# δι᾽ ἀμφιτρῆτος αὐλίου: Thematic Parallels between Sophocles' *Philoctetes* and Euripides' *Cyclops*

By

Lauren Hampson
M.A., University of Kansas, 2021
Postbaccalaureate, University of California, Davis, 2019
B.A., University of California, Davis, 2018

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Chair: Dr. Paul Touyz

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Dr. Pamela Gordon

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Dr. Craig Jendza

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The thesis committee for Lauren Hampson certifies that this is the approved version of the following thesis:

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ABSTRACT

Questions about the connection between Euripides' *Cyclops* and Sophocles' *Philoctetes* have been widely debated. However, the studies these scholars have conducted have been primarily concerned with the dating of *Cyclops* via generally superficial similarities between it and *Philoctetes,* and do not adequately address the complex thematic resonances between the two. Furthermore, when scholars discuss themes and reception in *Cyclops,* they focus on Homer's *Odyssey* but overlook *Philoctetes*. My paper addresses these linguistic and thematic echoes, with special attention paid to the role of Odysseus in creating and sustaining these multifaceted connections. Specifically, my project will look at the ways that *Cyclops* represents a reception and fulfillment of Sophocles' *Philoctetes* by examining the use and abuse of social norms throughout each play, especially as enacted by Odysseus. I will first examine specific moments in *Philoctetes* that find their echo in *Cyclops* before moving on to a comparative analysis of the plays in order to reveal the overlooked thematic and metatheatrical resonances. I argue that by acknowledging and appreciating these similarities, we as readers can more fully understand the nuances of each play and the way that social systems create and normalize the way that "others" are treated in those systems. In conclusion, this project, by closely examining specific moments in *Philoctetes* and *Cyclops,* sheds new light on the generally neglected connections between these two plays.

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# INTRODUCTION

The obvious comparand for Euripides' *Cyclops* is, of course, Homer's *Odyssey*. The satyr play reproduces the story from the epic, deviating from it at the level of myth only as much as adding satyrs forces the story to adapt. This has led scholars, when they engage with the play at all, to discuss it primarily in terms of the *Odyssey*.[1] Commentaries and scholarship focus on the ways that *Cyclops* responds to or corrects the Odyssey. This is vital for understanding the play, but allows other important intertexts to slip through the cracks. This study proposes to offer a remedy to this oversight, by examining the thematic and metatheatrical parallels between this play and Sophocles' *Philoctetes*. Specifically, it will focus on the way that Odysseus operates in the two plays and how *Cyclops* may be read in part as an answer to and escalation of the earlier tragedy.

I am certainly not the first to explore the connection between it and *Philoctetes*. In the discussion about the murky date of the *Cyclops*, scholars have examined the satyr play in comparison with various tragedies through a variety of means, from superficial philological considerations to more thematic parallels.[2] Earlier scholarship favored an earlier date range in order to associate the play with *Hecuba*, dated to 424-418 BCE, though this view has fallen out of favor in recent years.[3] Scholars have since settled on two primary production dates, 412 and 408 BCE, although the date is ultimately impossible to prove. [4] Arguments on both sides rely on

[1] Hunter and Laemmle, 2020, 4-21; Seaford, 1984, 51-59.
[2] Seaford, 1984; Wright, 2005; Marshall, 2001; Shaw 2018, 25, 109-116.
[3] Seaford, 1982, 168-70.
[4] For 412: Wright, 2005. For 408: Marshall, 2001; Seaford, 1984; Shaw, 2018, argues for neither date, but acknowledges that either Wright or Seaford is probably correct (25). Later (109-116) he seems to favor 412 alongside Wright, but does not say this explicitly.

interpretations of the same evidence. However, this study will assume and support a production date of 408 BCE for a number of reasons.

First, the philological connection. One of the primary verbal clues scholars point to is the use of the rare word ἀμφιτρής, "pierced through" to describe the caves of Philoctetes and Polyphemus (*Phil*. 19, *Cyc.* 707). Marshall uses this to argue in favor of the later production date, as its use in *Cyclops* apropos of nothing renders its use there "potentially incomprehensible, and the *Philoctetes* passage potentially frivolous." [5] While I am inclined to agree with Marshall, Wright points out that ἀμφιτρής may have been quite common in texts no longer extant; alone, its use in *Cyclops* would mean very little.[6] He instead argues for 412 by noting the similarity between an exclamatory phrase in *Cyclops* and one in a fragment of *Andromeda*, which is also parodied in Aristophanes' comedy *Thesmophoriazusae*.[7] Wright argues that Euripides is parodying the use of the phrase in *Andromeda* in *Cyclops*, which if performed in 412 would have come directly after *Andromeda*; this would then have Aristophanes parodying Euripides' own double usage of it a year later. Jendza disputes this evidence, arguing that such self-parody is unusual for Euripides, while a paracomic explanation in which Euripides is parodying Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae* is more likely.[8] Hunter and Laemmle also note that these sorts of exclamations are fairly common.[9] Such language concerns are an important place to begin to build an argument but cannot stand on their own.

[5] Marshall, 2001, 230.
[6] Wright, 2005, 23.
[7] Wright, 2005, 24. The phrase is the various iterations of ἔα: τίν᾽ ὄχθον τόνδ᾽ ὀρῶ (*Thesmo.* 1105, *Andromeda* fr. 125) and ἔα: τίν᾽ ὄχλον τόνδ᾽ ὀρῶ (*Cyc*. 222). The parallel hinges on the similarity in sound between ὄχθον and ὄχλον.
[8] Jendza, 2020, 223-225. Jendza further examines the way that Euripides often "escalates" the situations of previous tragedies, both his own and others. He specifically uses Euripides' *Orestes* in this discussion, but the methodology can also be extended to support the 408 date for *Cyclops* (173-186, 199-206).
[9] Hunter and Laemmle, 2020, 40.

Other connections lie in parallels between *Cyclops* and other tragedies, especially the so-called "escape plays" of *Helen*, dated to 412, and *Iphigenia at Tauris*, also tentatively dated to 412; Wright adds to these *Andromeda*.[10] He thus argues for an "escape tetralogy", with *Cyclops* as the satyr play attached to the others based on various story-level and thematic similarities, in addition to the somewhat vague verbal connection.[11] While the argument for this thematic and structural connection cannot be ignored, other plays, including *Philoctetes,* lay claim to equally strong ties. Hunter and Laemmle adduce the events of *Hecuba* as an example. *Hecuba* is usually dated to between 424-418 BCE, far earlier than the preferred date range for *Cyclops* of 412-408 BCE.[12] Still, the two plays both have a 'monstrous' character who is blinded by the hero and has cannibalistic tendencies; even the names, Polyphemus and Polymestor, are similar.[13] Despite their resemblance, few scholars today would push the production date of *Cyclops* so far back, given the other evidence. Furthermore, the commentators offer *Ion*, dated to 415-412 BCE, as a similar example: there, the titular Ion sweeps a temple of Apollo, singing a monody to the god, which is paralleled in *Cyclops*.[14] As Hunter and Laemmle themselves note, to date no one has claimed that *Cyclops* ought to be considered the satyr play that followed *Ion* based on this similarity.[15]

We have seen the dangers of attempting to date plays via thematic or scene-specific moments with the examples of *Hecuba* and *Ion* above. Wright's argument for an "escape tetralogy" raises intriguing possibilities, though there is little evidence for thematic tetralogies.

