

Polyphemus does not call it fine, nor his sweetest possession. Polyphemus describes his single eye in three lines that show the last remnants of the Theocritean Cyclops. Ovid eases the reader into Polyphemus' transformation back into his epic self.

unum est in media lumen mihi fronte, sed instar
ingentis clipei. quid? non haec omnia magnus
Sol videt e caelo? Soli tamen unicus orbis.

True, I have but one eye in the middle of my forehead,
But it is as big as a good-sized shield. And what of it?
Doesn't the great sun see everything here on earth from his heavens?
And the sun has but one eye.
Ov. *Met.* 13. 851-53

Polyphemus has compared his eye to something violent and epic. The sun is symbolic of violence, destruction, illimitable power, and a masculine symbol of unbridled, primitive energy,¹¹⁵ and the reference to a shield is neither elegiac or pastoral, but martial and heroic.¹¹⁶ However, Ovid has pulled the Cyclops not into the language of Homer's Odysseus, as Theocritus did, but into the language of Vergil's Achaemenides from *Aeneid* 3. 635-37. Mack points out that Ovid uses the several of the same words (lumen, ingens, frons, clipeus, instar) that Achaemenides uses when he describes blinding Polyphemus.¹¹⁷ With just a few similar words, the reader hears Achaemenides' quivering voice from *Aeneid* 3. They remember why their piping shepherd could be doomed to such a dark fate.

Ovid has Polyphemus employ an interesting tactic to tempt Galatea that does not appear in the *Idylls*; the Cyclops says he would give his father, Poseidon, as her father-in law. "Furthermore, my father is king over your own waters" (Adde quod in vestro genitor meus aequore regnat, 13. 854). This reason, out of all the many that Polyphemus lists for Galatea,

¹¹⁵ Parry 1964, 277.

¹¹⁶ Farrell 1992, 252-53.

¹¹⁷ Mack 1999, 54.

would be the most convincing to a sea nymph. Although Polyphemus is not considered a prince of the sea, Galatea could think of herself as a sort of ocean princess. This statement could just as well be as threatening as it is convincing. Just as Poseidon proves to be lethal for Odysseus' watery *nostos* after he angers Polyphemus, the ocean god could make Galatea's domain just as fatal as she flees into the ocean, dodging the boulders of a furious Cyclops. Polyphemus entreats Galatea one last time to pity him (13. 855-56). "Polyphemus suddenly and dramatically loses confidence in his power of persuasion... his emotion conquers his reason, as often happens with characters in the *Metamorphoses*."¹¹⁸ His loss of rational, although apparently not surprising in this literary context, reminds the reader of *Idyll* 11. 52-53 when Polyphemus' desperation incites him to offer up his single eye to be burned by Galatea. In that situation Polyphemus reacts to his overwhelming emotion by being the passive recipient of violence. However in *Metamorphoses* 13, when a rival is present, his reaction will be reversed so that he becomes the active procurer of violence. Polyphemus again conveys his contempt for Jove and his heavenly domain (13. 857), ever more assuring that Ovid is portraying the Cyclops' Homeric self more and more.

In the *Idylls*, as I have mentioned, neither Galatea nor a rival actually appear. And even if Polyphemus did believe there were other suitors, he does not say so. But now, Polyphemus knows without a doubt that some exist, "And I could better bear your scorning if you fled from all your suitors" (*atque ego contemptus essem patientior huius / si fugeres omnes*, 13. 859-60). In his present counterfactual statement, Polyphemus expresses that he could patiently suffer Galatea's contempt if it was her sexual modesty she was preserving, but not if it was Polyphemus alone whom she hated. Unfortunately for Galatea, Polyphemus even knows the name of her lover, and cannot understand why she prefers Acis to his own embrace (13. 860-61).

¹¹⁸ Griffin 1983, 195.

Polyphemus is unable to understand Galatea's point and view and preferences, he does not have any perspective. The reader recognizes this Polyphemus; he is slowly transforming from his Theocritean self into his Homeric self. Next, he proves his selfishness, when he says that although Acis might be pleasing to himself and to Galatea (*licet*, 862, used with concessive force), Polyphemus wishes that it weren't the case. Even if there is someone out there who makes Galatea happy, if it is not he, the Cyclops resents such happiness. He resents it so much that his violent nature breaks through, "I'll tear his vitals out alive, I'll rend him limb from limb..." (*viscera viva traham divulsaque membra*, 13. 865). Polyphemus spirals into a jealous rage, and for a moment, we hear Odysseus describing the horror of his companions being torn limb from limb (*μελειστὶ ταμῶν*, *Od.* 9. 291). Not only will he transform Acis into limb-meal, but he will also scatter the limbs over the field and over Galatea's waves, so that he may mix with her that way (*sic se tibi misceat*, 13. 866). Polyphemus is not only terrifying in this moment; he is sophisticated, since he seems to fully understand the sexual double entendre of the verb *miscere*. Tissol says that Polyphemus purposefully transfers Acis out of the human category in order to conceptualize his violent act, "The pun transfers Acis from his identity as Galatea's lover, denoted by the figurative sense of *miscere*, to his new identity as a dismembered, indeed partly liquefied, body, as denoted by the literal sense".¹¹⁹ Polyphemus has a knack for transforming men into stew; the reader hears Achaemenides' voice again, as he describes watching his companions limbs transform into gore, as they are disgorged from Polyphemus' mouth, mixed (*commixta*) with blood and wine (*Aen.* 3. 632-33).

