

INTRODUCTION TO *CYCLOPS*\*

INTEREST in Euripides' *Cyclops* is generally justified historically: other than a chunk of Sophocles' *Ichneutae*, it is the only example of a satyr-play, that ribald piece which in the dramatic festivals crowned a group of three tragedies or a tragic trilogy. But the *Cyclops* is more than historically interesting; it is, by modern standards, good fast farce, clearly stageworthy, with a fine dramatic intelligence behind it. The movement is typically Euripidean, not merely in the sharp reversal of roles and sympathies, the crisp dialogue and the consistent anachronization, but in formal structure and underlying idea as well. Moreover, despite the play's sportive obscenity and knockabout humor, its underlying idea is essentially serious. The *Cyclops*, that is, may be clearly a farce, but it is primarily a farce of ideas, a gay and ironic flirtation with the problem of civilized brutality. As such, it lies within the main stream of Euripides' tragic thought, and, if its treatment and tone differ from that of tragedy, the difference is less a difference of dramatic quality or genius than a difference of genre.

We should like to know a great deal more about satyr-drama as a genre than we do, and we should especially like to know what in fifth-century practice was the formal connection between a satyr-play and the three tragedies which preceded it. But unfortunately the *Cyclops* is undated and cannot, with any degree of certainty, be assigned to one of the extant tragedies.<sup>1</sup> In the absence of that crucial

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1. The most tempting suggestion has been, I think, that the *Cyclops* should be assigned to a group of three tragedies of which the extant *Hecuba* was one. (The *Hecuba* is dated, on very good grounds, almost certainly to 425 B.C.) The assignment is strengthened not merely by topical considerations (cf. E. Delebecque, *Euripide et la guerre du Péloponnèse*) but by very close formal resemblances between the two plays. Thus the blinding of Polyphemus parallels the blinding of Polymnestor, and Polyphemus' final appearance from the cave vividly recalls Polymnestor's emergence from the tent. In both plays again, the guiding idea is that of civilized brutality, and in both cases a barbaric vengeance is taken upon a barbarian (Polymnestor,

information, it becomes difficult to speak with assurance of the formal nature of the play or to generalize from it to the formal definition of fifth-century satyr-drama. Indeed, even if we possessed the requisite information, the very distance which separates the tragedy of Euripides from that of Aeschylus and Sophocles would tend by analogy to preclude a generalization about satyr-plays. One ancient writer, it is true, speaks of satyr-drama as being "tragedy-at-play" or "joking tragedy."<sup>2</sup> But this is hardly helpful, since it may mean either that satyr-drama was mock tragedy, or tragedy *buffa*, or pure farce, or simply a sportive treatment of the subject matter of tragedy. All of these are possibilities applicable to the *Cyclops*, but we have no evidence which might allow us to decide among them.

In point of origins the satyr-play, like both comedy and tragedy, was closely bound up with Dionysiac fertility ritual. Even in the fifth century satyr-drama in its frequent obscenity, its conventional use of Silenus as "nurse" and companion of Dionysus, and its chorus of satyrs with their *phalloi* preserves more vividly than tragedy the memory of its origins. What the original connection between tragedy and comedy and "satyr" may have been, we do not know, though Aristotle in a much disputed passage asserts that the satyr-play was one of the early stages of tragedy;<sup>3</sup> but the value of the testimony appears doubtful.<sup>4</sup> On the whole, scholars have preferred to believe that both satyr-drama and tragedy are independent developments of Dionysiac ritual and that satyr-drama was probably adopted by the dramatist Pratinas from a Peloponnesian source and attached to the Attic festivals. Alternatively, it is held that the double aspect of Dionysiac ritual—the mourning for the dead god and the

Polyphemus) by a "civilized" person (Hecuba, Odysseus). The final prophecies again closely parallel each other, and the portrayal of Odysseus in the *Hecuba* is given a great deal of point if we have in mind the sequel in *Cyclops*. In the dovetailing of actions and the reversal of roles, the two plays are strikingly similar.

2. Demetrius of Phalerum *De interp.* 169; cf. Horace *Ars poetica* 231-33.

3. *Poetics* 1449<sup>a</sup> 9 ff.

4. Cf. A. W. Pickard-Cambridge, *Dithyramb, Tragedy and Comedy* (Oxford, 1927), p. 124.

joyous celebration at his resurrection—accounts for the connection between tragedy and the satyr-play. On this theory tragedy contains the *agon* of the dying god, while the satyr-play, like comedy, exhibits the happy celebration for the reborn god and the ritual of the sacred marriage and rounds off the complete drama of the rite in a sportive coda. The presence in the *Cyclops* of an attenuated *komos* and a hinted mock (male) marriage between Silenus and Polyphemus offers some slight evidence for the theory. But it is this very attenuation of the ritual element in the play that reminds us that a theory of formal origins does not really explain what we need to know—the *literary* use and the meaning of the developed form. An account of origins may perhaps explain the conventions of a given form, but it will seldom explain the conscious literary deployment of those conventions.

For the rest our information is tantalizingly slight. Thus we know that the satyr-plays were briefer than the tragedies (the *Cyclops* is the shortest of extant plays); they had their own peculiar choral dance, the *sikinnis*, and they allowed, in prosody and diction, a very slight relaxation from tragic standards in the direction of colloquial speech. For its material satyr-drama drew upon the same sources in myth and *epos* as tragedy. Thus the *Oresteia* appears to have been followed by the *Proteus*, a satyr-play dealing with Menelaus' Egyptian adventure with the Old Man of the Sea, while the *Cyclops* is a conflation of the Polyphemus episode from the ninth book of the *Odyssey* with the story of the capture of Dionysus by Lydian pirates.<sup>5</sup> Both the chorus of satyrs and its "father" Silenus form a standard part of satyric convention, and their characters are accordingly stylized: the satyrs are boisterous, childlike "horse-men" (*not* "goat-men") with a strong streak of cowardice, while Silenus is at every point the ancestor of Falstaff—lewd, fat, bald, drunken, boastful, knavish, and foolish. Finally, it needs to be stressed that, however comic a satyr-play may seem, it is not to be confounded with Greek comedy, which differs from it not only in its material (usually free invention or mythological burlesque), but in structure, conventions, and the degree of topicality and license.

