EURIPIDES' CYCLOPS AND HOMER'S ODYSSEY: AN INTERPRETATIVE COMPARISON*

Of the satyr plays which are preserved, the only play that has come to us in its entirety is Euripides' Cyclops, which was probably produced in 408 B.C.1.

The Cyclops is a dramatisation of the episode with the Cyclopes in the ninth book of Homer's Odyssey. This in itself was not a novelty. Before Euripides, Aristias the son of Pratinas wrote a satyr play with the same title; comic poets also exploited the theme, like Epicharmos (Cyclops), Callias (Cyclopes) and Cratinos (Odysseis)2. About these plays, however, we know very little.

It should be remarked that other satyr plays took their subject matter from the Homeric poems or the Homeric cycle, e.g. Aeschylus' Kirke and Proteus, and also his Odyssean tetralogy, as well as Sophocles' Nausica, Iambe and Ichneutai. The plots of Iambe and Ichneutai are taken from the Homeric hymns to Demeter and Hermes respectively3.

As the Dionysiac myths were limited and frequently exploited by the writers of satyr plays, a need for new themes arose, which led to the solution of the 'prosatyric' drama, such as the Alcestis, combining tragic and satyric elements, but without the chorus of satyrs and Silenus, which was produced in the fourth place, where traditionally one would expect a satyr play.

* A shorter version of this paper was read in Italian at a seminar at the Department of Classics of the University of Florence.

1 Regarding the dating of this play there is no consensus. Some believe that it is a juvenile work (Mancini, Alasia), others that it is a late play: it has been placed before the Alcestis (Murray); ca. 441, that is before Cratinus' Odysseis (Tanner); after 428, that is after the Hippolytus (Wilamowitz); after 420 (Perrotta); before Aristophanes' Hippis (424) or the Acharnians, 425 (Meridier); after 427 (Hahne); after 426-424 (Jirani); 425 (Robert); together with the Hecuba in 424 (Sutton); after the Iphigeneia in Tauris and Helen, that is after 412 (Marquart); a work of Euripides' maturity (Wecklein, Pohlenz, Della Valle, Taccone, Schmid, Duchemin); in the same tetralogy with the Helen and the Andromeda, that is in 413-412 (Gregoire); 411-408 (Seaford); 409 (Ferrante).

2 For a comparison between the Euripidean Cyclops and Cratinus' Odysseis see G. Kaibel, Kratinos 'Oðoσoς and Euripides Κύκλος, "Hermes" 30, 1895, 71-89.

In our case, the Homeric episode with the Cyclopes had been linked with the satyrs before Euripides, as we have said. It would be very interesting to compare these earlier plays with Euripides', but unfortunately the material is scanty indeed. The only possible comparison is with Homer's episode, and the scholars give special emphasis to this or that similarity or difference. The most extensive such comparison is to be found in Wetzel's detailed study.4

These comparisons are very helpful for the evaluation of the Euripidean art, but the conclusions drawn by scholars are sometimes contradictory. Some claim that the Euripidean Cyclops has no exceptional value, or – even worse – is just a hasty dramatisation of the Homeric episode unworthy of Euripides (Momigliano, P. Arnott, etc.). On the other hand, those who support a different view have not succeeded, in my view, in proving the qualities of this play, though they consider it a masterpiece (Marquart) or at least a work of great quality (Campo, Seaford, Della Valle, Wilamowitz).

Therefore, one of our main purposes is to show the originality of the Euripidean drama and to point out how the Homeric episode has provided Euripides with the general framework which he has filled with his own genius. In a way this approach reminds us of Aristophanes' relation to tragedy or previous literature in general. Our purpose is not only to find out the tragic, paratragic or Homeric lines, but also to see how they are used and what effects they create.

From his detailed examination Wetzel has drawn the conclusion that in the Euripidean Cyclops 230 lines out of 709 (or one third of the total) are derived from the corresponding Homeric episode, and in the last pages of his book he presents us with a table of Euripidean verses and their relation to the episode with the Cyclopes in Homer. Whoever takes this as a starting point, will surely succumb to the false impression that, more than anything else, the Cyclops is a patchwork of Homeric verses. Moreover, the fact that the spectators, or today the readers, have a good knowledge of the Homeric myth inclines them to consider the Cyclops a mere dramatisation of the Homeric episode and nothing more.

A further point should be made clear. The evaluation of a certain work should not be based merely on our own aesthetic conceptions of originality, but rather on the aesthetic criteria of the ancients. It is well known that different playwrights have often written plays with the same titles and on the same mythological subjects, but each with an antagonistic or critical attitude in relation to their rivals' productions. What matters therefore is not so much the general structure, the myth, as the way the tragic or comic poet used and

4 W. Wetzel, De Euripidis fabula satyrica, quae Cyclops inscribitur, cum Homeric o comparata exemplo, Wiesbaden 1965.
exploited it, his treatment of the characters involved, and the differences in plot as compared to the prototype and in general the plays of his predecessors. We should follow these guidelines in our approach to and evaluation of the Euripidean Cyclops.

From Aristias' Cyclops only one fragment has survived, ἀπώλεσας τὸν οἶνον ἐπιχέας ὑδώρ ("you have spoiled the wine by pouring water in it"), which is echoed in line 557 of the Euripidean Cyclops. Of Epicharmus' Cyclops three minor fragments survive, from which it is evident that Polyphemus was portrayed as a comic glutton. The Odysseis of Cratinus is represented by 15 fragments. From these we gather that, here too, Polyphemus was a comic glutton (fragments 149, 154, 155 refer to eating; fr. 146 to Maron's wine; fragments 143, 144 hint at the winds and storm which drove the ship of Odysseus and his companions on to the land of the Cyclopes, and at the directions given Odysseus by Circe on how to reach Ithaca; in fr. 147 it is clear that Odysseus conceals his identity from Polyphemus by narrating false stories about himself, as in the Odyssey); it is also clear that Odysseus has lost his epic dignity; here he is portrayed as a comic figure. The revelation of the name and identity of Odysseus and his companions, who form the chorus of the play, is obvious in fr. 151. Another fragment, 145, is linked to the known Homeric episode by the name of Odysseus. And fr. 151 refers to Odysseus' companions who, in order to save themselves, take refuge under the beds.

Fragments 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 of Callias' Cyclopes refer to food; fr. 6 shows that the meal includes fish. It is obvious that Polyphemus here too was portrayed as a comic glutton.

Euripides' Cyclops begins with an expository prologue consisting of a rhesis by Silenus (1-40), in Euripides' usual manner. Its only relation with Homer is perhaps that to a certain degree Silenus identifies himself with the Homeric Odysseus, because after many adventures and sufferings he too has come to the land of the Cyclopes. In a certain way this opening resembles those of Aristophanic comedies, for here as there a slave comes on stage complaining about his master's behaviour. Thus Euripides imparts a parodic tone, an Aristophanic colouring, to Silenus' prologue speech.

Euripides, in order to stress the epic dimension of Silenus' adventures, uses Homeric or quasi-Homeric words and expressions just like the comic poets exploit tragedy, which results in the so-called 'paratragodia'. Thus in lines 16f. the expression ποίδες δ' ἐρεμοῦς ἦμενοι γλαυκὴν ἄλα / ῥοθίοις λευκαίνοντες recalls the Homeric lines 9.179f. οὐ δ' αἶν' εἰσθανο-νον καὶ ἐπὶ κλῆσι καθίζον, / ἐξῆς δ' ἐξόμενοι πολιήν ἄλα τύπτον

It is important to note, however, that in Homer these two lines are formulaic\(^6\) and therefore were probably known to the spectators. The same is true of the word εὐθυνον which recalls the Homeric phrase τὰς δ’ ἄνεμός τε κοβερνήται τ’ ἱθυνον (e.g. 9.78). Another common point is the reference to the promontory of Malea\(^7\), which is the critical point of the adventures both of Silenus and of Odysseus. Apart from these little but well selected reminiscences of the *Odyssey*, Silenus’ *thesis* is original and befits his character. His lamentations are mixed with boasting about his courage in four of his adventures, which he briefly alludes to. These adventures are related to Dionysus (the *mania* of Dionysus caused by Hera and his adventures with his nurses\(^8\), vv. 3-4; the *gigantomachia*, vv. 5-8; the episode with the Tyrrenian pirates, vv. 11-12; and the episode with Oeneus and Althea at the visit of Dionysus\(^9\), vv. 39-40) and the myths alluded to were probably known to the spectators from related satyr plays. Thus we grasp another facet of the expository prologue.

