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POLYPHEMUS' JOURNEY: FROM HOMER'S MONSTER TO THEOCRITUS' ROMANTIC HERO

The proposed study focuses on attempting to show the main stages of the transformation of a man-eating monster, who knows no laws, into a romantic image of a shepherd in love. In Homer, Odysseus' encounter with Polyphemus was one of many adventures that happened on the way of the king of Ithaca, but it had a great influence on the future events of the epic. Polyphemus' role in the *Odyssey* is to be the main character's antagonist, although he may also evoke some sympathy from the readers because of his unexpectedly emotional monologue to his ram. Later, the image of the Cyclops begins to take on increasingly ironic overtones, becoming a character in Euripides' satirical drama and Philoxenus' dithyramb. Finally, within the Hellenistic interpretation of ancient mythological images, Theocritus introduces the young Cyclops Polyphemus into his idylls as an unhappy shepherd in love. He "heals" himself from the wound of love by singing a song to his beloved and eventually recovers, accepting his appearance and returning to his daily duties.

Even though Polyphemus' mythological image has been widely studied, it continues to attract scholars' attention. Thus, this article proposes a diachronic approach to the development of the image from Homer to Theocritus, emphasizing certain lexical and stylistic features that have not been sufficiently covered in the scientific literature.

PODRÓŻ POLIFEMA: OD HOMEROWEGO POTWORA DO ROMANTYCZNEGO BOHATERA U TEOKRYTA

Proponowane badanie koncentruje się na próbie ukazania głównych etapów przemiany potwora pożerającego ludzi, który nie uznaje żadnych zasad, w romantyczny obraz zakochanego pasterza. U Homera spotkanie Odyseusza z Polifemem to tylko jedna z wielu przygód, które stały się udziałem króla Itaki w drodze. Miało ono jednak ogromny wpływ na przyszłe wydarzenia eposu. Rola Polifema

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w *Odysei* polega na tym, że jest on antagonistą głównego bohatera, choć może również budzić pewną sympatię czytelników z uwagi na swój nieoczekiwanie emocjonalny monolog skierowany do barana. Obraz cyklopa nabiera później coraz wyraźniejszego ironicznego wymiaru, stając się postacią w dramacie satyrowym Eurypidesa i dytyrambie Filoksenosa. Wreszcie, w ramach hellenistycznej interpretacji starożytnych obrazów mitologicznych, Teokryt wprowadza do swoich idylli młodego cyklopa Polifema jako nieszczęśliwie zakochanego pasterza. „Leczy" on swoją ranę miłosną śpiewając pieśń swojej ukochanej. I wreszcie odzyskuje siły, akceptując swój wygląd i powracając do codziennych obowiązków.

Mimo że mitologiczny obraz Polifema był już szeroko badany, wciąż przyciąga uwagę naukowców. Dlatego w niniejszym artykule proponuję podejście diachroniczne do rozwoju tego obrazu od Homera do Teokryta z uwzględnieniem wybranych aspektów leksykalnych i stylistycznych, dotąd niewystarczająco opisanych w literaturze przedmiotu.

Keywords: Polyphemus, Cyclops, Homer, Theocritus, monster, shepherd, love, epic, idyll
Słowa klucze: Polifem, cyklop, Homer, Teokryt, potwór, pasterz, miłość, epos, idylla

Nempe ille inmitis et ipsis
horrendus silvis et visus ad hospite nullo
impune et magni cum dis contemptor Olympi,
quid sit amor, sensit… (*Metamorphoses*, 13: 759-762).[1]

Introduction

There is no way to find a better characteristic of Cyclops Polyphemus than in Ovid. It might seem impossible to combine such words as *inmitis*, *horrendus* and *amor* in the description of one person. In these lines the poet showed the journey of radical transition from a Pan-Hellenic epic monster to a lyrical elegiac hero, yet a little clumsy. This path is in the focus of the study in which we will consider Polyphemus' ambiguous background image: as a cruel, murderous shepherd and as a romantic shepherd in love. Whereas the primary source of Polyphemus as a man-eating monster is well known (from Homer's *Odyssey*), the characterization of a young lover's image must be explained.

The diachronic method of studying the literary process can be productive here showing gradual layering of the image. So, if one observes the works solely dedicated to Polyphemus after *Odyssey,* they may note Euripides' satirical drama *Cyclops* (c. 409 B.C.), dithyramb of the same title by Philoxenus (c. 380 B.C.) and, most importantly for us, the sixth and eleventh idylls of the Hellenistic poet Theocritus. I believe the analysis of the lover's image must be derived from the content of *Idylls*. It is explained, for instance, by the fact that Euripides' drama is neither a continuation nor

[1] *That savage, dreaded by the forest trees, feared by the stranger who beholds his face, contemner of Olympus and the gods, now he can feel what love is* (transl. by B. More).

a prehistory of the meeting between Odysseus and Polyphemus, but the author's own version of the events described in the ninth song of the *Odyssey*. Philoxenus' work undoubtedly influenced Theocritus and his successors; however, it is not preserved in the original version (we know about it only from the references by other authors).

The Cyclops' image can also be found in the works by other authors, for example, in the epigram by Callimachus, which appeared around the time of the *Idylls*. It is known that later bucolic authors Bion and Moschus, who also mentioned Polyphemus in their works, were significantly influenced by Theocritus. Ovid, a Roman master of transformations, told the story of Polyphemus in books 13 and 14 of the *Metamorphoses*. Virgil's epic poem *Aeneid* provides readers with what happened to the Cyclops after he was blinded. However, these works are not examined in the article, they require a separate in-depth study.