While it seems that Ovid has not used any words evoking 'fire' or 'burning', he has only been preserving them for Polyphemus' final declaration of jealous madness.

uror enim laesusque exaestuat acrius ignis

¹¹⁹ Tissol 1997, 24.

cumque suis videor translata viribus Aetna
pectore ferre meo nec tu Galatea moveris

For I burn, and my hot passion, stirred to frenzy, rages more fiercely within me;
I seem to carry Aetna let down into my breast with all his violence.
And you, Galatea, do not care at all.
Met. 13. 867-69

Polyphemus and Aetna become one; the Cyclops has been harboring the fire and lava of his wrathful passion for too long, and will soon erupt. Ovid has delayed the burning motif to describe Polyphemus' anger. Whereas Theocritus integrates 'burning' language when Polyphemus is at his most desperate, although in both cases he is at his most irrational. This motif in the *Metamorphoses* becomes all the more terrifying since it is associated with Polyphemus' fury instead of sadness. Polyphemus has officially lost it, and Galatea has witnessed it all (*nam cuncta videbam*, 13. 870). And just as she saw him, after he wanders (*errat*, 872), he sees her too. "I see you" (*me videt atque Acin 'video'*, 13. 874). Polyphemus sees Galatea not as sweet sleep holds him, nor as he gazes out to sea, but in reality. Ovid makes this extremely clear by using *videre* twice in the same line. After seeing Acis and Galatea he exclaims, "...and I'll make that union of your love the last" (*que exclamat 'et ista / ultima sit faciam Veneris concordia vestrae*, 13.874-75). Polyphemus is essentially saying, "If I can't have you, then no one can!". We learn that the Cyclops, at least in *Metamorphoses* 13, does not have the capacity to love Galatea, but merely to lust after her. This lust drives him to murder, thus fulfilling his purpose.

Ovid has adequately emphasized the sight motif, but next he makes sure that the reader can hear Polyphemus as well, just as Galatea does. Once Polyphemus' *clamor* is heard, his surroundings react accordingly. Seeing a lion up close is terrifying enough, but not fully so until it bears its teeth and roars.

tantaque vox quantum Cyclops iratus habere
debut illa fuit clamore perhorruit Aetne

His voice was big and terrible as a furious Cyclops' voice
should be. Aetna trembled with the din of it
Met. 13. 876-77

Both Polyphemus and Galatea mention Aetna within ten lines of each other. Polyphemus associates Aetna with violent power, and Galatea says that even this natural force that Polyphemus deems intimidating, is scared of the mere *clamor* of the Cyclops. Just as when Galatea says he is even frightening to the forests (13. 760), Polyphemus is marked as both associated and rejected by the land he holds so dear, as to even use it as bait for a sea nymph. In the *Idylls*, Polyphemus as a pastoral character coincides with nature as Theocritus portrays its peaceful allurements. But nature can also be immensely violent and dangerous, “Her catastrophic side is that which looms largest in Ovid’s landscapes and forms the ideal stage for violent love and death.”¹²⁰ So does Ovid portray nature’s catastrophic side alongside Polyphemus in order to highlight her ferocity in comparison with Polyphemus’; in this case, Polyphemus surpasses nature in his animosity.

Nature reacts to Polyphemus differently, depending on his literary setting. When it does not favor him, Polyphemus portrays the dangerous side of nature with his violent and immature tendencies, or as in *Metamorphoses* 13, by his animalistic lust. When nature does favor Polyphemus, he is the most “human.” Such as in his pastoral setting, his thoughts and emotions are pitiable and relatable. In the *Odyssey* (9.447-54), we feel the most pity for Polyphemus when he converses with his beloved ram, because we see him interacting with an animal (nature) lovingly. In the *Aeneid* (3.672-74), “... the waves and the distant land of Italy tremble in fear at Polyphemus’ roar, while Aetna echoes in sympathetic response. In Ovid, however, even the

¹²⁰ Parry 1964, 282.

volcano recoils in horror.”¹²¹ Even though the metamorphosis in this story is Acis turning into a river god, it seems as Polyphemus is undergoing a metamorphosis as well. It is as if the non-violent Theocritean Cyclops was too good to be true.

