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THE MYTH OF THE CYCLOPS IN ANTIQUITY AND IN THE SPANISH GOLDEN AGE

MIT CYKLOPA W ANTYKU I LITERATURZE HISZPAŃSKIEJ ZŁOTYCH WIEKÓW

W literaturze starożytnej obecne są dwa, biegunowo odmienne, motywy podania o Cyklopie: epicki, znany z IX ks. *Odysei*, przywołany później i poddany modyfikacji przez Eurypidesa w dramacie satyrowym *Cyklop* oraz liryczno-erotyczny spopularyzowany przez Teokryta w XI sielance, *Skargi Cyklopa*. Wersję Teokryta rozbudował Owidiusz w XIII ks. *Metamorfoz*. Pomostem między obydwoma wariantami mitycznymi jest tzw. dytyramb Filoksenosa z Kytery. Mit Polifema, głównie w postaci, jaką nadał mu Owidiusz, przewija się przez hiszpański wiek XVI aż do początku kolejnego stulecia, znajdując wielu naśladowców i tłumaczy. Pod koniec XVI wieku sięga do niego również Lope de Vega w powieści pasterskiej *La Arcadia* (1598), nadając mu formę tradycyjnej hiszpańskiej strofy *romance*. Mit stanowi odbicie historii będącej przedmiotem narracji, wzbogacając powieść o elementy perspektywy autobiograficznej. W *Fábula de Polifemo* (1612) Luisa de Góngory mit ulega całkowitej transformacji. W jego interpretacji przeważają barokowe kontrasty i hiperbola. Struktura dzieła oparta jest na zbieżności przeciwieństw: potworności Polifema i piękna Galatei. Mit staje się też okazją do transpozycji koncepcji piękna, wywodzącej się od petrarkizmu: obserwować można dominantę planu metaforycznego, zastępującego elementy rzeczywistości.

Keywords: myth of Polyphemus, ancient literature, Spanish literature, Lope de Vega, Luis de Góngora

The famous episode narrated by Homer in the ninth book of the *Odyssey*, in which we can read about Odysseus's stay on the island of the Cyclopes, significantly contributed to the emergence of a mythical literary hero – Polyphemus. Homer's story was often referred to by ancient authors, who, for various reasons, modified, travestied and reinterpreted the myth, what consequently enriched the image of the Cyclops with new features. As a result, ancient literature passed down two divergent stories with Polyphemus in the leading role. The first of these mythological accounts, found in Homer's *Odyssey*, tells the well-known bloody tale about a cannibal outsmarted by the cunning Odysseus; the second narrates

the romantic myth of a monster in love with a beautiful nymph, whose unrequited feelings push him to crime. The latter theme was most fully developed and popularized by Ovid in the thirteenth book of his *Metamorphoses*. It should be emphasized that it is Ovid's version of this beauty and the beast theme, which in time inspired modern artists and representatives of different fields of art¹. In European literature, the myth of the Cyclops returned to literature mainly due to the Spanish Baroque authors², who recalled the ancient model and extended it with a new artistic and intellectual dimension.

In this article, two main areas will be discussed. First of all, we trace the stages of the transformation of the Homeric story about Odysseus meeting Polyphemus into the version found in the *Metamorphoses*. In the second part, we focus on the reception of the Cyclops myth in the literature of the Spanish Siglo de Oro within two basic works of the most representative and outstanding authors of the period: Lope de Vega and Luis de Góngora. In this article, however, we cannot examine in detail either Lope de Vega's *Arcadia* or *Fabula de Polifemo y Galatea* by Góngora and present all the aspects of their reception process. Therefore, we limit our discussion only to the most important, in our opinion, elements concerning the issue.

The ninth book of the *Odyssey* (ca. 800 BC) and the thirteenth book of the *Metamorphoses* (ca. 8 AD) – the two most famous versions of the myth of the Cyclops, seem to be, at the same time, the two most distant in time reference points for the ancient literary tradition referring to the character of Polyphemus. The central position is occupied by a dithyramb³ entitled *Cyclops* or *Galatea*⁴ by Philoxenus of Kithira (ca. 435–380 BC), to our knowledge, the first poem, in which appeared the motif of Polyphemus in love with beautiful Galatea⁵. The few surviving fragments of this story (maximum 23 lines), are less than representative to discuss its content. However, we possess numerous *testimonia* and anecdotes about the poet's relationship with the tyrant of Syracuse – Dionysius the Elder, who had some literary aspirations himself, that may shed some light on the discussed issue. We cannot really judge the tyrant's poetic talent, because we know too few remaining samples of his poetic attempts, but according to the rather criti-

¹ We shall mention here such exemplary works as the 'Galatean Nymph' by Raphael, 'Acis and Galatea' by Cl. Lorraina, 'Galatea' by G. Moreau, 'Triumph of Galatea' by F. X. Fabre and the operas 'Atys and Galatea' by J. B. Lully'ego, G. F. Händel (performed earlier as a „serenata” in one act 'Acis, Galatea and Polyphemus') and by J. Haydn.

² Apart from Spanish authors, we shall mention here such names as: T. Stagliani, an Italian author of the bucolic poem 'Il Polifemo' an imitation of Idyll XI by Theocritus and F. D. Książnin, the author of the Polish version of the Theocritean 'Polyphemus the Cyclops'.

³ The ancient literary genre of the poem by Philoxenus is now being questioned. More on the argument in: J. H. Hordern, *The 'Cyclops' of Philoxenus*, *Classical Quarterly* 49.2, 1999, p. 445–455.

⁴ In testimonies we find two titles: the *Cyclops* or *Galatea*.

⁵ A. Sancho Royo, *Análisis de los motivos de composición del 'Cíclope' de Filóxeno de Citera*, Habis 14, 1983, p. 34.

cal evaluation of Diodorus Siculus, they could not have been meaningful or influential ἀλλὰ ποιητῆς ὦν κακὸς καὶ διακριθεὶς ἐν Ἀθήναις ἐνίκησε τοὺς κρείττονας ποιητῆ (XV 74,5)⁶. Athenaios, citing Phineas, informs that not until he discovered that the poet tried to seduce his lover with a grateful name Galatea, did the tyrant highly value the company of witty Philoxenus. As punishment, Dionysius sent him to the quarries. Such circumstances made the harmed lyrical poet write the dithyramb *Cyclops*, in which Dionysius was the Cyclops, Galatea was the hetaera and he himself the famous Odysseus (I 6e-7). A similar story is told by a scholiast on Aristophanes's *Plutos* (v. 290):

λέγεται δ ὅτι ποτ Γαλατεία τινὶ παλλακίδι Διονυσίου προσέβαλε, καὶ μαθὼν Διονύσιος ἐξώρισεν αὐτὸν εἰς λατομίαν. φεύγων δ' ἐκείθεν εἰς <τὰ> μέρη τῶν Κυθήρων ἦλθε καὶ ἐκεῖ δράμα τὴν Γαλάτειαν ἐποίησεν, ἐν ᾧ εἰσήγαγε τὸν Κύκλωπα ἐρώντα τῆς Γαλατείας. τοῦτο δ αἰνιττόμενος εἰς Διονύσιον ἀπεικασεν αὐτὸν τῷ Κύκλωπι, ἐπεὶ καὶ αὐτὸς <ὁ> Διονύσιος οὐκ ὠξυδόρκει.