The works featuring original elaborations of the myth of the Cyclops Polyphemus have been comprehensively analyzed by scholars (Aguirre, Buxton 2020; Asimopulos 2013; Hutchinson 2007; Sens 2007; Gutzwiller 2006; Hordern 2004; Mondi 1983 and others). The myth of a one-eyed giant has also been explored in the context of world mythology. According to J. Glenn (1978: 43), the Cyclops is "a universal folktale figure who is deeply rooted in the oral tradition of peoples ranging from Iceland and Portugal to Lithuania and Arabia". However, there is a thought that Homer started writing about a new type of the Cyclopes as he never mentions Polyphemus being a craftsman like all Cyclopes used to be in Hesiod's *Theogony*. For Polyphemus being a cannibalistic son of Poseidon and a nereid is also rather newly established in the *Odyssey* and continued in the subsequent literary tradition. "Although Hesiod describes his Cyclopes as ὑπέρβιον ἦτορ ἔχοντας (139), there is nothing particularly violent or malicious in the actions of these master craftsmen" (Mondi 1983: 18).

In my view, Homer's *Odyssey* and Theocritus' *Idylls* 6 and 11 are the main contexts for reflecting the dual nature of Polyphemus' image. Therefore, a comprehensive analysis of lexical and stylistic features based on these works may be beneficial here. Of course, to show a more complete picture and demonstrate how ambivalent the image of the Cyclops is in ancient literature, one should refer to analogies in works by other authors. The transition from Polyphemus-the-man-eating-monster to Polyphemus-the-romantic-lover is believed to be essential. This can be traced through the works by Euripides and Philoxenus, who should be considered the main intermediate links between Homer and Theocritus. Thus, this article aims to identify fundamental principles of Polyphemus' artistic evolution as mythological and literary image.

Polyphemus in Homer

After the Trojan War, the Greek warriors loaded up their trophies and headed home. Among them was Odysseus returning to his wife Penelope and son Telemachus. According to Homer, the Trojan War was fought not only by outstanding

warriors but also by the gods, who divided into supporters of the Achaeans or the Trojans. From the very beginning of the war, Poseidon helped the Achaeans, but his attitude changed when Odysseus blinded his son, the Cyclops Polyphemus. In fact, after this event, Poseidon tried to punish Odysseus in every possible way, by slowing down what he most wanted – his return home.

The story of how Odysseus and Polyphemus met occupies quite a significant part and is described in the ninth book of the *Odyssey* in verses 166-542. A few lines earlier (106-115), however, one can see an "announcement" of future events that resonates with the classic description of the "golden age" (Mondi 1983: 22), because the Cyclopes have rich harvests without doing anything according to Zeus' will. The focus in the following narrative is on the heroic image of Odysseus, while Polyphemus is described as a wild, bloodthirsty creature who is not aware of any laws or social rules[2] and does not use "a fully developed language" (Gera 2003: 10). This episode shows that Odysseus is driven not only by avarice, but also by the thirst for glory. Moreover, Odysseus left most of his companions on the Goat Island nearby where there was a lot of food. This fact "makes the trip to Polyphemus nonessential and motivated only by intellectual curiosity" (Alwine 2009: 332). Odysseus and his companions entered Polyphemus' cave without permission, ate his food and wanted to steal his herd, but now, feeling danger, they are appealing to the laws of hospitality and calling upon Zeus for their protection (v. 266-271). The owner of the cave does not believe that robbery should be repaid with hospitality and punishes the uninvited guests in a way that is understandable to him – by eating them. Interestingly, at the beginning of the adventure, Odysseus' companions asked him to take the food and animals back to the ship while the owner was away, but Odysseus wanted to see who lived in the cave and to establish his status as a hero in this case as well: ὄφρ' αὐτόν τε ἴδοιμι, καὶ εἴ μοι ξείνια δοίη. | οὐδ' ἄρ' ἔμελλ' ἑτάροισι φανεὶς ἐρατεινὸς ἔσεσθαι (229-230).[3]

It is crucial to note that Homer presented the story of the encounter with the Cyclops as a story told by Odysseus while visiting Alcinous. Thus, the story is believed to be preconceived, because it is presented in Odysseus' version, and therefore it can be changed according to the circumstances in which it is told. Of course, the Cyclops' cruelty cannot be justified, but Odysseus might also be perceived controversially. The interpretation of this event has several sociological projections, due to P. Asimopulos: "Cyclops' blinding and Odysseus' rescue express the victory of intellect over brute force, the predominance of wisdom upon which legal frameworks, organized societies, and therefore civilization are built" (2013: 52). Yes, Odysseus is fulfilling his cultural mission and wants to bring the civil laws to the wildest places. However, it should be noted here that Odysseus and his companions

[2] For further reading see: Skarbek-Kazanecki 2024.

[3] *I might see the man himself, and whether he would give me gifts of entertainment. Yet, as it fell, his appearing was not to prove a joy to my comrades*.

invaded the microcosm of the Cyclopes, disrupting their way of life. Polyphemus' everyday life and herding skills are described in detail: he grazed and cared for his sheep and goats every day, knew how to make cheese. Odysseus, as a representative of the standard "human" order of those times, simultaneously brings chaos and disorder to the world of the Cyclops. T. Nortwick (2009: 53) emphasizes that Odysseus "must return to Ithaka in order to restore order and block change, but along the way he often does just the opposite, creating disorder, enforcing change."