[10] Wright, 2005, 27. The dating of *Helen* and *Andromeda* are more certain, while *Iphigenia at Tauris* is dated between 416-412 BCE.
[11] Wright, 2005, 40-42.
[12] Hunter and Laemmle, 2020, 43.
[13] Hunter and Laemmle, 2020, 43.
[14] Hunter and Laemmle, 2020, 41.
[15] Hunter and Laemmle, 2020, 41 n. 147.

Furthermore, his argument rests on the shaky assumption that *Iphigenia at Tauris*, uncertainly dated to between 416-412, was performed alongside the more securely dated *Andromeda* and *Helen*. The pairing of *Iphigenia at Aulis* with the other two is based itself on thematic parallels between the two to create the tragic trilogy to which he proposes adding *Cyclops* for a full thematic tetralogy. This is a series of shaky connections added to one another to create an interesting, if ultimately unlikely, chronology. Better, then, to use the combination of a direct verbal link (δι᾽ ἀμφιτρῆτος) and a securely dated play (*Philoctetes*).

An argument employing philological and thematic criteria is more compelling. Wright, of course, does this in the development of his argument for 412 BCE, but the linguistic evidence is shaky at best, as has been discussed above. The connection created by the use of ἀμφιτρής and the close thematic parallels between *Cyclops* and *Philoctetes* is stronger. The use of the term works both to "update" Homer for the stage—something scholars point to frequently about *Cyclops*—and to draw a final, concrete connection to Sophocles' play. There is no prior reference to Polyphemus' cave being two sided, unless we take a suggested restoration of line 60, which would have the text read "ἀμφίθυρον".[16] Whether or not the suggested restoration is correct, the use of the adjective in *Cyclops* stands as a clear response to, and perhaps subtle commentary on, Sophocles' innovation, especially when taken with the various thematic parallels.

As will become clear in the following pages, the connection between these two plays cannot be boiled down simply to date or shared language. Rather, the connection between the two at the level of theme and character is of the utmost importance for a complete understanding of the two plays. The 'monstrous' Polyphemus may be more fully realized as a sympathetic

[16] Seaford, 1984, 112 n. 60.

character when viewed through the lens of Philoctetes, while Philoctetes' 'monstrosity' may be better understood through Polyphemus. Central to this study is the figure of Odysseus and the overlap in his Sophoclean and Euripidean characterizations.

Odysseus' evolution from Iliadic commander and hero of the *Odyssey* to the more reviled tragic figure we find in several of the extant tragedies is far beyond the purview of this study, and is given its due in Stanford's *The Ulysses Theme*.[17] Odysseus first appears in the extant tragedies in Sophocles' *Ajax*, wherein he is not wholly negative, though also not the Homeric hero; Stanford describes his conduct by the end as "magnanimous, compassionate, [and] modest" while also acknowledging that his behavior at the beginning was less heroic.[18] In his earlier treatment of the hero, then, Sophocles did not find him to be wholly a villain. Forty years later, Sophocles had removed the rose-tinted glasses: the Odysseus of *Philoctetes* is unscrupulous and cruel.[19]

Odysseus is a rare stage presence in extant tragedy, and more so in the Euripidean corpus. In *Hecuba*, Odysseus' only appearance in Euripides' extant plays besides *Cyclops*, his behavior is summed up well by Stanford when he says the man is "unforgettably detestable…a sinister, malign influence".[20] Stanford does not treat *Cyclops*, but he would have presumably had something similar to say about Odysseus' appearance there. The stage-Odysseus is an able manipulator of social customs and norms, often cloaking his actions in the excuse of their being for the good of the group, not the individual. In both *Philoctetes* and *Cyclops*, the operative

[17] Stanford, 1992.
[18] Stanford, 1992, 105.
[19] Stanford, 1992, 108-111; his view here is wholly negative, and while I am inclined to agree with him, others offer a somewhat more nuanced view. Schein, 2013, is one of these more nuanced views (20-23).
[20] Stanford, 1992, 111.

customs are *xenia* and *philia*.[21] These are ideas integral to the functioning of Greek society as a whole, and the tragedies in microcosm. It must be noted that most extant tragedies are organized around violations primarily of *philia*, but also *xenia*.[22] *Cyclops* and *Philoctetes* are not unique in that regard. They are however unique in their focus on the use and abuse of these customs by Odysseus. I propose that the pathos of each play hinges on the choices Odysseus makes with regards to the eponymous characters: Philoctetes and Polyphemus are complex personages who become defined by their abuse at the hands of Odysseus, despite their sometimes subhuman categorizations.

A sympathetic Cyclops may be foreign to many readers, and probably would have been to an ancient audience. Shaw and O'Sullivan say as much in their respective studies.[23] I propose however that it is not an impossibility. Rick Newton hypothesizes—I would argue correctly—that Homer invites us to pity Polyphemus even as he confronts his audience with the Cyclops' monstrosity. Specifically, Newton argues that this pity is fostered through parallels between Polyphemus' experience at the hands of Odysseus in *Odyssey* 9 and Odysseus' own experiences in *Odyssey* 17.[24] Newton concludes by arguing that these parallels both invite pity for Polyphemus and help to explain and justify Odysseus' treatment of the suitors: he becomes, when presented with his own unasked-for guests, Cyclopean.[25] Thus I am not the first to see a way through to sympathy for the Cyclops, and Newton's precedent is a useful touchstone for the use of Polyphemus as a way to understand and explain the monstrosity of those with whom he

[21] For *Philoctetes*: Belfiore, 2000, 63-81; Blundell, 1989, 185-225; . For *Cyclops*: Shaw, 2018, 75-83; O'Sullivan, 2017, 344-360; O'Sullivan and Collard, 2013, 41-57.
[22] Belfiore, 2000, 15.
[23] Shaw, 2018; O'Sullivan, 2017.
[24] Newton, 1983.
[25] Newton, 1983, 142.

shares narrative and thematic space. Specifically, this can be a paradigm for examining Philoctetes as he is subject to abuses of *philia* and *xenia*.

A brief examination of *xenia* and *philia* is in order. These terms are treated extensively in Belfiore's *Murder Among Friends* and Blundell's *Helping Friends and Harming Enemies*, and the view of these terms in this study is generally in keeping with their formulations.[26] Belfiore argues from the outset of her text that *philia* and its violation is at the heart of tragedy as a genre, with *xenia* as a subcategory of *philia* relationships.[27] Blundell has a similarly expansive definition of *philia* and *philoi*, though makes little mention of *xenia*. These two generally consider *philia* to be a form of ritualized friendship, in addition to a bond between blood-related family and married partners. Both also, helpfully, use *Philoctetes* as a case study: Belfiore's chapter explores violations of *xenia*, while Blundell examines the complicated *philia* relationships at play between Odysseus, Neoptolemus, Philoctetes, and also Heracles. *Cyclops* too addresses both kinds of ritualized relationships at length, which Shaw and O'Sullivan touch upon in their studies.[28] Konstan also offers definitions for *xenia* and *philia* within the context of *Cyclops*, and adds to the concept of *philia* the idea that *philoi* are not required to like each other, merely to act in the way social structures require.[29] This paper will build upon these disparate studies and seek to establish overlap in concerns about and uses of these social institutions, especially with regards to the figure of Odysseus.