The discovered couple cannot simply shudder at his roar; they have to escape. Galatea dives into the nearby ocean, and Acis flees on land. So far, we have seen that the only survivors who escape Polyphemus’ island do so by fleeing into the ocean. Maybe Acis does not know that Polyphemus can not swim (*Id.* 11. 60), for why else would he turn his back to flight on land, Polyphemus’ natural domain, rather than plunge into the ocean with Galatea? The sea nymph recalls the parting words of her Symaethian hero (Symaethius heros, 13.879), “...Ovid empties the word of meaning. The gruesome slaughter immediately follows this example of significantly indecorous wit, and together they create the intensely grisly/comic mixed tone so characteristic of the *Metamorphoses*.”¹²² At the moment when the story begins to become serious, Ovid diverts the intensity with his sarcasm. Much less so does the reader dread the violence that is about to ensue, for Ovid has tempered their fear with cynical apathy. Ovid reduces and prevents any intense emotional involvement, which are compassionately employed by Vergil and Theocritus, with his mock-pastoral tone.¹²³ Just in time, for Acis is going to die. As he runs, he prays to Galatea and his parents to save and admit him into their watery kingdom (13. 880-81). However, even as he prays for their assistance, he seems to already deem himself beyond saving with the future participle of *perere*. Although the “hero” begs for redemption, Ovid assures the reader that it will not be likely. Galatea having been frightened (*pavefacta*, 878), like Odysseus and Achaemenides, can only witness the horror of Polyphemus’ might. Only swiftness of foot and/or

¹²¹ Farrell 1992, 259.

¹²² Tissol 1997, 123.

¹²³ Galinsky 1975, 135.

wit exceeds the physical might of Polyphemus, otherwise being the observer is the most powerless position to be in. Ovid revels in this uncomfortable notion to the point of emotional detachment.

No wonder Ovid indulges himself in the *Metamorphoses* with the lesser-known Theocritean Polyphemus (*Met.* 13) along with the Homeric/Vergilian Cyclops (*Met.* 14). For in *Metamorphoses* 14, Ovid can really only concentrate on the epic depiction of Polyphemus, adapted by Vergil. But with the story of Galatea and Polyphemus, not only does Ovid have the opportunity to parody pastoral, but epic as well at the same time. “The Cyclops ran after him and hurled a piece wrenched from the mountain-side” (*insequitur Cyclops partemque e monte revulsam / mittit*, 13. 882-82). Like muscle memory (or since Polyphemus has not technically encountered Odysseus yet: muscle prescience), Polyphemus proleptically reenacts his final act of violence in the exact same style as in the *Odyssey*, tearing a piece from his mountain. At least Odysseus, and even Aeneas’ crew, has a chance to escape because they are already in the ocean by the time blind Polyphemus begins pursuing them. But in Acis’ case, he is neither in the water nor is the Cyclops eye-less yet. Despite my assertion that swiftness of foot or wit succeeds the wrath of Polyphemus, neither are worthy means of escape when the rock that Polyphemus hurls is so huge that even though only the merest edge of it reaches Acis, he is completely buried by it (13. 883-83). The so-called hero becomes as miniscule as the snowflakes Polyphemus offers to bring Galatea (*Id.* 11. 55-7). Acis is dead, “Crimson blood came trickling from beneath the mass” (*puniceus de mole cruor manabat*, 13. 887). Since Polyphemus has reduced him to merely a liquid, and the only thing Galatea can do is transform him from crimson to clear liquid, and he changes into a river-god.

Theocritus deliberately portrays Polyphemus as pathetic and lovelorn, the Cyclops’

violent nature is repressed as he finds a solution for his strong emotions by means of song. In *Idyll 6* Polyphemus is confident and acts in such a way that Galatea is now pursuing him. There is no rival for Polyphemus to be jealous over, instead Galatea is jealous of the other women Polyphemus has been pursuing, and reacts violently by pelting stones at his dog, just as Polyphemus pelts a huge rock at Acis. But Ovid only retains Polyphemus' pathetic qualities for the sake of comedy alongside examples of his more violent characteristics. This maddened passion recalls the Homeric Polyphemus, but in *Metamorphoses 13* the passionate violence stems more so from love (for Galatea) rather than from hate (for Odysseus). Polyphemus wishes he could tear apart Acis, which reflects his passionate hate for Odysseus and stretching his arms up to the sky in a prayer to Poseidon to reacquire him or one of his companions to tear apart (*Met. 14*: as I shall discuss later) or that Odysseus never reach home (*Od. 9. 530-35*). Either way, the strong emotion of killing and mangling a body reflects the same intensity of loving a body so much as to mangle with it. This passion still remains hopeless in the Odyssean context because only Poseidon himself will actually feel any cathartic release from posing detriments to Odysseus' path. Polyphemus in the *Odyssey* and *Aeneid* creates an environment devoid of humanity, which in turns enables a situation for a hero to emerge. In the *Idylls*, Polyphemus himself is granted the opportunity to create an environment of humanity for himself, by himself. Instead of an enemy to contend with, his 'enemy' is an allusive lover. Sadness and loneliness mollifies anger. However in *Metamorphoses 13*, Ovid reinitiates violence by creating a more tangible, and therefore killable, enemy. Violence returns with anger instead of sadness. Polyphemus has finished playing the part of the pathetic shepherd who sings songs.