Two key epithets are worth highlighting in Polyphemus' artistic characteristics: οἶος (*alone, lonely*) and ἄγριος (*living in the fields, wild, savage*). Polyphemus was known to live alone in the cave, not maintaining friendly relations with other Cyclopes. However, in the time of danger, when Odysseus blinded him, Polyphemus called his neighbors for help, and they did come, but could not help him because Odysseus tricked the Cyclops and didn't tell him his real name (v. 399-413). I believe, the epithets οἶος and ἄγριος are interconnected, since Polyphemus is lonely because he is wild, and he became wild, probably, because of the lack of communication. Next to the adjective οἶος, there are two adverbs with the meaning of *far away* (ἀπόπροθεν) and *from afar* (ἀπάνευθεν) that reinforce the perception of Polyphemus' isolation. In the same passage, there is an appropriate comparison that highlights his image, emphasizing once again the Cyclops' loneliness: ῥίῳ ὑλήεντι / ὑψηλῶν ὀρέων, ὅ τε φαίνεται οἶον ἀπ' ἄλλων (191-192).[4]

Polyphemus' physical strength and his frightening and unpleasant appearance are repeatedly mentioned in the text: ἀνὴρ ἐνίαυε πελώριος (187) "a monstrous man"; ἄνδρα… μεγάλην… ἀλκήν (214) "a man … clothed in great might"; δεισάντων φθόγγον τε βαρὺν αὐτόν τε πέλωρον (257) "our spirit was broken for terror of his deep voice and monstrous self". Obviously, such features were supposed to add a negative connotation to the image and cause disgust to this character among the audience of the *Odyssey*. Nevertheless, Polyphemus' power also inspires respect, as he is called "the mighty Polyphemus" κρατερὸς Πολύφημος (407, 446). It should also be noted that the Cyclops perceives Odysseus as a completely insignificant, powerless, little man, "one that is puny, a man of naught and a weakling" ὀλίγος τε καὶ οὐτιδανὸς καὶ ἄκικυς (515). These words were spoken by Polyphemus after being blinded, recalling the prophecy he had received from the fortune-teller Telemus that a man named Odysseus would deprive him of his sight (507-516). Polyphemus expressed his disappointment, as he expected it to be someone of equal strength: ἀλλ' αἰεί τινα φῶτα μέγαν καὶ καλὸν ἐδέγμην | ἐνθάδ' ἐλεύσεσθαι, μεγάλην ἐπιειμένον ἀλκήν (513-514).[5] Instead, he, a demigod, was blinded by a mortal man, who had clouded his mind with wine. From Polyphemus' point of view, this greatly diminishes the heroic nature of Odysseus' act, which was commonly regarded as a true feat.

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[4] "Like a wooded peak of lofty mountains, which stands out to view alone, apart from the rest".

[5] "But I ever looked for some tall and comely man to come hither, clothed in great might".

The opposition between the civilized Achaeans (ἀνδρί γε σιτοφάγῳ (191) "a man that lives by bread") and the wild Cyclops (ἤσθιε δ' ὥς τε λέων ὀρεσίτροφος (292) "he ate them as a mountain-nurtured lion") is also expressed in phrases that emphasize the latter's lack of laws and respect for gods (lawless, godless): ἀπάνευθεν ἐὼν ἀθεμίστια ἤδη (189) "with his heart set on lawlessness" and οὔτε δίκας ἐὺ εἰδότα οὔτε θέμιστας (215) "that knew naught of justice or of law". Indeed, Polyphemus challenged the gods (stating that the Cyclopes do not even care about Zeus – οὐ ἀλέγουσιν), considering himself to be better and stronger than them (275-276). The only guide to action for Polyphemus is his θυμός: οὐδ' ἂν ἐγὼ Διὸς ἔχθος ἀλευάμενος πεφιδοίμην | οὔτε σεῦ οὔθ' ἑτάρων, εἰ μὴ θυμός με κελεύοι. (277-278).[6] The characteristics of the Cyclops are found three times in an almost unchanged formulation in the phrase νηλέϊ θυμῷ (271, 287, 368) "with pitiless heart" by which Homer underlines the ugliness of the Cyclops' soul. Polyphemus meets the uninvited guests with a pitiless heart, in that way he talks to them and eventually eats them alive.

In the analyzed passage of the ninth song, one can trace the tendency for the same features to be transferred from one character to another. Thus, an epithet νήπιος (*childish, silly*) is first used by Polyphemus to describe Odysseus and his fellows (v. 273), and later, when the situation comes under people's control, the drunken Cyclops himself is called so (v. 442). A similar phenomenon can be observed with the epithet σχέτλιος (mostly in bad sense, flinching from cruelty or wickedness, merciless, headstrong, in Homer mostly of heroes[7]). This is how Polyphemus is described:

> σχέτλιε, πῶς κέν τίς σε καὶ ὕστερον ἄλλος ἵκοιτο
> ἀνθρώπων πολέων, ἐπεὶ οὐ κατὰ μοῖραν ἔρεξας; (351-352)[8]

> σχέτλι', ἐπεὶ ξείνους οὐχ ἅζεο σῷ ἐνὶ οἴκῳ
> ἐσθέμεναι: τῷ σε Ζεὺς τίσατο καὶ θεοὶ ἄλλοι. (475-479)[9]

In a different sense (as *mad*, *unhappy, reckless*), the same adjective σχέτλιος is used for Odysseus. This is how his fellows call him, restraining him from teasing Polyphemus after he is blinded: σχέτλιε, τίπτ' ἐθέλεις ἐρεθιζέμεν ἄγριον ἄνδρα; (494) "Reckless one, why wilt thou provoke to wrath a savage man".