5. Cf. *Homeric Hymn to Dionysus*.

In plot and detail Euripides' adaptation of his Homeric material is remarkably close. If Odysseus here does not escape from the cave by clinging to a ram's belly, and if the immense boulder which in Homer blocked the cave has here been rolled away, these are clearly alterations demanded by the necessities of theatrical presentation. In Euripides the Cyclops is still the creature of his belly, a barking barbarian, and Odysseus is still in some sense the shrewd and civilized man who manages by exercise of mother wit to mutilate the man-eating monster and escape. Or so, at least, it might seem if we possessed only the first half of the play. But the *Cyclops* is not merely a dramatic retelling of Homer; rather, it is Homer's parable of the civilized man and the savage systematically anachronized into its fifth-century equivalent, an altogether different parable.

Neither Odysseus nor Polyphemus is really Homeric at all. Odysseus is not the type of the civilized man, and the Euripidean Cyclops, like the United States in Wilde's epigram, has passed directly from barbarism to decadence without pause for civilization. Both manifest late fifth-century types of corruption: Odysseus' Homeric heroism in its new context is systematically undercut, less heroism than a transparent vainglory and depraved eloquence; Polyphemus is less Caliban than Calicles, an outright exponent of philosophical egoism and the immoralist equation of night and right. Euripides has taken considerable pains, moreover, to indicate to his audience that this is no longer Homer's world, but their own. Thus, when Odysseus first appears, he is greeted by Silenus as a "glib sharper" and "son of Sisyphus." Now, whatever Odysseus may be in Homer, he is never merely a "glib sharper," and his father is Laertes, not Sisyphus. To an audience bred on Homer the distinction is revealing: at one blow Euripides deprives Odysseus of his Homeric paternity in order to attach him to Sisyphus, the proverbial type of cheat and thief, and thereby warns his audience of what they may expect. Odysseus is in fact the familiar depraved politician of the *Hecuba*, the *Trojan Women*, and the *Iphigeneia at Aulis*; he stands, as he almost always does in tragedy, for that refinement of intellect and eloquence which makes civilized brutality so much more terrible than mere savagery. In the *Cyclops*, however, he is on

the defensive, and there is irony in the reversal of roles as the man who refused mercy and *nomos* to Hecuba must now himself plead for it. If we sympathize with Odysseus at first, this initial sympathy is nonetheless quickly alienated by the sheer, otiose brutality of his revenge and by Polyphemus' transformation into a drunken, almost lovable, buffoon. The gory description of the Cyclops' cannibalism may perhaps justify Odysseus' revenge, but it does not thereby redeem its barbaric cruelty. Just as the full action of the *Hecuba* consists in reducing both Hecuba and the barbarian Polymnestor to a common subhuman cruelty, so the *Cyclops* shows, not the distinction, but the identity, between Odysseus and Polyphemus.

Odysseus' speech for *nomos* and mercy is the crux of the play. As Silenus recognizes, the speech is pure sophistry, but the sophistry has important consequences that we need to examine. The difficulty lies in the thoroughness of the anachronization and the allusions to the sanctions and background of the Peloponnesian War.

It opens with a disclaimer of responsibility for the Trojan War: "A god was responsible; don't blame men." Such disclaimers in Euripides normally operate to damn those who make them, as, for instance, Helen's disavowal of responsibility in the *Trojan Women*. The next argument sounds very strange indeed. The Greeks, Odysseus argues, have preserved the temples of Poseidon (father of Cyclops) and saved Hellas; therefore the Cyclops, who is Greek because he lives in Greek Sicily (another anachronism), should spare Odysseus and his men. What we have here is a covert but unmistakable allusion to the Persian Wars, when Athens claimed to have saved Hellas and the ancestral gods from the Persians. There is irony in the claim that it was piety which saved the silver-mines of Laurium on Cape Sunium (where there happened to be a shrine to Poseidon), but the larger irony is somewhat more complex.

What Odysseus is urging here is nothing more or less than the argument which Athens had used to acquire her empire: Athens had saved Hellas and should have the rewards of her deed. This sanction for empire was employed down to the time of the Peloponnesian War to coerce neutrals and unwilling states into the Athenian orbit, and the sanction was as loathsome to most Greeks as the Athenian

Empire. Herodotus, writing in the forties, is so much aware of the unpopularity of Athens and her sanction that he is reluctant to state the real truth which underlies the sanction—Athens *did* save Hellas. In 432 B.C., just before the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War, the unofficial Athenian envoys at Sparta could say of their empire:

We have a fair claim to our possessions. . . . We need not refer to remote antiquity . . . but to the Persian War and contemporary history we must refer, although we are rather tired of continually bringing this subject forward.<sup>6</sup>

By 416, the Athenian generals at Melos could argue naked imperialism; the empire had outgrown its sanction:

We shall not trouble you with specious pretences . . . either of how we have a right to our empire because we overthrew the Persians, or are now attacking you because of wrong that you have done us . . . since you know as well as we do that right, as the world goes, is only in question between equals in power, while the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must.<sup>7</sup>

This, then, is the sanction Odysseus urges, and it is one whose irony it would be difficult for his audience to miss. The irony lies in the fact that an argument normally used to deny mercy to others is here being used to obtain it. When it fails before the Cyclops' massive egoism, Odysseus resorts to the ultimate argument of the weak, law and civilized custom (*nomos*). In so doing he joins Thucydides' Plataeans and Melians, as well as his own victim Hecuba. And, like Hecuba, failing to receive *nomos*, he finally resorts to a revenge utterly unsanctioned by any civilized standards, *anomos*. The speech closes on an overt reference to the cost of human suffering in the Peloponnesian War. And here, as so often in Euripides, the really serious argument is put in the mouth of a man who is not qualified to make it, or who contradicts it in his actions. The contradiction lies in the inverted use of the imperialistic sanction and the implied indifference to human suffering in other circumstances.

If Odysseus speaks in part the language of the Athenian im-

6. Thuc. i. 73. 2 ff.

7. *Ibid.* v. 89.

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perialists and in part the language of the Melians, the Cyclops outdistances him by far. Devoid of respect for the gods, his religion is his belly and his right his desires. He speaks exactly the language of Plato's Thrasymachus and Callicles, a straightforward egoism resting on an appeal to Nature for the disregard of morality. *Nomos*, so far as he is concerned, is a mere convention of the weak to elude the strong. In the contrast, then, of Polyphemus and Odysseus we have no Homeric contrast of barbarism and cool, civilized intelligence, but a juxtaposition of two related types of civilized brutality whose difference is merely that of circumstance, one being weak, the other strong. It is because neither Cyclops nor Odysseus has any genuine moral dignity, because both of them are shown as effectively brutal and corrupt, that the bloody blinding of Polyphemus can come as close to pathos as it does without becoming any less comic.