Moreover, Silenus narrates his heroic adventures – which seem incredible even to himself – while holding the iron broom for cleaning the cave, in comic contrast to his boasting\(^10\). But there’s more. Some years earlier, in 412, Euripides had produced the *Ion*. Here, the young man Ion, servant of the god Apollo, appears at the beginning, after the prologue speech by Hermes, with a broom in his hand in order to clean Apollo’s temple. A similar situation is suggested in the *Hypsipyle*, a play produced a few years earlier. In fr. 1031, lines 15-18, the chorus asks Hypsipyle whether she is in front of the palace in order to sweep the floor, as the home-servants do:

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\text{τί σὺ παρὰ προθύρωις, φίλα;}
\]
\[
\text{πότερον δόματος εἰσόδους}
\]
\[
\text{σαίρεις ἢ δρόσον ἐπὶ πέδῳ}
\]
\[
\text{βάλλεις οία τε δούλα;}
\]

The parodos of the *Cyclops*, which is the earliest bucolic\(^11\) song we possess, is striking, but has little, if any, connection with the Homeric episode.

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\(^6\) 9.103-4, 179-180, 471-2; 11.146-147.

\(^7\) 9.79f.

\(^8\) We know the title of one such play, Aeschylus’ *The nurses of Dionysus (Dionysou trophyi)*; Sophocles’ *Dionysiskos* may have exploited the same myth.

\(^9\) A satyric drama *Oeneus* is at least attested for Sophocles. A play with the same title is written by Euripides.

\(^10\) A characteristic case of boasting by Silenus is in Sophocles’ *Ichneutai*, 145-168.

The satyrs drive the flock into the cave with the help of assistants (v. 82 πρόσπολοι), who would not be needed if the sheep were not real, while chanting songs addressed first to the ram (first stanza)\(^12\), then to the female sheep (second stanza), but also songs longing\(^13\) for their life with Dionysus and the nymphs, as well as for dance, wine, and sex. We note that the phrasing in line 63 is similar to Hypsipyle, fr. 1.

The first episode, which is the most extensive (263 lines), consists of the following scenes: i) the announcement of the arrival of Odysseus by Silenus\(^14\); ii) the arrival of Odysseus and his dialogue with Silenus; iii) the dialogue between Odysseus and the chorus of satyrs; iv) the dialogue between Silenus and Odysseus; v) the arrival of the Cyclops, reactions, and dialogue with the chorus; vi) the dialogue between the Cyclops, Silenus and Odysseus, the agon; and vii) the entrance into the cave; the monologue of Odysseus.

Generally speaking, this part corresponds to Homer's entrance of Odysseus and his companions into the cave, followed by the arrival of the Cyclops and their being locked inside. However, if we try to highlight the words and expressions which are similar in the dramatic text and the epic episode, we shall have to conclude, contrary to what is usually believed, that the similarities are very limited. They seem to be the following:

i) Odysseus goes to get food and water (87-89);
ii) he intends to find out whether the people living there are hospitable (125);
iii) he carries with him an excellent wine, a gift by Maron himself (141);
iv) the brief description of the bucolic labours (207-209);
v) the Cyclops' suspiciousness towards the strangers (223); his question about where they come from (275) and Odysseus' answer (277-279);
vii) the Cyclops' reference to Zeus and his own superiority (321).

However, points i\(^15\), ii\(^16\), v and vi\(^17\) are motifs often found in other parts

\(^{12}\) This address to the ram may be regarded as an allusion to Polyphemus' tender address to his ram in Od. 9.447ff.

\(^{13}\) The choruses in the late Euripidean plays (e.g. the Iphigeneia in Tauris, Hypsipyle and Andromeda) often express their nostalgia for their homeland.

\(^{14}\) In Silenus' preannoucement of the arrival of the Greek ship with Odysseus and his companions, the phrase ὁ ταλαϊπωροι ξένοι (89) πόθεν πάρεισι recalls I.T. 479 πόθεν ποθῇ ἤκετε, ὁ ταλαϊπωροι ξένοι. The word ύδρηλοι (89) on the other hand, used by Euripides for the water-jugs, is a Homeric word used properly to qualify the meadows on the island in front of the land of the Cyclopes (9.133 λειμάνες ύδρηλοι).

\(^{15}\) E.g. in the land of the Lotus-eaters, 9.85.

\(^{16}\) The lines are a well-used formula, which is not limited to Odysseus. Cf. for in-
of the *Odyssey*. On the contrary, points iv and vii, as well as the reference to the earth which is bound to produce grass (321 and 332) are derived from the corresponding episode of the *Odyssey*. But even these are used differently. The long Homeric description of Polyphemus’ bucolic labours is reduced to three lines in Euripides. Also in lines 425ff. Odysseus, in order to be able to escape, after blinding the Cyclops, ties the rams by threes with withes (ἀρσενες ὅιες ... συνέεργον ἐνστρέφεσσι λύγοισι, ... σύντρεις αἰνύμενος); at *Cycl. 225*, Silenus brings out of the cave lambs tied two by two with withes, in order to sell them to Odysseus. The situation is quite different.

From the point of view of verbal similarities, we observe that the words, expressions, or verses recalling the Homeric episode are very few. Odysseus’ dialogue with Silenus is interesting and contains many noteworthy original elements: Odysseus’ politeness, which is extravagant, given the circumstances, rising as it does to almost dithyrambic style (96-97); Silenus’ ironic characterisation of Odysseus as κρόταλου δριμό, Σισύφου γένος (104), which echoes similar characterizations of Odysseus in tragedy; Odysseus’ interest in the political system of the land of the Cyclopes, whether it is a monarchy or a democracy (119); the way he uses the extraordinary wine he carries in order to trap Silenus (139ff.); the scene portraying Silenus’ first contact with wine after a long time, which results in exultation, dance and expression of his sexual desires (145-174 and especial-

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17 This is evoked by Odysseus himself in many other instances, but also by many characters in both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.
19 In *Od. 10.109f.*. Odysseus’ companions, in the land of the Laestrygonians, ask one girl who is the king of this land and who are his subjects: ἐκ τ’ ἐρέοντο / ὡστις τώνδ’ εὖθει βασιλεύς καὶ οἷςιν ἀνάσσοι.
20 Lines 140ff. seem to be a parody of the Euripidean recognition scenes; this is stressed especially by the use of ὃ φιλτατ’ εἰπών and soon after by Silenus’ child-nursing role here connected with Maron. On the other hand lines 147-8 are a reminiscence of Homeric verses stating that the excellent wine which Odysseus carries, a present of Maron, must be mixed with twenty parts of water (9.209ff. ἐν δέκας ὑμπλήσες ὑδάτως ἀνά εἶκοσι μέτρα / γεύ’, ὡμὴ δ’ ἡδεία ἀκο κρητήρος ὁδῶθέει, ἡθεσσάη. In the *Cyclops* this motif is shifted to a magical spring, and therefore linked to the *bacchae*, as we see, for instance, in Euripides’ *Bacchae*. For similar magical springs in later Greek literature, see Apollonius Rhodius 3.221-4, and Dioscourides, epigram in A.P. 7.31, where it is used metaphorically about Anacreon.
ly 152-3, 157-8, 169-172)\(^2\); the brief but rich in allusions dialogue between the satyrs and Odysseus (175-187), where Euripides parodies elements of some characters that he himself had presented in his tragedies, e.g. Helen, Paris, Menelaus\(^2\), but also parodies himself, since he plays with the accusation known also to Aristophanes (e.g. in his *Thesmophoriazousai*) of his misogyny (e.g. *Medea* 573ff., *Hippol. 616-650*) reversing it to fit the character of the satyrs (186-7); the rather boastful words of Odysseus (188-202), which are full of heroic spirit\(^2\), but are in contrast with his readiness to buy the things he needs and go away (131) – which moreover contrasts with his curiosity in Homer, where he wants to stay and know, although his companions urge him to leave as soon as possible – and, after a while with his humiliating service to Polyphemus (405-6).

The first appearance of the Cyclops, who apparently returns from hunting with his dogs (130) – an aristocratic activity, which we see also with Hippolytos and Theoklymenos –, is underlined through an expression which in the *Troades* is found in the marriage song of Cassandra (308 ἀνεχὲς πάρεξε = *Cycl. 203*). Is this another instance of parody, though its purpose is unclear? The same expression appears in Aristophanes, *Wasps* 1326, in a different context and with a different meaning.

There follow accusations and threats against the satyrs, which reflect the situation created by their detachment from Dionysus, witness the song of the satyric chorus in the parodos, and the Cyclops’ intention to verify whether they have properly done the work required from them. His dialogue with the satyrs contains jokes on the part of the satyrs (201-2), but also jokes from

\(^2\) In lines 166-7 we have an allusion to Anacreon (17 Diehl): 'Ἀρθείς δηντ' ἀπὸ λευκάδος πέτρης... In *Od. 24.11* Hermes and the souls of the suitors, which he guides to the underworld, reach Okeanos and the rock of Leukas (πάρ δ' ἰσαν 'Ἀρχανοὺ τε βοῶς καὶ λευκάδα πέτρην).