At the dramatic climax of the story, after being blinded, Polyphemus unexpectedly changes, though only briefly, perhaps even evoking sympathy from the audience. This is a reference to Polyphemus' tragic and rhetorically rich mono-

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[6] "Nor would I, to shun the wrath of Zeus, spare either thee or thy comrades, unless my own heart should bid me".

[7] https://logeion.uchicago.edu/σχέτλιος.

[8] "**Cruel man**, how shall any one of all the multitudes of men ever come to thee again hereafter, seeing that thou hast wrought lawlessness?"

[9] "Thou **cruel wretch**, who didst not shrink from eating thy guests in thine own house".

logue to his largest ram. We can see that Polyphemus' attitude towards domestic animals is much more tender and caring than towards other Cyclopes, not to mention Odysseus' men. When addressing the ram, he does not expect a response but has a faint hope for the animal's sympathy. "The ram becomes in this moment more pet than livestock […] patiently waiting while his master pours out his pain" (Nortwick 2009: 52). Theocritus tried to use a similar technique in Polyphemus' song by the sea.

Summing up the characteristics of Polyphemus in Homer, we can say that in addition to the obviously negative qualities, such as "savage" (ἄγριος), "lawless" (ἀθέμιστος), "with a pitiless heart" (νηλέϊ θυμῷ), there are also neutral ones, such as "mighty" (κρατερός) and "lonely" (οἶος), as well as characteristics that are transferred to Odysseus: "thoughtless" (νήπιος) and "cruel/reckless" (σχέτλιος).

Polyphemus in Euripides and Philoxenus

We know little about satyr and comic plays about Polyphemus of Aristias, Epicharmos, Callias and Cratinos, while Euripides' *Cyclops* is preserved entirely (Katsouris 1997: 1). It is probably from Euripides that the satirical, grotesque and controversial image of Polyphemus originates.[10] The drama includes characters other than those known from the corresponding passage of the *Odyssey*, namely the satyrs led by Silenus, who serve Polyphemus. The Cyclops, Odysseus and his companions are also present. Apart from the difference in genres of the works under comparison, we see a lot in common: Odysseus and his companions dock at the shores of Sicily to replenish their food supplies, they take (perhaps for exchange) a sack of strong wine, several of the companions are eaten by the angry owner of the cave, Zeus is called to protect the guests, Odysseus is deceiving the Cyclops by using the name "Οὔτις" and Polyphemus is blinded.

The presence of satyrs in the drama could have helped Odysseus and his fellows escape the cruelty of the Cyclops, but everything turns out almost the same as in Homer. When Odysseus asks whether the Cyclopes are hospitable, Silenus ironically answers: "Strangers, they say, supply the daintiest meat" (v. 126). Realizing that he has arrived at the home of a man-eating creature, Odysseus wants to escape as quickly as possible, hoping to replenish his supplies with the help of Silenus (Zalewska-Jura 2006: 183). When Odysseus learns from the chorus that Polyphemus is approaching the cave, he asks a question that is rather unusual for his general heroic image: ἀπολώλαμέν τἄρ', ὦ γέρον: ποῖ χρὴ φυγεῖν; (v. 194) – "we are all dead, old man, where should we run to?" In the following verses, Odysseus seems to come to his senses, as he decides that, having held

[10] One of the most comprehensive studies of the plot, poetics and genre features of this satire can be found in "W rytmie sikinnis" (Zalewska-Jura 2006).

back the advances of so many brave warriors at Troy, he will not run away from one enemy (v. 198-202). To create a certain distance, Polyphemus in Homer calls Odysseus ὀλίγος τε καὶ οὐτιδανὸς καὶ ἄκικυς (515), in Euripides he addresses him as ἀνθρωπίσκος – "a little man" (v. 316) and "he is talking down to him in more than one sense" (Ussher 1971: 173). In Euripides Polyphemus is shown as a noble lord who owns servants and therefore does not work but only goes hunting for fun. Unlike Homer's Polyphemus who is believed to be wild, lonely and lawless monster, this one "resembles a sophist" and "clearly inhabits moral world as the Greeks whose morality he knows very well and chose to reject" (Schade 2013: 23). However, addressing the Cyclops ὦ κάλλιστον ὦ Κυκλώπιον, ὦ δεσποτίσκε (v. 266) "dear master, sweet little Cyclops", "adds a note of sarcasm to the flattering comment from his slaves" (Ussher 1971: 173). One peculiar thing that probably influenced Theocritus' writing the most is the parodos of the play which is regarded as "the earliest bucolic song we possess" (Katsouris 1997: 4). As shepherds-satyrs drove the herd to the Polyphemus' cave they sung three songs addressing sheep. This rhetoric instrument (addressing domestic animals) is one of the bucolics' prominent features widely used in the *Idylls*.

Philoxenus should be considered the creator of Polyphemus' "alternative" image, which was "equipped by a love-object, Galatea" (Hutchinson 2007). Since the text of the dithyramb has not been preserved in its original form (only retellings are available, for example, in a letter from Synesius of Cyrene or in the form of a parody in Aristophanes' *Pluto*), studies often use phrases that convey scholars' doubts and assumptions, for example, in J. Hordern (2004: 285, 297): "Philoxenus' Cyclops *possibly* contained…; Philoxenus' most *probable* source for Synesius' story, and this is *likely to be right…*; all *probably* depended on Philoxenus' poem" etc. It is from Philoxenus that the tradition of "mocking" Polyphemus and his love for Galatea begins, because the dithyramb takes on some features of a comedy.[11] "The most obvious such affinity is that the treatment of amorous Polyphemus was humorous, and the tone at least predominantly lighthearted" (Sutton 1983: 38).