The ending is in fact superbly controlled. As usual in Euripides, the sympathy invoked for one character is suddenly alienated and shifted to another; the victim and the oppressor change places. Polyphemus, from being first a Homeric cannibal and then a Euripidean Callicles, is suddenly turned into a decadent, rather likable buffoon who loathes war, understands generosity, and tipsily "rapes" Silenus. Odysseus makes his bid for glory by blinding this cannibal oaf while he sleeps drunkenly. The shift in sympathy is not decisive, because no real principle is involved; but it is not therefore illusory. Odysseus' action is contemptible, but not quite criminal; Polyphemus gets what he deserves, but we pity him. That we are meant to view the action in this way seems clear both in Polyphemus' final prophecy of trouble for Odysseus and in Odysseus' statement that he would have done wrong had he burned Troy but not avenged his men. Whatever his rights in avenging his men may be, they are not sanctioned by the burning of Troy, an action which the Cyclops condemns, and with him Euripides. The truth is that Odysseus and the Cyclops deserve, not justice, but each other. The *Cyclops* in its seriousness and its humor plays about a struggle for justice between two men who either distort justice or deny its existence and who cannot therefore meaningfully claim it when wronged. And yet they get it.

## THE CYCLOPS

### CHARACTERS

*Silenus*

*Chorus of satyrs*

*Coryphaeus, or chorus-leader*

*Odysseus*

*Cyclops, called Polyphemus*

*Members of Odysseus' crew*

*Slaves*

SCENE: *An enormous cave at the foot of Mt. Etna. In the foreground, a slope of pasture; on the right, a small brook. Silenus comes out of the cave to speak the prologue. He is old, fat, and bald. A horse's tail hangs down his legs. He wears a filthy tunic and carries a rake.*

*Silenus*

O Bromios,

thanks to you, my troubles are as many now  
as in my youth when my body still was strong!  
First I remember when Hera drove you mad  
and you left your nurses, the mountain nymphs.

And then there was that war with the Giants:  
there I stood, on your right, covering your flank  
with my spear. And I hit Enceladus  
square on the button of his shield and killed him.

Or wait: was that in a dream? No, by Zeus,  
for I showed the very spoils to Bacchus.

And now I must bail against a wilder wave  
of trouble. For when I heard that Hera  
had pricked on those Lydian pirates to sell you  
as a slave abroad, I hoisted sail with my sons  
to search for you. Right on the stern I stood,  
the tiller in my hands, steering the ship.

And my boys strained at the oars, churning white  
the green sea in our search for you, my king!

And then we had almost made Malea  
when an east wind cracked down and drove us here,  
to rocky Etna, where the one-eyed sons  
of the sea-god, the murderous Cyclopes,  
live in their desolate caves. One of them—  
they call him Polyphemus—captured us  
and made us slaves in his house. So now,  
instead of dancing in the feasts of Bacchus,

we herd the flocks of this godless Cyclops.  
 Down at the foot of the mountain, my sons—  
 young men all of them—watch the youngling herd.  
 I am assigned to stay and fill the troughs  
 and clean the quarters and play the chef  
 for the loathsome dinners of the Cyclops.  
 And now I must scour the cave with this rake—  
 these are my orders—to welcome back home  
 my absent master and his flock of sheep.

*(He halts suddenly, turns to the left and looks. A confused  
 hubbub, mingled with singing, offstage.)*

But I see my sons shepherding their sheep  
 this way. What? *(Shouts.)* How can you dance like that?  
 Do you think you're mustered at Bacchus' feast  
 and mincing your lewd way with lyre-music  
 to the halls of Althaea?

*(Preceded by a flute-player and driving their herds before them, the  
 chorus of satyrs bounds into the orchestra. Except for short goat-  
 skin jerkins, they are naked. About their waists they wear belts—  
 skin-colored—to each of which is fixed, in front, a phallus, and in  
 the rear, a horse's tail. They do a series of fast and intricate steps  
 as they push the stubborn rams, coax the ewes,  
 and round up the strays.)*

Chorus

*(To a ewe who dashes for the slope.)*

STROPHE

You there, with the fine pedigree  
 on both sides, dam and sire,  
 why run for the rocks?  
 Haven't you here a quiet breeze,  
 green grass for the grazing?  
 Look: the water from the brook  
 beside the cave  
 swirls through your troughs  
 and the small lambs bleat.

*(To an obstinate ram.)*

Hey, you too? Are you off as well  
 to crop on the dew on the hill?  
 Move, or I'll pelt you with stones!  
 In with you, horny-head, move along  
 into the fold of Shepherd Cyclops!

*(To a stubborn ewe.)*

ANTISTROPHE

Relieve your swollen teats!  
 Come, suckle your young whom you left  
 all alone in the lamb-pens!  
 Asleep all day, your new-born lambs  
 bleat that they want you.  
 Leave your cropping and into the fold,  
 into the rocks of Etna!

[Hey, you too? Are you off as well  
 to crop on the dew on the hill?  
 Move, or I'll pelt you with stones!  
 In with you, horny-head, move along  
 into the fold of Shepherd Cyclops!]

EPODE

No Bacchus here! Not here the dance,  
 or the women whirling the *thyrsos*,  
 or the timbrels shaken,  
 where the springs rill up!  
 Not here the gleam of wine,  
 and no more at Nysa with nymphs,  
 crying *Iacchos! Iacchos!*  
*Where is Aphrodite? . . .*  
 she that I used to fly after  
 along with the bare-footed Bacchae!  
 Dear lord Bacchus, where do you run,  
 tossing your auburn hair?  
 For I, your servant, am a wretched slave,  
 tricked out in dirty goatskin

to serve a one-eyed Cyclops,  
and out of the way, lord, of your love.

*(Silenus, who has been scanning anxiously the horizon on the  
right, turns suddenly, his finger on his lips.)*

Silenus

Be quiet, my sons. Quick, order the slaves  
to corral the flocks into the rock-fold.

Coryphaeus

Move along there.

*(Slaves appear and hustle the animals into the cave.)*

But why this hurry, father?

Silenus

I see a Greek ship drawn up on the shore  
and oarsman led by a captain coming  
toward our cave. They carry water-pitchers  
and empty containers about their necks:  
they'll want supplies. Poor strangers, who are they?  
They can't know our master Polyphemus,  
coming like this to the maneater's cave  
and looking for a welcome in his maw.  
But hush, so we can learn from where they've come,  
and why, to Sicily and Mt. Etna.