\(^2\) Helen: 177 χειρίαν, 180 διεκροτήσατε, 181 πολλοίς ἠδεται γαμουμένη, 182 τὴν προδότιν, 185 ἐξεπτεῖθη; see also El. 213-4, *IT* 525, *Andr. 229*, 610, *Troades* 991-2, and *Helen*. However, we should note that even in Homer there is sometimes a negative attitude towards Helen, who is blamed for the disasters which befell Troy and the heroes who took part in the Trojan war: Eumaios, for instance, talking unwittingly to the disguised Odysseus, and believing his master is dead, says about Helen: 14.68ff. ἀλλ’ ὠλεθ’ – ὃς ὄφελλ’ Ἐλένης ἀπὸ φύλου ὄλεσθα / πρόχνη, ἐπεὶ πολλῶν ἀνδρῶν ὑπὸ γοῦνατ’ ἐλυσε. Paris, dressed in Persian trousers and wearing a gold necklace: *Troades* 991 f., but also in the *Cypria*. Menelaus, here an ἀνθρώπινον λῶστον, is always presented in Euripidean tragedy as a villain without any scruples (e.g. *Andromachе*).

\(^2\) Such brave words are often used by Odysseus in *Od.:* 13.389ff. α’ κέ μοι ὃς με-μαυαία παραστατής, γλαυκώπι, / καὶ κέ τριτκικοσίουσιν ἐγὼν ἀνδρισσο μαχοίμην / σὺν σοι, πόταν θεά, ὅτε μοι πρόφρασσʼ ἐκαρήγοις; see also 14.216-222 and 224-6, 16.105-107.
the Cyclops himself (220-1). We have echoes of the Homeric episode in lines 207-9\textsuperscript{24}, though their counterpart is a much longer description of the bucolic labours in the *Odyssey*; in v. 223 where Polyphemus, upon seeing Odysseus and his companions, asks whether they are pirates or thieves (λησταὶ τίνες κατέσχον ἡ κλώπες χθόνα); and in v. 225, where he speaks of the lambs which are tied two by two with withes, which corresponds to *Od.* 9.425ff., as we have seen earlier. In this dialogue we should also notice some elements which are satyric or comic but lack any relation to the Homeric episode. Such are the wrong interpretation on the part of the Cyclops of the blush of Silenus, which is caused from his wine drinking; Silenus’ lies (232ff.), which put Odysseus in the greatest danger, and his multiple oaths (262-5) in order to uphold them, which end in a parody with the evocation of sea waves and all kinds of fish\textsuperscript{25}; his humorous diminutives (266-7) and his willingness to make a curse at the expense not of his own life but of the life of his sons, the satyrs (269-70); the trust which Polyphemus places upon Silenus, whom he considers as just as Radamanthys (273-4), and his cannibalistic appetite, which is coloured with sacrificial elements (243-6) and the motif of the glutton (214-9\textsuperscript{26}, 247-9)\textsuperscript{27}. Some of the following lines might be related to the Homeric episode. However, it is important to see in which context they appear. The question πόθεν ἐπελεύσατ’ ὁ ξένοι; ποδαποῖ; (275) probably corresponds to a similar question in the Homeric episode, but we must note that the formula is often used in other parts of the *Odyssey*\textsuperscript{28}. It is also interesting to observe that it appears after Polyphemus’ threat that he would slay and eat the strangers boiled or grilled, since he has had enough of lions\textsuperscript{29} and deer, and had not eaten humans for a long time. Though the second part of his question, τίς ήμᾶς ἐξεποίδευσεν πόλις, finds some parallels only in other parts of the *Odyssey*\textsuperscript{30}, it is deliberately used here, for it contains the classical ideal of the educational influence of the city upon the citizen; it also has an ironical echo, because the Cyclops

\textsuperscript{24} The expression ἡ πρός γε μαστοῖς εἰσὶ χύπο μητέρων / πλευρᾶς τρέχουσι clearly recalls the Homeric formulaic expression καὶ ὑπ’ ἐμβρυόν ἦκεν ἐκάστη (9.309, 341-2).

\textsuperscript{25} Cf. *Medea* 746-7 ... θεών τε... ἶπαν γένος.

\textsuperscript{26} Line 218 μήλειον ἦ βόειον ἦ μεμιμήνον is thought to recall Aeschylus *Prom.* 116 θεόστος ἦ βρότειος ἦ κεκραμένη.

\textsuperscript{27} Like Heracles in comedy (e.g. Aristophanes’ *Birds* and *Frogs*) and the satyr play. In Epicharmus, Callias and Cratinus, Polyphemus is also presented as a glutton.

\textsuperscript{28} E.g. 3.71-74 in four verses. In 9.252 ὁ ξένοι, τίνες ἔστε; πόθεν πλεῖθ’ ὑγρα κέλευθα; Cf. also 1.170, 14.187, 24.298.

\textsuperscript{29} It is interesting to note that in the *Odyssey* Polyphemus does not eat lions but he eats like a lion (9.292 ἤσθε δ’ ἄς τε λέον).

\textsuperscript{30} Cf., for instance, 14.187 πόθι τοι πόλις...; and 24.298 πόθι τοι πόλις ἧδε τοκής;
does not know, or in any case, does not accept either city life or the laws that regulate a civilised society. Odysseus’ answer (277-9) corresponds to Od. 9.259ff. In Homer Odysseus proudly refers to Agamemnon and the fall of Troy in the last part of the episode, after blinding Polyphemus. Here, on the contrary, firstly the reference is made as soon as Odysseus is confronted with the Cyclops; and secondly the latter condemns the Greeks’ military expedition against the Phrygians as shameful and unworthy, as it was undertaken for the sake of a woman (280-4); this probably recalls Euripides’ contemporary criticism of the Sicilian expedition.  

The agon which follows is a small masterpiece. On one side is Odysseus, the κρόταλον δριμύ, Σισύφου γένος, on the other Polyphemus the cannibal. Surely the spectators would impatiently expect their confrontation and arguments.

According to Wetzel, vv. 295-312 are derived from the Homeric episode, 9.263-271. But is it really so?

In the rhesis by Odysseus (285-312), to be sure, certain elements might really come from Homer, in particular from Od. 9.262 οὕτω ποι Ζεὺς ἦθελε μητίσασθαι and 9.266ff. κιχανόμενοι τά σὰ γοῦνα / ἰκόμεθ', εἴ τι πόροις ξεινήμον ἥ καὶ ἄλλως / δοίης δοτίνην, ἢ τε ξείων θέμις ἐστίν. / ἄλλ' αίδειο, φέριστε, θεοὺς· ἱκέται δὲ τοὶ ἔσμεν. / Ζεὺς δ' ἐπιτιμήτωρ ἱκετάων τε ξείων τε, / ξείνιος, ὃς ξείνοισιν ἀμ' αίδοίοισιν ὀπηδεί.

Odysseus makes two points in order to support his argument. First, he claims that Zeus is the cause of everything which happens, and, second, that the divine law regarding the suppliants requires from the Cyclops that he behave humanely towards the strangers. Odysseus begins his argument by saying θεοῦ τὸ πράγμα· μηδέν' αἰτιῶ βροτῶν (285), thus denying any personal responsibility. In all probability, this is a reminiscence of the council of the gods in the first book of Odyssey, where Zeus, refuting the mortals’ habit to blame the gods for their misfortunes, puts the blame solely on the humans, and substantiates his point with the case of Aegisthus. The reminiscence is marked more clearly by employing the same words: Od. 1.32-34, particularly the phrase θεοῦς βροτοὶ αἰτιῶνται. However, this

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31 However, there is such criticism in Homer, when Penelope speaks of the damned Ηη: Κακούλαν οὐκ ὄνομαστήν (19.260, 597, and 23.19).

32 Putting the blame on the gods, however, is not something especially characterising Odysseus; we find this in many other instances in Homer, e.g. Od. 1.348-9 (Zeus is to be blamed); 9.558f οὐδέ τις ἄλλος αἰτίως, ἄλλα Ζεὺς (Odysseus talking to the soul of Aias in the underworld); II. 3.164 (gods are to be blamed). Cf. also 23.220 where Penelope talking about Helen says that she blamed the gods.
kind of remark is very common in Homer and is found in many other cases: consequently, it cannot be considered typical of Odysseus. Moreover, although there is in Homer similar argumentation, it is probable that here it reflects not so much Homer as contemporary with Euripides beliefs.