It is important to analyze certain aspects of Philoxenus' dithyramb that can be traced to Homer, as they may have influenced Theocritus. For example, the fact that Polyphemus in Philoxenus is also presented as musician – he sings a love song and plays the kithara[12] (Gutzwiller 2006: 20) should be mentioned here. It is quite possible that Galatea did not occupy a central place in the dithyramb, but that the image of Odysseus played an important role there, which disappears in later interpretations (Hordern 1999: 451). Researchers mostly agree that the characters' prototypes in Philoxenus' work were the author himself, as well as the Sicilian tyrant Dionysius the First and his mistress Galatea. "Philoxenus, un-

[11] A detailed analysis of the dithyramb on the edge of drama, see Sutton 1983: 37–43.

[12] In Theocritus, the Cyclops has a more typical shepherd's instrument, the syringa, while in Homer he whistles.

doubtedly familiar with Euripides' satyr play, could not neglect the fact that the Cyclops' features of character resembled the ones of Dionysius, i.e. arrogance and roughness in his poetry, while brutality and violence in his tyranny, whereas the adventures and the character of Odysseus himself seemed to reflect his own nature" (Zalewska-Jura, Kłosińska-Nachin 2014: 115). Philoxenus, in the form of Odysseus, is trapped in the cave of the Cyclops and tries to cunningly gain his freedom. He presents himself as a "wizard" (ὁ γόης) who can persuade Galatea to love Polyphemus by helping him in "his ill-fated marine love" (οὐκ εὐτυχοῦντι τὰ εἰς τὸν θαλάττιον ἔρωτα) (Hordern 2004: 285–286). At least this is how Synesius of Cyrene tells the story.

Polyphemus in Theocritus

The main character of the sixth and eleventh idylls of Theocritus is the same Cyclops Polyphemus, who, however, differs sharply from Homer's version. He is a shepherd who, because of his love, has abandoned his flock, but does not eat people. "In Homer the Cyclops is a brutish monster, who devours Odysseus' men; in contrast, Theocritus presents him in the throes of his first erotic passion, and highly conscious about his looks" (Gutzwiller 2007: 87). Indeed, in Theocritus we read a story of the young Polyphemus, who has not yet met Odysseus and has not yet undergone the changes that the former brought with him. The Cyclops in the eleventh idyll by Theocritus is a romantic shepherd who suffers from unrequited love for the sea nymph Galatea. According to A. Brooke (1971: 79), "the youthful Cyclops appears to be the prototype of all Theocritus' pastoral lovers. At once grotesque, passionate, and naive, he is more broadly conceived than the perhaps later versions, less complex in both intentions and achievement". The sixth idyll describes the events after Polyphemus gets disappointed in love, and Galatea seems to be pursuing him instead: καὶ φεύγει φιλέοντα καὶ οὐ φιλέοντα διώκει "she flies the wooer, and when one woos not, follows" (6: 17). Therefore, "the most essential aspects of the change that define Polyphemus' new personality are love, youth, realism, the locus amoenus, and music/poetry (Christoforidou 2005: 34).

In addition to Homer, the works of Philoxenus and Euripides with the same storyline clearly influenced the formation of Polyphemus' image in Theocritus. Researchers H. Zalewska-Jura and A. Kłosińska-Nachin (2014: 117) note that "Theocritus makes necessary changes in the character of Polyphemus, what strictly corresponds with the literary fashion of Hellenistic times. He substitutes cruelty with tenderness, brutality with subtleness, primitivism with mental maturity. Moreover, he attributes his protagonist with poetic and musical skills". Well, a common characteristic of Theocritus' Polyphemus in the critical literature is the focus on his "comic clumsiness" (Fantuzzi, Hunter 2004) or "comic absurdity" (Brooke 1971), which is particularly evident in his "unwittingly clumsy love song"

(Bulloch 2008). E. Spofford (1969) in his analysis of the Polyphemus' image uses the phrases "trace of burlesque", "parody of strong feelings", "mock-heroic manner". I think that this image is rather tragicomic, because despite his outward unattractiveness and awkwardness, the hero suffers from love and tries to characterize his state in ways that are familiar to him (bucolic comparisons, naive reproaches and promises). Even in the role of a simple shepherd, Polyphemus is presented in Theocritus as a so-called "poëta doctus" (Mazur 2003). He knows botanical and medical vocabulary and uses detailed medical descriptions. Probably, it is in this way that "a humorous effect is achieved – the monster is using terms that he just should not know" (Mazur 2003: 6).

Even though Theocritus introduces a young Polyphemus "with new hair on his lips and temples" ἄρτι γενειάσδων περὶ τὸ στόμα τὼς κροτάφως τε (11: 9) the poet does indirectly hint at his unhappy future, which will come after the arrival of a "stranger" to the island (11: 61). This refers to the already mentioned prophecy of the fortune-teller Telemus, which is a common feature of the works by Homer (*Od*. 9: 507-516) and Theocritus (6: 22-23). Within this plot element, one can observe the evolution of Polyphemus' image in the idylls. For, while in idyll 11 the Cyclops passionately suggests that Galatea burn his single eye if it would make her feel better, in the sixth idyll the tone has changed. Despite the prophecy, the Cyclops cherishes his γλυκύν eye so that "I may see to the end" (6: 22-23).