*(Odysseus appears on the right. He carries a sword. A wine-flask  
made of skin is suspended from his neck; a cup is attached to the  
cord. He is followed by crew-members carrying pitchers and jugs.)*

Odysseus

Strangers, could you tell us where we might find  
running water? We have nothing to drink.  
Would some one of you like to sell some food  
to hungry sailors? *What?* Do I see right?  
We must have come to the city of Bacchus.  
These are satyrs I see around the cave.  
Let me greet the oldest among you first.

Silenus

Greeting, stranger. Who are you, and from where?

Odysseus

I am Odysseus of Ithaca, king of the Cephalenians.

Silenus

I've heard of you: a glib sharper, Sisyphus' bastard.

Odysseus

I am he. Keep your abuse to yourself.

Silenus

From what port did you set sail for Sicily?

Odysseus

We come from Troy and from the war there.

Silenus

What? Couldn't you chart your passage home?

Odysseus

We were driven here by wind and storm.

Silenus

Too bad. I had the same misfortune.

Odysseus

You too were driven from your course by storm?

Silenus

We were chasing the pirates who captured Bacchus.

Odysseus

What is this place? Is it inhabited?

Silenus

This is Etna, the highest peak in Sicily.

Odysseus

Where are the walls and the city-towers?

Silenus

This is no city. No man inhabits here.

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*Odysseus*  
Who does inhabit it? Wild animals?

*Silenus*  
The Cyclopes. They live in caves, not houses.

*Odysseus*  
Who governs them? Or do the people rule?

*Silenus*  
They are savages. There is no government. 120

*Odysseus*  
How do they live? Do they till the fields?

*Silenus*  
Their whole diet is milk, cheese, and meat.

*Odysseus*  
Do they grow grapes and make the vine give wine?

*Silenus*  
No. The land is sullen. There is no dance.

*Odysseus*  
Are they hospitable to strangers here? 125

*Silenus*  
Strangers, they say, make excellent eating.

*Odysseus*  
What? You say they feast on human flesh?

*Silenus*  
Here every visitor is devoured.

*Odysseus*  
Where is this Cyclops now? In the . . . house?

*Silenus*  
Gone hunting on Mt. Etna with his packs. 130

*Odysseus*  
What should we do to make our escape?

*Silenus*  
I don't know, Odysseus. We'll do what we can.

*Odysseus*  
Then sell us some bread. We have none left.

*Silenus*  
There is nothing to eat, I said, except meat.

*Odysseus*  
Meat is good, and it will stop our hunger. 135

*Silenus*  
We do have fig-cheese. And there is milk.

*Odysseus*  
Bring it out. The buyer should see what he buys.

*Silenus*  
Tell me, how much are you willing to pay?

*Odysseus*  
In money, nothing. But I have some . . . wine.

*Silenus*  
Delicious word! How long since I've heard it. 140

*Odysseus*  
Maron, son of a god, gave me this wine.

*Silenus*  
Not the same lad I once reared in these arms?

*Odysseus*  
The son of Bacchus himself, to be brief.

*Silenus*  
Where is the wine? on board ship? you have it?

*Odysseus*  
In this flask, old man. Look for yourself. 145

*Silenus*  
That? That wouldn't make one swallow for me.

*Odysseus*  
No? For each swallow you take, the flask gives two.

*Silenus*  
A fountain among fountains, that! I like it.



*Odysseus*  
Will you have it unwatered to start with?

*Silenus*  
That's fair. The buyer should have a sample. 150

*Odysseus*  
I have a cup here to go with the flask.

*Silenus*  
Pour away. A drink will joggle my memory.

*Odysseus*  
*(Unstoppers the flask, pours out a cup and waves it under Silenus' nose.)*

There you are.

*Silenus*  
Mmmmmm. Gods, what a bouquet!

*Odysseus*  
Can you see it?

*Silenus*  
No, by Zeus, but I can whiff it.

*Odysseus*  
Have another. Then you'll *sing* its praises. 155

*Silenus*  
Mmmmmmaa. A dance for Bacchus! La de da.

*Odysseus*  
Did that purl down your gullet sweetly?

*Silenus*  
Right down to the tips of my toenails.

*Odysseus*  
Besides the wine, we'll give you money. 160

*Silenus*  
Money be damned! Just pour out the wine.

*Odysseus*  
Then bring out your cheese, or some lambs.

*Silenus*  
Right away.  
I don't give a hoot for any master.  
I would go mad for one cup of that wine!  
I'd give away the herds of all the Cyclopes. 165  
Once I get drunk and happy, I'd go jump  
in the sea off the Leucadian rock!  
The man who doesn't like to drink is mad.  
Why, when you're drunk, you stand up stiff down here  
*(Gestures.)*  
and then get yourself a fistful of breast 170  
and browse on the soft field ready to your hands.  
You dance, and goodbye to troubles. Well then,  
why shouldn't I adore a drink like that  
and be damned to the stupid Cyclops  
with his eye in the middle?  
*(He enters the cave.)*

*Coryphaeus*  
Listen, Odysseus, we'd like a word with you. 175

*Odysseus*  
By all means. We are all friends here.

*Coryphaeus*  
Did you take Helen when you took Troy?

*Odysseus*  
We rooted out the whole race of Priam.

*Coryphaeus*  
When you took that woman, did you all take turns  
and bang her? She liked variety in men, 180  
the fickle bitch! Why, the sight of a man  
with embroidered pants and a golden chain  
so fluttered her, she left Menelaus,  
a fine little man. I wish there were 185  
no women in the world—except for me.  
*(Silenus reappears from the cave, his arms loaded with wicker panniers of cheese; he leads some lambs.)*

Silenus

King Odysseus, here are some lambs for you,  
the fat of the flock, and here, a good stock  
of creamed cheeses. Take them and leave the cave  
as fast as you can. But first give me a drink  
of that blessed wine to seal our bargain.  
Help us! Here comes the Cyclops! What shall we do?

190

Odysseus

We're finished now, old man. Where can we run?

Silenus

Into the cave. You can hide in there.

195

Odysseus

Are you mad? Run right into the trap?

Silenus

No danger. The rocks are full of hiding-places.

Odysseus

*(Grandiloquently.)*

Never. Why, Troy itself would groan aloud  
if we ran from one man. Many's the time  
I stood off ten thousand Phrygians with my shield.  
If die we must, we must die with honor.  
If we live, we live with our old glory!

200

*(The satyrs run pell-mell around the orchestra; Silenus slinks into  
the cave. On the left appears a bearded man of great  
height. He holds a club and is followed by dogs.)*

Cyclops

Here. Here. What's going on? What's this uproar?  
Why this Bacchic hubbub? There's no Bacchus here,  
no bronze clackers or rattling castanets!  
How are my newborn lambs in the cave?  
Are they at the teat, nuzzling their mothers?  
Are the wicker presses filled with fresh cheese?  
Well? What do you say? Answer, or my club  
will drub the tears out of you! Look up, not down.