The remaining testimonies let us draw the conclusions that the dithyramb was an allegorical satire, in which both 'clever' Odysseus and a black character Polyphemus-Dionysius made amorous advances towards a beautiful nymph. It seems probable that this rivalry engaged also or in the first place the artistic abilities of both protagonists. In one of the preserved fragments of the poem, the poet introduces himself as the 'disciple of the Muses, the nursemaid of Bacchus, the most devoted aulos player'⁷, while Polyphemus in his love suffering tries to sooth his pain by strumming a Lyre. The onomatopoeia *θηρεττανελό* (fr. 6) used in this description aims to underline his insufficient skills. The contrast manifested in the poem seems to depict a real conflict between the poet and the tyrant, that was often mentioned in ancient anecdotes, not rarely different in details⁸. Philoxenus is said not to express an appropriate appraisal or even to criticize one of Dionysius's poems, what finally led to relegation to the quarries as a punishment. After a while the tyrant sent for the prisoner and made him listen to his poems again. The poet left the auditorium with such words: 'Send mi back to the quarries!'. This anecdote, on the one hand, points out the artistic background of the conflict between men, which seems even more crucial than the love affair itself⁹, on

⁶ More on the satyr play *Limos* of Dionysius, see H. Zalewska-Jura, *W rytmie sikinnis. Studium nad warstwą aluzji i podtekstów w greckim dramacie satyrowym*, Łódź 2006, p. 255.

⁷ Fr 2 ἄνδρα δ τὸν Κυθήρηθεν ὃν ἐθρέψαντο τιθηναί
Βάκχου καὶ λωτοῦ πιστότατον ταμίην
Μοῦσαι παιδευθέντα Φιλόξενον.

⁸ Diodorus Sic. 15, 6; Lucian Adv. Indoct. 15, Stoeb. 3, 13, 33; Liber Suda s.v. Ἀπαγέ με εἰς τὰς λατομίας and Φιλοξένου γραμμάτιον.

⁹ A. Sancho Royo also finds the love motif marginal to the conflict of the poet with Dionysius.: 'No creemos, sin embargo, que haya de considerarse la rivalidad amorosa por Galatea como fundamento exclusivo o primordial del mismo', *op. cit.*, p. 49.

the other hand, though, it proves Philoxenus's sense of humor, that he sophisticatedly applied in his poem to lampoon and caricature the tyrant. In the discussed dithyramb, the sea-nymph Galatea is depicted as the cause of strife between Odysseus and Polyphemus. Another ancient testimony must be mentioned here, for it seems important for the concept in which Galatea as *tertia persona dramatis* was introduced to the plot of the poem. In the scholion to Theocritus's eleventh Idyll, we come across a reference to an old Sicilian legend about the temple of a local deity – Galatea.

Δουρίς φησι διὰ τὴν εὐβοσίαν τῶν θρεμμάτων καὶ τοῦ γάλακτος πολυπλήθειαν τὸν Πολύφημον ἰδρύσασθαι ἱερὸν παρὰ τῇ Αἴτνῃ Γαλατείας·
Φιλόξενον δὲ τὸν Κυθήριον ἐπιδημήσαντα καὶ μὴ δυνάμενον ἐπινοῆσαι τὴν αἰτίαν ἀναπλάσαι, ὡς ὅτι Πολύφημος ἦρα τῆς Γαλατείας

The state of an open conflict in the field of artistic-literary competences that results in immurement, the acts of rivalling for a woman called Galatea, her resemblance to the Sicilian goddess Galatea (γάλα – 'milk', θέα – 'goddess') and her relation with Polyphemus¹⁰, the sense of guilt, a wish to lampoon the tyrant in the act of revenge – these are elements that contributed to the projection of the Cyclops myth with its love motif. If we add here the poet's artistic talent, intelligence, wit and his openness to new forms of artistic expression, only then we will see all the aspects of the issue. It is also worth mentioning, that the times of Philoxenus are characterized as aiming at change, originality, at finding new means of literary and music expression, the reconstruction of old and creating new literary genres¹¹.

All these innovations introduced by Philoxenus to the myth cannot be analyzed without making some relevant references to earlier literary tradition¹².

¹⁰ Cf. J. Ławińska-Tyszkowska, *Elementy dramatyczne idylli Teokryta. Liryka archaiczna w zwierciadle poezji Aleksandryjskiej*, Studia Hellenistica, Wrocław 1967, p. 32. In her opinion, the motif of Polyphemus's love for Galatea was already present in pre-literary legend. A. Sancho Royo, *op. cit.*, p. 44, favours a similar idea as he refers to the Roman historian Appian of Alexandria (the 2nd century A.D), who gives an account of the etiological myth about the origins of the nations called Celts, Illyrians, and Galatians, that took their names after the three sons of Polyphemus and his wife Galatea. (*Ilir.* 2). The presence of Polyphemus in a Sicilian local mythical story seems reasonable, for the Cyclopes were a band of lawless shepherds living in Sicily and their place of living was usually located under Mount Etna. They were said to be skilled workers, and the Greeks credited them with building the walls of several ancient cities and Polyphemus, one of them, was just easy to recognize.

¹¹ See, Ch. Segal, *Choral Lyric in the fifth Century*, [in:] *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature. Greek Literature*, Cambridge 1987, p. 242–243.

¹² Sancho Royo, *op. cit.*, p. 35–36, adopted a methodological criterion to separate biographical factors (or personal), those resulting from tradition and the factors associated with the assumptions of his literary époque.

The broader context of the examined issue lets us observe not only the various aspects of the poet's innovations, but it also highlights the impact of earlier authors on the way this Homeric motif was transferred and alternated. Moreover, it also demonstrates the intellectual inclinations of the dithyramb itself as a satirical allegory, compensating, at least to a small extent, our inability to reconstruct its plot¹³.