If one examines the structure of the eleventh idyll, it appears to resemble a letter. The addressee is someone called Nicias, who seems to be a doctor and Theocritus' good friend. The poet appeals to his friend's profession when he talks about the Cyclops' love affair, as he mentions that the only φάρμακον (cure) in this case is poetry. In addition, two purely medical terms are used here: ἔγχριστον ("rubbed in as an ointment") and ἐπίπαστον ("in powder"):

> οὐδὲν πὸτ' τὸν ἔρωτα πεφύκει φαρμακον ἄλλο
> Νικία οὔτ' ἔγχριστον, ἐμὶν δοκεῖ, οὔτ' ἐπίπαστον,
> ἢ ταὶ Πιερίδες: κοῦφον δέ τι τοῦτο καὶ ἀδὺ
> γίνετ' ἐπ' ἀνθρώποις, εὑρεῖν δ' οὐ ῥᾴδιόν ἐστι. (11: 1-5)[13]

It is also important to understand the diversity of meanings of the Greek noun φάρμακον: "drug", "healing remedy", "medicine", "cure" but also "enchanted potion", "charm", "spell",[14] therefore, it is impossible to choose an absolute equivalent. Here we can draw an analogy with the second idyll, where the main character Simaetha, like Polyphemus, suffers from unrequited love (she calls it a "disease"). She also tries to find a cure to get rid of this condition and partially relieves it by singing a spell, as H. Parry (1988: 43) states "what is distinctive about the

[13] "No other remedy is there for love, Nicias, neither unguent, methinks, nor salve, save only the Muses; and this remedy is painless for mortals and pleasant, but hard to find" (transl. by A. Gow).

[14] https://logeion.uchicago.edu/φάρμακον.

second idyll, and neglected, is the spell itself as a form of *poiesis* and therefore as therapy". Unlike Polyphemus, Simaetha prepares κακὰ φάρμακα (a charming potion), summoning Medea and Hecate to help. Thus, the φάρμακον of Cyclops does not pose any threat or harm. E.B. Holtsmark (1966: 258) believes that "the Cyclops' poem demonstrates as an example that the only natural remedy against love is song, or poetry – a remedy, and not a temporary analgesic".

Some scholars insist that the eleventh idyll is comic in nature – through the image of the clumsy and pathetic Polyphemus, Theocritus jokes with his friend. "Idyll 11 certainly teases poor Nicias, comparing him implicitly to the clumsy and grotesquely unsuccessful lover Cyclops and remarking explicitly that a doctor's powers are useless in contrast to Theocritus' chosen expertise, poetry" (Bulloch 2008: 572). Instead, the complex structure of the idyll and the deep typology of bucolics are signs of a sophisticated work that therefore can be perceived in a joking tone on the surface. The "complexity of the structure" of idyll 11 lies in the use of a "ring", a detailed analysis of which can be found in R. Schmiel (1993: 229–230). The researcher identifies seven parallel elements of the ring and its center (v. 38-44). Indeed, the symmetry of the idyll's passages, built on parallelism, contrast and repetition, is quite remarkable. To my belief, with this skillfully thought-out structure, the author tries to convey the complexity of Polyphemus' character. The most vivid parallels are found at the beginning and the end of the work: there the author claims that it is not easy to find a cure for unhappy love in poetry (v. 1-6). Obviously, this cannot be done by everyone, and therefore Theocritus' statement that Polyphemus still has succeeded sounds like a recognition of the latter's poetic skill: οὕτω γοῦν ῥάιστα διᾶγ' ὁ Κύκλωψ ὁ παρ' ἁμῖν, | ὠρχαῖος Πολύφαμος, ὅκ' ἤρατο τᾶς Γαλατείας (11: 7-8).[15] In these lines, one can trace a contrast in the phrases ὁ παρ' ἁμῖν ... ὠρχαῖος. On the one hand, there is a reference to the "epic" Polyphemus, known since ancient times as the "Homeric" Polyphemus. This "epic connotation of the name is tempered in a way that lets one know that closeness and distance are relevant aspects of the perspective on the Cyclops" (Spofford 1969: 26). On the other hand, ὁ παρ' ἁμῖν emphasizes that Polyphemus is like Theocritus' "countryman", since they both are said to have lived on the island of Sicily. Moreover, as G. Schade states, introduction of the Cyclops "as "one of us" transforms the one-eyed monster Polyphemus into an aetiological paradigm for all subsequent Sicilian lovers and poets" (Schade 2013: 19).

The final verses of the idyll show the results of Polyphemus' work on his self-reflection, which was described at the beginning: οὕτο τοι Πολύφαμος ἐποίμαινεν τὸν ἔρωτα | μουσίσδων, ῥᾴον δὲ διᾶγ' ἢ εἰ χρυσὸν ἔδωκεν. (11: 80-81).[16] Yet, it is difficult to say whether poetry is really an effective method of

[15] "So at least my countryman the Cyclops fared most easily – even Polyphemus of old … he was in love with Galatea".

[16] "Thus did Polyphemus shepherd his love with minstrelsy, and fared easier than if he had spent gold".

overcoming unhappy love, which is here compared to a domestic animal. The direct meaning of the verb ποιμαίνω – *to shepherd* is most often found in combination with the words μῆλα, ἄρνας, ποίμνας, πρόβατα.[17] Theocritus and some other authors use the metaphorical meaning of this lexeme – *to tend, to soothe*. The words ῥᾷον δὲ διᾶγ' (11: 81) resonate with the ones at the beginning of the idyll – ῥάιστα διᾶγ' (11: 7) which are other examples of the allusions to the letter receiver's profession (Gow 1950: 220). These phrases differ in the use of the degrees of comparison as in the first lines it is the superlative (most easily), and in the last lines it is the comparative (easier).