Odysseus continues his efforts at persuasion with arguments based on the notions of friendship, benefit and gratitude, the traditional law (νόμος) of hospitality and respect of the suppliants, of piety, of divine justice which punishes the πονηρὰ κέρδη, but also through a passionate and moving plea to the Cyclops, to the effect that he ought to show compassion for the misfortunes of Hellas caused by the Trojan war (vv. 304-9). Such a plea, especially after the catastrophic Sicilian expedition, clearly aims at moving the spectators. Almost certainly this is not accidental. There are indeed other such hints in the same speech. Greece is referred to three more times in Odysseus’ speech, always in connection with the idea of gratitude and reciprocation of kindness; besides, geographical areas are mentioned that were well known to the audience, such as Tainaron, Malea, Sounion, Geraistos. Thus in v. 291: “we have saved the temples of your father which are γῆς έν ἑλλάδος μυχώνες”; in v. 295f. – a textually difficult passage – “we have not abandoned Greek matters to the Phrygians, something which would have been an insufferable shame” (τὰ θ’ ἑλλάδος δύσωφορά γ’ ὀνείδη Φρυξίν οὐκ ἐδώκαμεν); in v. 297f.: “you have part in the benefit [which we have brought to Greece, after our victory against the Phrygians], because you live at Aitna, at the farthest point of Greece”. The latter remark is usually interpreted as an allusion to the arguments which the Athenians often used to justify their hegemony and their imperialistic policy. It is clear that Euripides is imparting a new dimension to his Homeric borrowings by such indirect political allusions. The concluding section of Odysseus’ rhesis, with its moralising about εὐσέβεια and δυσσεβεία, is certainly meant as a parody of the usual Euripidean practice.

The serious tone of Odysseus’ arguments finds a sharp contrast in Silenus’ following exhortation (313-15) – which is very comic – to the effect

33 Cf. also the similar argument in Troades 988.
34 Geraistos is a place mentioned in Od. 3.177, where it is implied a temple of Poseidon (ἐς δὲ Γεραιστον / ἐννύχαια κατάγοντο. Ποσειδάων δὲ ταύρων / πόλλα’ ἐπὶ μήρ’ έφθεμεν). There is also mention of the holy Sounion (3.278 Σούνιον ιρόν), probably because there was also a temple of Poseidon, as in post-Homeric times.
36 Such ideas, i.e. that the mean is punished by the gods, and the maltreatment of the suppliants is especially punished by Zeus the protector of the suppliants, are common in Homer: see, e.g. Od. 9.266ff., 13.213, 22.374.
that the Cyclops ought to eat Odysseus, and not leave any piece of him; in particular he should eat his tongue, which will make him become smart and garrulous (κομψός καὶ λαλίστατος)\textsuperscript{37}. Here, apart from the folkloric and religious allusions, we may gather Silenus’ opinion about Odysseus, whom he regards as an intelligent and garrulous man.

In the Cyclops’ answer (316-346) only two points, in my view, can be regarded as derived from the Homeric episode: i) Polyphemus does not agree that Zeus is a god superior to himself – something which recalls \textit{Od.} 9.275f. οὐ γὰρ Κύκλωπες Διὸς αἰγίοχον ἀλέγονσιν / οὔδὲ θεῶν μακάρων, ἔπει ἦ πολὺ φέρτεροί εἶμεν; and ii) earth produces by itself grass for his animals, which recalls \textit{Od.} 9.108ff., especially line 109 ἄσπαρτα καὶ ἀνήρωτα πάντα φόντατι (“everything grows without cultivation and without sowing”). But these two borrowings acquire a new light in Euripides. In the first place Polyphemus begins and ends his speech with a reference to god, as Odysseus has done earlier; he too begins with a general gnome, like Odysseus. His answer is the answer of a self-sufficient man, who does not need anything from anyone and is therefore free to act according to his own will, without taking into consideration anyone or anything. Aristotle has written that the human being is social (πολιτικὸν ὄν), and that the man who lives alone, not in a society, is either a god or a beast (θεός ἢ θηρίον)\textsuperscript{38}. Polyphemus is the incarnation of both. It is typical that he begins and ends his speech with a reference to god. His last two lines do not leave any margin for doubt. The god of the cave (ὁ κατ’ αὐλιον θεός) is he himself and he ‘invites’ Odysseus and his companions at his altar to participate in the banquet, not in accordance with the usual practice at the sacrifices, but as victims. Instead of sharing the sacrificial meat, they will be offered as sacrificial meat to the Cyclops\textsuperscript{39}. His speech in general is a mixture of allusions to popular beliefs, philosophical theories, and contemporary social and political practices. The deification of richness is probably reminiscent of sophistic theories\textsuperscript{40}, but can be easily reconciled with popular belief\textsuperscript{41}. It is

\textsuperscript{37} The tongues of the sacrificial animals were offered to the gods (see \textit{Od.} 3.332 ff., 341).

\textsuperscript{38} \textit{Politics}, Book I., 1253a 28-29.

\textsuperscript{39} Cf. especially 244-5.

\textsuperscript{40} Such deification of notions which play an important role in human life are found in other Euripidean plays: \textit{Phoenissai} 506 and \textit{Archealus} fr. 250 N.\textsuperscript{2} of Tyrannis, 531 of Philotimia, 782 of Eulabeia, I.A. 392 of Elpis, \textit{Orestes} 399 of Lype, 213f. of Lethe, 1682 of Eirene, and \textit{Hel.} 650 of γυνώσκειν φιλιος.

\textsuperscript{41} Probably Euripides plays and alludes to his own tragedies, where several characters had expressed contradictory opinions about πλοῦτος. Praise of richness is found, for instance, in \textit{Bellerophontes} fr. 366, in \textit{Palamedes} fr. 580 and in \textit{Danae} fr. 324 N.\textsuperscript{2}; but it is
also interesting to note that the Cyclops believes he belongs to the wise and prudent men (316, 337)\textsuperscript{42}, because he shares the formers' opinion about richness, and the latters' about eating, drinking, and the true meaning of life. Everything else is boasting and beautiful words (317) which have no power nor value. Thus, indirectly, the Cyclops rejects Odysseus' arguments as useless boasting. He is as self-sufficient as a god — no, he is even more powerful than a god — and he is also wise and prudent; his power, his wisdom and prudence result from his richness and abundance\textsuperscript{43}, and are reinforced by his awareness of this state of things. Therefore he despises and rejects the beauty of mere words and gives no heed to Odysseus' mention of the temples of Poseidon, the Cyclops' father, and his remarks about reciprocal gratitude (318-9); for the same reason he has no fear of Zeus and his thunderbolts (320-321)\textsuperscript{44}. It is noteworthy that he repeats three times (two times in ν. 321 and once in 331; see also line 605 spoken by Odysseus in reference to the Cyclops) the expression ο' μοι μέλει (“I do not care at all”)\textsuperscript{45}. Whether it rains or snows, he has no need of anything, he is αὐτόκρατης, self-sufficient (323-331). In the Homeric episode the Cyclopes do not cultivate the land, neither do they sow or harvest; all grows by its own accord, as if they lived in the golden age\textsuperscript{46}. Euripides transforms the

condemned in Aiolos fr. 27 μὴ πλοῦτος ἐξητης; οὐχὶ δὲ θαυμάζω θεόν, ὡν χῶ κάκιστος ῥάδιως ἐκτῆσατο; in Alexandros fr. 78 Snell ἄδικον ὁ πλοῦτος and in Archelaus fr. 310 πλουτεῖς, ὁ πλοῦτος δ' ἄμαθος δειλόν θ' ἁμα.

\textsuperscript{42} Paganelli argues that both the exaltation of πλοῦτος and the words σοφός and σωφρος are loaded with oligarchic ideology, as is the Cyclops' whole attitude (p. 23ff.). But this seems rather exaggerated.

\textsuperscript{43} His πλοῦτος consists of cheese, milk and meat, in other words of products of his herds of sheep and cattle. The importance of this is made clear by Od. 4.85-88: καὶ Λιβύων, ὑνα τ' ἄρνες ἄφαρ κεραὶ τελέουσαι; / τρίς γὰρ τίκτει μῆλα τελεσφόρον ἐς ἐνιαυτόν; / ἐνθα μὲν οὔτε ἄναξ ἐπιδευνὴς οὔτε τι ποιμὴν / τυρφοῦ καὶ κρειῶν, οὐδὲ γλυκεροῖο γάλακτος, / ἀλλ' ἀεὶ παρέχουσιν ἐπητανὸν γάλα θήσατι.

\textsuperscript{44} Cf. Od. 9.237ff. νηπίως εἰς, ὃ εἰεῖν', ἥ τηλὸθεν εἰλῆλουθας, / ὅς μὲ θεοὺς κέλεαι ἡ δειδίμεν ἡ ἀλεασθαί: / οὐ γὰρ Κύκλοπες Δίως αἰγυπτόν ἀλέουσιν / οὐδὲ θεῶν μακάρον, ἐπεὶ ἡ πολὺ φέρτεροι εἰμεν. / οὐδὲ ἄν ἐγὼ Δίως ἐχθὸς ἀλευμένος πεφιδοίμην / οὔτε σεῦ οὔθ' ἑτάρων.