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Coryphaeus

There. We're looking right up at Zeus himself.  
I can see Orion and all the stars.

Cyclops

Is my dinner cooked and ready to eat?

Coryphaeus

Ready and waiting. You have only to bolt it.

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Cyclops

And are the vats filled up, brimming with milk?

Coryphaeus

You can swill a whole hogshhead, if you like.

Cyclops

Cow's milk, or sheep's milk, or mixed?

Coryphaeus

Whatever you like. Just don't swallow me.

Cyclops

You least. I'd soon be dead if I had you  
jumping through your capers in my belly.

220

*(He suddenly sees the Greeks standing near the cave.)*

Hey! what's that crowd I see over by the cave?  
Have pirates or thieves taken the country?  
Look: sheep from my fold tied up with withies!  
And cheese-presses all around! And the old man  
with his bald head swollen red with bruises!

225

*(Silenus emerges from the cave, groaning; he is red-faced  
from the wine.)*

Silenus

Ohhh. I'm all on fire. They've beaten me up.

Cyclops

Who did? Who's been beating your head, old man?

Silenus

*(Indicating the Greeks.)*

They did, Cyclops. I wouldn't let them rob you.

230

*Cyclops*

Didn't they know that I am a god?  
Didn't they know my ancestors were gods?

*Silenus*

I tried to tell them. But they went on robbing.  
I tried to stop them from stealing your lambs  
and eating your cheeses. What's more, they said  
they would yoke you to a three-foot collar  
and squeeze out your bowels through your one eye,  
and scourge your backsides with a whip,  
and then they were going to tie you up  
and throw you on a ship and give you away  
for lifting rocks or for work at a mill.

*Cyclops*

Is that so? Run and sharpen my cleavers.  
Take a big bunch of faggots and light it.  
I'll murder them right now and stuff my maw  
with their meat hot from the coals. Why wait  
to carve? I'm fed up with mountain food:  
too many lions and stags and too long  
since I've had a good meal of manmeat.

*Silenus*

And quite right, master. A change in diet  
is very pleasant. It's been a long time  
since we've had visitors here at the cave.

*Odysseus*

Cyclops, let your visitors have their say.  
We came here to your cave from our ship  
because we needed food. This fellow here  
sold us some lambs in exchange for wine—  
all quite voluntary, no coercion.  
There's not a healthy word in what he says;  
the fact is he was caught peddling your goods.

*Silenus*

I? Why, damn your soul.

*Odysseus*

If I'm lying. . . .

*Silenus*

I swear, Cyclops, by your father Poseidon,  
by Triton the great, I swear by Nereus,  
by Calypso and by Nereus' daughters,  
by the holy waves and every species of fish,  
I swear, dear master, sweet little Cyclops,  
I did not sell your goods to the strangers!  
If I did, then let my dear children die for it.

*Coryphaeus*

And the same to you. With these very eyes  
I saw you selling goods to the strangers.  
And if I'm lying, then let my father  
die for it. But don't do wrong to strangers.

*Cyclops*

You're lying. I would rather believe him  
*(He indicates Silenus.)*

than Rhadamanthus himself. And I say  
that he's right. But I want to question you.  
Where have you come from, strangers? where to?  
And tell me in what city you grew up.

*Odysseus*

We are from Ithaca. After we sacked  
the city of Troy, sea-winds drove us here,  
safe and sound, to your country, Cyclops.

*Cyclops*

Was it you who sacked Troy-on-Scamander  
because that foul Helen was carried off?

*Odysseus*

We did. Our terrible task is done.

*Cyclops*

You ought to die for shame: to go to war  
with the Phrygians for a single woman!

*Odysseus*

A god was responsible; don't blame men.  
 But we ask as free men, we implore you,  
 do not, O noble son of the sea-god,  
 murder men who come to your cave as friends.  
 Do not profane your mouth by eating us.

(*He waxes rhetorical.*)

For it is we, my lord, who everywhere  
 in Hellas preserved your father Poseidon  
 in the tenure of his temples. Thanks to us,  
 Taenarus' sacred harbor is inviolate;  
 the peak of Sunium with its silver-lobes  
 sacred to Athena, is still untouched;  
 and safe, the sanctuaries of Geraestus!  
 We did not betray Greece—perish the thought!—  
 to Phrygians. And you have a share in this:  
 for this whole land, under volcanic Etna  
 in whose depths you live, is part of Hellas.

(*The Cyclops shows disapproval.*)

In any case—and if you disagree—  
 all men honor that custom whereby  
 shipwrecked sailors are clothed and protected.  
 Above all, they should not gorge your mouth and paunch,  
 nor be spitted as men might spit an ox.  
 The land of Priam has exhausted Greece,  
 soaked up the blood of thousands killed in war:  
 wives made widows, women without their sons,  
 old men turned snow-white. If you roast the rest  
 for your ungodly meal, where will Hellas turn?  
 Change your mind, Cyclops! Forget your hunger!  
 Forget this sacrilege and do what is right.  
 Many have paid the price for base profits.

*Silenus*

A word of advice, Cyclops. If you eat  
 all of his flesh and chew on his tongue,  
 you'll become eloquent and very glib.

*Cyclops*

Money's the wise man's religion, little man.  
 The rest is mere bluff and purple patches.  
 I don't give a damn for my father's shrines  
 along the coast! Why did you think I would?  
 And I'm not afraid of Zeus's thunder;  
 in fact, I don't believe Zeus is stronger  
 than I am. And anyway I don't care,  
 and I'll tell you why I don't care. When Zeus  
 pours down rain, I take shelter in this cave  
 and feast myself on roast lamb or venison.  
 Then I stretch myself and wash down the meal,  
 flooding my belly with a vat of milk.  
 Then, louder than ever Zeus can thunder,  
 I fart through the blankets. When the wind sweeps down  
 with snow from Thrace, I wrap myself in furs  
 and light up the fire. Then let it snow  
 for all I care! Whether it wants or not,  
 the earth must grow the grass that feeds my flocks.  
 And as for sacrifices, I make mine,  
 not to the gods, but the greatest god of all,  
 this belly of mine! To eat, to drink  
 from day to day, to have no worries—  
 that's the real Zeus for your clever man!  
 As for those who embroider human life  
 with their little laws—damn the lot of them!  
 I shall go right on indulging myself—  
 by eating you. But, to be in the clear,  
 I'll be hospitable and give you fire  
 and my father's water—plus a cauldron.  
 Once it starts to boil, it will render down  
 your flesh very nicely. So, inside with you,  
 and gather round the altar to the god  
 of the cave, and wish him hearty eating.