3. B) Achaemenides: The Raconteur of Violence

As for *Metamorphoses* 14, Ovid creates a slightly more poetic and gruesome rendition of the *Cyclopeia*, keeping in mind the Homeric and Vergilian motifs, while still adding his own perception that would allow his own readers to decipher his own story as memorable and adequately explained. Assuming his audience knew the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid* backwards and forwards, Ovid needed to keep similar elements from these preceding stories to keep his readers comfortable by means of recognition, but continually interested by his imposition of slightly altered material. Therefore, Ovid throughout his *Cyclopeia* changes various facets of Vergil's story to set himself apart from his epic predecessor. "...When he decides to treat an event, such as the story of Achaemenides, at similar length to Vergil's, he varies enough of the detail and tone to make it different".¹²⁴ While Vergil creates the character of Achaemenides, Ovid in *Metamorphoses* 14 adopts him to relay the Cyclops story to his own made-up character named Macareus who was also a surviving companion of Odysseus. Achaemenides is safely off the island and happily living with Aeneas and his crew. He is well dressed and healthy, no longer in the decrepit clothes that personified his suffering, "The rags of Achaemenides had supported and 'realized' his tale of deprivation, dehumanization, and woe (*iam non hirsutus amictu, / iam suus et spinis conserto tegmine nullis*, 14. 165-66). New clothes make him a new man- *suus*".¹²⁵ Achaemenides with his new appearance has a slightly altered outlook of his experiences, and instead of telling the Cyclops story to the Trojans so that he can be saved, he tells it to Macareus so that he can revel in his accomplishment of survival.

Not only did he not die by the giant's teeth, but the Trojans also accepted him and

¹²⁴ Galinsky 1975, 219.

¹²⁵ Lateiner 1996, 239.

decided not to kill him either. Since it would have even been pleasing for Achaemenides to find his grave in the ocean because of Aeneas, undoubtedly he is even more delighted to be alive with him. Ovid actually makes Aeneas more venerated by Achaemenides than Vergil himself imposed. For, it was Anchises and not Aeneas that first lends sympathy to the groveling Greek (*Aen.* 3. 610-11), but does not give praise the Trojans as a whole; it is Aeneas only that Achaemenides endows his eternal gratitude. Achaemenides prefers the life he has now with Aeneas in opposition to going back to Ithaca (where he lived in poverty), and feels forever indebted and grateful to Aeneas. “Comfortable with being part of the Trojan group (now in Ovid), Achaemenides in the *Metamorphoses* is just too happy being finally himself (suus)”.¹²⁶ He even says if he prefers his Ithacan home over Aeneas’ ship, if he reveres Aeneas any less than his own father then, “May I look on Polyphemus yet again, and those wide jaws of his, dripping with human gore” (iterum Polyphemon et illos / adspiciam fluidos humano sanguine rictus, *Met.* 14. 167-70). Achaemenides’ recognition of Aeneas can either be interpreted as an indicator towards the kindness that resides in humanity overall, or as an autonomous gesture of benevolence. Although Aeneas is a rightful symbol for the nationalism of Rome, the *Metamorphoses* pulls Achaemenides back to the bare roots of his probable intention as a character; that of conveying the affinity that overwhelms even the most incompatible groups of warring people when a greater enemy beyond human proportions appears.

Already, in his sincere reverence of Aeneas, Achaemenides descriptive language of violence fills his listener’s mind with Polyphemus’ gnashing mouth covered in the blood of men. Since Achaemenides is obviously in a better emotional and physical state than he was in the *Aeneid* on Polyphemus’ island, his narration of the Cyclops story will become more terrifying in

¹²⁶ Papaioannou 2005, 109.

juxtaposition to his own excitement and reassurance of safety. “The grotesque and gory details exist in their own right and become the source of bathetic amusement.”¹²⁷ In addition to Achaemenides being ‘more dramatic’, Achaemenides tells the story in a different chronological order in the *Metamorphoses* than when he did in the *Aeneid*. He begins with Odysseus’ taunts to Polyphemus as he sailed away. He finally expresses his own resentful feelings about being a forgotten companion, watching his leader jeopardize the freedom he desperately yearns for.

quid mihi tunc animi (nisi si timor abstulit omnem
sensum animumque) fuit, cum vos petere alta relictus
aequora conspexi? volui inclamare, sed hosti
prodere me timui: vestrae quoque clamor Ulixis
paene rati nocuit.