If Philoxenus played a fundamental role in creating a romantic theme of the Cyclops myth, he must have found the paradigm for his satirical perspective and lampooning Dionysius in the character of Polyphemus in the Euripidean satyr play, the *Cyclops*. In a humorous depiction of the Cyclops, as a kind of 'deterrence' of the Homeric monster, Euripides had his predecessors in such comic writers as Epicharmus of Kos, Cratinus and Aristetas, also the author of the satyr play *Cyclops*, from which we have only one sentence: ἀπόλεσας τὸν οὖνον ἐπιχέας ὕδωρ (fr. 4 Steffen). The surviving three fragments of Epicharmus's comedy *Cyclops* suggest that the gluttony of Polyphemus might have been the funny element of the story. Similar themes are found in the fragments of Cratinus's comedy *The Odysseuses*, in which we read that Polyphemus is no longer a wild cannibal, but a sophisticated foodie and a connoisseur of culinary arcane¹⁴. Euripides could have taken over the nature of Polyphemus from older colleagues. He probably used also some other of their ideas, but the basic material for the plot was provided by the story told by Odysseus as presented in the ninth book of the *Odyssey* (v. 105–542), which he adapted to the needs of the genre¹⁵. Apart from the relationship between the epic and the dramatic version of the myth, our attention will focus first on the Eurypidean image of Polyphemus, which, as it was mentioned earlier, might have been the paradigm for Polyphemus-Dionysius found in the dithyramb of Philoxenus.

Homer describes Polyphemus as a member of a defined, although not institutionalized society. He also regards him a completely asocial individual. His system of values is limited to primitive existence which aims only to satisfy his basic needs. His barbarism is manifested both in his contempt for elementary laws, both divine and human, as well as in his animalish and wild acts of anthropophagy.

The character of Polyphemus, as presented by Euripides, combines all the contrasts, such as Greek and barbarian elements, both sophistication and

¹³ It can be assumed that the story focused on the conversation, perhaps the agon for winning Galatea, between Odysseus and Polyphemus; probably there appeared also the theme of the imprisonment and escape of Odysseus; it is even possible that it contained the act of blinding the Cyclops as a punishment, just as it was described in the version of Euripides. The supposition of J.H. Hordern, that to gain freedom Odysseus promised to help Polyphemus incite a feeling of love in the nymph seems, however, groundless. Credible, though, is the researcher's opinion that in the dithyramb we can trace a 'romantic lament of Polyphemus'. *The 'Cyclops' of Philoxenus*, *op. cit.*, p. 450–451.

¹⁴ For further reading see: H. Zalewska-Jura, *W rytmie sikinnis*, *op. cit.*, p. 177–178.

¹⁵ A detailed comparison of the two versions and an elaborate analysis of the *Cyclops* of Euripides is presented in: H. Zalewska-Jura, *W rytmie sikinnis*, *op. cit.*, p. 177–178.

primitiveness. He exemplifies a caricature of a character. As an owner of slaves (the satyrs and Silenus) his social position differs from the one he had in Homer's poem. Although he still remains a primitive individual, at the same time he is wealthy, abundant in slaves and cattle (an element added to the Homeric sheep and goats). He spends a lot of time hunting (that was *de facto* a popular hobby shared by many contemporary Athenian aristocrats) more for pleasure than out of necessity. Silenus is the one responsible for cleaning the manure from his cave and preparing meals, while the satyrs pasture his herds. His acts of cannibalism are also ambiguous in their character, bestial and sophisticated at the same time, the cruelty of his deeds is intensified by the fact that he regards them as a form of worshipping gods. Polyphemus as reported by Euripides is an eccentric cannibal, what does not correspond with the epic paradigm, who makes use of various utensils to prepare his dreadful feast and he employs his unquestionable cooking skills to prepare the human meat. His *rhesis* (v. 316–346), which makes the central part of his *agon* with Odysseus, reveals very important features of the dramatic character of the Cyclops. It is a Sophistic laudation of wealth, that gives power, the laudation of the club law, the lecture on the precedence of *physis* over *nomos* and the glorification of hedonism. On one hand, Polyphemus's erudition is attested as far as axiological dilemmas of the classical period, philosophical debates and Sophistic theories are concerned, on the other hand, though, in his monologue he appears as an unambiguous supporter of all the glorified ideas. N. Wecklein seems right in his opinion about Polyphemus: 'Er ist ebenso grundsätzlich ein Egoist ohne jeden sozialen Sinn, er spricht mit der gleichen zynischen Offenheit über das Recht des Stärkeren und behandelt den Odysseus mit derselben mitleidigen Überlegenheit wie Kallikles den Sokrates'¹⁶. Not once does Euripides demonstrate the mental primitivism of his character any time he makes him use a colloquial language. Even the mentioned *rhesis* is prepared in such a way that it combines ostentatious rhetorical techniques with colloquialisms – the symbol of an uncouth speaker. Another scene worth recalling here seems the one in which the satyrs make fun of the poetic-vocal show given by the wine-intoxicated Polyphemus (v. 488–493):

σίγα σίγα. καὶ δὴ μεθύων
 ἄχαριν κέλαδον μουσιζόμενος
 σκαιὸς ἀπφδὸς καὶ κλαυσόμενος
 χωρεῖ πετρίνων ἔξω μελάθρων.
 φέρε νιν κόμοις παιδεύσωμεν
 τὸν ἀπαιδεύτον

Almost the whole third *epeisodion* is dominated by jokes about the infantile and crude nature of the Cyclops, and it reaches its climax in his act of violence, under the influence of intoxication, on the old and physically unattractive Silenus¹⁷.

¹⁶ N. Wecklein, *Euripides. Kyklops. Einleitung und Kommentar*, Leipzig 1903, p. 13–14.

¹⁷ In A. Sancho Royo's opinion, that follows M.J. Mewaldtem argument, the rape scene was introduced into the myth by Euripides, who was the first to characterize Polyphemus with a love

