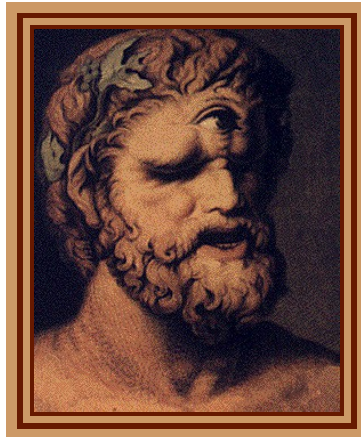


Aeneid Book III Analysis 9: Themes: Polyphemus, Personification, Repetition



The major deity/mythological creature who actually appears in the IGCSE set passage is Polyphemus. You may find it helpful to go back over Lessons for Year 2 Term 2 Weeks 8-10 Day 2 and Year 2 Term 3 Weeks 1 and 2 Day 2 to glean all the information you can about Polyphemus and draw a picture of him now. It does not have to be a work of art but just something that will help you remember all the things that Virgil says about his appearance. Annotate the drawing in Latin and in English to help you. Another possibility would be to draw a series of annotated pictures rather like a cartoon strip beginning with the information from the most famous story about him on the *Mothers' Companion* flashdrive in Volume 3, Classics, "Legends of Greece and Rome" by G. H. Kupfer, no. 35. Then move on to the episode described in your set lines.

Here are some extra notes that might help you to draw/annotate/add to your picture(s) I have highlighted in **green** words that your picture should help you to remember.

The **shepherd** Cyclops Polyphemus lived in a "**huge** cave" "a house of **blood** and bloodstained feasts, huge and dark inside." He is so big that he "knocks against the high **stars**." "He **eats** the entrails and dark blood of wretched **men**." Achaemenides saw him seize the bodies of two of Ulysses companions and **smash them on a rock** while he was reclining in the cave. Achaemenides also "saw when he devoured their **limbs** dripping with dark gore and their warm bodies **quivered** in his teeth." Ulysses and his companions waited until Polyphemus was asleep "full full of the feast and overwhelmed with wine, and lay immense throughout the cave, **vomiting** in his sleep blood and blood-stained **scraps of food mixed** with strong wine". Then they "with a sharp weapon **pierced** his one and only great **eye** which lurked in his savage forehead". A **hundred other Cyclopes** as great as Polyphemus, commonly dwell on the bay where Aeneas and the Trojans have landed and wander on the high mountains. Polyphemus himself **appeared on the top of the mountain** among the flock. When he shouted the volcano **Etna** "bellowed".

Line 658 is worth learning as a description of Polyphemus because when we scan the line we get:

mōnstr(um)hōr | rēnd(um),īn | fōrm(e),īn | gēns, cūi | lūmēn ā | dēmtūm

This not only has the maximum number of spondees to give a feel for the huge size of Polyphemus but also creates, by means of the elisions, the huge single word *mōnstrhōrrēndīnfōrmīngēns*! If you can't learn the whole line just learn this amazing word.

Exam style questions are on the next page:

<i>hic me, dum trepidi crudelia limina linquunt,</i>	616
<i>immemores socii vasto Cyclopi in antro</i>	
<i>deseruere. domus sanie dapibusque cruentis,</i>	
<i>intus opaca, ingens. ipse arduus, altaque pulsat</i>	
<i>sidera (di talem terris avertite pestem!)</i>	620
<i>nec visu facilis nec dictu adfabilis ulli;</i>	
<i>visceribus miserorum et sanguine vescitur atro.</i>	
<i>vidi egomet duo de numero cum corpora nostro</i>	
<i>prensa manu magna medio resupinus in antro</i>	
<i>frangeret ad saxum, sanieque aspersa natarent</i>	625
<i>limina; vidi atro cum membra fluentia tabo</i>	
<i>manderet et tepidi tremerent sub dentibus artus—</i>	
<i>haud impune quidem, nec talia passus Ulixes</i>	
<i>oblitusue sui est Ithacus discrimine tanto.</i>	629

Translate lines 616- 620. [5]

Who is the speaker and what is his nationality? [2]

Who is the speaker addressing? [2]

ipse (line 619) Who is this? [1]

Write out and scan line 618 [2]

Comment on Virgil's use of metre in this line. [2]

Give two examples of literary techniques that Virgil uses in this passage and explain how he uses them to create an effect or to give meaning. [4]

(Hint: this is where you use the information you have learned about repetition and personification.)

