

Lucian, *Dialogues of the Sea Gods*

ΔΩΡΙΔΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΓΑΛΑΤΕΙΑΣ

ΔΩΡΙΣ

Καλὸν ἔραστήν, ὦ Γαλάτεια, τὸν Σικελὸν τοῦτον ποιμένα φασὶν ἐπιμεμηγένηναι σοί.

ΓΑΛΑΤΕΙΑ

Μὴ σκώπτε, Δωρί· Ποσειδῶνος γὰρ υἱὸς ἐστίν, ὅποιός ἂν ᾖ.

ΔΩΡΙΣ

Τί οὖν; εἰ καὶ τοῦ Διὸς αὐτοῦ παῖς ὢν ἄγριος οὕτως καὶ λάσιος ἐφάνετο καί, τὸ πάντων ἀμορφότατον, μονόφθαλμος, οἶει τὸ γένος ἂν τι ὀνήσαι αὐτὸν πρὸς τὴν μορφήν;

ΓΑΛΑΤΕΙΑ

Οὐδὲ τὸ λάσιον αὐτοῦ καί, ὡς φῆς, ἄγριον ἀμορφόν ἐστίν— ἀνδρῶδες γάρ— ὅ τε ὀφθαλμὸς ἐπιπρέπει τῷ μετώπῳ οὐδὲν ἐνδεέστερον ὀρών ἢ εἰ δὴ ᾔσαν.

ΔΩΡΙΣ

Ἔοικας, ὦ Γαλάτεια, οὐκ ἔραστήν ἀλλ' ἐρώμενον ἔχειν τὸν Πολύφημον, οἷα ἐπαινεῖς αὐτόν.

ΓΑΛΑΤΕΙΑ

Οὐκ ἐρώμενον, ἀλλὰ τὸ πᾶν ὀνειδιστικὸν τοῦτο οὐ φέρω ὑμῶν, καί μοι δοκεῖτε ὑπὸ φθόνου αὐτὸ ποιεῖν, ὅτι ποιμαίνων ποτὲ ἀπὸ τῆς σκοπῆς παιζούσας ἡμᾶς ἰδὼν ἐπὶ τῆς ἠϊόνος ἐν τοῖς πρόποσι τῆς Αἴτνης, καθ' ὃ μεταξὺ τοῦ ὄρους καὶ τῆς θαλάσσης αἰγιαλὸς ἀπομηκύνεται, ὑμᾶς μὲν οὐδὲ προσέβλεψεν, ἐγὼ δὲ ἐξ ἀπασῶν ἢ καλλίστη ἔδοξα, καὶ μόνῃ ἐμοὶ ἐπέειχε τὸν ὀφθαλμόν. ταῦτα ὑμᾶς ἀνιῶ· δεῖγμα γάρ, ὡς ἀμείνων εἰμί καὶ ἀξίεραστος, ὑμεῖς δὲ παρώφθητε.

ΔΩΡΙΣ

Εἰ ποιμένι καὶ ἐνδεῖ τὴν ὄψιν καλὴ ἔδοξας, ἐπίφθονος οἶει γεγονέναι; καίτοι τί ἄλλο ἐν σοὶ ἐπαινέσαι εἶχεν ἢ τὸ λευκὸν μόνον; καὶ τοῦτο, οἶμαι, ὅτι συνήθης ἐστὶ τυρῶ καὶ γάλακτι· πάντα οὖν τὰ ὅμοια τούτοις ἡγεῖται καλά. ἐπεὶ τὰ γε ἄλλα ὁπότεν ἐθελήσης μαθεῖν, οἷα τυγχάνεις οὐσα 290τὴν ὄψιν, ἀπὸ πέτρας τινός, εἴ ποτε γαλήνῃ εἶη, ἐπικύψασα ἐς τὸ ὕδωρ ἰδὲ σεαυτὴν οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἢ χροῖαν λευκὴν ἀκριβῶς οὐκ ἐπαινεῖται δὲ τοῦτο, ἢν μὴ ἐπιπρέπη αὐτῷ καὶ τὸ ἐρύθημα.