The character of Odysseus also differs from the one presented in the epic poem. Homer explains that Odysseus arrives in the cave of the Cyclops because of his curiosity and his need to pay a visit to an unknown host (greed?). Though, warned by his companions, his *hybris* takes priority and he stays in the cave no matter that this act puts him and his fellows in jeopardy. When the situation becomes critical he obviously resorts to his cleverness, makes a good escape plan and then mutilates Polyphemus to save his and his men's life and to steal incidentally the flock of sheep. When he is safe, his *hybris* takes over again and he finally makes his companions subject to destruction and himself suffer from many calamities. In the *Cyclops*, however, Odysseus's arrival at Polyphemus's cave is dictated by his need to find food and water, for which he wants to pay in wine. An explicit Silenus's allusion about cannibal inclinations of the Cyclops makes Odysseus eager to leave the cave as quickly as the necessary supplies are collected. When Polyphemus returns, Silenus, to save his life, accuses Odysseus of stealing. Odysseus's – an expert in cheating in Homer's account – line of defense is trite, naïve and unsuccessful. He recalls his unquestionable virtue in defending the temples of Poseidon. When his honorable deeds and military services turn out ineffective in the face of cruelty, whereas his eloquence and prudence powerless in the face of arrogance, he decides to resort to a more drastic solution, but his act of blinding Polyphemus differs here, it is not just a way to make his escape, but it becomes a kind of punishment for the Cyclops's impiety and violation by the host of the duties of hospitality – *xenia*. In comparison to a morally controversial image of epic Odysseus, his dramatic equivalent is depicted in a conspicuously positive manner¹⁸. The tragic author aimed to contrast explicitly two moral attitudes: Odysseus's honesty, piety and nobility with Polyphemus's arrogance, brutality, violence and roughness. Therefore, the Euripidean play is regarded to be significant in the process of the transformation of the Cyclops myth.

Philoxenus, undoubtedly familiar with Euripides's satyr play, could not neglect the fact that the Cyclops's features of character resembled the ones of Dionysius, i.e. arrogance and roughness in his poetry, while brutality and violence in his tyranny, whereas the adventures and the character of Odysseus himself seemed to reflect his own nature. His dithyramb – a satire on Dionysius – was supposed

joke ('la faceta amatoria'), *Análisis de los motivos...*, *op. cit.*, p. 38. We are inclined to see in this scene rather the element of a caricature of manners, directed against the tastes of specific groups of the Athenian aristocracy or a kind of sexual motif introduced to the literary convention than a 'love joke'. See, L. Paganelli, *Il dramma satiresco. Spazio, tematiche e messa in scena*, Dioniso LIX (2), 1989, p. 224 and H. Zalewska-Jura, *W sidlach libido. Motywy seksualne w greckim dramacie satyrowym*, *Collectanea Philologica* XV, 2012, p. 15–17.

¹⁸ In the tragedies of Euripides, we dispose of Odysseus portrayed as a negative character: a pattern of cunning and wickedness in *Telephus*, a crafty demagogue, a ruthless and ungrateful type in *Hecuba*, an immoral monster and a miserable swindler responsible for the murder of a small Astyanax in *The Trojan Women*.

to be a way to punish the tyrant for mistreatment and violation of the duties of hospitality (that is sending him to quarries) and his revenge for all the suffering.

The next stage¹⁹ of transforming the Cyclops myth appears in the works of Theocritus, who referred to the love motif of Polyphemus and Galatea in two of his bucolic poems, the sixth and the eleventh. The sixth Idyll is an agon between two shepherds, Daphnis and Damoetas. After a short introduction, where we find out the circumstances in which the poetic rivalry of the shepherds took place, Daphnis, in his speech to an imaginary Polyphemus, draws an amiable scene of subtle advances made by Galatea to the Cyclops, who remains indifferent to her charm and continues to play the Lyre. Damoetas, in the words of Polyphemus, explains that his cold-hearted behavior is just a trick to arouse the feeling of love in the nymph by making her jealous. In the eleventh Idyll of Theocritus, we discover a different image of the Cyclops. It is addressed to the poet's friend, Nicias, a doctor, who suffers from unrequited love, and is supposed to give him a kind of *remedium amoris*. Theocritus advises him to resort to poetry to cure his "wound", just like the Cyclops called Polyphemus was once able to do when he suffered from love to Galatea. He sat down on riparian rocks and sang tender serenades for the nymph till he finally realized that the best cure for unrequited love was work²⁰.

There are many literary-connected tendencies observed in the Hellenistic époque that influenced the Theocritean vision of the myth of the Cyclops, enough to name just a few: the literary forms of the short story or the poem; a deep and extensive knowledge; a wide use of the myth; the craving for originality in presenting unknown versions of myths or making various modifications within popular legends; a sentimental trend to idealize people and nature. His poetry manifested people's longing for a simple life, for closer contact with nature and the glorification of the life of shepherds and peasants, on the other

¹⁹ We omit here the comedy *Galatea* by a little-known author of the Old Comedy, Nicochares, although it cannot be completely denied that the subject of his artistic work were the advances of Polyphemus to the nymph. The interpretation of the three surviving fragments leaves still too much room for speculation; see: J. Ławińska-Tyszkowska, *Elementy dramatyczne, op. cit.*, p. 37–38. We cannot refer to the play *Galatea* by Alexis, a representative of the so-called Middle Comedy, due to the scant information we possess about the plot and the characters of the play. In the surviving fragments, we find out only some jokes on philosophers. For the translation and commentary on the citation (12, 544 e-f) from Athenaios see, K. Bartol, J. Danielewicz, *Komedia grecka. Od Epicharma do Menandra*, Warszawa 2011, p. 378–379.

²⁰ It is impossible not to agree with the brilliant argument of A.W. Bulloch: 'Id. 11 is an attractive poem which any friend would be pleased to receive, but certainly teases poor Nicias, comparing him implicitly to the clumsy and grotesquely unsuccessful lover Cyclops and remarking explicitly that doctor's powers are useless in contrast is Theocritus' chosen expertise, poetry', *Hellenistic poetry*, [in:] *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature, op. cit.*, p. 572. According to the scholiast, Nicias retaliated by poetic joke:

ἦν ἄρ' ἄληθες τοῦτο, Θεόκριτε· οἱ γὰρ Ἔρωτες
ποιητὰς πολλοὺς ἐδίδαξαν τὸ πρὶν ἀμούσους.

hand – its ornamented form and content revealed undoubtedly the author's erudition and intelligence²¹.

Theocritus makes necessary changes in the character of Polyphemus, what strictly corresponds with the literary fashion of Hellenistic times. He substitutes cruelty with tenderness, brutality with subtleness, primitivism with mental maturity. Moreover, he attributes his protagonist with poetic and musical skills. Theocritus's Cyclops remains a one-eyed monster, but he is aware of his looks and, for this reason, suffers from many of his complexes, although in the sixth Idyll, maybe as a kind of therapy, he emphasizes his great beard, white teeth and a beautiful pupil of his single eye (v. 36–38). It is worth mentioning that in this sentimental bucolic poem there is no place for Odysseus. In this way, Theocritus contributes to the separation of the time-honored by Homeric tradition tandem Odysseus/Polyphemus in the myth of the Cyclops (although we cannot be certain if it was the first time in the history of literature) and, at the same time, he eliminates the motif of rivalry over a woman, that was still present in Philoxenus's story.