It is not only poetic singing that has a healing effect on Polyphemus, but also the nature that surrounds him. This can be felt in the description of the area of Cyclops' residence (in verses 44-48 he "promotes" his cave and the surrounding nature so that Galatea will stay with him), as well as the place where he is "healed": ἀλλὰ τὸ φάρμακον εὗρε, καθεζόμενος δ' ἐπὶ πέτρας | ὑψηλᾶς ἐς πόντον ὁρῶν ἄειδε τοιαῦτα. (11: 17-18).[18] The land/sea opposition seen here is not unique to this idyll, nor to other works by Theocritus (e.g., 11: 43; 16: 60-61; 17: 76, 90-92). Polyphemus and Galatea themselves represent this opposition, because the Cyclops lives on land, and the nymph lives in the sea. There is, of course, a paradox here, since Polyphemus is considered the son of Poseidon and the nereid. He reproaches his mother for not having been born with fins (11: 54) and promises his beloved that he will learn to dive on his own (11: 60). Cyclops' relationship with his mother is shown quite extensively but is mostly limited to reproaches for not contributing to the bonding of Polyphemus and Galatea: ἀ μάτηρ ἀδικεῖ με μόνα, καὶ μέμφομαι αὐτᾷ (11: 67) "My mother alone is who wrongs me, and her I blame". Cyclops' mother introduced them when she came out of the sea to gather flowers with nereid Galatea. It was the first time that Polyphemus felt that he was in love, and at the same time realized that his feelings were unrequited: παύσασθαι δ' ἐσιδών τυ καὶ ὕστερον οὐδέ τί πᾳ νῦν | ἐκ τήνω δύναμαι τὶν δ' οὐ μέλει, οὐ μὰ Δί' οὐδέν. (11: 28-29).[19] Nevertheless, it is a little unusual to read how a son curses his own mother because of his unhappy love. According to E.B. Holtsmark (1966: 256), "the censure of his mother displays his immaturity in that it shows him wanting, like a child, to enjoy maternal protection against the cruel impingement of adult reality". Obviously, the physical suffering of the Cyclops, manifested in weight loss, headaches and leg pains, is linked to his psychological state. He summarizes his symptoms with the word ἀνιάω meaning "to suffer", "to grieve", "to distress" and lets us recall that in the first part of the idyll Polyphemus is looking for φάρμακον because of "having deep beneath his breast an angry wound from the arrow of Cyprides" ἔχθιστον ἔχων ὑποκάρδιον ἕλκος (11: 15) thus metaphorically describing love.

[17] https://logeion.uchicago.edu/ποιμαίνω.

[18] "Yet the remedy he found and seated on some high rock would gaze seaward and sing thus".

[19] "And having seen thee, from that day forth even until now I cannot cease; but naught thou carest, nay, naught at all".

Theocritus paid much attention to describing the appearance of the Cyclops in his own words: "a shaggy brow stretching over all my forehead, one long and single brow from ear to ear; and single is the eye beneath, and wide is the nostril above my lip" (11: 31-32). However, realizing that he was unattractive to Galatea, he proposes to change his appearance in an extremely cruel way – to burn his eyebrow with a stick from his own fire (11: 50-52). There is a clear analogy here with the story of Polyphemus, as described by Homer, because the Cyclops is also blinded by a stick and fire from his own cave. In desperation, Polyphemus is ready to give Galatea his only eye as a reflection of his soul, "in other words, allow her to destroy his inner self that he may satisfy his own narcissistic longing to be "loved" at any cost" (Holtsmark 1966: 255): καιόμενος δ' ὑπὸ τεῦς καὶ τὰν ψυχὰν ἀνεχοίμαν | καὶ τὸν ἕν' ὀφθαλμόν, τῶ μοι γλυκερώτερον οὐδέν (11: 52-53).[20] Instead, in the sixth idyll, the Cyclops significantly changes the assessment of his own appearance, rejecting self-criticism: καὶ γάρ θην οὐδ' εἶδος ἔχω κακόν, ὥς με λέγοντι (6: 34) "For truly I am not even ill-favored, as they say". "This" Polyphemus moved to a different stage of perceiving of his relationship with Galatea (in particular, pretended indifference and rejection of her signs of attention), which was also manifested in the acceptance of his appearance: "my beard and my single eye, and it reflected the gleam of my teeth whiter than Parian marble" (6: 35-38).

The sixth idyll is an example of classical bucolic lyrics, in which one can see a shepherd's singing competition taking place in a traditionally idyllic place (ἐπὶ κράναν δέ τιν' ἄμφω ἑζόμενοι θέρεος μέσῳ ἄματι τοιάδ' ἄειδον (6: 3-4)), and the winner of the competition receives gifts (χὠ μὲν τῷ σύριγγ', ὁ δὲ τῷ καλὸν αὐλὸν ἔδωκεν (6: 43)). Cowherds Damoitos and Daphnis contribute to Polyphemus' image in turn: Galatea is now in love with the Cyclops (she throws apples at him, which in ancient times were a symbol of love), seeking his attention, while Polyphemus pretends indifference and even sets a dog on her. Here again we see the land/sea opposition, which is expressed not only in the location. In fact, there is one point of contact between these oppositions in the idyll under analysis: ἀ δὲ καὶ αὐτόθε τοι διαθρύπτεται, ὡς ἀπ' ἀκάνθας | ταὶ καπυραὶ χαῖται, τὸ καλὸν θέρος ἀνίκα φρύγει (6: 15-16).[21] The comparison of the sea nymph Galatea to a dried thistle swaying in the wind seems inappropriate, but it is a trope that Theocritus may be using to explain the nature of this relationship. After all, even a thistle cannot grow in the sea, and seaweed, for example, does not belong to the land. Therefore, Polyphemus (as a representative of the land) cannot be paired with a sea creature. Partly this, according to A.W. Bulloch (2008: 577), shows the attractiveness of the work: "the charm of this poem derives from the careful

[20] "Thou mayest burn my soul, and my one eye too, than which nothing is dearer to me".