What were my feelings then (except that fear took away all sense and feeling) when, left behind, I saw you making for the open sea? I longed to call out to you, but I feared to betray myself to the enemy. Even your vessel Ulysses’ cry almost wrecked.
Met. 14.177-181

Achaemenides has to restrain himself as he watched his leader become unrestrained. The abandoned companion has to adapt his own persona to that of the clever sufferer. At the very end of Achaemenides’ story, he says that he recognizes the Trojan ships in the distance still out on the sea, and acquires their attention by bidding them with silent gestures, and then rushes down to persuade them (*Met.* 14. 218-19)¹²⁸ “He does not want cannibalistic Polyphemus to locate him by hearing his voice and the distant Trojans are ‘out of earshot’. He wants to draw their attention so that they will rescue him...”¹²⁹ Ovid more so than Vergil attributes the quality of cleverness to Achaemenides as he takes care to stay alive on the island as long as possible before Aeneas’ fleet arrives, and desperately makes use of their presence by his discreet manner of silent signaling.

¹²⁷ Galinsky 1975, 233.

¹²⁸ While in the *Aeneid*, Achaemenides recognizes the Trojans when they’re already landed on shore (*Aen.* 3. 596-97)

¹²⁹ Lateiner 1996, 245.

While accentuating the *pietas* of Aeneas, Ovid alters another aspect of the Vergil's *Cyclopeia* by describing Odysseus in a more negative light than Vergil. As Vergil created Achaemenides, Ovid takes on a similar endeavor by creating another one of Odysseus' crew to elaborate upon the Odyssean narrative in the *Metamorphoses* as well, named Macareus. Achaemenides exists in the *Aeneid* to venerate the Trojan race as a whole by means of Aeneas saving him, but also takes care not to degrade Odysseus despite having been forgotten by him. Ovid alters this slightly by using Achaemenides to venerate Aeneas specifically, and creates Macareus to elaborate upon more stories and call out Odysseus on his mistakes as a leader in a delicate manner, "...Macareus' presence reinforces Ovid's mockery of Ulixes. Reserved and laconic in his comments on his former leader, Macareus nonetheless allows his actions to speak for himself and convey his awareness that following Ulixes leads to certain death".¹³⁰ The juxtaposition of these heroic conceptions within the *Aeneid* and the *Metamorphoses* creates a combination that elaborates on the beauty of forgiveness by granting Aeneas to be the savior of Achaemenides while also acknowledging the shortcomings of Odysseus.

Achaemenides' story has already officially begun; the *conspexi* in line 179 is the first sight verb that the narrator employs. However, Achaemenides' *vidi* in line 181 seems to mirror the validity of his ocular testimony that Vergil accentuated in the *Aeneid*. This *vidi* recalls Achaemenides watching Polyphemus hurling rocks at the escaping boat of Odysseus, he describe Polyphemus' curse, which was left out of the *Aeneid*. Vergil describes Polyphemus going to the seashore to wash his wound (*Aen.* 3.662-63), but not Polyphemus' curse that incites Poseidon's wrath for Odysseus' remaining travels. Ovid's version of the curse is intensified from Homer's Polyphemus, whose specific prayer to Poseidon is to prohibit Odysseus' arrival home; and if he

¹³⁰ Papaioannou 2005, 109-110.

does succeed to return to Ithaca, Polyphemus hopes he shall find woes within his house (*Od.* 9.526-36). Homer's Polyphemus objectively wants vengeance no matter the form or who carries out the deed. In the *Metamorphoses* Achaemenides describes Polyphemus' curse as wishing him, or even a single companion, to return back to the Cyclopes' island to feast on cathartically.

o si quis referat mihi casus Ulixem
 Aut aliquem e sociis, in quem mea saeviat ira
 Viscera cuius edam, cuius viventia dextra
 Membra mea laniem, cuius mihi sanguis inundet
 Guttur, et elisi trepident sub dentibus artus.
 Quam nullum aut leve sit damnum mihi lucis.'