Thus, this study will trace the pivotal moments in *Philoctetes* on its own, before moving on to a comparative analysis of the two plays. *Cyclops* is barely half the length of the tragedy,

[26] Belfiore, 2000; Blundell, 1989.
[27] Belfiore, 2000, xv-xvi.
[28] Shaw, 2018; O'Sullivan, 2005.
[29] Konstan, 1990, 217. His discussion centers on the *philia* between Odysseus and his men, but the ideas may be easily applied to Silenus and his satyr sons.

and so the analysis thereof will be more comprehensive than that of *Philoctetes*. That is to say, the attention paid to *Philoctetes* selects for scenes that are useful in our understanding of the connection between the two plays. The comparative analysis of chapter two will explain the choices of focus for chapter one and expand upon the observations there, in addition to offering comment and analysis on *Cyclops* itself.

CHAPTER 1

## (1) Introduction

The character of Odysseus is not remotely straightforward. The Homeric iteration exemplifies the clever, epic hero while the tragic Odysseus runs the gamut from sympathetic hero to cruel villain. The Odysseus of the *Philoctetes* is controlling and masterfully cruel, but consistent. He enters and exits the stage with one goal, to retrieve the bow of Philoctetes and help the army. To accomplish this, Odysseus bends to the breaking point the cultural norms of Greek society, specifically those of *philia* and *xenia*. He uses his relationship with and power over Neoptolemus, the ephebic child of Achilles assigned to help him retrieve the bow, to enact his plan. His goals are perhaps noble: within the common Greek ideology of "help friends, harm enemies," claiming the bow (and perhaps 'attaining' Philoctetes himself) is good. Tragedy, however, cannot be straightforward and someone must be the 'villain'.

Odysseus becomes that villain through his treatment of the eponymous hero, Philoctetes. Abandoned ten years before by the very same Odysseus, Philoctetes is the sympathetic heart of the play. Or, perhaps, Philoctetes' pain is the center of the play.[30] The sympathy Philoctetes elicits in this play can be attributed to two main factors: the recognition from the audience that his suffering is not his fault, [31] and his treatment at the hands of Odysseus. As we shall see, Neoptolemus is part of this, too: he is, at least for a time, an extension of Odysseus on the stage. The relationship he falsely engenders with Philoctetes is instrumental in Odysseus' plan. But, as

[30] Schein, 2013, 25. He claims that Philoctetes' "paroxysm is literally and figuratively at the heart of the play".
[31] Schein, 2013, 25. Citing Eagleton, he notes that Philoctetes' frailness "horrifies modern spectators and readers" as it perhaps would have 5th century Athenians; in this horror is also recognition.

he comes to recognize the inherent humanity in the near-subhuman figure of Philoctetes, his perspective and attitude add a further juxtaposition to those of Odysseus.

In his role as the 'villain' of the story, Odysseus also acts as an internal playwright.[32] He orchestrates the dialogue between Neoptolemus and Philoctetes, essentially putting words in the young man's mouth; he does the same with the False Merchant, who appears partway through the play, complicating the story. Even when Odysseus is on stage, he actively manipulates both Neoptolemus and Philoctetes, pushing them toward his own goals. His 'stage management' fails, however, as he is ultimately outwitted by the deified Heracles. Still, he achieves a version of his goals: Philoctetes will go to Troy with the bow, opening the way for all the Greeks to achieve the ultimate glory of taking the city.

Thus, the purpose of this chapter is to examine the way that Odysseus uses, abuses, and manages key Greek social customs at specific points in *Philoctetes* that find echo and resonance in *Cyclops*, examined in chapter two. Therefore, this will not be an exhaustive study of these abuses in the *Philoctetes*, but rather a look at the key moments that see Odysseus defining the character of others through manipulation and abuse of social customs and standards. This chapter argues that Odysseus breaks and violates social norms in order to create a marginalized 'other' out of Philoctetes, which would make acceptable the abuses Odysseus commits against him and allow Odysseus to achieve his own ends without consequence.

[32] Schein, 2013, 135 n. 83, 211 n. 542-627; Greengard, 1987, 25 "Odysseus is in contention with Sophocles as much as with Philoctetes on the outcome of this script".

**(1.1) Prologue: Philoctetes Introduced**

At the beginning of *Philoctetes*, Sophocles draws a sharp contrast between the identities of Neoptolemus and Philoctetes, which serves to highlight Philoctetes' "otherness" from the very start of the play. Odysseus introduces us to the important players in the story, saying ἔνθ', ὦ κρατίστου πατρὸς Ἑλλήνων τραφεὶς / Ἀχιλλέως παῖ Νεοπτόλεμε, τὸν Μηλιᾶ / Ποίαντος υἱὸν ἐξέθηκ' ἐγώ ποτε, "here, Neoptolemus, child born from a father greatest of the Greeks, Achilles, I once abandoned the Melian the son of Poeas" (*Phil.*3-5). We see that when Philoctetes is first mentioned, he is not named but instead identified by a series of descriptors: he is of a place (Μηλίς), and a father (Ποίας), but more importantly as Odysseus continues, he suffers from an injury to the foot. As a point of contrast, when Neoptolemus is introduced, he is linked with his father in the same place in the line as Philoctetes.[33] But, Neoptolemus' identity is not subsumed fully by his other features – he is named in the same breath as the reference to his father, who is also then connected to the Greeks, as noted above, through the use of Ἑλλήνων. Philoctetes gets not such broad connection.

Instead, Odysseus' main concern is the disruption Philoctetes' pain caused to sacrificial rituals among the fleet. We are told that the Greek fleet could not perform rites and sacrifices ἑκήλοις, "in peace" (*Phil*. 9). This demonstrates Odysseus' priorities. Philoctetes, despite his heritage and importance to the expedition, is considered less important than social customs. That he adduces social concerns as a reason for abandoning a *philos* highlights Odysseus' willingness to forego or bend custom to his own ends. Odysseus focalizes the problem of Philoctetes' cries on ritual at least in part because it is a convenient way to excuse himself and the Atreids.

[33] Schein, 2013, 117 n. 4; He notes here that "the combination of proper name and patronymic is unusual in Sophocles and limited to formal addresses…". This would seem to indicate that Odysseus is doing his best to hedge his bets with Neoptolemus.

Neoptolemus, even as a young man, would presumably understand the importance of being able to correctly engage with custom. Stephens argues that a Greek audience, intimately familiar with agonizing wounds, would understand the necessity of removing Philoctetes from the scene, especially in order to make sacrifices.[34] I do not disagree that the disruption of ritual was a problem for the Greek fleet, but abandoning a friend and ally with no recourse certainly falls under the category of a violation of *philia*.