\textsuperscript{45} If we admit that Euripides' Cyclops imitates the Anacreontic poetry, we are probably confronted with a parody of a well-known Anacreontic poem which begins with Οὗ μοι μέλει τὰ Γάγεα (M. L. West, Carmina Anacreontea, Stuttgart and Leipzig 1993, n. 8). Cf. Archil. fr. 19 West. A little further on it continues: ἐμοὶ μέλει... ἐμοὶ μέλει... τὸ σμήνερον μέλει μοι: τὸ δ' ἀτρίμον τις οἴδει;

\textsuperscript{46} Od. 9.108ff. οὔτε φυτέυονσιν χερσὶν φυτὸν οὔτ' ἄροσιν, / ἀλλά τὰ γ' ἀσπαρτα καὶ ἀνήροτα πάντα φύονται, / τυρφοῦ καὶ κρειῶν ἡ δ' ἁμπελοῖ, σὲ τε φέρουσιν / οὖν τοιοῦτοφυλὸν καὶ σφίν Δίως ὅμβρος ἄξει. For a description of the golden age see Hesiod, Op. 117ff.
whole situation by employing the term “necessity” (ἀνάγκη)\(^{47}\), a cosmological agent in presocratic philosophy\(^{48}\). But the Cyclops’ references to the divine go on. In line 335 he repeats that he himself is a god: he offers the animals in sacrifice to himself and his own belly, which is the greatest and most important deity\(^{49}\). Absolute self-sufficiency, absolute egotism characterise him. Richness is god; whoever has it, is a god; but the most powerful god\(^{50}\) is eating and drinking to one’s fill every day, caring about nothing (336-8)\(^{51}\). Clearly, he identifies absolute happiness with hedonism; he is a supporter of hedonism. One thing is missing: sex\(^{52}\). But apparently Polyphemus does not need that. However, in a fragment (273) of Alexis with similar content, food, drink, and sex go together:

\[ \text{τὰς ἡδονὰς δεί συλλέγειν τὸν σῶφρονα·} \\
\text{τρεῖς δ’ εἰσίν α’ γε τὴν δύναμιν κεκτημέναι} \\
\text{τὴν ὃς ἀληθῶς συντελοῦσαν τῷ βίω,} \\
\text{τὸ πιεῖν τὸ φαγεῖν τὸ τῆς Ἀφροδίτης τυγχάνειν·} \\
\text{τὰ δ’ ἄλλα προσθήκας ἄπαντα χρή καλεῖν} \]

"the prudent man must collect the hedonai, of which three have the real power to make life better, drink, food and Aphrodite (= sex); everything else should be regarded as additions”.

These ideas reflect popular beliefs, often expressed in Greek literature, but in all probability they are also related to hedonistic theories put forth by contemporaries of Euripides, e.g. Callicles\(^{53}\).

The Cyclops’ life and conduct are in accordance with his own nature as a god and a beast. Consequently, he believes that any kind of restriction is contrary to nature and unnecessarily complicates life; some such restrictions are the laws, which he rejects. Euripides certainly alludes to the contemporary philosophical debates about the opposition of nature and law, φύσις and

\(^{47}\) In Alc. 965 ἀνάγκη is also the supreme element, more powerful than anything else: κρείσσον οὐδὲν Ἀνάγκας ἦρον. Cf. Troades 886 εἴτ’ ἀνάγκη φύσεως εἶτε νοῦς βροτῶν.

\(^{48}\) E.g. Democritus A1, 35, 83, B289. Cf. Gorgias B11.6, and Antipho B44 D-K.

\(^{49}\) We find the same opinion in Alexandros fr. 33 Snell: γαστήρ ἄπαντα, τοῦπίσω δ’ οὐδὲν σκοπεῖ. But similar ideas are present in the Odyssey, when Odysseus is disguised and plays the role of a beggar: 7.215-221 οὐ γὰρ τι στυγερὴ / ἐπὶ γαστέρι κύντερον ἄλλο ἐπλετο... ἢ δὲ μάλ’ σειε ἐσοθέμεναι κέλεται καί πινέμεν ἐκ δὲ μὲ πάντων ληθάνει δόσ’ ἐπαθὼν, καί ἐνυπλησθήναι ἁνάγη (Odysseus speaking to Alcinoos); 15.344-5, 16.286-9.

\(^{50}\) This recalls the Homeric formula for Zeus πατήρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε.

\(^{51}\) Cf. Alcm. I 37 Davies ὃ δ’ ὀλβιος ὄστις εὐφρον ἄμεραν διαπλέκει ἀκλαυτος.

\(^{52}\) On the contrary, wine-drinking, food and sex are the three important ingredients of life according to Heracles in the Alcestis.

\(^{53}\) As in Plato’s Gorgias, for instance.
vómos. Polyphemus could be the symbol or the incarnation of the justice of the stronger, as it is expressed by Thrasymachus in the first book of Plato's Republic. His reference to the soul (ψυχή 340) is probably another hint at contemporary theories. The Cyclops’ answer to Odysseus’ reference to the law of hospitality and the gifts given on such occasions (ξένια τε δοῦναι, 301) is also worth noting. It is well known that in Homer a bronze λέβης or θώραξ is sometimes given as an exceptional gift of hospitality. So, before Odysseus’ departure from the land of the Phaeacians, Alcinoos gives him an exceptional present: a large tripod and a man-sized λέβης.

Here, Polyphemus promises he’ll give Odysseus one such exceptional gift, an heirloom λέβης, which however will be used to boil Odysseus himself; and this bronze λέβης will also be used as a θώραξ which will “embrace” the body of Odysseus, although it may be δυσφόρητον, difficult to wear.

It is clear, I believe, that with this speech the Cyclops proved to be a δριμύτερον κρόταλον than Odysseus, who, having no other recourse, appeals to Athena and Zeus (347-355), with a criticism of the gods characteristic of Euripides. We are faced with a further instance of self-parody by the author.

The first stasimon (356-374) refers to the Cyclops’ ἀνθρωποφωνία and to the horrible crime of cutting to pieces and eating strangers and suppliants. Just like the Cyclops had given a sacrificial colour to his cannibalism, the chorus uses words which are related to sacrifice and to Dionysos’ σπαραγμός by his thiasos, expressing at the same time its own disgust and aversion and its unwillingness to take part in such a sacrilegious sacrifice (ἀποβώμιος θυσία).

At this point it is necessary to underline the similarity of these Euripidean

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55 Od. 13.13 ff. ἀλλ’ ἐγε ό δῶμεν τρίποδα μέγαν ἢδὲ λέβητα / ἀνδρακάς; cf. 15.84.

56 This interpretation is supported from the significance of the verb ἀμφέχομαι in the lexicon of Phoutos (K. Tsantsanoglu, New Fragments of Greek Literature from the Lexicon of Phoutos, Athens 1974, fr. 179): ἀμφέχομαι: to ἀμφιέχομαι, and the fragment from Pherecrates’ Myrmekanthropoi, ἔχω δὲ πάντως ἰμάτιον: ἀμφέχομαι (123 K.-A.). But this meaning is also supported by Homeric usage, such as in ll. 3.56-7 ἦ τε κεν ἦδη / λᾲνον ἔσσο χιτῶνα, and Od. 8.437 γάστρη μὲν τρίποδος πῦρ ἀμφεκέ.

57 The word ἐφεστίους (371) is probably a Homeric borrowing, for it is found in Od. 7.248 ἀλλ’ ἐμὲ τὸν δυστήνον ἐφεστίων ἦγαγε δαίμον; the phrase θέρμ’ ἀπ’ ἀνθράκων κρέα (374) recalls Od. 14.76 f. ὀπτήςας... παρέβηκ’ ὀδυσσῆ / θέρμ’ αὐτός ἀδελοίσιν (where Eumaios offers them to the disguised Odysseus). On the other hand the word κρεοκοπεῖν is a borrowing from Aeschylus, for we meet it in his Persai 463.
verses with fr. 143 of Cratinus' *Odysseis*, where the speaker is obviously the Cyclops addressing Odysseus’ companions:

άνθ' ἀν πάντας ἐλών ὕμᾶς ἐρίηρας ἔταρνος,
φρύξες χάνψας κάπανθρακίας κάπτηςας
εἰς ᾤμην τε καὶ ὄξαλμην κατ' ἐς σκοροδάλμην
χλιαρὸν ἐμβάπτων, ὃς ἂν μοι ὄπτοτατός μοι ἀπάντων
ὑμῖν φαίνηται, κατατρόξομαι, ὁ δ' στρατιώται.