Oh, that some chance would but bring Ulysses back to me,
 or someone of his friends, against whom my rage might vent itself,
 whose vitals I might devour, whose living body
 I might tear asunder with my hands, whose gore might flood
 my throat, and whose mangled limbs might quiver between my teeth!
 How nothing at all, or how slight a thing would be the loss of my sight appear!
Met. 14.192-7

Achaemenides in the *Metamorphoses* does not describe the blinding scene, but merely implies the blinding by describing the Cyclops as 'blind' or 'sightless' several times through his *Cyclopeia* (*Met.* 14. 189: *luminis orbus*, *Met.* 14.200: *inanem luminis orbem*). This quote from Polyphemus is interesting because, unlike in the *Aeneid*, Polyphemus' words are heard in the mind of the listener. Not only this, but just like his actions, his words prove him to be a vicious and bloodthirsty Cyclops. For unlike in the *Odyssey* where Polyphemus asks that only Odysseus never find his way home, or if he does, to find disaster, Ovid's Polyphemus wants to inflict the suffering himself, not his father. Within these lines Ovid includes the gory aspects that were present in Achaemenides' description of the eating scene that were apparent in the Vergilian version, such as the image of blood and quivering limbs. The purpose of this seems to be so that when Achaemenides describes the cannibalistic scene this time in the *Metamorphoses*, he can add or elaborate on different imagery that Vergil withheld, such as the Polyphemus' lion-simile.

Here in the *Metamorphoses*, we can know what Achaemenides felt watching Polyphemus in his blind rage. Instead of perceiving his anxiety because of his specific location and meager appearance, we feel it in his elaborated explanations. Achaemenides is pale with horror as he gazes upon the angry brute.

spectantem vultus etianmum caede madentes
 crudelesque manus et inanem luminis orbem
 membraque et humano concretam sanguine barbam

I looked upon his face still smeared with blood,
 and his cruel hand, his sightless eye,
 his limbs and his beard, matted with human gore
Met. 14. 199-201

This is now the third time that Achaemenides has described the sheer amount of blood associated with the cannibalistic Cyclops, and he has not even come to horrors he experienced inside the cave yet. The reader themselves can now picture the inanimate mixture (concernere) of mortal men dripping (madere) from the Cyclops' face; not even the Cyclops knows how savage and disgusting he looks. Polyphemus is then personified as death, as he stands before Achaemenides' eyes (mors erat ante oculos, 14. 202). Even though Achaemenides has stared death in the face, this is apparently the least of his concerns (minimum tamen illa malorum, 202). Achaemenides segues between his fears at that moment of becoming the bloody dripping mixture in Polyphemus beard (et iam prensurum iam nunc mea viscerea rebar / in sua mensurum, 14. 203-04), by describing the events that happened in the cave to produce the gory concoction on the Cyclops' hands.

In the *Metamorphoses* Ovid revitalizes the lion-simile from *Odyssey* 9. Ovid retains all the multiple pieces of the human body delectable enough to eat by the Cyclops while also retaining the animate nature of the dead body parts. Achaemenides begins with *vidi* again as he watches the Cyclops dash his friends three times on the ground (not a rock as in *Aeneid* 3).

cum super ipse iacens hirsuti more leonis
 visceraque et carnes cumque albis ossa medullis
 semianimesque artus avidam condebat in alvum

When crouching like a shaggy lion over them,
 he filled his greedy maw with their vitals and their flesh,
 their bones full of white marrow,
 and their limbs still warm with life.
Met. 14. 207-9

Instead of warm joints quivering under the giant's teeth (*Aen.* 3. 627), half-alive joints are put into his greedy stomach. Even though Ovid does not include a word referring to blood or the act of quivering in the eating scene, which Vergil employs successfully to apply terrifying decadence to the image of cannibalism, Ovid has already included these sorts of words in the curse that I previously mentioned. Achaemenides does not insert Odysseus into the story at this moment between the eating and vomiting, as he did in the *Aeneid*; Ovid makes sure to not describe Odysseus as a hero. Instead, Achaemenides at this moment reiterates his pale and motionless fear, "A quaking terror seized me and I stood pale with horror" (*me tremor invasit stabam sine sanguine maestus*, 14. 210). The reader does not imagine blood leaving the devoured men's bodies in this scene, but it rushing away from the surface of Achaemenides' mournful face.

Achaemenides in the *Metamorphoses* implies no significant temporal distance between the eating and vomiting of the devoured companions. He adds a greater sense of urgency to the vomiting scene, skipping the intermediary step of sleep for the giant, as Achaemenides watches Polyphemus masticating then immediately spewing his meal afterwards. He is telling his story briskly and confidently, while in the *Aeneid* he was still engulfed by the enervated trauma he has resided in for those three months. "He heaps up and clearly enjoys the horrors of the

cannibalism.”¹³¹ Ovid generally keeps the same kind of language as Vergil’s gory description of the story, but some vocabulary is altered.

mandentemque videns eiectantemque cruentas
ore dapes et frustra mero glomerata vomentem

I watched him now chewing, now ejecting his bloody
feast from his mouth, now vomiting the morsels lumped with wine.
Met. 14. 211-12

