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| Thematic Focus: Translation and Close Reading [OPTIONAL] |
| **Polyphemus’ Prayer to Poseidon**  **Directions**:   * Read each of the following translations. * List how each translator expresses or describes the following:   + Poseidon   + Odysseus   + Condition of the homecoming   + The ship   + Problems in Ithaca * How would you describe the style of the translation? * Which one do you prefer and why? |
| **A. Robert Fagles translation**  But at that he bellowed out to lord Poseidon,  thrusting his arms to the starry skies, and prayed, ‘Hear me—  Poseidon, god of the sea-blue mane who rocks the earth!  If I really am your son and you claim to be my father—  come, grant that Odysseus, raider of cities,  Laertes’ son who makes his home in Ithaca,  never reaches home. Or if he’s fated to see  his people once again and reach his well-built house  and his own native country, let him come home late  and come a broken man—all shipmates lost,  alone in a stranger’s ship—  and let him ﬁnd a world of pain at home!’  **B. George Chapman Translation (1616)**  Then flew fierce vows to Neptune, both his hands  To star-born heaven cast: “O thou that all lands  Gird’st in thy ambient circle, and in air  Shak’st the curl’d tresses of thy sapphire hair  If I be thine, or if thou mayst justly vaunt  Thou art my father, hear me now, and grant  That this Ulysses, old Laertes’ son  That dwells in Ithaca, and name hath won  Of city-ruiner, may never reach  His natural region. Or, if to fetch  That, and the sight of his fair roofs and friend,  Be fatal to him, let him that amends  For all his miseries, long time and ill,  Smart for, and fail of; nor that fate fulfill  Till all his soldiers quite are cast away  In others’ ships. And when, at last, the day  Of his sole-landing shall his dwelling show,  Let Detriment prepare him wrongs enow.  **Alexander Pope translation (1726)**  Hear me, O Neptune: thou whose arms are hurl’d  From shore to shore, and gird the solid world,  If thine I am, nor thou my birth disown,  And if the unhappy Cyclop be thy son,  Let not Ulysses breathe his native air,  Laertes’ son, of Ithaca the fair.  If to review his country be his fate,  Be it through toils and suffering long and late,  His lost companions let him first deplore,  Some vessel, not his own, transport him o’er.  And when at home from foreign sufferings freed,  More near and deep, domestic woes succeed!  **Samuel Butler translation (1900)**  On this, he lifted up his hands to the firmament of heaven and prayed, saying, “Hear me, great Neptune; if I am indeed your own true–begotten son, grant that Ulysses may never reach his home alive; or if he must get back to his friends at last, let him do so late and in sore plight after losing all his men [let him reach his home in another man's ship and find trouble in his house.'”  **Allen Mandelbaum translation (1990)**  He prayed to lord Poseidon,  Lifting his hands up to the starry heaven:  “Listen, Poseidon, dark-haird lord who clasps  The earth hard fast. If I’m indeed your son  And you declare yourself my father, then  Don’t let this ravager of towns, Odysseus,  Laertes’ son, who lives in Ithaca,  Return to his own land. But if his fate  Must have him see his dear ones once again,  And reach his sturdy home, his native land,  Then let him struggle back – a battered man,  With all his comrades lost, and on a ship  Of strangers. In his house, let him meet grief. |
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