“Virgil's Polyphemus is an evil character unrelieved by anything that might stir our sympathy.” To what extent does your reading of the Aeneid support this view? You should write at least 100 words and support your answer with reference to the text. [10]

(Hint: “to what extent?” therefore use “on the one hand... on the other hand...” in your answer to keep you on track.)

Answers on the next page.

Translate lines 616- 620. [5]
Check your answer with your flashcards.

Who is the speaker and what is his nationality? [2]
Achaemenides. He is Greek.

Who is the speaker addressing? [2]
Notice that there are two marks allocated for this question so the answer “Anchises” or “the Trojans” for instance, is not likely to get full marks. However, Anchises and the other Trojans will get 2.

ipse (line 619) Who is this? [1]
Polyphemus

Write out and scan line 618 [2]
No elisions. Note that *ue* and *ie* are **not** diphthongs. Remember also that the *u* in *qu* does not count as a separate letter.

Mark last five syllables:

deseruere. domus sanie dapi | būsquē crŭ | ēntīs,

No diphthongs. Vowels before two consonants are long so:

deseruere. domūs sanie dapi | būsquē crŭ | ēntīs,

count remaining syllables: 12

de-se-ru-e-re. Do-mūs sa-ni-e da-pi | būsquē crŭ | ēntīs,

12 remaining syllables means four dactyls.

dēsērŭ | ērē. dō | mūs sānī | ē dāpī | būsquē crŭ | ēntīs,

This was a nasty one because if you mistook *ue* and *ie* for diphthongs you could not get the correct answer. Practising reading Latin aloud is a good way to overcome any difficulties in distinguishing diphthongs from vowels pronounced separately. You are probably quite good at this in any case if you have formed good habits when chanting verbs and nouns in grammar lessons.

Comment on Virgil's use of metre in this line. [2]

If you got the right answer to the scansion question, you will spot the “galloping dactyls”. And of course Achaemenides is describing how he was left when Ulysses and his companions **rushed** pell-mell out of the cave!

Give two examples of literary techniques that Virgil uses in this passage and explain how he uses them to create an effect or to give meaning. [4]

Notice the four marks: one for each technique and one for each explanation of how they are used. In this passage Virgil uses **personification**, *natarent limina*. He describes the threshold as if it were a person swimming in blood to create an **effect** of horror. He also uses **repetition** *vidi...vidi...* to create an **emphatic** effect.

“Virgil's Polyphemus is an evil character unrelieved by anything that might stir our sympathy.” To what extent does your reading of the Aeneid support this view? You should write at least 100 words and support your answer with reference to the text. [10]

On the one hand, the description of Polyphemus that Virgil puts into the mouth of Achaemenides is **unrelievedly evil**. He is not only huge [1] and “not pleasant to look at” [1] but also “affable to no one”. [1] He eats human flesh, [1] and consumes his victims while still warm and trembling. [1] His very home, a dark cave, [1] is described as “grim” [1] and “a house of blood” [1]. On the other hand, when the Trojans actually see Polyphemus, although he is “a fearful monster” Virgil includes touches that **stir our sympathy**. Polyphemus actually find comfort in his flock of sheep [1] and Virgil points out that evil things have happened to him too. When he reaches the shore, the now blind

Polyphemus pitifully tries to bathe his wounded eye, groaning with pain as he does so. [1] We can't help feeling just a little sorry for him.

Don't worry if you found this difficult. There are only so many things the examiners can ask for in such a relatively short passage and we will cover as many of them as we can find in exercises like this. Then when you come to sit the paper you will almost certainly have covered the ground already. And if the paper does spring any surprises, you will be so used to seeing the kind of thing the examiners are wanting that you will spot what they are asking for in any case.