The second line is similar to v. 358f. of the *Cyclops*, ἐφθά καὶ ὅπτά καὶ ἀνθρακίας ἀπο (θερμά) θυεύειν βρύκειν... and v. 372f. ἐφθά τε δανύμενος μυσαροίσι τ' ὀδούσιν / κόπτων βρύκων / ἀνθρόπων θέρμα' ἀπ' ἀνθράκων κρέας. Here, as in the next song, we have a Euripidean allusion to the comedy of Cratinus, contrary to the general practice of comedians’ imitation or parody of tragedy, especially of Euripides. In Cratinus’ fragment Polyphemus prepares his meal as an experienced cook (μύρον); he knows various ways of cooking, many more than the Euripidean Cyclops: in the oven, on charcoal, grilling, boiling, preserving in salty water, either plain or with the addition of vinegar or garlic. However, there is no allusion to sacrifice, which is probably a Euripidean novelty.

The choral song is meant to mark a much longer lapse of time than its actual duration. During this interval the events narrated by Odysseus in the following episode are supposed to have taken place. The main themes of this episode are two: Odysseus’ report to the chorus of what took place inside the cave and the exposition of his plan to blind Polyphemus. Here, as was to expect, the references to and the echoes of the Homeric episode are more numerous. The result, however, is different. The words, the images, the descriptive elements which are reminiscent of Homer function in two ways: on the one hand they make sure that the Homeric episode stays in the background of the spectators’ mind – many of them probably knew it by heart, on the other hand they provide the general framework in which Euripides now creates something new, as if putting new wine in an old wineskin. Such constant intertwining of the new and the old, of Euripidean innovation and Homeric prototype, deserves special attention, as it is a process parallel to the comedians’ and especially Aristophanes’ attitude to their tragic models, and also an anticipation of Alexandrian poets’ behaviour towards previous Greek literature. What is important is the treatment of detail, as well as in-

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58 Such is the case, for instance, in Aristophanes’ *Frogs* 1124f. When Euripides asks Aeschylus to recite the prologue of the *Oresteia*, the spectators begin reciting it first and for that reason Dionysus asks them to be quiet (1125 ήγε δῆ σίώπα πάς ἄνήρ).

59 However, this is what one of the negative critics of the Euripidean *Cyclops* has condemned: “la caratteristica più evidente del *Ciclope* in confronto all’episodio omerico è
novation, juxtaposition or combination of the old with the new elements.

The main such element is that Polyphemus eats his victims following the rigid order of the sacrificial ritual, in what amounts to an ἀποβόμωμος θυσία, as the satyr chorus said earlier in their first stasimon. He is not merely the repulsive cannibal who eats his victims like a lion: some civilised elements characterise his actions; for instance, he does not eat raw meat⁶⁰ and conforms to sacrificial practices⁶¹. Polyphemus makes a fireplace and prepares his bed nearby; then he fills up a crater with cow milk⁶² and takes out a large cup made of ivy-wood⁶³, before placing water in a large culdron to boil over the fire. This done, he prepares the skewers for the meat, not forgetting a large vase to collect the sacrificial blood from his victims (Αἶναία σφαγετα) nor the sacrificial double-axe. Then the Cyclops, aptly named the cook of Hades hated by the gods (θεοστυγής Αἴδου μάγειρος)⁶⁴, takes two of Odysseus’ companions, who, as Odysseus reports, were of blooming complexion (σαρκος εἶχον εὐτραφέστατον πάχος); his choice is not haphazard: he examines them carefully with his eyes and his palms (ἀθρήσας κάπιβαστάσας χεροῖν). Following a certain orderly ritual he sacrifices them by cutting their throats and collecting their blood; he puts one in the boiling water. As for the other, he holds his body by the feet to crack his skull on the sharp edge of a rock and scatter his brain; then he cuts the flesh to pieces and puts it on the charcoal to cook, while the harder parts are placed in the λέβης to boil⁶⁶. Such detailed description has no counterpart in the

una cura minuziosa del particolare, uno sforzo di far toccare con mano le idee del Ciclope, il suo modo di vivere e di agire” (Momigiano, “Atene e Roma” 10, 1925, 156).

⁶⁰ This detail, however, is found in Cratinus’ play too.

⁶¹ That this is so it is obvious if one compares this passage with, e.g. the Homeric description of a sacrifice in Od. 3.418-463: there as here we find words such as πέλεκυν ὄξυν, σφαξεν, ὀβελοί, αἶμα.

⁶² Probably the humour derives from the fact that the “krater” was not used for milk but for mixing wine with water. Besides, Polyphemus’ richness includes cow herds; therefore, he has of course cow milk.

⁶³ Homer uses the word κισσούβιον (9.346).

⁶⁴ In a fragment of Aristias’ Keres (=goddesses of death), someone, who appears to be a glutton, is called Αἴδου τραπεζεύς. It is very probable that here we have another reminiscence of an earlier satyr play.

⁶⁵ We should note that this word is a hapax.

⁶⁶ I wonder whether Euripides’ audience, listening to this behaviour of the Homeric Cyclops, could recall parallel mythological events connected with the Dionysiac myths, or whether Euripides, in his description of Polyphemus, intended us to recall them. The Titans had cut Dionysus to pieces, which they put in a boiling λέβης and then on skewers over the fire (see Clem. Alex., Protrept. 2.18 διασπάσαντες αὐτὸν λέβητα τινι τριποδι ἐπιθέντες καὶ τοῦ Διονύσου ἐμβαλόντες τὰ μέλη, καθήσουν πρότερον έκειτα
corresponding Homeric episode. It is clear that by such horrible description Euripides aimed at creating an impression of horror through the behaviour of a ‘civilised cannibal’.

But there are more new elements. In Homer, when Odysseus offers wine to Polyphemus, he says: “Cyclops, drink wine... to know what sort of wine my ship carried” (9.347f.); Euripides has him say: “Oh Cyclops, son of the god of the sea, see what divine drink from the vine Greece produces, a splendour of Dionysus” (413-5). In the Euripidean Cyclops the vine does not grow in the land of the Cyclopes, and therefore there is not wine. This difference is noted by many. The word ‘Ελλάς is probably meant to mark the difference between civilisation and barbarism. Even the mention of Dionysus is no meaningless addition: he is the god who punishes Pentheus and Lykourgos. Wine is the god himself, as it is obvious from the previous lines, 519-29. Talking to the satyrs Odysseus admonishes them to rejoin Dionysus, their old friend, who bears no resemblance to the Cyclops (τῶν ἄρχατον φίλον Δίόνυσον ἄναλαβ’). Besides, in v. 424 Odysseus offering the Cyclops a cup of wine after another warmed up his entrails (σπλάγχνα ἐθέρμανον ποτά); it is noteworthy that this expression is also found in Aristophanes’ Frogs 844 μὴ... σπλάγχνα θερμήνης κότω, which probably parodies the Euripidean verse. But Euripides has taken this phrase from Aeschylus; here we have another reminiscence of a play earlier than the Cyclops. In v. 417 Polyphemus-takes the cup of wine and drinks it at one gulp (ἔσπασεν τ’ ἀμυστὶν ἐλκύσας). This recalls the symposium, a social activity characteristic of civilised society. After

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drinking much unwatered wine, the Cyclops begins to sing coarsely and his song mingles with the cries and tears of Odysseus’ companions, all these sounds echoing in the cave (ἄδει δὲ παρὰ κλαίονει συνναότατος ἔμοις ἄμουσ’, ἐπηχεὶ δ’ ἄντρον, 425-6)\(^{72}\). Here, in my view, we have a reminiscence of Euripides’ *Andromeda*, a play produced in 413-412 and parodied by Aristophanes in *Thesm.* 1010-1135\(^{73}\).

If the reminiscence of the *Andromeda* may be doubted, another one is quite certain. In the *Alcestis* (438) the scene with the old servant and Heracles has many striking similarities with the *Cyclops*, not only in content but also in expression. Someone is dead (*Alcestis*) and there is a funeral procession as well as tears and lamentations, but on the other hand Heracles not only eats and drinks, but also sings and philosophises. In spite of the differences, the similarities are such that we may feel confident that Euripides had his own *Alcestis* in mind as he was writing the *Cyclops*. Moreover, we must not forget that in Euripidean satyr play Heracles was the leading hero. Some parts of the servant’s speech in the *Alcestis* are very close to the *Cyclops* both in content and in word. Here are the most obvious similarities:

\[
\text{ποτήρα δ’ ἐν χεῖρεσσι κίσσινον λαβὼν}
\]
\[
\text{πίνει μελαίνης μπηρδς εὐξώρων μέθυ,}
\]
\[
\text{ἐώς θερμήν’ αὐτὸν ἀμφιβάσα φλάξ}
\]
\[
\text{οἴνου: στεφεὶ δὲ κράτα μυρσίνης κλάδοις}
\]
\[
\text{ἀμους’ ὑλακτών. δισσᾶ δ’ ἣν μέλη κλύειν}
\]
\[
\text{ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἤδε, τῶν ἐν ‘Αδμήτου κακῶν}
\]
\[
\text{οὐδὲν προτιμῶν, οἰκέται δ’ ἐκλαίομεν}
\]
\[
\text{δέσποιναν, ὦμα δ’ οὐκ ἐδείκνυμεν ξένῳ}
\]
\[
\text{τέγγοντες. ‘Αδμήτος γὰρ ὅδ’ ἐφίετο·}
\]
\[
\text{καὶ νῦν ἔγω μὲν ἐν δόμοισιν ἐστιῶ}
\]
\[
\text{ξένον, πανόργον κλώτα καὶ ληστήν τινα (Alc. 756-66).}
\]