ΓΑΛΑΤΕΙΑ

Καὶ μὴν ἐγὼ μὲν ἢ ἀκράτως λευκὴ ὅμως ἔραστήν ἔχω κἄν τοῦτον, ὑμῶν δὲ οὐκ ἐστὶν ἡντινα ἢ ποιμὴν ἢ ναύτης ἢ πορθμεὺς ἐπαινεῖ· ὁ δὲ γε Πολύφημος τὰ τε ἄλλα καὶ μουσικὸς ἐστὶ.

OF DORIS AND GALATEIA

Doris

A beautiful lover, O Galateia, they say this shepherd from Sicily is mad for you

Galateia

Don't mock me, Doris: he is the son of Poseidon, whatever he may be

Doris

So what? Even if he was the child of Zeus himself, he's so wild and hairy, and, the most hideous part of all, one-eyed. How would his birth benefit his appearance?

Galateia

His hairiness is not, as you say, wild or ugly – but manly – and not only does the eye suit his forehead, but he sees no worse than if he had two.

Doris

You seem, Galateia, to have Polyphemus not as a pursuer but as the pursued, so many are the ways that you praise him.

Galateia

I'm not in love with him, but I can't bear to listen to criticism of yours, you all just seem jealous to me of that time when that shepherd saw us from his lookout place joking and drinking to Mt Aitna on the beach, where the coast extends between mountain and sea. He did not look to you at all, but I seemed the most beautiful out of all, and I alone was occupying his eye. These things trouble you. It shows that I am better and most loveable, but you have all been neglected.

Doris

If to a shepherd also lacking sight nonetheless, you appear beautiful, you think to have become enviable? And yet what else was he able to praise in you than your whiteness alone: and this, I think, is only because he is accustomed to cheese and milk, so he deems everything he considers beautiful like these. Whensoever you may wish to learn of your other beautiful features, how you look, then, if there is ever a calm, bending over the water from a rock, see yourself as nothing other than simply white skinned. But he doesn't praise this, unless a blush is also conspicuous to him.

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ΔΩΡΙΣ

Σιώπα, ὦ Γαλάτεια· ἠκούσαμεν αὐτοῦ ἄδοντος ὅποτε ἐκώμασε πρῶην ἐπὶ σέ· Ἀφροδίτη φίλη, ὄνον ἂν τις ὀγκάσθαι ἔδοξεν. καὶ αὐτὴ δὲ ἡ πηκτὶς οἴα; κρανίον ἐλάφου γυμνὸν τῶν σαρκῶν, καὶ τὰ μὲν κέρατα πήχεις ὥσπερ ἦσαν, ζυγώσας δὲ αὐτὰ καὶ ἐνάψας τὰ νεύρα, οὐδὲ κολλάβοις περιστρέψας, ἐμελώδει ἄμουσόν τι καὶ ἀπῶδόν, ἄλλο μὲν αὐτὸς βοῶν, ἄλλο δὲ ἡ λύρα ὑπῆχει, ὥστε οὐδὲ κατέχειν τὸν γέλωτα ἐδυνάμεθα ἐπὶ τῷ ἐρωτικῷ ἐκείνῳ ἄσματι· ἡ μὲν γὰρ Ἥχῳ οὐδὲ ἀποκρίνεσθαι αὐτῷ ἤθελεν οὕτω λάλος οὔσα βρυχομένη, ἀλλ' ἤσχύνετο, εἰ φανείη μιμουμένη τραχεῖαν ῥῆδην καὶ καταγέλαστον. 2915. ἔφερον δὲ ὁ ἐπέραστος ἐν ταῖς ἀγκάλαις ἀθυρμάτιον^ε ἄρκτου σκύλακα τὸ λάσιον^ε αὐτῷ προσεικίότα. τίς οὐκ ἂν φθονήσειέ σοι, ὦ Γαλάτεια, τοιοῦτου ἐραστοῦ;

ΓΑΛΑΤΕΙΑ

Οὐκοῦν σύ, Δωρί, δεῖξον ἡμῖν τὸν σεαυτῆς, καλλίῳ δῆλον ὅτι ὄντα καὶ ᾠδικώτερον καὶ κιθαρίζειν ἄμεινον ἐπιστάμενον.