(*Cyclops enters the cave, driving Odysseus' crew before him.*)

285

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345

*Odysseus*

Gods! Have I escaped our hardships at Troy  
and on the seas only to be cast up  
and wrecked on the reef of this savage heart?  
O Pallas, lady, daughter of Zeus, now  
if ever, help me! Worse than war at Troy,  
I have come to my danger's deepest place.  
O Zeus, god of strangers, look down on me  
from where you sit, throned among the bright stars!  
If you do not look down upon me now,  
you are no Zeus, but a nothing at all!

*(He disappears into the cave; Silenus follows him.)*

*Chorus*

Open the vast O of your jaws, Cyclops!  
Dinner is served: the limbs of your guests,  
boiled, roasted, or broiled, ready for you  
to gnaw, rend, and chew  
while you loll on your shaggy goatskin.  
Don't ask me to dinner. Stow that cargo  
on your own. Let me keep clear of this cave,  
well clear of the Cyclops of Etna,  
this loathsome glutton,  
who gorges himself on the guts of his guests!  
Savage! Stranger to mercy! A monster  
who butchers his guests on his hearth,  
who boils up their flesh and bolts it,  
whose foul mouth munches  
on human meat plucked from the sizzling coals!

*(Odysseus appears from the cave.)*

*Odysseus*

Zeus, how can I say what I saw in that cave?  
Unbelievable horrors, the kind of things  
men do in myths and plays, not in real life!

*Coryphaeus*

Has that god-forsaken Cyclops butchered  
your crew? Tell us what happened, Odysseus.

*Odysseus*

He snatched up two of my men, the soundest  
and heaviest. He weighed them in his hands.

*Coryphaeus*

How horrible! How could you stand to watch?

*Odysseus*

First, after we had entered the cave,  
he lit a fire and tossed down on the huge hearth  
logs from a vast oak—you would have needed  
three wagons merely to carry the load.  
Then he pulled his pallet of pine-needles  
close to the fire. After he milked the sheep,  
he filled a hundred-gallon vat with milk.  
By his side, he put an ivy-wood box,  
nearly four feet in width and six feet deep.  
Next he put a cauldron of brass to boil  
on the fire, and beside it thorn-wood spits  
whose points had been sharpened in the coals  
and the rest trimmed down with an axe. There were  
bowls for catching blood, big as Etna,  
and set flush against the blade of the axe.  
Well, when this damned cook of Hades was ready,  
he snatched up two of my men. With one blow  
he slit the throat of one over the lip  
of the brass cauldron. Holding the other  
by the heels, he slammed him against a rock  
and bashed out his brains. Then he hacked away  
the flesh with his terrible cleaver  
and put the pieces to roast on the coals.  
The leftovers he tossed in the pot to boil.  
With the tears streaming down, I went up close  
and waited on the Cyclops. The others,

their faces ashen, huddled up like birds  
in the crannies of the rocks. Then he leaned back,  
bloated with his awful meal on my men,  
and let out a staggering belch. Just then

410

some god sent me a marvelous idea!  
I filled a cup and gave him Maron's wine  
to drink. "Cyclops," I said, "son of the sea-god,  
see what a heavenly drink yield the grapes  
of Greece, the gladness of Dionysus!"

415

Glutted with his dreadful meal, he took it  
and drained it off at one gulp, then lifted  
his hands in thanks: "You are the best of guests!  
You have given me a noble drink to crown  
a noble meal." When I saw how pleased he was,  
I poured him another, knowing the wine  
would quickly fuddle him and pay him back.  
Then he started to sing. I poured one drink  
after another and warmed his belly.

420

So there he is, inside, singing away  
while my crew wails; you can hear the uproar.

425

I slipped quietly out. Now, if you agree,  
I'd like to save myself and you as well.

So tell me, yes or no, whether you want  
to escape this monster and live with the nymphs  
in the halls of Bacchus. Your father in there  
agrees, but he's weak and loves his liquor.

430

He's stuck to the cup as though it were glue,  
and can't fly. But you are young, so follow me  
and save yourselves; find again your old friend,  
Dionysus, so different from this Cyclops!

435

*Coryphaeus*

My good friend, if only we might see that day  
when we escape at last this godless Cyclops!

(*Showing his phallus.*)

This poor hose has been a bachelor  
a long time now. But we can't eat the Cyclops *back!*

440

*Odysseus*

Listen to my plan for setting you free  
and our revenge upon this loathsome beast.

*Coryphaeus*

Tell on. I would rather hear tell of his death  
than hear all the harps in Asia play.

*Odysseus*

He is so delighted with Bacchus' drink  
he wants to carouse with his relatives.

445

*Coryphaeus*

I see. You'll set an ambush in the woods  
and kill him—or push him over a cliff.

*Odysseus*

No, I had something more subtle in mind.

*Coryphaeus*

I thought from the first you were sly. What then?

450

*Odysseus*

I hope to stop his going on this spree  
by saying he shouldn't give his wine away,  
but keep it for himself and live in bliss.

Then, as soon as the wine puts him to sleep,  
I'll take my sword and sharpen up the trunk  
of an olive tree I saw inside the cave.

455

I'll put it in the coals and when it's caught,  
I'll shove it home, dead in the Cyclops' eye,  
and blind him. Just like a timber-fitter  
whirling his auger around with a belt,  
I'll screw the brand in his eye, round and round,  
scorch out his eyeball and blind him for good.

460

*Coryphaeus*

Bravo! I'm for your plan with all my heart.

465

*Odysseus*

And finally, my friends, I'll embark you  
and your old father aboard my black ship  
and sail full speed away from this place.

*Coryphaeus*

May I lend a hand at this ritual?  
Help hold the pole when you put out his eye?  
This is one sacrifice I want to share.

470

*Odysseus*

You must. The brand is huge. You all must lift.

*Coryphaeus*

I could shoulder a hundred wagon-loads  
so long as Cyclops died a wretched death!  
We'll smoke out his eye like a hornets' nest.

475

*Odysseus*

Be quiet now. You know my stratagem.  
When I give the word, obey your leaders.  
I refuse to save myself and leave my men  
trapped inside. I could, of course, escape:  
here I am, outside. But I have no right  
to abandon my crew and save myself alone.

480

*(He enters the cave.)*

*Chorus*

Who'll be first along the brand? Who next?  
We'll shove it square in the Cyclops' eye!  
We'll rip away his sight.

485

Quiet.

Shhhh.