This justification is also rebuked by Philoctetes himself later in the play: Πῶς, ὦ θεοῖς ἔχθιστε, νῦν οὐκ εἰμί σοι / χωλός, δυσώδης; πῶς θεοῖς ἔξεστ', ἐμοῦ / πλεύσαντος, αἴθειν ἱερά, πῶς σπένδειν ἔτι; / αὕτη γὰρ ἦν σοι πρόφασις ἐκβαλεῖν ἐμέ (*Phil*. 1031-35).[35] He points out here that his situation has not changed from the one that caused the fleet to abandon him ten years before; the Greeks would be as unable to perform the necessary rituals now as they were then.[36] Philoctetes recognizes that it is something about his deformity that incited the Greeks to abandon him, but he focuses on the stench of his diseased foot, not his cries of pain, in line with the way the myth is usually portrayed.[37] Odysseus makes no mention of the stench and focuses entirely on the ritual aspect. As Philoctetes points out, if the only reason he was abandoned was because of ritual considerations, then in coming to retrieve him Odysseus and the army invalidate the cause of his decade of suffering.

There is a sense of dismissiveness to Odysseus' summation of events. As Hall points out, the word Odysseus uses is ἐκήλοις, which does not simply mean 'peace' as I translated above.

[34] Stephens, 1995, 158.
[35] Translation: How, oh most hated by the gods, am I now not lame and ill-smelling to you? How would it be possible, with me sailing, to burn holy sacrifices, (or) to still pour libations? For this was the excuse to throw me away.
[36] Blundell, 1987, 309
[37] Schein, 2013, 276 n. 1032.

She translates it as "at our ease" and notes that it is used often of the gods' "carefree enjoyment of their banquets".[38] Hall uses this as evidence of the callousness of Odysseus (and the army as a whole) toward Philoctetes.[39] I am inclined to agree with her. The sacrifices were important and necessary, of course. However, the way that Odysseus frames the problem, as one of ease rather than necessity, clearly marks out how he conceives of his social obligations. Odysseus conceives of social inclusion as something that is contingent upon being able to adhere to social norms, not just a desire to do so. Philoctetes has the desire to engage in culture in spades. What he lacks, in the eyes of Odysseus and the other leaders, is the type of humanity that grants the ability to engage in these rituals. He cannot engage in rituals involved with eating because he is himself devoured by his disease. Konstan, in his discussion of the *Cyclops*, argues that that play was meant to "affirm the norms of exchange and reciprocity that govern human communities."[40] His analysis focuses in part on eating: who can and cannot be eaten, and who eats what as the dividing line between human and inhuman. *Philoctetes* is not focused on eating, but on participation in rituals associated with eating. While Philoctetes is perhaps not as patently monstrous as Polyphemus, he does not fit comfortably within the sphere of "human" because he physically cannot engage in sacrifice. And, in being so unable, he is then ostracized: it is a vicious cycle from which Philoctetes cannot escape without divine assistance.

This is also the first place where we see Philoctetes described as ἄγριος, "savage" (*Phil.* 9). While we have been given clear signals that he is a man, the combination of ἄγριος and his various cries make him out to be more animal than man. From the start of the play, there is a clear delineation between men like Neoptolemus whose nobility and social inclusion goes

[38] Hall, 2012, 160.
[39] Hall, 2012, 161.
[40] Konstan, 1990, 209.

without saying, and Philoctetes, who has been forcibly, physically removed from his own social sphere. This exclusion is predicated on his inability to engage in normal daily functions and his perceived contravention of those functions. By this, I mean that when he can no longer function the way that the Greek army needs him to, he is pitilessly abandoned.

This sort of pitiless cruelty can even be seen in how Odysseus describes Philoctetes and his situation. For example, he calls Philoctetes' wooden cup and firewood a "treasure" (θησαύρισμα, *Phil*. 37). This demonstrates a few things. Odysseus acknowledges that Philoctetes is in abject poverty, and has come to impoverish him further. He certainly means the word θησαύρισμα ironically, but it has a kernel of truth: they are the smallest trappings of civilization, and so perhaps a small comfort to Philoctetes. As Schein notes, this moment in which we see Philoctetes is the first time we begin to actually see the cruelty done to Philoctetes when he was abandoned.[41] His "treasure" is a poorly made cup and some firewood, the barest semblance of a home, and it is clear that Philoctetes has descended into something arguably less than human. Between his "savage" cries and his (if we are being generous) rustic living, in depriving Philoctetes of Greek society Odysseus and the Atreids have effectively stripped him of his humanity.

At 180, the chorus tells us that Οὗτος πρωτογόνων ἴσως / οἴκων οὐδενὸς ὕστερος, / πάντων ἄμμορος ἐν βίῳ, "this man was second to no one of high-born houses, now he is without a share in his life of all things" (*Phil*. 180-182). Nobility may then be a mutable quality. The chorus' view of Philoctetes is shaped both by what they see before them and by the characterization Odysseus has provided. While Neoptolemus and the chorus recognize

[41] Schein, 124, n. 29-39

Philoctetes' past before he was bitten by the snake, Odysseus seems to willfully ignore the status Philoctetes once held. It is politically expedient for Odysseus to treat the concept of nobility, and the rights that category grants, as flexible in both plays; it is easier to dismiss the wants or needs of a person whose social standing merits very little consideration.

When Philoctetes enters the stage at line 219, he inadvertently emphasizes the image the chorus paints at line 180. He describes himself as ἀπηγριωμένον, "having become wild", and ἔρημον κἄφιλον, "desolate and friendless" (*Phil*. 226, 228). His conception of his current self is not so different from the image Odysseus painted, though it is a much more sympathetic image coming from him. Differences begin to appear when he learns that Neoptolemus ostensibly knows nothing about him or his deeds and sufferings at 250. In response to this, he says Οὐδ' οὔνομ' οὐδὲ τῶν ἐμῶν κακῶν κλέος / ᾔσθου ποτ' οὐδέν, οἷς ἐγὼ διωλλύμην, "You have not ever at all learned my name or report of these evils, by which I was destroyed?" (*Phil*. 251-2). Philoctetes assumes that, regardless of his other exploits, those of his class would at least have the decency to mention his suffering. He considers himself still worthy of mention and κλέος, even if that fame is for his suffering: fame in suffering is still a form of fame. Neoptolemus, of course, may have heard of him before arriving on Lemnos and being subject to Odysseus' exposition; he may even have known the stories of Philoctetes' various exploits, besides his diseased foot. Still, Philoctetes' knowledge of how the heroic ethos works tells him that Neoptolemus should, despite never having met him, know who he is by context.

I find it interesting that even Philoctetes knows he will be best known for his disease: in his monologue a few lines later (254-316), he mentions that he holds the bow of Heracles, but his focus is his suffering, especially at the hands of the Greek leaders. His personality, his exploits, and his status have been subsumed by and into his diseased foot, alongside the bow that is his

lifeline, which both take precedence over his own deeds. It might be argued that even Odysseus acknowledges, despite his best efforts, that Philoctetes and the bow are effectively inseparable: when he tells Neoptolemus at 55 that he must ψυχὴν ὅπως δόλοισιν ἐκκλέψεις, "deceive [Philoctetes'] mind by trick", one might read that as "steal his life by deceit".[42] Odysseus would not want to admit that the two are one and the same, but the idea is implicit in his own words. Philoctetes has, on account of his disease and abandonment, experienced 'social death.'[43] This is emphasized by Philoctetes' following lines, in which he says οὗ μηδὲ κληδὼν ὧδ' ἔχοντος οἴκαδε / μηδ' Ἑλλάδος γῆς μηδαμοῦ διῆλθέ που, "of whom, though being in this condition, not even a word has yet come through to my home and not even to anywhere in Greece" (*Phil*. 255-6).[44] Philoctetes ought, by his social standing, to be talked about throughout Greece. Instead, he is reduced to obscurity on an empty island, all but literally dead. He has not only been abandoned but essentially forgotten.