ΔΩΡΙΣ

Ἄλλὰ ἐραστὴς μὲν οὐδεὶς ἔστι μοι οὐδὲ σεμνύνομαι ἐπέραστος εἶναι· τοιοῦτος δὲ οἶος ὁ Κύκλωψ ἐστί, κινάβρας ἀπόζων ὥσπερ ὁ τράγος, ὠμοβόρος,^ε ὡς φασι, καὶ σιτούμενος τοὺς ἐπιδημούντας τῶν ξένων, σοὶ γένοιτο καὶ πάντοτε σὺ ἀντερῶνῃς αὐτοῦ.

Galateia

And yet I, completely white, nevertheless have a pursuer even if I have this one. And there is not one of you whom either a shepherd or sailor or ferryman praises. But this Polyphemos is especially musical.

Doris

Shut up Galateia: We heard him singing when he revealed to you all morning long. Dear Aphrodite, one would have thought an ass was braying. And also that harp he used? What kind of thing was that? The fleshless skull of a deer, and the handles were horns just as they were. But having yoked and bound it together with sinew, but left untwisted around a peg, he chanted something inelegantly and out of tune, himself shouting one thing and the lyre responding something else, so that we were unable to restrain our laughter against that love song. For not even Echo, talkative as she is, wished to reply to his teeth-gnashing, but she would be ashamed, if she appeared mimicking his rough and laughable ode. And your love carried in its arms a bear-cub as a pet, resembling him in shagginess. Who would not envy you, Galateia, with such a pursuer as *this*?

Galateia

Certainly not you, Doris. Show us your lover who is clearly more beautiful and better at singing and playing the kithara.

Doris

Well, I don't have one, nor do I pride myself to be beautiful. But such a one as the Cyclops is, smelling of a goat just as a goat-man, eating raw flesh as they say, and eating strangers, may he be yours and may you love him always.

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ΚΥΚΛΩΠΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΟΣΕΙΔΩΝΟΣ

ΚΥΚΛΩΨ

ὦ πάτερ, οἶα πέπονθα ὑπὸ τοῦ καταράτου ξένου, ὃς μεθύσας ἐξετύφλωσέ με κοιμωμένῳ ἐπιχειρήσας.

ΠΟΣΕΙΔΩΝ

Τίς δὲ ἦν ὁ ταῦτα τολμήσας, ὦ Πολύφημε;

ΚΥΚΛΩΨ

Τὸ μὲν πρῶτον Οὐτίμ ἐαυτὸν ἀπεκάλει, ἐπεὶ δὲ διέφυγε καὶ ἔξω ἦν βέλους, Ὀδυσσεὺς ὀνομάζεσθαι ἔφη.

ΠΟΣΕΙΔΩΝ

Οἶδα ὃν λέγεις, τὸν Ἰθακήσιον ἐξ Ἰλίου δ' ἀνέπλει. ἀλλὰ πῶς ταῦτα ἔπραξεν οὐδὲ πᾶν εὐθαρσῆς ὢν;