We omit in this article many followers and epigones²² of the Theocritean version of the myth, to get to the last link in ancient tradition that is the thirteenth book of the *Metamorphoses* by Ovid (v. 750–897). In the story told by Galatea, who is the narrator of the plot, there appear the motives found in all previous versions of the myth, combined together in such a way to make a coherent whole, but still complemented with new details.

The description of Polyphemus corresponds with the Homeric image of this character: the nymph's hatred for the Cyclops is equal to her big love for Acis (v. 756–757); Polyphemus is terrifying even to the woods themselves (v. 759–760), his head and beard are covered with bristling hair (v. 765–767), the pine trunk he uses as a walking stick proves his massive stature (v. 782), and the pan-pipes the giant plays are made of a hundred reeds (v. 785). The references to his love to kill, his fierceness, and his huge thirst for blood (v. 768) and whom no stranger has ever seen with impunity (v. 760–761) or the fact that he scorns mighty Olympus and the gods (v. 761) also follow the epic description. Ovid took the motif of the augur Telemus and his divination that in the future Ulysses would bereave Polyphemus of that single eye in the middle of his forehead (v. 770–775). The scene in which the Cyclops hurls a rock wrenched from the mountain towards Acis (v. 882–883) is also of Homeric provenience. We want to add here that the allusion to the future events sets²³ the Cyclops myth's chronology: Galatea's love and the murder of her beloved precede the meeting with Odysseus.

²¹ A. M. Komornicka, *Poezja starożytnej Grecji. Wybrane gatunki literackie*, Łódź 1987, p. 152–153.

²² The motif of Polyphemus's love for Galatea becomes a *topos* in bucolic literature, e.g.: Bion fr. 16, Vergil ecl. II, VII, IX.

²³ Also Theocritus mentions the augury in Idyll VI (v. 23–24).

Euripidean elements in Ovid's version of the myth are traced in the discrepancies observed in the character of Polyphemus himself, such as arrogance and humility, cruelty and tenderness, bestiality and melancholy, rudeness and talent.

The *Cyclops* by Philoxenus also seems to have inspired Ovid's mythological story, especially if we take into consideration the motif of rivalry for Galatea. The remaining fragments of the dithyramb preclude us from pointing out other analogies, though, I must remind that the motif of musically – inspired Polyphemus probably is owed to Philoxenus.

The scenes of the myth, as described by Ovid, may be associated with the descriptions found in the bucolic poems of Theocritus. It suffices to mention the rock with the view on the sea. The Cyclops sits on the rock, plays the panpipes and sings a love song. The structure, the content and the lexis of the serenade so strongly resemble the bucolic variation, that we can regard it even as a travestiation of the song found in the eleventh Idyll of Theocritus; having expressed the words of reproach upon the nymph's indifference he continues with a list of advantages that can be drawn from the relation with the Cyclops, and then he points out the positive aspects of his appearance and finally his ardent requests for mercy. Ovid substitutes Polyphemus's reflection that the best cure for unrequited love is work with threats towards the opponent.

Ovid's version of the myth seems new in such a way that it introduces a sort of thrilling element – the crime of passion. The anger rising in Polyphemus reaches its climax when he sees his beloved hugged by Acis. He is ready to kill them both, but he slays only Galatea's lover. The Cyclops's crime differs in nature from the bestial act of cannibalism committed in Homer's poem, because the protagonist himself is equipped with different features, which locate him on a different psychological level. Acis also is a kind of *novum* in the discussed myth. His presence is explained by Ovid's idea of transformation; Acis was changed into a river, which then was named after him²⁴. Moreover, the presence of 'the other' makes the emotional aspect of the story (i.e. *Metamorphoses*) more intense, and, what was pointed out by S. Stabryła: 'głównym tematem, a zarazem przesłaniem tego utworu (scil. *Metamorfoz*) są ludzkie namiętności, przy czym celem Owidiusza nie było wzbudzenie w czytelniku sympatii, ale wywołanie zainteresowania dla niekończących się odmian egzystencji'²⁵.

This overview of the ancient transmission of the Cyclops myth provided in this part of the article that aimed to demonstrate few selected alternations ob-

²⁴ It is interesting, however, that, despite the story of Ovid and the late comment of Servius to the Eclogue IX by Virgil, there is no other literary evidence relating to the character of Acis. We cannot deny that Ovid as a *poeta doctus*, reached for some unknown local Sicilian myth, perhaps the one known only in oral tradition. In the lexicon of Hesychius of Alexandria the word Ἄκις is the name of a river near Catania, a town which lies at the foot of Mount Etna.

²⁵ S. Stabryła, *Wstęp* [to:] *Owidiusz. Metamorfozy*, transl. A. Kamieńska, Wrocław 2004, p. XCVII.

served within the plot of the myth and the character of Polyphemus, brings us to the final version found in Ovid's work, which became the theme of this myth's reception in contemporary literature.

The motif of Polyphemus and Galatea was one of the favourite themes that occurred in the Spanish Golden Age Literature. In the first place, we shall mention the Spanish translations of *Metamorphoses* by Ovid, that – from the first half of the 16th century – in one of the critic's words seem a real mess²⁶. It's enough to list Cristóbal de Castillejo's translation of the song of Polyphemus, that is regarded not only to be the best, but the one that gives the Latin verses a real spirit of a Castilian village. In the 16th century, in accordance with the commonly applied norm of imitation, we come across many imitations of the song of Polyphemus. These tell the story of a turned down lover, completely in despair, as found in the works by Garcilaso de la Vega ('Eclogue' III) or Luis Barahona de Soto (*Angélica*). The latter's song in few places seems a direct translation of Ovid's work. In 1611, don Luis Carrillo de Sotomayor published his *Fábula de Acis y Galatea*, that is also mainly the translation of Ovid's poem: enough to add that – as it occurred in the version of the Latin poet – the story of Galatea is told by the nymph herself.

Mythological stories written by Lope de Vega and Luis de Góngora, which are the main subject of our studies, surprise, on one hand, with their original character, but, on the other hand, they show, in an amazingly coherent way, two complementary aspects of Spanish Baroque, though we cannot exclude that they differ as far as the nature of their origins is concerned. As such, the myth gives ground for new aesthetics, at the same time – as a part of universal cultural legacy in the form of literary theme – it becomes a trigger for the conflict in the literary field. At the end of the 16th century, both authors remain in more or less vicious controversy, of which reminiscences are found in the form of a satirical sonnet²⁷. Luis de Góngora accuses Lope of rudeness and lack of poetic talent and derides his low social status²⁸. In the first place, he criticizes that Lope de Vega wants to share his works with the common people, which is his way to earn some money with his art. Lope, above all, was a dramatist, the author of the anti-Aristotelian concept of drama, striving for the applause of the plebs. Góngora wanted to be perceived as a noble swan among vulgar ducks (scil. the fans of Lope). The author of *Arcadia* criticized him for the fact that his poetry was impenetrable, too exclusive, full of erudite peculiarities that made Spanish language similar to Basque and Polish, both recognized as two archetypes of exotic unnaturality²⁹. Besides, in one of the ridicule

²⁶ A. Dámaso, *Góngora y el «Polifemo»*, t. I, Gredos, Madrid 1967, p. 195.