Thus, from the beginning, Odysseus frames Philoctetes as a wild, almost inhuman man and encourages Neoptolemus to believe his words. Philoctetes inadvertently reinforces this image in his first entrance but emphasizes that his wildness is a comparatively recent development. Odysseus, in abandoning Philoctetes, set him on the path that led him to his current friendless and isolated state. Returning to Lemnos now emphasizes how physical isolation breeds isolated people. Odysseus created the circumstances under which Philoctetes is made more susceptible to societal rejection and instrumentalization by Odysseus. As we work through the play, we see that Odysseus adds to these circumstances by his further manipulation of social norms.

[42] Schein, 2013, 129 n. 55
[43] Hall, 2012, 160.
[44] Translation from Schein commentary

**(1.2) Stories within Stories: Narrative as Manipulation**

The first lines of the play set the stage for how Odysseus will attempt to influence and shape the way that Neoptolemus and the audience see both Neoptolemus himself and Philoctetes. Odysseus introduces Neoptolemus as κρατίστου πατρὸς, "[child] of the best father" (*Phil*. 3-4). We get his name and his heritage, both important aspects of conceptions of nobility and social worth.[45] The immediate effect is to place emphasis on Neoptolemus' own inherent nobility: Achilles was the best of the Achaeans, at least according to Odysseus here, and so Neoptolemus can inherit his 'best-ness.' This interaction, as it continues, shows Odysseus' first attempts to subtly, and less subtly, manipulate Neoptolemus into doing as Odysseus wants him to. He plays with and uses Neoptolemus' conception of himself and the heroic ethos of his father to turn the young man to his way of thinking.[46]

We are also told, or perhaps simply reminded, with that same κρατίστου that Achilles is also best of the Ἑλλήνων (*Phil*. 3-4). This use of Ἑλλήνων is, of course, an anachronism. As Schein notes, Odysseus may have used this to encourage patriotism in the mind of Neoptolemus: he does not owe his allegiance just to Odysseus or his own men, but to all the Greeks at Troy.[47] This opening speech is careful to emphasize Achilles and the Greeks as a whole, not Odysseus himself; it is not until nearly 50 lines later that Odysseus 'pulls rank' on the younger man to remind him of his duty.

[45] Schein, 2013, 117 n. 4 notes that the proper name-patronymic combination is unusual in Sophocles and is generally used in formal speeches.
[46] Dunn, 2020, 36. Dunn's article explores more in-depth the 'narrative bonds' formed between Philoctetes and Neoptolemus. She explores how the stories characters tell to and about each other shape their relationships.
[47] Schein, 2013, 116-7 n. 3.

Odysseus' initial comment on Neoptolemus' heritage is more fully elaborated on beginning in line 50. Odysseus introduces his plan with an appeal to Neoptolemus:

Ἀχιλλέως παῖ, δεῖ σ' ἐφ' οἷς ἐλήλυθας
γενναῖον εἶναι, μὴ μόνον τῷ σώματι,
ἀλλ' ἤν τι καινὸν ὧν πρὶν οὐκ ἀκήκοας
κλύῃς, ὑπουργεῖν, ὡς ὑπηρέτης πάρει.[48]

There are a few important things here for understanding the way that Odysseus operates in this play. He once again associates Neoptolemus immediately with Achilles, whom he identified earlier as the κρατίστου πατρὸς Ἑλλήνων [τραφεὶς] (*Phil*. 3). Odysseus here reiterates the connection between father and son, presumably to emphasize the γενναῖον that follows. However, as noted by Schein, invoking Achilles here is strange, insofar as deception was not Achilles' mode.[49] Odysseus then tells Neoptolemus to be γενναῖον, true to his heritage. This 'heritage' he wants to evoke is his highlights his nobility, which is here implied to be inherent. Neoptolemus is integral to the downfall of Troy because of his heritage and his potential military prowess. Aside from his noble birth, he has not had much chance to prove himself 'worthy' of being the son of Achilles. Philoctetes, meanwhile, had amply proved his nobility and worth, but those statuses are overlooked. By discounting his elite status, Odysseus attempts to dismiss any loyalties Neoptolemus may feel toward Philoctetes.

Here Odysseus also emphasizes his role as the leader in this expedition when he says ὡς ὑπηρέτης πάρει, "since you are here to serve" (*Phil*. 54). Neoptolemus is tasked with completing

[48] Translation: "Child of Achilles, it is necessary for you to be true to your birth for these things for which you have come, not only in body, but if you hear some new thing which you have not heard before, to serve since you are here to serve."
[49] Schein, 2013, 128 n. 49

every active part of the endeavor, but Odysseus is in charge. The use of ὑπουργεῖν and ὑπηρέτης in quick succession makes Odysseus' point fairly clear. Neoptolemus is an attendant, assistant, helper, but not the leader of this expedition. This emphasis is perhaps made to remind Neoptolemus of whom he is supposed to follow: in Odysseus' mind, he can only be loyal to his noble upbringing by obeying the orders of a superior, and completing the work that they were sent to do. In doing otherwise, he would fail to live up to his potential, at least in the eyes of Odysseus. He would also upend the current order of the army; Neoptolemus may be the commander of his own men but as Odysseus makes clear, Neoptolemus is still subservient to him. As noted above, whether Achilles would have approved of such measures is doubtful; but Neoptolemus cannot know that for certain. At this point in the narrative, Odysseus is the only living role model for what a 'proper' Greek man is. As we will see Neoptolemus will be, in the end, uninterested in Odysseus as a source of morality and confirmation of adulthood and will instead adhere to the model set by Achilles and Philoctetes.

The whole of the prologue with Odysseus is effectively Odysseus laying the foundation for his "play within a play." He needs Neoptolemus to fulfill a specific role in the story and to improvise only as much as is needed to create a compelling story for Philoctetes. At this point in the play, Neoptolemus is clearly willing to help achieve Odysseus' ends; he wants glory and the promise of, as Odysseus puts it, σοφός τ' ἂν αὐτὸς κἀγαθὸς κεκλῆ' ἅμα, "[being] called/reported of as wise and good" (*Phil*. 119). This inclusion of κἀγαθὸς is reminiscent of the κάλος κἀγαθὸς, the ideal 'beautiful and good' Athenian upper-class citizen. Schein notes that it is a "characteristically Odyssean twist" on the Athenian phrase.[50] Whether or not the twist was appealing to an Athenian audience, it is clearly persuasive to Neoptolemus, who responds Ἴτω·

[50] Schein, 2013, 143 n. 119.

ποήσω, πᾶσαν αἰσχύνην ἀφείς, "let it go, I will do it, putting away all shame" (*Phil*. 120). It is a decisive capitulation, but not a happy one.

Odysseus' long speech from 54 is also where we first see him manipulating social convention to achieve his ends. He tells Neoptolemus a variety of reasons why Neoptolemus must meet with Philoctetes which culminate in the statement that Neoptolemus σὺ μὲν πέπλευκας… οὔτε τοῦ πρώτου στόλου, "did not sail on the first expedition" (72-73). This is, rhetorically and story-wise, the most important reason.[51] Odysseus needs to use the institution of *philia*, which will keep Neoptolemus alive, to allow him to get close to Philoctetes to steal the bow. Odysseus seems to be relying on Philoctetes to better respect that institution that he himself did. He guesses correctly, perhaps, that Philoctetes will be desperate for human contact.