ΚΥΚΛΩΨ

Κατέλαβον αὐτοὺς ἐν τῷ ἄντρῳ ἀπὸ τῆς νομῆς ἀναστρέψας πολλοὺς τινας, ἐπιβουλεύοντας δῆλον ὅτι τοῖς ποιμνίοις· ἐπεὶ γὰρ ἐπέθηκα τῇ θύρᾳ τὸ πῶμα—πέτρα δὲ ἐστὶ μοι παμμεγέθης—καὶ τὸ πῦρ ἀνέκαυσα· ἐναυσάμενος ὁ ἔφερον δένδρον ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄρους, ἐφάνησαν ἀποκρύπτειν αὐτοὺς πειρώμενοι· ἐγὼ δὲ συλλαβὼν τινας αὐτῶν, ὡσπερ εἰκὸς ἦν, κατέφαγον ληστὰς γε ὄντας. ἐνταῦθα ὁ πανουργότατος ἐκεῖνος, εἴτε Οὐτίς εἴτε Ὀδυσσεὺς ἦν, δίδωσί μοι πιεῖν φάρμακόν τι ἐγγέας, ἡδὺ μὲν καὶ εὖοσμον, ἐπιβουλότατον δὲ καὶ ταραχωδέστατον· ἅπαντα γὰρ εὐθύς ἐδόκει μοι περιφέρεσθαι πiónτι· ἄρα καὶ τὸ σπήλαιον αὐτὸ ἀνεστρέφετο καὶ οὐκέτι ὄλωσ ἐν ἐμαυτοῦ ἡμην, τέλος δὲ εἰς ὕπνον κατεσπάσθη. ὁ δὲ ἀποξύνας τὸν μοχλὸν καὶ πυρώσας προσέτι ἐτύφλωσέ με καθεύδοντα, καὶ ἀπ' ἐκείνου τυφλὸς εἰμί σοι, ὦ Πόσειδον.

ΠΟΣΕΙΔΩΝ

ὦς βαθὺν ἐκοιμήθης, ὦ τέκνον, ὃς οὐκ ἐξέθορες μεταξὺ τυφλοῦμενος. ὁ δ' οὖν Ὀδυσσεὺς πῶς διέφυγεν; οὐ γὰρ ἂν εὖ οἶδ' ὅτι ἠδυνήθη ἀποκινήσαι τὴν πέτραν ἀπὸ τῆς θύρας.

OF THE CYCLOPS AND POSEIDON

Cyclops

O Father! What kind of things I have suffered at the hand of that abominable stranger, who got me drunk then blinded me by attacking me while I was sleeping.

Poseidon

And who was this daring man, Polyphemos?

Cyclops

The first thing he called himself was 'Nobody', but when he fled and was outrange of my missiles, he said that he was called Odysseus.

Poseidon

I know who you speak of, the one from Ithaka. He sailed from Troy. But how did he do these things, since he's not very courageous?

Cyclops

I found a bunch of people in my cave, having turned from the pasture, clearly plotting against the flocks. For when I placed the lid on the door – and it is an immense rock even for me – and I lit the fire by getting a light from the tree which I was carrying from the mountain, they appeared to be trying to hide themselves: and I, having seized some of them, just as was reasonable, I devoured them, being thieves. Then, that devious man, whether Nobody or Odysseus, having poured out a drug, he gave it to me to drink, sweet and fragrant, most treacherous and troubling: For immediately everything seemed to be carried around to me, having drunk it and the cave itself turned upside down and I was no longer entirely myself, and finally I was dragged down into sleep. And he, sharpening and igniting a stake besides me, blinded me while I slept, and from that I am blind to you, Poseidon.

Poseidon

How deep you were put to sleep, child, that you did not leap forth in the middle of being blinded. And so how did Odysseus escape? For I know well that he would not be able to move the stone away from the door.

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ΚΥΚΛΩΨ

Ἄλλ' ἐγὼ ἀφείλον, ὡς μάλλον αὐτὸν λάβοιμι ἐξιόντα, καὶ καθίσας παρὰ τὴν θύραν ἐθήρων τὰς χεῖρας ἐκπετάσας, μόνα παρῆς τὰ πρόβατα εἰς τὴν νομὴν, ἐντειλάμενος τῷ κριῷ ὅσα ἐχρῆν πράττειν αὐτὸν ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ.