²⁷ G.M. Profeti, *El micro-género de los sonetos de sátira literaria y Quevedo*, La Perinola: revista de investigación quevediana, 2004, p. 375–396.

²⁸ See above all these sonnets: 'A cierto señor que le envió la «Dragontea»', 'A la «Arcadia»', de Lope de Vega Carpio', 'A Lope de Vega', 'A los apasionados por Lope de Vega', 'A los mismos'.

²⁹ See also the following sonnets: 'Boscán, tarde llegamos. Hay posada?', 'Cediendo a mi des crédito anhelante', 'Conjura un culto, y hablan los dos de medio soneto abajo', 'Responde a un

sonnets, Lope suggests that Góngora himself does not understand the products of his imagination. This aesthetic strife seems to manifest a typical schism in the field of literature for high and low level³⁰ and proves more or less of a hidden battle for domination, a battle, which must have influenced the authors' attitudes towards the studied Cyclops myth.

Let's begin with the older version. In 1598, Lope published his pastoral novel *Arcadia*, making references to the literary genre that originated in Italy. The first version of *Arcadia* was written by Jacopo Sannazaro between 1483–1486 and was warmly welcomed in Iberian Peninsula, where in 1559 a Spanish pastoral romance *Los siete libros de la Diana* was published by a Portuguese author Jorge de Montemayora³¹. Lope, as mentioned above, is first of all a dramatist, but it is obvious that the theatre does not fulfill his artistic ambitions and frustrates him as it is associated with low art³². This fact brings some light on the mentioned controversy with Góngora: although Lope defends a clear and intelligible art he still looks for more sophisticated forms within the literary genre neglected by the genius opponent. As we can see, however, in his reinterpretation of the myth in *Arcadia* Lope de Vega opposes the elite Góngora.

Lope's novel far exceeds the reasonable limits of erudition: the shepherds talk about love, they completely forget about their flocks when they solve their problems and dilemmas and they seem so familiar with mythology and ancient culture that contemporary editions of Lope's work increase in size just to explain all the hidden intricacies. Love remains the leading theme, which in Lope's opinion is always followed by unfaithfulness and jealousy. For this reason, we are not surprised that the myth of Polyphemus is introduced into the story of the two protagonists: Belisarda and Anfriso, and, in a way, it seems to reflect their story. One of the shepherds narrates the story: a beautiful shepherdess Crisalda is walking towards the hills when she meets Alasto, a well-built giant and an attractive semigod, who is said to intimidate people, but in fact is not regarded as a monster. Alasto falls in love with Crisalda and he composes an octosyllable song for her, a verse typical for Spanish folk culture since the Middle Ages. He makes a list of gifts he would offer to Crisalda if she only reciprocated his feelings. Crisalda promises to do it and she returns to her village where she absconds and avoids him for a whole year. Eventually, Alasto worried about his beloved, decides to visit the village and check what stopped her from seeing him for such a long time. He finds her weaving one of the shirts for her future husband. She manages to restrain

poeta que le afeaba escribir con claridad', 'Cortando la pluma hablan los dos'.

³⁰ This struggle is present in Spanish literature from its origin, as evidenced by the famous second stanza from the epic poem *Libro de Aleixandre*.

³¹ T. Eminowicz, *Hiszpański romans pasterski*, UJ, Kraków 1994, p. 13–16.

³² J. Montero Reguera, *Prosas de Lope*, *Lectura y signo: revista de literatura*, vol. 3, 2008, p. 195–235.

the anger of the giant and hands him down one of the shirts woven for her fiancé. Later she pays him a visit in the mountains, where Alasto gives her new gifts. She promises to marry him and returns to the village, where the villagers prepare a trap for the infatuated giant. When the peasants enjoy themselves at the wedding of Crisalda and Orfindo, Alasto discovers that he was betrayed (Crisalda was also engaged to another man – Galicio – who in the act of despair escaped to the mountains singing a song which let Alasto understand the disloyalty of his beloved). And again Alasto descends from the mountains, but this time the cunning villagers inebriate him with wine (one of the villagers heard in the mountains the story of Odysseus), they bind him, kill and then they go to his cave to steal his goods.

Lope significantly transforms the myth of the Cyclops. To comprehend how far he goes with all the modifications, we must keep in mind the fact that Renaissance Neoplatonism was one of the concepts that influenced the emergence of pastoral romance. Generally speaking, it was believed (popularized by Judah Leon Abravanel's *Dialogues of Love*) that the physical beauty of a beloved is like a straight way to God³³. Just like in mystic literature of the second half of the 16th century we observe here a motif of reaching the First Principle's that is God's perfection, which for the followers of Neoplatonism of that time was possible by means of human love and the contemplation of female beauty. In this context, the fact that Polyphemus described by Lope de Vega as informing Crisalda that he watched her swimming in a stream (Vega 1980, p. 95) occurs as an issue not to be neglected. The giant's song, in accordance with the convention of Neoplatonism, is at the same time his way of expressing an admiration for the divine beauty of the shepherdess 'Los blancos jazmines miro que con tu frente se afrentan' (p. 101)³⁴. The allusion to the name of Galatea – white as milk – is obvious here, because we read that even jasmine would envy Crisalda her stunning white skin. Lope, however, as does Góngora, rejects the word milk and its connotations (they were explicitly used by Theocritus and Ovid), as it seemed too vulgar from a Neoplatonic perspective. Moreover, Lope de Vega's Polyphemus reveals the features of a Neoplatonic lover: one look at his beautiful sweetheart softens his low and barbarian passions: 'Alasto, pues, vio en el rostro de Crisalda el mismo suyo, y enternecido el corazón, se arrepintió de haberle dado disgusto' (p. 176). Well, Lope de Vega, as we will see, in his myth of the Cyclops refers to Neoplatonism with the aim of defeating it. And that is the way he does it.