Schein notes that when Odysseus mentions "a brief part of the day" at 1.83, his words here are feeding into the image of Odysseus as stage manager.[52] Plays were generally a day long, and so Odysseus asks Neoptolemus to engage in playacting, and the requisite putting aside of cultural norms, for only so long as it takes to put on a festival. This metatheatrical connection to the duration of the festival softens the request: Odysseus is not asking Neoptolemus to act against his nature for all time. The connection to the theatrical festival day is also arguably sinister: the theatre was dedicated to Dionysus, and though not a god of *xenia* necessarily, he is a liminal god, and strangers were and are liminal people, able to become friend or foe. Odysseus, by asking Neoptolemus to use and abuse Philoctetes in a pseudo-theatrical 'play' is essentially abusing the institution of the theatre itself.

[51] Schein, 2013, 132 n. 72-3
[52] Schein, 2013, 135 n. 83

A final note on Odysseus and the beginning of the play: there is some indication that Achilles and Philoctetes were at least *philoi*.[53] In evidence of this, he addresses Neoptolemus as Ὦ φιλτάτου παῖ πατρός, "O child of a dearest father" (*Phil.* 242). The extent of their relationship is impossible to pin down, but we may assume from the warm treatment Philoctetes affords Neoptolemus, the older man at least thought highly of Achilles and is willing to do the same for his son. Odysseus would have known this, having travelled with both Achilles and Philoctetes. This in turn means that he knows what he is asking of Neoptolemus, in deceiving a person with whom the young man has ancestral ties. Neoptolemus, on the other hand, might not know this; it is unclear throughout the play exactly how much the young man knows about his father and his father's *philoi*. I bring this up to emphasize the knowledge gulf between the two. Odysseus knows how social conventions are to be carried out, and understands the gravity of violating *xenia* and *philia*, having done so himself. Even with this knowledge, Odysseus deemed that relationship and set of social conventions substantially less important than the needs of the army. His statement to Neoptolemus at l. 83 is illustrative of this: νῦν δ' εἰς ἀναιδὲς ἡμέρας μέρος βραχὺ / δός μοι σεαυτόν, "but now give to me one short day in shamelessness." Odysseus acknowledges that duplicity is not inherently moral, but asks it of Neoptolemus, nonetheless. And Neoptolemus perhaps understands the rituals of social relations at a surface level but is certainly inexperienced. He, at least at this point, must rely on Odysseus for understanding what is allowed and what is not with regard to strangers; this allows Odysseus to abuse that power.

Once Odysseus physically leaves the stage, it is up to Neoptolemus to maintain the façade that they had set in motion. I say physically leaves the stage because his force is felt

[53] Belfiore, 1993, 119. Belfiore offers ln. 260 as evidence of Philoctetes' relationship with Achilles: Ὦ τέκνον, ὦ παῖ πατρὸς ἐξ Ἀχιλλέως. This is in addition to 242. She also notes that Philoctetes then goes on to treat Neoptolemus as a *xenos*. Also, we may take Blundell (1989) as evidence that military alliance constituted a form of *philia* (47).

whether he is on stage or not; the presence of Odysseus' stories in this play works, somewhat, like the presence of wine in *Cyclops*, which makes Dionysus' absent presence felt. Neoptolemus' impending vitriol against the Achaean leaders in his story about the arms of Achilles is an elaboration from, if not a wholesale invention of, Odysseus. Odysseus is also the architect of the relationship between Neoptolemus and Philoctetes, though he ultimately loses control of Neoptolemus as the younger man comes into his own. Before that point, however, even the words Neoptolemus speaks and the accusations against the Greek leaders he makes are suggestions from Odysseus (*Phil.* 54-66).[54] These words are calculated to ingratiate Neoptolemus into Philoctetes' good graces by making him appear more like Philoctetes and to help lay the foundations of a relationship of *philia*, though one built on the lies that Odysseus has told.

Part of this is establishing Neoptolemus as someone who, like Philoctetes, has grievances against the Greeks and Odysseus especially. Odysseus essentially custom makes, purposely or accidentally, a story that fits perfectly with the one that Philoctetes imagines for himself. When Neoptolemus finishes the narration of his experiences with the Achaean leaders, Philoctetes states that he has arrived at Lemnos with a shared pain, and recognizes the work of those hated men (*Phil*. 403-406). Their 'shared' pain is, as Philoctetes says, a σύμβολον, a "token" (403). This specific term is also used for the symbolic gift exchanged between two parties to represent the initiation of *xenia*.[55] It was more often an object that was once whole and then broken in two so that the parties could recognize each other later.[56] This dual suffering, one half real and the

[54] Schein, 2013, 130 n. 58. Schein here notes that Odysseus "moves smoothly into a lively *rhesis*…as if Neoptolemus were already speaking." While I do not feel that I know enough about Greek syntax to establish whether Odysseus is taking any joy in creating a false narrative, his penchant for telling (tall) tales is obviously well established.
[55] Belfiore, 1993, 116.
[56] Schein, 2013, 194 n. 403-4

other fabricated, is representative of what the relationship between the two men will be until Neoptolemus finally matures and engages with the older man as a near-equal through proper oath-swearing.[57] While the two have of course just met, the story lays the foundation for their relationship in such a way as to make the two almost identical. This is clearly a powerful drug for Philoctetes, having been without human interaction for so long, and then to be presented with a person who so superficially mirrors his own experiences. Odysseus thus makes his presence known even when he is not on stage, a sense only heightened by the eventual entrance of the False Merchant.

### (1.3) The False Merchant: Round One

Schein calls the False Merchant a "character in a play within the play authored and directed by Odysseus."[58] Odysseus sets the stage in the opening of the play and then disappears for a few hundred lines. His presence is always felt in the lies or half-truths Neoptolemus tells Philoctetes, but he does not exert overt influence between the time he leaves the stage and this moment. Here, he 'reappears' in force. The character that appears must be played by the same actor who had previously portrayed Odysseus; he would have been the only one available. It is more than likely that the False Merchant is in fact meant to represent one of the men who accompanied Odysseus and Neoptolemus, not Odysseus himself; as we see later, Philoctetes immediately recognizes Odysseus' voice when he officially returns to the stage (*Phil*. 975).[59] By

[57] Fletcher, 2012, 97.
[58] Schein, 2013, 211 n. 542-627.
[59] Daneš, 2019, contests this view and holds that it is in fact Odysseus in disguise, and arguest that this proves that Philoctetes cannot recognize Odysseus (561). However, as I note, Philoctetes has an ear for voices and recognizes him immediately later; this is not to say that Odysseus could not modulate his voice, but Daneš does not address this.

sending an emissary, Odysseus would make good on his promise at 127-8, wherein he tells Neoptolemus that he would send a man if the deception was taking too long. Whether the staging was meant to indicate that this was Odysseus in disguise, or the man Odysseus said he would send is not of huge import to the analysis herein: he is the mouthpiece of Odysseus's tricks and social engineering, regardless of his actual identity. The False Merchant is emblematic of Odysseus' willingness to utilize any and all avenues to achieve his ends, even using such a low-ranking persona as a merchant to convey his message.