The verb *mandere* appears in both the *Aeneid* and *Metamorphoses* for this eating scene (*Aen.* 3.627, *Met.* 14. 211), but in the former text it accompanies the line concerning ingestion while in the *Metamorphoses* the verb is positioned right next to the word concerning regurgitation. The wine and bits are now lumped together instead of mixed, and the blood is brought up in relation to the Cyclops’ banquet. Achaemenides in the *Metamorphoses* associates the horrific vomiting image with somewhat intact bodies opposed to their transformation into digested inanimate material. He associates human chunks and wine as not fully immersed with each other, as *commixta* would imply, for *glomerata* separates the wine and human remains. This can explain the propinquity of the vomiting scene in the *Metamorphoses*, simply because there was less time for the Cyclops’ gullet to fully digest the contents of its feast. The mentioned blood identifies with the act of eating rather than the morsels that are spewed forth afterwards. This bloody emphasis of the banquet rather than the vomit consequently can make the scene more gruesome. Since the gore is more closely paired with the act of eating men rather than digesting them, the terrifying theme of cannibalism is more pronounced; the reader is reminded that the vomit came from men, not food.

Achaemenides concludes the horrors within the cave with, “Such fate I pictured as in store for wretched me” (*talia fingebam misero mihi fata parari*, 14. 213). He moves on to his

¹³¹ Otis 1970, 73.

three months of subsisting on the island. For many days he hid and trembled, "... fearing death and yet longing to die" (*moretemque timens cupidusque moriri*, 14. 215). Achaemenides becomes subhuman while on that island; eating like a scavenger, and cowering like an animal of prey on the lower end of the food chain. But with this horrific perspective on rudimentary life, in return he becomes all the more vivacious when Aeneas saves him. Achaemenides feels comfortable delving into gory descriptions bathed with blood, because he has come eye to eye with his own morality (*mors*). "In Latin poetry, as in Greek, such descriptions of the body easily become part of a discourse of mortality, infused by a generalized compassion for the human condition, of which the specific suffering is exemplary. To speak of the body in classical literature is to speak of mortality."¹³² He gains a new appreciation for what it means to live in safety, culture, and happiness. Once he is off the island, it is easier for him to confront and process the juxtaposition of respect for life and desire for death. His life with Aeneas becomes all the more precious because at one point, even though he was scared of death, he also desired it. His joy at the end of his tale is sincere when he describes running to the Trojan ship. A vessel that would have previously conjured enmity is now a welcome sign. "I touched their hearts: a Trojan ship received a Greek!" (*et movi: Graiumque ratis Troiana recepit*, 14: 220). Achaemenides has all the more faith in the kindness of humanity since he encountered its definition after its antithesis.

Since Achaemenides is the narrator in the *Metamorphoses*, he becomes a type of hero just as the two epic heroes before him were in narrating the *Cyclopeia* to the Phaeacians and the Carthaginians. He is a minor hero in comparison to men such as Odysseus and Aeneas, but nevertheless still a hero because he fought in the Trojan War and eventually earns *kleos* by

¹³² Segal 1998, 13.

means of Vergil and Ovid. He is also heroic not by being a hero necessarily, specifically because he does not save anyone (besides warning the Trojans to flee from the Cyclopes' island) and is saved. But, he can be a hero because he creates an opportunity where Aeneas can become more of a hero than he already is. Achaemenides employs cunning to survive on a deadly island and warns the Trojans without giving them away to Polyphemus. As Odysseus must think of a clever plan to escape without being noticed, and not just use brute force, Achaemenides must be clever in not making rash decisions and imploring the Trojans in just the right way. Like Homer, Vergil seems primarily concerned with heroes and nobility and their view on these fantastical events. However in the *Metamorphoses*, Achaemenides is able to tell the story first hand, not a typical heroic monologue but something completely his own:

When Ovid remarks that Achaemenides is 'iam suus' (now his own man) he may suggest that his intertextually chameleonic self, whose literary existence is so firmly circumscribed and his performance dictated almost to the last word, has eventually become an original and independent epic character. Literally (and literarily) out of nowhere, Vergil's doublet of Sinon, primarily invented to bring Ulixes to the fore just before Aeneas' fleet abandons the textual space of the *Odyssey*, acquires individuality in Ovid.¹³³

Ovid personalizes the story to exist as what it is, a story of kindness and friendship, instead of using it to imply a more general veneration of a country. He cares more about the subjective state of humanity opposed to the objective. Ovid's subtle personalization of characters, not constrained by strict epic parameters, makes his rendition of the *Cyclopeia* emotionally accessible to the common reader. The reader can lament with Achaemenides and his specific insight into that gut dropping feeling of watching one's last hope disappear into the horizon, while simultaneously celebrating the happiness Achaemenides holds in juxtaposition to his traumatic experience. "The *Metamorphoses* stresses violence rather than unhappiness..."¹³⁴Ovid

¹³³ Papaioannou 2005, 93.

¹³⁴ Parry 1964, 280.

intensifies the goriness found in Homer and Vergil, but not in a sad manner, but like a teenage boy amplifying the details of a scary movie he watched and successfully finished despite his fear.