The fact that Crisalda is described as an unfaithful woman, *nota bene* Alasto is not the only one betrayed admirer, is what surprises us in Lope's version of the myth, which refers to the main story (from the romance), in which – just as it was in the myth – there are three candidates willing to marry the pretty shep-

³³ T. Eminowicz, *Hiszpański romans pasterski*, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

³⁴ Quotations from Lope de Vega's *Arcadia* according with the edition: Lope de Vega, *Arcadia*, Madrid, Castalia 1980.

herdess. The reason for such a transformation may be found in Lope's biography: when he writes his romance *Arcadia* he is in exile caused by his derisive invectives written on his beloved Elena Osorio and her family because of her disloyalty. The novel is written on the court of the prince of Alba, Antonio Alvarez de Toledo, who also suffers from complicated love affairs. The mythical Galatea becomes his archetype of female variability, cunningness and lust (enough to remind how eagerly Crisalda accepts the precious gifts from Alasto when she visits him in his cave: '[...] de las piedras tomó las que le agradaban, que para esto sólo le faltó miedo' (p. 171). Lope's and his friend's (also protector's) biographies form a part of the Cyclops myth: personal affairs influence his reading of the myth.

More surprising seems even the fact that Polyphemus-Alasto is killed by the cunning peasants from Crisalda's village. They gather a few times to make out the best plan to get rid of the awkward giant. This motif, not found in any other known classical versions of the myth, shall be interpreted in the context of the relations between Alasto and the villagers. We must underline here that Lope de Vega's Cyclops *descends* from the mountains to the village, what seems natural as he lives there. Since the very first relations, however, Alasto locates himself on the divine side giving his genealogy (p. 98–100) and underlying Crisalda's human condition: 'vosotros mortales' (p. 95). Her home is described as 'poor': 'humilde casa' (p. 167), and the villager, who shows Alasto the way to the girl's house is a simple peasant: 'villano' (p. 166). This way of depicting the characters, according to their moral values (Polyphemus in high, on the side of gods; Crisalda in low, in the human sphere, full of indecent passions and low intentions) aims to degrade the Neoplatonic concept of love (in its Renaissance version). We cannot ignore the fact that Alasto's love means not going up but going down, to the village, where he is despicably and insidiously murdered. Low passions and instincts destroy the noble acts of the generous giant. Lope's version reveals a fundamental chasm between human existence and the unreachable sphere of mythical or divine reality. Love does not make people noble, does not lead to the One, rather it does nothing but degrade.

Lope discusses also the matter of wealth and luxury of the temporal world. Lope's version adds another important element which regards his negative attitude towards Neoplatonism. In *Arcadia*, Lope creates one of the first still-life descriptions in Spanish literature (*bodegón*), inspired by the picture of the Cyclops's gifts for Galatea found in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Barahona de Soto, who in his work *Angélica* gave a longer (than Ovid) description of the fruit and vegetables given by Polyphemus³⁵ must have had its impact on the poem of Lope de Vega. Lope gives a detailed description of the birds, animals, fish and amphibians he is ready to give to his beloved:

³⁵ Osuna Rafael, *Una imitación de Lope de la «Fábula de Polifemo» ovidiana*, Bulletin Hispanique, vol. LXX, 1968, p. 9–19.

guindas, madroños, castañas,
 membrillos, uvas, almendras,
 endrinas, cermeñas, nueces
 peras, nisperos y serbas. (p. 105);

Liebres, conejos, cabritos,
 osos, gamos, corzos, ciervas,
 jabalíes, toros, tigres,
 espines, cabras montesas. (p. 106);

Ranas, peces, camarones,
 langostas, truchas, murenas,
 conchas, cangrejos, zafíos,
 delfines, focas, ballenas (p. 107)

To add, a *bodegón* appeared in European paintings at the end of the 16th century (in Spain the first documented references to this kind of art are from 1599) and, for certain, it was in strong connection with the unusual and unprecedented abundance as well as accumulation of food in big urban agglomerations, such as Madrid or Seville, what was followed by the fear of possible deprivation of these material goods and, inevitably, the moral aspirations of some artists. The artists in their *bodegones* tried to apply the rule of imitation and reproduce the products in the most possible realistic manner³⁶. Why is Lope's *bodegón* so crucial in his myth of the Cyclops? We could see, that love, instead of improving, rather gave access to villainous instincts. Simultaneously, as Lope in his gesture of compensation, creates his *bogegón* (or rather a series of *bodegones*), he makes something opposite, for he changes what is quotidian and temporal. The gifts provided by earth, air and water were to keep up with Crisalda's beauty and to incline her to love: 'y cuanto el mar, el aire, el suelo encierra, /Si me quieres, ofrezco a tu belleza' (p. 107). Hence, the Polyphemus of Lope de Vega rejects the commonness to become a servant of beauty and love. With a touching tenderness and simplicity he can see even in very little things all the beauty they were endowed by nature: 'del almendro flor y fruto, / que uno sabe y otro alegra' (p. 104). Lope de Vega applies the form of art, that was regarded by the painters of those times as inferior, apt only for those young artists, who wanted to make a quick profit and gain applause³⁷, to demonstrate the unlimited liberality of nature. He rejects the sophisticated intellect of Neoplatonics and consciously decides to stay in the temporal existence.

Góngora, though, opposes Vega's vision of the myth, for he does not apply any significant modifications within Ovid's story about Polyphemus and Galatea.

³⁶ J. Sánchez, *Bodegones poéticos: pintura, fruta y hortalizas como bienes de consumo moral y literario en Lope de Vega y Luis de Góngora*, [in:] E.G. Santo-Tomás (ed.), *Materia crítica: formas de ocio y de consumo en la cultura áurea*, Editorial Iberoamericana, Madrid 2009, p. 196–203.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 204.

The *Fábula de Polifemo y Galatea* by Góngora, written in 1012, is first to point out the contradictory features of Polyphemus and Galatea all the way: beauty and abhorrence³⁸. In the beginning, there is the description of Polyphemus: ‘...Allí una alta roca / mordaza es a una gruta, de su boca’³⁹. And further:

caliginoso lecho, el seno oscuro
ser de la negra noche nos lo enseña
infame turba de nocturnas aves
gimiendo tristes y volando graves (p. 171).

Góngora does not hesitate to use even three adjectives to describe darkness, among which one Latinism (‘caliginoso’) appears; with its inapparent allusiveness these make the sense of mystery and horror even stronger. Polyphemus’s realm is chaotic and ominous, deeply disharmonic. Góngora transforms the classical myth by using hyperbola and hyperbaton:

De este, pues, formidable de la tierra
bostezo, el melancólico vacío
a Polifemo, horror de aquella sierra,
bárbara choza es, albergue umbrío (p. 172).