The merchant's role is, of course, to check in on Neoptolemus; presumably, Odysseus felt he was taking too long. Odysseus cannot allow Neoptolemus to begin to see Philoctetes as a person worthy of *philia* and/or *xenia*. He clearly understands from the beginning that Neoptolemus could be the 'weak link' in the plan.[60] The appearance of the trader here, when it appears that Neoptolemus has agreed to help Philoctetes to the detriment of the army, is interesting. There is some indication that Neoptolemus was in fact planning to sail to Troy regardless, but this is not certain. In agreeing to bring Philoctetes home, Neoptolemus asks only that the gods give them safe travels ὅποι τ' ἐνθένδε βουλοίμεσθα πλεῖν, "wherever whence we should wish to sail" (*Phil*. 528-29). Hall finds this statement a deceptive one, while Schein calls the phrase 'equivocal' and believes Neoptolemus means Troy rather than Philoctetes' home.[61] The False Merchant's appearance here changes the course of the play: regardless of where Neoptolemus planned to sail, the delay allows Neoptolemus and Philoctetes to inadvertently deepen the bonds of *xenia* and *philia* that they had begun to establish, even as this also leads to Neoptolemus' subsequent betrayal.

[60] Daneš, 2019, 559.
[61] Hall, 1994, 120; Schein, 2013, 208 n. 519-38.

This scene is the first scene in which Neoptolemus refers to Philoctetes as a friend, despite Philoctetes' previous use of such terms.[62] He does it a roundabout way, informing the False Merchant that Philoctetes is his φίλος μέγιστος, "greatest friend" (*Phil*. 586). This is addressed to the False Merchant, but obviously within earshot of Philoctetes. Whether Philoctetes noticed that this was the first absolute statement of friendship (although contingent upon his hatred of the Atreids) is not noted, but he presumably would have heard it with gladness; the text offers no comment. Whether Neoptolemus actually means it at this point in the story is less clear and there is some argument that he does not in fact mean what he says here.[63] I would argue that this moment marks when Neoptolemus has been forced to make a choice, and comes down in favor of Philoctetes. Regardless, this works within the structure of establishing a relationship of *philia* or *xenia* with Philoctetes, as a declaration of friendship was essential.

The story that the False Merchant spins is curious, as it directly contradicts known myth and the reality of what Odysseus and Neoptolemus could know.[64] He first tells Neoptolemus that Phoenix and the sons of Theseus φροῦδοι διώκοντές σε, "have gone out pursuing [him]" (*Phil*. 561). This must be false, as Phoenix and the other Achaean leaders know where Neoptolemus is and have no reason to think he was deserting the army. However, it works to set up a further parallel between Neoptolemus and Philoctetes: they are both, apparently, being pursued by leaders of the army to return them unwillingly to the war. This is in addition to the already fabricated story of the arms of Achilles, and Neoptolemus' treatment at the hands of the Atreids and Odysseus. He also tells Neoptolemus that Odysseus and Diomedes were sailing to retrieve Philoctetes (*Phil.* 591). The lead-up to this 'revelation' is winding and almost exclusively for

[62] Belfiore, 2000, 67.
[63] At least Schein says he "protests too much".
[64] Schein, 2013, 212 n. 542-627.

Philoctetes' 'benefit': Neoptolemus knows that Odysseus is on the island and that the ἄλλον ἄνδρ' that the False Merchant mentions at 570 must be Philoctetes.[65] The False Merchant's unwillingness to say whom Odysseus and Diomedes are searching for results in the aforementioned declaration of friendship at 586.

Partway through the scene, the False Merchant addresses Neoptolemus as παῖ (*Phil*. 589). This is a very Odyssean usage of the word and can be read as an attempt to set Neoptolemus 'in his place.' Of course, Philoctetes also calls Neoptolemus παῖ, though he is much more likely to address him as τέκνον. However, with two exceptions, it is always in address with the ὦ in front of it. The first is at 804, as Philoctetes falls victim to his disease; I would argue that language has broken down for Philoctetes, and so he uses a more abrupt address because he has neither the time nor the presence of mind to be more rhetorically capable. The only other place he addresses Neoptolemus as παῖ, and at the end of his speech no less, is when he is demanding his bow back at 981. In both cases, the παῖ is emphatic and comes during some sort of power play.[66] This seems important as a device of Odysseus to control the narrative. He has thus far forced the analogy between Neoptolemus and Philoctetes into a higher register with his falsified story, and here he phrases his speech to remind Neoptolemus that despite these superficial (and perhaps less superficial) similarities, Neoptolemus is still ostensibly subservient to Odysseus.

When the False Merchant leaves the stage, we see the beginning of the full ritual initiation of the *xenia* relationship between the two men. Shortly before his pain overwhelms him, Philoctetes takes a concrete action toward establishing a reciprocal relationship with Neoptolemus by offering the bow, saying παρέσται ταῦτά σοι καὶ θιγγάνειν / καὶ δόντι δοῦναι

[65] Schein, 2013, 215 n. 570-1. He calls the statement "vague" and says that it "calculatedly creates more suspense".
[66] Schein, 2013, 217 n. 589-90. Schein only says that it is emphatic, and bisects the trimeter. The note about a power play is my own.

κἀξεπεύξασθαι βροτῶν / ἀρετῆς ἕκατι τῶνδ' ἐπιψαῦσαι μόνον (*Phil*. 667-669).[67] Philoctetes offers Neoptolemus the privilege of holding the bow, and subsequently returning it to him. The bow takes on a specific significance, rather than its general importance to the play as a whole. It, in this limited *xenia* ritual, insofar as it remains unfulfilled until late in the play, is the *pista* that is exchanged as a representation of the bond that has been formed.[68] The problem with this exchange is immediately apparent: Neoptolemus fails to complete this ritualized representation of the friendship between himself and Phil, and so violates *xenia*. It is important to note that he does not actually hold the bow at this moment, and instead is given the bow when Philoctetes is overtaken by pain; this scene simply makes the offer of reciprocal friendship explicit and lays the foundation for that moment.[69] He is, of course, conflicted about this: just as Philoctetes' paroxysms of pain end, Neoptolemus own begin with the exclamation παπαῖ (*Phil*. 895). Having seen Philoctetes suffering and, and perhaps recognizing the 'gift' of the bow for the initiation of ritual obligation that it was, Neoptolemus seems to no longer be able to maintain the 'Odyssean' deception.