ΠΟΣΕΙΔΩΝ

Μανθάνω ὑπ' ἐκείνοις ἔλαθον ὑπεξεληθόντες· σὲ δὲ τοὺς ἄλλους Κύκλωπας ἔδει ἐπιβοήσασθαι ἐπ' αὐτόν.

ΚΥΚΛΩΨ

Συνεκάλεσα, ὦ πάτερ, καὶ ἦκον· ἐπεὶ δὲ ἤροντο τοῦ ἐπιβουλεύοντος τοῦνομα καγὼ ἔφην ὅτι 294Οὐτίς ἐστι, μελαγχολᾶν οἰηθέντες με ἀπίοντες ὤχοντο. οὕτω κατεσοφίσαστό με ὁ κατάρατος τῷ ὀνόματι. καὶ ὁ μάλιστα ἠγίασέ με, ὅτι καὶ ὀνειδίζων ἐμοὶ τὴν συμφορὰν, Οὐδὲ ὁ πατήρ, φησὶν, ὁ Ποσειδῶν ἰάσεται σε.

ΠΟΣΕΙΔΩΝ

Θάρρει, ὦ τέκνον· ἀμυνούμαι γὰρ αὐτόν, ὡς μάθη ὅτι, εἰ καὶ πῆρως μοι τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν ἰᾶσθαι ἀδύνατον, τὰ γοῦν τῶν πλεόντων [τὸ σῶζειν αὐτοὺς καὶ ἀπολλύναι] ἐπ' ἐμοὶ ἐστι· πλεῖ δὲ ἔτι.

Cyclops

But I moved it, so that I might catch him going out. And sitting by the door I was hunting him, having spread out my hands and allowing only my sheep to pass into the pasture, I commanded the ram to do whatever was necessary to find him for me.

Poseidon

I know what happened: those men escaped your notice by sneaking out: You should have called upon the other cyclopes to your aid.

Cyclops

I did call them together, father! and they came: but when they asked the name of the one who was plotting against me and I said that it was Nobody, they thought that I was mad and left. Thus, the one with the accursed name outwitted me. And he grieved me that he also disgraced me for my disaster, 'and not your father Poseidon' he said, 'will heal you!'

Poseidon

Cheer up, child: For I will punish him, so that he may learn, and even if it is impossible for me to heal your maimed eye, then at least the action of saving and destroying those of whom are sailing is mine: and he still sails.

Lucian, *Dialogues of the Sea Gods***Compare and contrast the depiction of the gods in Lucian's *Dialogues of the Sea-Gods* with the depiction of the gods in Homeric epic**

The mythical cyclops, Polyphemos, is notorious for his savage characterisation in book nine of Homer's *Odyssey*. Homer's treatment of the character is certainly authoritative, but Lucian in the first two dialogues of his *Dialogues of the Sea Gods* presents Polyphemos in a new light, as a believably likeable protagonist. Here, I discuss the means through which Lucian accomplishes this. He achieves a successful balance of both comic and tragic tones to diminutise and humanise – both important processes in conveying him as a more appealing character. This Lucian does by toying with ideas of savagery, power, rage and violence. He additionally replaces gluttony and brashness with naïvety and foolishness. The combinations of these themes are coordinated well and, alongside the new perspective as told by Polyphemos himself, result in an appealing character who had, up until the time of writing, never seen such a retelling of his story.