[21] "Even from there she coquets with thee, and wanton as the dry thistledown when the bright summer parches it".

combination of attractive rural image, finely actualized, and the sense of detached superiority which Theocritus offers his readers […]".

The Theocritus' Polyphemus is rich in various comparisons that, from his point of view, characterize his beloved as best as possible. In addition to the already mentioned comparison of Galatea with a dried thistle, there are several other comparisons with the flora and fauna in Idyll 11. Some scholars (Rossi, Bernsdorff) consider such comparisons primitive, while C. Isenberg and D. Constan (1984: 303) note that "Though pastoral lovers are sometimes rough and raw, but they are not brutish". I. Kantzios (2020: 222) calls such metaphors "purely pastoral". Despite its simplicity, this literary technique "reveals genuine intimacy with and affection for the land. Polyphemus understands the countryside as a place of exquisite beauty and material abundance". Indeed, such comparisons are elements of folk imagery common among rural people. Animals were an important part of the shepherd's life, so a comparison with them is of the greatest value in the eyes of Polyphemus being a shepherd. A wide range of feelings is expressed when the Cyclops speaks about his beloved Galatea: λευκοτέρα πακτᾶς, ἁπαλωτέρα ἀρνός, | μόσχω γαυροτέρα, φιαρωτέρα ὄμφακος ὠμᾶς … (11: 20-21).[22]

I assume that Theocritus' Polyphemus is a highly complicated character with apparent clumsiness and naivety. In Idyll 11 he realizes himself as a poet, which eases his pain from unrequited love. At the end of the work, Polyphemus finds "enlightenment" (Holtsmark 1966) and, having rethought his psychological state, accepts it. It is not known whether the singing gave the Cyclops peace in love, but he decided to return to his duties as a shepherd. Singing, as well as physical labor, are the means that help many characters in Theocritus' idylls overcome emotional difficulties. In Idyll 6 we see a traditional bucolic poem with the elements typical of this genre: a singing competition between shepherds, a prize for the winner, and a locus amoenus. The image of Polyphemus in this idyll is ambiguous: one may think that the Cyclops is more unhappy because he ignores Galatea and does not seem to succumb to her advances. Instead, he accepts his unusual appearance and values his eye even more. In both idylls, the inevitability of Polyphemus' blindness at the hands of a stranger who will turn out to be Homer's Odysseus is felt.

Conclusion

Poetic reinterpretation of typical epic images was quite common during the Hellenistic period. For instance, some mythological characters underwent such a transformation in Callimachus' and Apollonius' works, but it is as well noticeable in Theocritus' *Idylls*, in particular the images of Heracles, Aphro-

[22] "Whiter than curd to look on, softer than the lamb, more skittish than the calf, sleeker than the unripe grape".

dite, and, of course, Polyphemus. It is worth noting that Homer was the first to place Polyphemus in a typical pastoral environment, which practically resembled the "golden age". In fact, this is why the clumsy Cyclops-shepherd easily became one of the key characters in bucolics. Homer's Polyphemus is lonely but self-sufficient in his daily life, whereas Odysseus, though a so-called cultural hero, brings more chaos than order in this episode. Cyclops is described by various characteristics (ἄγριος, ἀθέμιστος, νηλέϊ θυμῷ, κρατερός, οἶος), while some of the epithets are even transferred to Odysseus, as νήπιος and σχέτλιος.

The irony that many researchers see in Idylls 11 and 6 obviously appeared there because of Euripides' and Philoxenus' influence. In their satirical drama and dithyramb respectively, these authors began the process of transforming the "epic" Cyclops by diminishing his menace. Thus, Polyphemus in Euripides is presented as a corrupt lord who still willingly practices cannibalism, while Philoxenus was the first to describe Polyphemus as being in love with the nymph Galatea.

Theocritus took up this idea, focusing his attention specifically on the lyrical element – pastoral love. The poet attempts to convey in detail all the torments of the hero in love: the emotional "wound from Cypress' arrow", physical pain, indifference to daily duties, and the search for a way to "heal". At first glance, the song sung by Polyphemus on the seashore seems to be filled with only "simple", "primitive" lyricism, but a closer analysis confirms its deep emotionality and important place in the bucolic genre. In two idylls about the Cyclops, Theocritus unexpectedly raised important issues of his and even our time, although with an ironic tone: anyone can love, but the main thing is to have the courage to accept one's feelings and appearance, as did the unpleasant Polyphemus.

Polyphemus' journey after the *Idylls* continues: the following authors alternately refer to the image of an epic monster who, deprived of sight, throws rocks at Odysseus' ship in his helplessness, and to the romantic image of a monster in love who suffers from unrequited feelings. It may be interesting to further analyze the trends in the reflection of the Cyclops' image both in ancient literature (Callimachus, Apollonius of Rhodes, Moschus, Bion, Virgil, Ovid, etc.) and in the modern world literary tradition.

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