First the word *ποτήρα* (= a large cup of wine) is used only by Euripides, in the *Alcestis* and *Cycl.* 151; this cup is made of ivy wood (κίσσινος), as in the *Odyssey* (the *κισσούβιον*). Both Heracles and Polyphemus eat immoderately and drink much unwatered wine; the verb *θερμάινο* (warm up) used metaphorically is found in both plays; both Heracles and Polyphemus get drunk and start singing: Polyphemus ξύει δὲ παρὰ κλαίουσι συνναότατοις

\(^{72}\) We should be reminded of what Odysseus says about wine in *Od.* 14.463ff.: ὦνος γὰρ ἀνώγει / ἡλέος, ὃς τ’ ἐφέκε πολύφρονά περ μάλ’ ἀέσθαι / καὶ θ’ ἄπαλον γε- λάσαι, καὶ τ’ ὀρχήσασθαί ἄνηκε, / καὶ τ’ ὑπὸς προκέηκν ὁ πέρ τ’ ἄρρητον ἄμεινον.

\(^{73}\) Line 222 ἔκατ’ τίν’ ὠχλὸν τόνδε ὄρῳ is probaly a self-parody of *Andromeda*, fr. 125 ἔκατ’ τίν’ ὠχλὸν τόνδ’ ὄρῳ περὶρρυτόν (this is supported by Aristophanes’ parody in *Thesm.* 1105 ἔκατ’ τίν’ ὠχλὸν τόνδ’ ὄρῳ καὶ παρθένον).
EURIPIDES' CYCLOPS AND HOMER'S ODYSSEY

The same word, ἄμουσα, is used in both cases. The song of the drunk man mingles with lamentations and tears in both the Cyclops and the Alcestis. The servant, like Odysseus in the Cyclops, unwillingly serves Heracles, whom he calls κλώπα καὶ ληστήν, thief and pirate, words which are also used in the Cyclops by Polyphemus, when he suddenly takes sight of Odysseus and his companions (223 ληστοὶ τινες... ἡ κλώπες). Moreover, the old servant, like Odysseus, weeps but tries to hide his tears from Heracles. Finally, Heracles’ remarks about life are similar in many ways to the Cyclops’ rhesis.

The drunk Heracles speaks to the servant and gives him a lecture about life; he obviously considers himself wise (σοφός), v. 779, for, as he says, the servant will become wiser (σοφότερος), if he listens to him. His advice is similar to the Cyclops’ ideas about life:

εὔφρατεν σαυτόν, πίνε, τὸν καθ’ ἡμέραν
βίον λογίζου σόν, τὰ δ’ ἄλλα τῆς τύχης.
τίμα δὲ καὶ τὴν πλείστον ἡδίστην θέον
Κύπριν βροτοῖσιν· εὔμενής γὰρ ἡ θεός (Alc. 788-91).
οὔκ οὖν τὴν ἄγαν λύπην ἀφεῖς
πιῆ μεθ’ ἡμῶν ...;

(Euripides outlines Polyphemus’ character pretty much like he has portrayed Heracles in the Alcestis, and probably in other satyr plays of his, where Heracles was often the protagonist.}

Let's call attention to two more quite original points: i) Silenus attached to the cup of wine like birds stuck to the hunting sticks (432-4); and ii) the reaction of the satyrs to Odysseus’ request that they help him and thus save themselves from the Cyclops; all they can think of, in conjunction with their expected escape and liberation, is the satisfaction of sexual desires (439-40 ως διὰ μακρὸν γε τὸν σίφωνα τὸν φίλον χηρεύομεν...). These two elements are in keeping with the traditional character of the satyrs and Silenus.

The second stasimon (483-518) is a song in Anacreontics κατὰ στίχον in three stanzas, after an introduction in anapaestic metre according to Aeschylean models, which has no parallel in drama. It is connected with the previous episode, in particular with lines 425ff., where Polyphemus is said to be drunk and sing coarsely, but also with the final episode, the blinding of the Cyclops, through the allusions made in the introductory section and in the third stanza.

The drunk Polyphemus, sustained by Silenus who also carries the crater with wine and holding a large cup while followed by Odysseus who still carries the wineskin, enters the stage dancing and singing. Such lyric en-
trance is also unique, as far as we know, in the satyr play\(^74\). A further peculiar characteristic is the popular character of the structure of these songs, for all three stanzas have the same metre, rhythm and melody. Also unique in satyr play is the use of the Anacreontic metre κοτά στίχον. Moreover, in these songs Euripides parodies well-known literary motifs. In the anapaestic introduction the chorus imitates the expressions and the rhythm of a military marching song; in the first stanza it is obvious from the very first word μάκαρ (= blessed)\(^75\) that we are confronted with a parody of the μακαιρίσμος and then of the κώμος and the παρακλαυσίθυρον (a song sung in front of the door of one's beloved girl). Polyphemus' song is a parody of a σκόλιον and of a κώμος, although its content refers to his belly which is full like a freight ship loaded with food. The third stanza, which is sung by the chorus, has nuptial elements of the well-known ύμέναιος type; it is an ἕγκομιον of the bridegroom when he comes out of his house on his way to the bride's, while she is waiting inside her own house. There are also allusions to the nuptial crown made of many colourful flowers which the bridegroom wore on his head. But many of these references are ambiguous, as they clearly allude to the blinding of the Cyclops and his blood. These songs alone (or the agon) are enough, in my view, to make the *Cyclops* an extraordinary play.

The convivial scenes of the next episode (519-607) have of course no parallel in Homer. The first ten lines contain the satyric motif of a new invention disclosed in an enigmatic way (ἐὔρημα – οἶνιμα), of which we have an excellent example in Sophocles' *Ichneutai*, 298-312. The lectures on the appropriate symptic conduct, which Silenus gives to the Cyclops and are paralleled in Aristophanes' *Wasps* 1208ff., where Bdelykleon lectures his father Philokleon on how to be ξυμποστικός καὶ ξυνουσιαστικός (convivial and sociable), are at the centre of the action. It is worth noting that in this connection Euripides hints very briefly (548-9) at the Homeric scene with Odysseus' name Οὐτίς. Homeric reminiscences are also present in vv. 591-5: i) references to the sleeping Cyclops, to the olive branch prepared for his blinding, and the vomiting of the meat which he had eaten (cf. *Od*. 9.372ff. καὶ δὲ μιν ὑπνοῦσι / ἤρει πανδαιμάτωρ· φάρυγος δ' ἐξέσσυτο οἶνος /

\(^74\) We have, of course, an indirect testimony (Athenaeus 428F) that Aeschylus was the first to introduce drunken men on stage, but we do not know whether those plays were satyr or not; nor do we know whether their entrance was lyric.

ψωμοὶ τ' ἀνδρόμεοι· ὁ δ' ἐρέυγετο οἴνοβαρεῖων "and then sleep overtook him, sleep which tames everything; and from his throat wine and pieces of human flesh burst forth, as he belched with wine"; ii) Odysseus' admonitions to the satyrs (cf. Od. 9.376f., where he addresses his companions). We should however stress the different way in which Euripides uses these Homeric elements. A further, quite original scene portrays the drunk Cyclops' pederastic preferences, which are directed towards Silenus, whom he has kidnapped as Zeus did with Ganymedes. This marvellous scene is prepared in advance, in vv. 552-5, where Silenus himself uses pederastic metaphors in order to stress his own special relationship with wine, οἴνος:

KY. οὖτος, τί δρᾶς; τὸν οἴνον ἐκπίνεις λάθρας;
ΣΙ. οὖκ, ἀλλ' ἐμ' ὁ οὖτος ἐκυψεν ὅτι καλὸν βλέπω.
KY. κλαὐσθη, φιλῶν τὸν οἴνον οὐ φιλοῦντά σε.
ΣΙ. νολ μὰ Δί', ἐπεὶ μοῦ φησ' ἐράν ὄντος καλοῦ.