Polyphemos does not directly feature in the first dialogue, but it is his absence that gives Lucian the scope to establish his positive portrayal first under the pretense of gossiping girls – it is scarcer in the way of sympathetic overtones but, if read as a 'stylistic whole' with the latter, it establishes Polyphemos as a likeable figure as a prelude to his sufferings in the second.¹ Lucian's ability to present him in two different tones over two different texts is a luxury that Homer neither had nor needed, and it is this dual-tone approach that itself works to create a greater sympathetic reaction – the more likeable Polyphemos is by the end of the first dialogue, the further he has to fall by the second. One of Lucian's first priorities is to address Polyphemos' wild imagery. His frequent return to the same few jokes – Polyphemos' (lacking) eyesight (1.1.5-6, 1.8-9, 2.5-6, 2.9), his status as a bucolic farmer captivated with milks and cheeses (1.3.1-6) and his ineptitude in music (1.4.1-14), never fail to lighten the mood of Doris' repetitive and unwarranted criticism of his savage nature, a nature that Homer very heavily accentuates in every possible way: his diet of unmixed wine and raw flesh, his solitude lifestyle, and by far the worst, his open disregard for Zeus and *xenia* (Od. 9. 274). These habits assigned by Homer do unsurprisingly feature in Lucian, who keeps the tradition mostly intact, but here, as a foreigner himself, he questions if their depictions are actually fair. Where Homer writes:

'So I spoke, but from his pitiless heart he made no answer, but sprang up and laid his hands upon my comrades. Two of them together he seized and dashed to the earth like puppies. . . we wept and lifted up our hands to heaven on seeing such a horrid sight' (9. 285-95),

he has consciously created a sharp contrast of brutal and savage villainy to Odysseus. Homer's choice to describe Polyphemos as pitiless and Odysseus' companions, 'ἑτάρους', as puppies has an obviously deliberate dehumanising effect on Polyphemos, as does the men's supplication to the very heavens that their host so openly scorns. But Lucian blurs the depravity here, if not completely reverses it; he has Polyphemos justify his response by calling Odysseus and his companions 'ληιστάς', 'thieves' (2.2.6), an accusation that is certainly grounded in truth, and

¹ Bartley, (2009), pp. 64. Both become much funnier, particularly at the jokes around his one eye, when read together with the second, and even more so if the reader is to imagine both scenes happening concurrently.

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that he thus acted ‘ὡσπερ εἰκός ἦν’, ‘as was reasonable’ (2.2.6) – an equally comedic and sympathetic line, especially when compared back with Homer’s ‘puppies’. He moreover removes the lengthy and gory description of the affair, leaving only ‘κατέφαγον’, ‘I devoured them’ (2.2.6). As to Odysseus’ ‘gift’ of wine to Polyphemos, Homer gives the impression that it is Polyphemos’ own savagery, his habit of drinking undiluted wine, that is his downfall. Lucian, on the other hand, labels Odysseus’ ‘gift’ for what it was even in Homer: intently harmful. Alongside the usual term for wine, he uses the same word for poison – φάρμακον (2.2.8), provoking tragic undertones for Polyphemos akin to Euripides’ *Medea* (line 385). Where in Homer we find a keen sense of ‘nature-culture’ conflict, Lucian has this boundary shifted not in defiance of the giant’s lack of civility, but for the purpose of character and comedy.² Odysseus, after all, breaks *xenia* just as much as his host does.

To further contrast Homer in his effort to reverse the savage role played by Polyphemos, Lucian also adopts commonly comedic vocabulary. His use of the term ‘καταράτου’, ‘accursed’ (2.1.1), to describe Odysseus is a term that is not only frequent in Aristophanes, thus allowing him to parody comedy and further reverse their roles, but also technically true – a humorous quip made from both parody and irony.³ In contrast, he chooses to describe the cyclops as ‘ἀδρῶδες’, ‘manly’ (1.7.8), to subvert the typical conception of Polyphemos’ character and further reverse the roles played by the two characters.⁴ His use of ἀδρῶδες in particular allows Lucian to rationalise much of what sustains the savagery in Homer’s Polyphemos and evolve it into near-heroic imagery; Galateia rather comedically claims that his shagginess is in fact part of what makes him likeable (1.1.7-8), compared to in Homer where his appearance is enough to make the Greeks seize in fright and hide at the back of the cave (9.236).