Conclusion

Homer, Vergil, and Ovid customarily depict Polyphemus as a savage and violent monster. But with each author, Polyphemus undergoes small but significant changes that alter how the audience perceives each story. In most versions, Polyphemus is a simple-minded shepherd who kills men either by eating (Odysseus' and Achaemenides' companions) or throwing parts of his property at them (Acis). But an author like Theocritus can use such a character with a murderous reputation and still portray him with genuine human emotions. Theocritus can also convincingly make a mythical monster discuss aesthetics in light of the sight motif prevalent in *Odyssey* 9. Theocritus can make a cannibal fall in love; a character who was overcome by his passionate hatred for Odysseus now experiences hopeless love for a sea nymph. Although Polyphemus' relationship with Galatea slightly mirrors his with Odysseus, readers now can empathize with the Cyclops since he reacts to his intense emotions with song instead of cannibalism. Even a character who eats people alive can still be considered relatable when situated in a different context.

On a much smaller scale, Vergil and Ovid introduce a new character named Achaemenides, who as a companion of Odysseus, should be an enemy from the perspective of the Trojan Aeneas. But both authors present him in a sympathetic manner. Aeneas first encounters him as an unknown Greek that seems untrustworthy merely because he is modeled

off the treacherous Sinon. But this is purposefully the only “guilt” that Vergil assigns to Achaemenides, for being forgotten makes being saved become all the more glorious and appreciated. Achaemenides’ former days as a war enemy of the Trojans proves negligible in comparison to the horror that he experienced in Polyphemus’ cave. Achaemenides’ narration filled with gory imagery in both the *Aeneid* and *Metamorphoses* seems to surpass the level of violence and bloodshed from the battlefield. Polyphemus’ barbarity allows a character like Achaemenides to become all the more pitiable. Since Achaemenides was caged in Polyphemus’ cave like an animal and watched his friends be eaten like one, his level of suffering warrants being saved by former enemies. But as for Polyphemus, he receives pity from the authors and the reader instead of full forgiveness from any characters. For even in the *Idylls* when Polyphemus is shown at his most “sane” and does not exhibit any outright cruelty, allusions remind us of his heinous deed: he forever lives in the language of fire, darkness, and blood.

Homer’s *Cyclopeia* allows authors after him to analyze violence and madness in terms of intelligence and beauty, in conjunction with examination of their opposites (gentleness, sanity, idiocy, and ugliness). Theocritus, Vergil, and Ovid add or eliminate certain characters and narrators in order to change the perspective of the story; the reader perceives contending yet compatible relationships between the civilized and uncivilized, and more generally humanity and nature. In the *Odyssey* the Cyclops’ simple-mindedness emphasizes Odysseus’ intelligence and cunning. In the *Idylls* Polyphemus’ anxiety about his physical aesthetic makes the reader wonder how beautiful the inconspicuous sea nymph really is. In *Aeneid* 3 Achaemenides’ decrepit appearance and humble desperation affirms the ferocity of Polyphemus and the heroism of Aeneas.

Authors such as Homer and Theocritus expose one perspective of a certain quality (such

as how Polyphemus conceives beauty) along with its opposite (Polyphemus' conception of ugliness) so that both definitions can be analyzed and understood in relation to one another. However, Ovid attempts to show that sometimes there are no strict definitions of opposites, such as what is beautiful or ugly. Ovid describes certain elements in an exaggerated manner. For example, Ovid has Polyphemus go on and on about his compliments and complaints of Galatea, so that the descriptions become meaningless in their superfluity. The overabundance of adjectives begins to contradict each other and makes the reader become apathetic, and this apathy turns into an ambiguous perspective. So Ovid encourages the reader to define for themselves certain qualities that become based on a subjective perception of the scenario instead of relying on clear-cut examples in each story. These sorts of exaggerations encourage the audience to question the true nature of characters, such as Polyphemus, since Ovid tests the uncertainty of an objective point of view. Polyphemus encourages the reader to question definitions, such as what it means to hate, love, or pity both oneself and others.

Although I have consistently called Polyphemus a simple-minded brute, the manner in which authors emphasize unexpected emotions (such as pity) within his stories is intricate. The fact that it is difficult for the reader to either fully dislike or enjoy Polyphemus as a character shows the complexities of his character. Homer's *Cyclopeia* allows different authors to explore the potential identities of various characters that arise according to different situations. The Cyclops story in its multiple forms encourages the audience to take a step back and question their own judgments. If a huge one-eyed Cyclops does not believe he is a monster, but a handsome man clothed in might, then even the objective nature of reality becomes unreliable. Homer, Theocritus, Ovid, and Vergil display the uncertainty of the real world through a fictitious story with a violent mythological creature, but it ironically becomes a close semblance of the

unconfirmed state of human existence.

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