*(Polyphemus appears from the cave flanked by Odysseus and  
Silenus. Odysseus carries the flask and cup, while Silenus  
holds a pitcher and a mixing-bowl.)*

Here he comes, flat, off-key drunkard,  
reeling out of his home in the rock,

490

braying some wretched tune. Ha!  
We'll give him lessons in carousing!

*(Polyphemus stumbles blindly about.)*

A little while: then, perfect blindness!

*First semichorus*

Happy the man who cries *Evohé!*  
stretched out full length and making merry,  
for whom the wine keeps flowing,  
whose arms are open to his friend!  
Lucky man, upon whose bed there blows  
the soft bloom of a lovely girl  
with gleaming hair, sweet with oil!  
who cries: "Who'll open me the door?"

495

500

*Cyclops*

Mamama. Am I crammed with wine!  
How I love the fun of a feast!  
The hold of my little ship  
is stuffed right up to the gunwales!  
This marvelous meal reminds me:  
I should go feast in the soft spring  
with my brothers, the Cyclopes.  
Here, here, my friend, hand me the flask.

505

510

*Second semichorus*

O the flash of a handsome Eye!  
Handsome himself comes from his house,  
Handsome the groom, Handsome the lover!  
A soft bride burns for this groom;  
she burns in the cool of the cave!  
And soon we shall wreath his head  
with a wreath of reddest flowers!

515

*Odysseus*

Listen, Cyclops. I've spent a lot of time  
with this drink of Bacchus I gave you.

520

*Cyclops*

What sort of god is this Bacchus held to be?

*Odysseus*

Best of all in blessing the lives of men.

*Cyclops*

At least he makes very tasty belching.

(Belching.)

*Odysseus*

That's the kind of god he is: hurts no one.

*Cyclops*

How can a god bear to live in a flask?

525

*Odysseus*

Wherever you put him, he's quite content.

*Cyclops*

Gods shouldn't shut themselves up in wine-skins.

*Odysseus*

What matter, if you like him? Does the flask irk you?

*Cyclops*

I loathe the flask. The wine is what I like.

*Odysseus*

Then you should stay here and enjoy yourself.

530

*Cyclops*

Shouldn't I share the wine with my brothers?

*Odysseus*

Keep it to yourself; you'll be more esteemed.

*Cyclops*

But I'd be more useful if I shared it.

*Odysseus*

Yes, but carousing often ends in fights.

*Cyclops*

I'm so drunk nothing could hurt me now.

535

*Odysseus*

My dear man, drunkards ought to stay at home.

*Cyclops*

But the man's a fool who drinks by himself.

*Odysseus*

It's the wise man who stays home when he's drunk.

*Cyclops*

What should we do, Silenus? Should I stay home?

*Silenus*

I would. Why do we want more drinkers, Cyclops?

540

*Cyclops*

(Yawning.)

Anyway, the ground is soft and the flowers. . . .

*Silenus*

There's nothing like a drink when the sun is hot.  
Lie down there; stretch yourself out on the ground.

(Cyclops obediently lies down, and furtively Silenus  
puts the bowl behind his back.)

*Cyclops*

There. Why did you put the bowl behind my back?

545

*Silenus*

Someone might tip it over.

*Cyclops*

You wanted  
to steal a drink. Put it in the middle.  
You there, stranger, tell me what your name is.

*Odysseus*

Nobody is my name. But how will you reward me?

*Cyclops*

I will eat you the last of all your crew.

550

*Silenus*

That's a fine gift to give your guest, Cyclops.

(He quickly drains cup.)



*Cyclops*

What are you doing? Drinking on the sly?

*Silenus*

The wine kissed me—for my beautiful eyes.

*Cyclops*

Watch out. You love the wine; it doesn't love you.

*Silenus*

Yes, by Zeus, it has a passion for my good looks.

*Cyclops*

Here, pour me a cupful. But just *pour* it.

*Silenus*

How is it mixed? Let me taste and see.

*(He takes a quick pull.)*

*Cyclops*

Damnation! give it here.

*Silenus*

By Zeus, not before

I see you crowned—

*(He offers Cyclops a wreath of flowers.)*

and have another drink.

*(He empties the cup.)*

*Cyclops*

This wine-pourer is a cheat!

*Silenus*

Not at all.

The wine's so good it slides down by itself.

Now wipe yourself off before you drink again.

*Cyclops*

*(Wiping his face and beard.)*

There. My mouth is clean and so is my beard.

*Silenus*

Then crook your arm—gracefully now—and drink,  
just as you see me drink—and now you don't.

*(He drains cup.)*

*Cyclops*

Here! What are you doing?

565

*Silenus*

Guzzling sweetly.

*Cyclops*

*(Snatching away the cup and handing it to Odysseus.)*

Here, stranger. Take the flask and pour for me.

*Odysseus*

At least the wine feels at home in my hand.

*Cyclops*

Come on, *pour*!

*Odysseus*

I *am* pouring. Relax, friend.

*Cyclops*

Relax? That's not so easy when you're drunk.

*Odysseus*

There, take it up and drink down every drop,  
and don't say die until the wine is gone.

570

*Cyclops*

Mama. What a wizard the vine must be!

*Odysseus*

If you drench yourself on a full stomach  
and swill your belly, you'll sleep like a log.

Leave a drop, and Bacchus will shrivel you up.

575

*Cyclops*

*(Reeling.)*

Whoosh! I can scarcely swim out of this flood.

Pure pleasure! Ohhh. Earth and sky whirling around,

all jumbled up together! Look: I can see

the throne of Zeus and the holy glory

of the gods.

580

*(The satyrs dance around him suggestively.)*

No, I couldn't make love to you!

The Graces tempt me! My Ganymede here

*(He grabs Silenus.)*

is good enough for me. With him I'll sleep  
magnificently. By these Graces, I will!  
And anyway, I prefer boys to girls.

*Silenus*

Am I Zeus' little Ganymede, Cyclops? 585

*Cyclops*

You are, by Zeus! The boy I stole from Dardanos!

*Silenus*

I'm done for, children. Foul things await me.

*Cyclops*

Sneer at your lover, do you, because he's drunk?

*Silenus*

It's a bitter wine I'll have to drink now.  
(*Cyclops drags off Silenus protesting into the cave.*)

*Odysseus*

To work, you noble sons of Dionysus!  
Our man's inside the cave. In a short while  
his belly will heave its foul meal of flesh.  
Look, the brand has begun to smoke inside.  
We prepared it for just this: to smoke out  
the Cyclops' eye. Now you must act like men. 595

*Coryphaeus*

Our will is made of unbreakable rock.  
But hurry inside before *that* happens  
to my father. All is ready out here.