Similarly, just as he plays with sympathy and humour by softening notions of Polyphemos’ savagery, Lucian also softens notions of strength and power – notions that also set him apart as the bestial antagonist. At the beginning of Odysseus’ encounter, upon Polyphemos’ entrance into his cave, Homer describes the door as ‘a mighty rock; two and twenty stout four-wheeled wagons could not lift it from the ground, such a towering mass of rock’ (9.240-3). The use of strong adjectives and persuasive comparisons creates strong imagery as to the kind of stature that the audience could expect of Polyphemos, yet in Lucian, this door is described as merely ‘μοι παμμεγέθης’, ‘immense to me’ – a door that is by no means easily moved, but with Homeric imagery in mind, Polyphemos’ strength seems awfully downplayed. These two simple words foster an air of inability, which work to comically humanise him. Lucian elsewhere exhorts the audience to sympathy, particular phrases and grammatical tools, such as the passive voice used in ‘εἰς ὕπνον κατεσπάζθη’, ‘I was pulled down into sleep’, shift the point of interest from Odysseus’ triumph to Polyphemos’ vulnerability to again echo tragic verse, and Homer’s scene of Polyphemos’ frenzy of pain immediately after being blinded (9.398) Lucian also downplays, writing only that he ‘called for help’ – ‘συνεκάλεσα’ (2.4.3). Even the absence of Polyphemos’ blind rage softens his status as a crude force of barbarism. He is left blind in both accounts, where Homer (rightfully) writes him as enraged and vengeful:

² De Jong, (2001), pp. 231.

³ Bartley, (2009), pp. 66 and Hopkinson, (2008), pp. 204.

⁴ Bartley, (2009), pp. 54. He notes how this term was popular in philosophical prose and expands on the humour behind using philosophical vocabulary in such a context.

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'he became all the more angry at heart, and broke off the peak of a high mountain and hurled it at us, and it fell a little in front of the dark-prowed ship and barely missed the end of the steering oar. And the sea surged beneath the stone as it fell, and the backward flow, like a tidal wave, bore the ship swiftly landwards and drove it upon the shore.' (9.480-6)

The unbridled power of Polyphemos here outmatches all other of Odysseus' other undivine opponents. Homer uses striking imagery; the broken mountain and the surging sea are both strong mental pictures that further construct what sort of terrifying being he is. Lucian, in contrast, continues to reverse these motifs of raw strength into weakness and seeming incompetence; The mountain-torn stone hurled at Odysseus is reduced from a four-line ordeal to three simple words – 'ἔξω ἦν βέλους', 'he was out-range of my missiles' (2.1.4-5). Lucian abstains from mentioning what these missiles are and what sort of weight or size they might be – here he instead relies on his audience's familiarity with Homer's text to fill in the gaps. But this, regardless of any background knowledge of his character, only further develops the cyclops' status towards a more sympathetic and likeable comic-hero of his own story.

But Lucian continues to alter Polyphemos' image through more than just himself. Like his use of the sea nymphs, he next turns to Poseidon to continue his efforts in turning the cyclops into a more charmingly humorous figure. Lucian's use of Poseidon in his second dialogue is especially crucial in Polyphemos' new characterization, here he seems to be concerned with patronising his own son first and helping him second. His interactions create an atmosphere of infantility and clumsiness to further lighten the text and balance the sympathy with comedy; it is amusing to watch Poseidon interrogate Polyphemos, who in turn tries to subtly justify his own embarrassing misfortunes by distorting the truth. Poseidon's commentary to his child's suffering is indeed hilariously pretentious given the circumstances, but he raises points that serve purpose: aside from Lucian's opportunity here to safely question what are essentially mythological plot holes, Poseidon provides some additional needed comic relief for a dialogue that is otherwise overbearingly replete with pity. Polyphemos' humorous dialogue is, after all, provoked by his father's incessant questioning. Rather than inquiring if his son is okay, Poseidon instead mocks him: 'How deep were you put to sleep,' he asks, 'that you did not leap up amid being blinded?' (2.3.1)⁵ – a fair question, when contrasted with Homer's description of the attack:

'we took the fiery-pointed stake and whirled it around in his eye, and the blood flowed round it, all hot as it was. His eyelids above and below and his brows were all singed by the flame from the burning eyeball, and its roots crackled in the fire. And ... so did his eye hiss round the stake of olivewood. Terribly then did he cry aloud, and the rock rang around; and we, seized with terror, shrank back, while he wrenched from his eye the stake, all befouled with blood' (9. 387-97).