The motif of complexity, the labyrinth and mysterious, untamed powers is amplified by complicated syntax, which became a paradigm of artificiality and divergence from the classical norm in Spanish literature. In his comments on all the literary intricacies of the Baroque poet found in his crucial treatment of Góngora, Dámaso Alonso simply asks: ‘Was Góngora crazy?’⁴⁰. The Spanish critic proved that Góngora’s hyperbaton plays, in fact, an expressive role as it is evident in the following verses: ‘De este, pues, formidable de la tierra / bostezo (...)’ (p. 172). An unexpected position of the word ‘yawn’ makes the reader’s breath longer, therefore it imitates the physiological act of yawning. Classical expressiveness is confuted by hyperbaton resulting in the different positions of accents in sentences, according to Góngora’s will. To find his own place in the literary field, the author of the poem repossesses and experiments with classical tradition, not on a content-related (as Lope did), but only on a linguistic level.

As it was demonstrated above, one of Lope’s significant transformations within the content of the myth, was the way he depicted Galatea. Góngora creates a different image of the nymph in love:

³⁸ D. Alonso, „Potworność i piękność w «Polifemie» Góngory”, [in:] H. Markiewicz, „Sztuka interpretacji”, Ossolineum, Wrocław 1971, s. 101–133.

³⁹ Quotations from Góngora’s poem accordig with the edition: L. de Góngora, *Antologia poética*, Castalia, Madrid 1986.

⁴⁰ D. Alonso, „Potworność i piękność, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

son una y otra luminosa estrella
 lucientes ojos de su blanca pluma;
 si roca de cristal no es de Neptuno,
 pavón de Venus es, cisne de Juno (p. 176).

Góngora follows the Renaissance model, e.g. Petrarca in *Canzoniere* compares her eyes to the stars⁴¹. But it must be pointed out here that the Spanish poet modified the inherited metaphor in such a way that the eyes in reality were substituted for stars, while the eyes themselves were located in irreality, where they are indicated by colourful marks on feathers (Alonso Dámaso 1971, p. 124–126). The subtle play Góngora seems to apply in his work lets him create an image of lucidity and clarity, whereas it becomes more and more distant from reality. Moreover, in the last cited verse, we observe a change of attributes: the peacock is dedicated to Juno, the swan to Venus. Góngora plays with tradition not in opposition to it (though undoubtedly he tries to gain his own position), but mainly to make his poetic images based on tradition stronger. Venus's peacock is a swan with a peacock's iridescence, Juno's swan possesses also peacock features. Iridescence and white are both very intense, the attributes' exchange aims to intensify this intensity. Góngora leaves real life apart and works in imagination which contains other products of culture, such as poetic images, partly overexploited by then. We must remember that one of them was the motif of Polyphemus and Galatea by Lope de Vega, for Góngora knew the text of *Arcadia* very well.

Góngora does not equate Galatea with milk, as did Theocritus and Ovid. Though, it is justified, if we take into consideration the Greek etymology of the work and the bucolic character of the poem itself. It would be surprising if Polyphemus – the shepherd – for example compared her skin to marble. It should be noticed that one of the significant transformations of the myth we observe in Góngora's poem concerns the way Galatea is described. We perceive her from both perspectives: Polyphemus's and the poet's, which are completely autonomous. It explains the reason why the author rejected the milk-metaphor (maybe it is more obvious than the critics say, if we realize that Lope does not use it, although it is present in bucolic tradition in Sannazaro or Garcilaso). The white colour of Galatea's skin is emphasized by the image of the swan, snow or a pearl. Góngora, in contrast to Lope, does not continue the ancient model of depicting Galatea, for both competing authors are highly influenced by Neoplatonism. Lope degrades this concept; Góngora, by contrast, describes the intensive beauty of Galatea as if she were a deity: 'deidad, aunque sin templo, es Galatea' (p. 179). Góngora's divine Galatea owes much to the idea of *amour*

⁴¹ A. Vilanova, *Las fuentes y los temas del Polifemo de Góngora*, t. I, PPU, Barcelona 1992, p. 614–618.

courtois, Neoplatonism and Italian Renaissance⁴². No wonder, that in Góngora's poem Polyphemus's gifts for the spiritual nymph have nothing to do with excessive naturalism observed in Lope's story: 'arco, digo, gentil, bruñida aljaba, / obras ambas de artifice prolijo, / y de Malaco rey a deidad Java alto don' (p. 197). Góngora is not attracted by the mundane *bodegón*, especially not when he admires the beauty of Galatea⁴³. What links the visual art and his poetic pictures can be certainly found on the fresco *Triumph of Galatea* by Raphael, painted in villa Farnesina, on the outskirts of Rome⁴⁴. Inspired by the poem *Stanze per la Giostra* by the Italian classical scholar and poet of the Florentine Renaissance Angelo Poliziano, Raphael used to say, that when he painted Galatea he did not want to copy any real woman, but to reproduce the idea of beauty. The clash between ideal flawless or divine beauty and the dark world of erotic desires will be the motif of the symbolist Gustave Moreau in his *Galatea* at the end of 19th century: a similar opposition may be traced also in the 17th century in the Spanish poet⁴⁵.

Two giants of Spanish literature decided to undertake the Cyclops myth. Each of them transformed the story on a different level. These metamorphoses gave way for contemporaneity⁴⁶: paraphrasing the words of Bernard de Chartres, Lope and Góngora are not the dwarves on giants' shoulders, but they have a casual conversation with the classical myth. The rejection of a definite norm is not just a result of the dialogue with antiquity, but above all it appears to be the consequence of an aesthetic battle, not always friendly between the authors. Nevertheless, they both seem, to some extent, very close to each other, although they would probably deny it: in the myth of Polyphemus, they both point out the nagging dissonance between ideal order and passion, typical for the Spanish Baroque.

⁴² I. Ribó Labastida, *Galatea o la leche. La descripción de la belleza femenina en Teócrito, Ovidio y Góngora*, Lemir nr 10, 2006, passim.

⁴³ In fact, Góngora is also the author of the literary *bodegones*, but as he perfectly knows Lope de Vega's *Arcadia* he does not elaborate in his poem the motif of the gifts for Galatea. See, Osuna Rafael (1968), p. 15–19.

⁴⁴ E. Cancelliere, *Forma y color en el Polifemo de Góngora*, [in:] J.R. Lozano (coord.), *Góngora: la estrella inextinguible: magnitud estética y universo contemporáneo*, Sociedad Estatal de Acción Cultural, 2012, p. 109–123.

⁴⁵ M. Blanco Mercedes, *Del „Polifemo” griego al barroco: un mito y sus imágenes*, Insula 781–782, 2012, p. 3–6.

⁴⁶ M. Calinescu, *Cinco caras de la modernidad. Modernismo, vanguardia, decadencia, kitsch, postmodernismo*, Tecnos, Madrid 2003.