Polyphemus' visions (578-80) which are caused by his drunkenness probably should be compared with Pentheus' in the Bacchae, which are caused by Dionysus. In both cases the future victim understands up to a point the true identity of the god. Here the Cyclops, under the influence of wine (see vv. 519-29) which is identical with Dionysus, as we have seen earlier (οἴνος = Διόνυσος), can see the throne of Zeus and all the other gods (τὸ πᾶν τε δαιμόνιον ἂγνον σέβος). This is the first time the Cyclops uses such words, through which he undoubtedly recognises the existence of Zeus and the other gods. On the contrary, when he is not drunk, which is to say under the influence of Dionysus, θεὸν οὐδὲν ἦ βροτῶν μέλει (605), that is he does not care either about the gods or about the humans, as Odysseus says in the final lines of the episode, a little before he enters the cave.

In the following stasimon, the third one (608-23), the chorus imagines the blinding of Polyphemus and also expresses its yearning to be with Dionysus.

The reader, and very probably the spectators too, would expect the blinding to take place during this song, especially since considering that in the previous episode we have seen that the Cyclops is asleep (591), the olive branch is ready with its end burning (693), and Odysseus has invoked the help of Hephaestos and of Hypnos. But these expectations are disappointed: Odysseus, quite unexpectedly, emerges from the cave and demands from the satyrs absolute silence (624ff.). The silence motif is used by Euripides as an excuse for bringing Odysseus out of the cave and thus insert a

76 To play with his audience's expectations is a technique often used by Euripides. See W. G. Arnott, 'Ἡ διατήρηση τοῦ ἐνδιαφέροντος τῶν θεατῶν. Μερικά τεχνάσματα τοῦ Εὐριπίδη, "Dodone" 6, 1977, 41-53.
further short episode of only 31 lines (624-55). This comic dialogue between Odysseus and the satyrs exploits the traditional flaws of the satyrlic chorus. But the silence motif is found in fr. 151 of Cratinus’ *Odysseis*, where probably the chorus speaks to Polyphemus, at the end of the comedy, and reveals its own identity as well as Odysseus’ (σιγάν νῦν ἄπαξ ἔχε σιγάν, καὶ πάντα λόγον τάχα πεῦσει...). We are probably confronted with another reminiscence of Cratinus’ play.

In this scene Euripides, apart from obtaining comic results by the exploitation of the satyrs’ character, seems to play with a tragic convention. When he comes out of the cave, Odysseus asks the satyrs to go into it with him to help him blind the Cyclops; for the moment his companions are forgotten. The theatrical convention requires the chorus to stay in the orchestra and does not allow it to exit77 or go onto the stage. The theatrical solution, demanding that the chorus remain in the orchestra, is achieved through the character of the satyrs, who are shameless cowards: they are brave and willing when the danger does not exist or is far away (437-9, 596-8), fearful when it gets near. Their excuses are quite comic. First they ask Odysseus to determine who should enter first (632-4), which reminds us, even verbally, of the selection made in Homer through lots. Then, one group after the other, they devise excuses not to go into the cave: some are further than the others (635-6); a second group become suddenly lame (637-9); and the others have quite unexpectedly lost their sight, because of dust or ashes in their eyes (641-2). Finally they admit the real reason for which they do not want to go inside, which is self-preservation, and express their willingness to help in another way, with an Orphic incantation, which will automatically drive the olive branch into Polyphemus’ eye78. Thus the satyrs remain in the orchestra, as the convention of ancient theatre required. Odysseus is obliged to use his companions, and has to return to the cave content if the satyrs will help with κελευσμόι or κελεύσματα. This the satyrs gladly do, for, as they say, the danger will be ἐν τῷ Καρί, and indeed they sing a very brief song, the fourth stasimon (656-62), of the type κελευσμὸς ἐπὶ εὐψυχία, a song

77 There are very few exceptions to this rule: the chorus in Aeschylus’ *Eumenides*, in Sophocles’ *Ajax* 814 (with a change of scene), in Euripides’ *Alc*. 741ff., *Hel*. 385, *Rhesus* 565, and *Phaethon* (with a change of scene); cf. also Aristophanes, *Eccles*. 285-310.

78 Here Euripides seems to play both with popular methods of the kind and with the traditional satyrlic motif of the miraculous. A similar reference to magic incantations is found in *Phoen.* 1259ff., where the messenger urges Jocaste to use every way she can to save her sons: ἀλλ’ εἰ τίν’ ἀλήθην ἢ σοφοὺς ἔχεις λόγους ἢ φίλτρ’ ἐφοδίων. Cf. also *Alc.* 357-62. In Homer a magic incantation is used by the sons of Autolykos to stop the bleeding of Odysseus, wounded by a wild boar (*Od*. 19.457 ἐπαυδη δ’ αἵμα κελατινὸν / ἐσχεδον).
whose purpose is to encourage someone to do something, though it is also a labour song, as it accompanies the blinding of the Cyclops taking place inside the cave. Its metre and rhythm is varied, which attests to the vivacity of the satyrs' song and dance.

Immediately afterwards Polyphemus' cries of pain are heard within the cave, reminding us of the great heroes of tragedy\textsuperscript{79}, and then, according to tragic convention, he himself comes out on stage, or rather to the cave's entrance. In these final scenes, as was to be expected, the reminiscences and borrowings from the Homeric episode are much more numerous than elsewhere. Polyphemus' cry (663) is probably meant to recall the Homeric verse 9.395 συμερδαλέον δὲ μέγ' ὁμοξεν, but as we have already observed this is also a theatrical convention. However, Polyphemus standing at the entrance of the cave with his hands stretched out in order to prevent the escape of Odysseus and his companions corresponds to \textit{Od.} 9.408-12; the revelation of Odysseus' true name is paralleled in \textit{Od.} 9.502-5 and 475-9, coupled with satisfaction for blinding the Cyclops; the reference to the oracle on the part of Polyphemus has its counterpart at \textit{Od.} 9.507ff.; and Polyphemus tries to hit Odysseus' ship with rocks just as at \textit{Od.} 9.481ff. and 537-41. It is obvious that here more than anywhere else much is derived from Homer. Wetzel's index shows a correspondence between 105 Homeric lines and \textit{Cycl.} 663-707 (that is 44 lines). It is clear that Euripides has abbreviated Homer's prototype.

But even here we can recognize Euripides' originality. The blinding of the Cyclops and his cries of pain do not attract the other Cyclopes, as in Homer; rather, the attention focuses on the chorus of satyrs. The feelings of the latter, who express joy and satisfaction and mock the blind Polyphemus, are obviously opposed to his. Tears and cries (of Polyphemus) mix with joy (of the satyrs); the word παϊάν is appropriately used by the latter. This mixture of joy and grief has a counterpart in the earlier situation in the cave, as described by Odysseus at 425-6. But whereas there Polyphemus sang and Odysseus' companions cried, now roles are clearly reversed. Moreover, Polyphemus' desire and effort to catch Odysseus and his companions results in a game of blindman's buff (μυία), with comic effects, as the Cyclops, following the misleading directions of the satyrs, hits his head on the rocks of the cave. And, finally, there is the unexpected reference to a second entrance to the cave, which calls to mind Philoctetes' cave in Sophocles' tragedy (409). The word used is the same in both authors and is used only in these two plays, so the connection is certain: \textit{Cycl.} 707 δὲ ἀμφιτρήτος τῆςδε, \textit{Phil.} 19 δὲ ἀμφιτρήτος σύλιον. This is a Sophoclean reminiscence.

\textsuperscript{79} For instance, \textit{Hec.} 1035, 1037, 1039-40.
on Euripides’ part, which does not have any theatrical significance at the end of the play.

The exit of the chorus in two lines (708-9) marks the liberation of the satyrs and their reunion with Dionysus, who at the beginning of the play appeared as the cause of their slavery.

In conclusion, we are now in a position to reaffirm that in his Cyclops Euripides has used the corresponding Homeric episode with originality and freshness; echoes, reminiscences, and Homeric words and expressions are appropriately chosen and used; Homeric scenes and motifs usually acquire a different colour through allusions to contemporary social, political, and philosophical ideas, and by hinting at and exploiting known literary motifs, as well as referring and alluding to earlier plays – tragedies, comedies or satyr plays – either by Euripides himself or by others. In brief, we believe that this short play has all the merits to be regarded as a little masterpiece.

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80 Something which has not been noted is the fact that we have in Od. 13.109-112 a cave with two entrances; this is the cave at the shore of Ithaca, where the Phaiacians arrive and put the sleeping Odysseus. It is a large cave, with stalagmites and stalactites, in which a ship could safely enter; it has two entrances, the one from the sea for the mortals, and another higher up for the gods, which is prohibited for the mortals: ἔδω δὲ τε οἱ θύραι εἰσίν, / οἱ μὲν πρὸς Βορέα καταβαται ἄνθρωποι, / οἰ δ’ αὖ πρὸς Νότου εἰσὶ θεώτεραι οὖδὲ τι κείμη / ἄνδρες εἰσέρχονται, ἀλλ' ἀθανάτων ὁδὸς ἔστιν.