*Odysseus*

(*Prays.*)

O Hephaestus, ruler over Etna,  
free yourself from this vile neighbor of yours!  
Sear out his bright eye at one blow! O Sleep,  
child of black Night, leap with all your might  
on this god-detested beast! And do not,  
after our glorious trials at Troy, 600

betray Odysseus and his crew to death  
from a man who cares for neither man nor god. 605  
If you do, we will make a goddess of Chance,  
and count her higher than all the other gods!

(*He disappears into the cave.*)

*Chorus*

Grim tongs shall clutch by the throat  
this beast who bolts down his guests.  
Fire shall quench the fire of his eye. 610  
The brand, big as a tree, already waits,  
waits in the coals. 615

On, wine, to your work!

Rip out the eye of this raving Cyclops!  
Make him regret the day he drank you!  
What I want with all my soul to see  
is Bacchus, the god who loves the ivy!  
Shall I ever see that day? 620

(*Odysseus reappears from the cave.*)

*Odysseus*

Quiet, you dogs! By the gods, be quiet!  
Hold your tongues. I don't want a man of you  
to wink or clear his throat or even breathe. 625  
If we wake up that scourge of evil,  
we won't be able to sear out his eye.

(*The satyrs freeze into silence. The following dialogue  
is conducted entirely in whispers.*)

*Coryphaeus*

We are quiet. Our mouths are locked up tight.

*Odysseus*

To work then. And grab the brand with both hands  
when you enter the cave. The point is red-hot. 630

*Coryphaeus*

You should tell us our stations. Who'll be first  
on the blazing pole? And then we can all  
take our part in searing out the Cyclops' eye.

First parastate

Where we stand, over here by the entrance,  
we're too far away to reach his eye.

635

Second parastate

*(Limping in pain.)*

And just this minute we've gone lame.

First parastate

And we have too. While we were standing here  
we sprained our ankles, I don't know how.

Odysseus

Sprained your ankles, standing still?

640

Second parastate

And my eyes  
are full of dust and ashes from somewhere.

Odysseus

What cowards! I won't get any help from you.

Coryphaeus

And because I feel for my back and spine  
and don't want to have my teeth knocked out,  
I'm a coward, am I? But I can say  
a fine Orphic spell that will make the brand  
fly of its own accord into the skull  
of this one-eyed whelp of Earth and scorch him up.

645

Odysseus

I knew from that first what sort you were,  
and now I know it better. If you're too weak  
to lend a hand, at least cheer on my men  
and put some heart in them by shouting.

650

*(He enters the cave.)*

Coryphaeus

We'll shout and this Nobody will run the risks.  
We'll fuddle the Cyclops with our shouting.

655

Chorus

*(Dancing excitedly, shouting at the top of its lungs, and imitating the action taking place in the cave.)*

Go! Go! As hard as you can!  
Push! Thrust! Faster! Burn off  
the lashes of the guest-eater!  
Smoke him out, burn him out,  
the shepherd of Etna!  
Twist it! Turn! Careful:  
he is hurt and desperate.

660

*(A great shriek from within the cave.)*

Cyclops

Owwooooo! My eye is scorched to ashes!

665

Coryphaeus

Oh song of songs! Sing it for me, Cyclops!

Cyclops

Owoo! They've murdered me! I'm finished!  
But you won't escape this cave to enjoy  
your triumph, you contemptible nothings.  
I'll stand at the entrance and block it—so.

*(Polyphemus appears at the threshold of the cave and stretches his arms across it; his face streams with blood.)*

Coryphaeus

What's the matter, Cyclops?

Cyclops

I'm dying.

Coryphaeus

You look terrible.

Cyclops

I feel terrible.

670

Coryphaeus

Did you get so drunk you fell in the fire?

Cyclops

Nobody wounded me.

Coryphaeus  
Then you're not hurt.

Cyclops  
Nobody blinded me.

Coryphaeus  
Then you're not blind.

Cyclops  
Blind as you.

Coryphaeus  
How could nobody make you blind?

Cyclops  
You mock me. Where is Nobody?

Coryphaeus  
Nowhere.

Cyclops  
It's the stranger I mean, you fool, the one  
who stuffed me full of wine and did me in.

Coryphaeus  
*(Sententiously.)*  
Wine is tricky; very hard to wrestle with.

Cyclops  
By the gods, has he escaped or is he inside?

Coryphaeus  
There they are, standing quiet over there,  
under cover of the rock.

Cyclops  
On which side?

Coryphaeus  
On your right.  
*(Cyclops leaves the entrance and stumbles with outstretched  
hands toward the right. Meanwhile the Greeks  
steal out of the cave.)*

Cyclops  
Where?

675

680

Coryphaeus  
Over against the rock.  
Do you have them?

Cyclops  
*(Running into a jutting rock.)*  
Ouf! Trouble on trouble.  
I've split my head.

Coryphaeus  
And now they've escaped you.

Cyclops  
This way, did you say?

Coryphaeus  
No, the other way.

Cyclops  
Which way?

Coryphaeus  
Turn around. There. On your left.

Cyclops  
You're laughing at me in my misery.

Coryphaeus  
Not now. There he is in front of you.

Cyclops  
Where are you, demon?  
*(The Greeks stand at the entrance on the right, a whole  
length of the stage away from Cyclops.)*

Odysseus  
Out of your reach,  
Looking after the safety of Odysseus.

Cyclops  
What? A new name? Have you changed your name?

Odysseus  
Odysseus: the name my father gave me.  
You have had to pay for your unholy meal.

685

690

I would have done wrong to have fired Troy  
but not revenge the murder of my men.

695

*Cyclops*

Ah! The old oracle has been fulfilled.  
It said that after you had come from Troy,  
you would blind me. But you would pay for this,  
it said, and wander the seas for many years.

700

*Odysseus*

Much I care! What's done is done. As for me,  
I'm off to the shore where I'll launch my ship  
on the Sicilian shore and sail for home.

(Exit.)

*Cyclops*

Not yet. I'll rip a boulder from this cliff  
and crush you and all your crew beneath it.  
Blind I may be, but I'll reach the mountain-top  
soon enough through the tunnel in the cave.

705

(Exits into cave.)

*Chorus*

We'll enlist in the crew of Odysseus.  
From now our orders come from Bacchus.

THE COMPLETE GREEK TRAGEDIES

*Edited by David Grene and Richmond Lattimore*

EURIPIDES • II

THE CYCLOPS

*Translated by William Arrowsmith*

HERACLES

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