⁵ Presumably Poseidon means the entire process of firing the stake and lining it up with Polyphemos' eye. It otherwise seems too stupid and illogical a question even for Lucian, though it does remain a possibility for humour's sake. Alternatively, Bartley, (2009), pp. 71 suggests that it's an intentional jibe at Polyphemos for altering the truth.

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Lucian gives none of the gory details, instead choosing to use only the comedically Aristophanic word, 'ἐξετύφλωσε', 'he blinded (me)' (2.1.2).⁶ Lucian's audience would have remembered this scene and its excessively vivid language, but as he investigates some of the more illogical aspects of the scene, he simultaneously has his audience pointing fingers and laughing at the clumsy Polyphemos, themselves asking the same questions. He continues this model again as Poseidon then asks (and answers) how exactly Odysseus escaped from the enclosed cave (2.3.2-3, 4.1), an obvious question that Polyphemos has still failed to figure out. Polyphemos' stupidity here is different to his character in Homer, wherein he's portrayed more gluttonous and barbaric than foolish; he returns again and again to take more cups of the wine while, as Irene de Jong notes, Odysseus intentionally waits until his host is drunk before revealing his fake name.⁷ Lucian either fails to realise this or purposely forgoes it, he instead seems to suggest that Odysseus gave his pseudonym before Polyphemos got drunk and that for this Polyphemos is far dimmer than he appears in the *Odyssey*. Polyphemos, as if a toddler, must then somehow rationalise his blunder at the hands of the man whom he had already declared a criminal. He sympathetically uses the term mentioned above, *φάρμακον*, to describe the wine as a poison or drug purposely intended to put him to sleep, and that his fate was not consequential of his own folly.⁸ Lucian uses the term to create a tragic likeness at face value, but to an audience who understood the context well, it is equally hilarious. He is outwitted in both accounts, each time in the same way, but Lucian makes sure to create a more sympathetic display, albeit very humorously at Polyphemos' own expense, to turn him, finally a protagonist of his own story, into a likeable character. Just as Galateia is important in taming his savage conception, the use of Poseidon and their father-son relationship is particularly important in Polyphemos' humanisation just as much as his infantilisation.

Lucian intentionally utilizes certain grammatical tools in the first two dialogues of his *Dialogues of the Sea Gods* to reinvent Homer's Polyphemos. When compared directly with Homer's *Odyssey*, the differences in characterisation become obvious. On the one hand, while Homer conceives him in an aura of wild savagery and violent rage, Lucian takes an innovative approach. He chooses to invoke sympathy and comedy together to civilise and diminish these Homeric characteristics. Despite how contradictory these themes may seem, Lucian, through his linguistic brilliance, nonetheless combines them well. The resulting Polyphemos is one of a slightly more tamed nature (albeit still comedically uncivilised), and foolish naïvety. With the descriptions of his character by Doris and Galateia and in his interactions with Odysseus and Poseidon, what remains is a hilariously clumsy and deprecating image of Polyphemos so that the audience, in spite of Homer's familiar descriptions of savagery, can for once feel sympathy for him as an appealing protagonist. Lucian chooses to retain the overall arc of the story with Odysseus, as well as most of the smaller details, he merely reemphasises the characteristics of each figure. Yet, in his treatment of Polyphemos, Lucian has generated a story that feels uniquely fresh and independent of Homer's – a story that, as far as we are aware, was the first of its kind.

⁶ Bartley, (2009), pp. 67.

⁷ de Jong, (2001), pp. 242.

⁸ Bartley, (2009), pp. 69.

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