As soon as Odysseus reappears, he immediately reinforces the impression that he has no regard for Philoctetes and his suffering. It perhaps ought to be noted that Odysseus' reentry onto the stage at this moment is not entirely expected: when he leaves all the way back in the prologue, there is an undercurrent of a promise that we will see him again, but not specifically when or how. The False Merchant appeared right as Neoptolemus agrees to take Philoctetes on the boat with him (destination perhaps to be determined). Now, just as the two men begin to

[67] Translation: these things exist for you, to both touch [the bow] and to give it back to the one giving it and to boast loudly that you touched it alone of mortals by virtue of excellence.
[68] Belfiore, 2000, 64.
[69] Belfiore, 2000, 68. Belfiore says that this would "undercut the dramatic force of the next scene" in which Neoptolemus actually gets the bow.

reconcile following the revelation of the trick, Odysseus emerges in all his force to, perhaps, bring the story to a close. Neoptolemus had begun to turn to the chorus for moral direction, asking Τί δρῶμεν, ἄνδρες, "what should I do, men" (*Phil*. 974). He recognizes that he now has strong and conflicting ties to two opposed groups. In his inexperience, he cannot determine which is weightier, and so turns to men who are presumably his elders even he is their superior.[70] In the face of the possibility of Neoptolemus treating Philoctetes as a fellow Greek, he addresses the young man as κάκιστ' ἀνδρῶν, "worst of men" (*Phil*. 974). These are the first words he speaks in his own voice in nearly 800 lines.

It is true that this action on the part of Neoptolemus would be in direct opposition to his orders, and the needs of the army and the Achaeans. By calling Neoptolemus κάκιστ' ἀνδρῶν, Odysseus firmly puts obtaining the bow at all costs above any regard for Philoctetes. It is not made completely clear how long Odysseus had been lurking near or on stage—obviously long enough to have either heard or seen Neoptolemus wavering and perhaps moving toward returning the bow, but no more than that is apparent in the text. He has not, however, been present for the full conversation Neoptolemus and Philoctetes have had. Odysseus does not, and really cannot, know about the social obligation Neoptolemus has incurred toward Philoctetes, but realistically would not care even if he did. After Philoctetes' tirade against him at 1004, Odysseus responds to the accusations therein by saying Οὗ γὰρ τοιούτων δεῖ, τοιοῦτός εἰμ' ἐγώ, "for where there is need of such men, I am that one" (*Phil*. 1049). Odysseus conceives of himself as a man who will fill whatever role needs filling in the moment to gain the objective; if that

[70] Schein, 2013, 268 n. 974-5. Schein notes here that Neoptolemus' question is "heartfelt" and suggest he is "wavering".

means that he needs to betray former allies and friends, he is willing to do so. His one focus is on obtaining the bow, and if he and Neoptolemus must break with culture then so be it.

There is a bitter irony in Odysseus' words at ll. 997-998: Οὔκ, ἀλλ' ὁμοίους τοῖς ἀρίστοισιν, μεθ' ὧν Τροίαν σ' ἑλεῖν δεῖ καὶ κατασκάψαι βίᾳ, "no, but it is necessary for you to take Troy and raze it to the ground as an equal to the best". Odysseus has repeatedly dehumanized Philoctetes and dismissed his suffering as inconsequential, but here attempts to promise him glory and social inclusion, both facets of Greek heroic life that Philoctetes has desperately longed for. Odysseus clearly indicates, even as he offers a form of social inclusion, that in that same moment Philoctetes would give up his bodily autonomy. This is different from the promise of healing and glory that Heracles promises at the end, at least in the priorities at play. Heracles offers a cure at Troy before the chance to be considered 'among the best of men'.

Odysseus adds insult to injury in his penultimate departure from the stage, wherein he tells Philoctetes' he and Neoptolemus will leave him on Lemnos and win the glory that should have been his. He is, essentially, playing mind games with Philoctetes. Helenus' prophecy requires Philoctetes and his bow, not the bow alone; however, Odysseus has maintained throughout the tragedy that they are there for the bow. As discussed above, he offers Philoctetes the option of coming to Troy, and keeps him from throwing himself off the cliff, but Odysseus' goal never seems to be to persuade Philoctetes. Odysseus claims that Neoptolemus will ruin their endeavor because he is γενναῖός (1069). This, as Schein notes, carries with it the implication that his noble parentage leads him to behave in the socially correct way.[71] From the start of the play, Odysseus recognizes that Neoptolemus might rebel against trickery and contravention of social

[71] Schein, 2013, 282 n. 1068-9. Schein hypothesizes that Odysseus may be either mocking Neoptolemus for his nobility that would "naturally lead [him] to pity Philoctetes" or attempting to appeal to N.'s loyalty to the army.

norms in an attempt to live up to his father. Here, we see his earlier speech reiterated and throw back in Neoptolemus' face: he called him noble all the way back in the prologue in order to try to evoke Achilles and encourage the young man to obey orders. Here, he uses the same word to denigrate Neoptolemus and make that same nobility the source failure. Odysseus acknowledges that it would be γενναῖος to treat Philoctetes as a human and a *xenos*, but chooses not to act in accordance with that knowledge and to demand Neoptolemus to the same.

Through both the use of the False Merchant and his violent reappearance on the stage, Odysseus confirms for the audience, and Neoptolemus, that he is pitiless and manipulative. The False Merchant mimics and makes explicit Odysseus' focus on profit and gain; Blundell calls the False Merchant a "reflection of his creator" and not a good reflection.[72] Neoptolemus and Philoctetes' growing relationship demonstrates that the lonely man can properly and fully engage with a fellow Greek when presented with institutions with which he is familiar: he can be rehabilitated. Odysseus puts an end to this, at least for a time. His entrance marks the moment at which Philoctetes begins to regress back into his 'savage' ways, which even once more leads to the breakdown of language for Philoctetes (*Phil*. 1181-1189).[73] This is both in response to the idea of the chorus leaving him at that moment, but also marks his stress at the prospect of losing the only connection to civilization he has had in 10 years. Odysseus, in taking the bow and Neoptolemus, takes Philoctetes' last concrete connections to communality and friendship, both new and old; the bow represents his old *philia* with Heracles and the burgeoning *philia* he has with Neoptolemus. We, as the audience, feel pity toward Philoctetes here.

[72] Blundell, 2004, 324.
[73] Language, for Philoctetes, breaks down at moments of high emotional stress. He exclaims αἰαῖ αἰαῖ, δαίμων δαίμων at 1185-6, similar to his exclamations during the onset of his paroxysm at 732.

**(1.4) Pity in Words Alone**

Throughout *Philoctetes*, the narrative plays with our pity and fear for Philoctetes. We pity him from the start because he is isolated and alone, and come to pity him all the more as he comes into contact with Odysseus. Pity is a powerful emotion and one that scholars have agreed is central to *Philoctetes*.[74] There are two main terms for two subtly different forms of pity, *eleos* and *oiktos*. Lucia Prauscello, in her article on the semantics of *eleos* and *oiktos* words, offers a full discussion on the confluence of those words there.[75] According to Prauscello, the term *eleos* calls for the listener to enact a "positive forward drive to correct their [the sufferers] misfortune", while *oiktos* invites a "holding back from further action".[76] We see in this play a mismatch between what Philoctetes asks for (*eleos*) and what his audience, Neoptolemus and the chorus, are willing to offer (*oiktos*). The two words are frequently juxtaposed against each other, generally with Philoctetes asking for the more demanding form of pity and receiving only its lesser form.

We see this juxtaposition first toward the end of Philoctetes monologue that began at l. 254, when he mentions that other sailors have stopped in Lemnos. Philoctetes says Οὗτοί μ', ὅταν μόλωσιν, ὦ τέκνον, λόγοις / ἐλεοῦσι μέν, καί πού τι καὶ βορᾶς μέρος / προσέδοσαν οἰκτίραντες, ἤ τινα στολήν, "when they had come, child, they pitied me with words, and pitying me they gave some portion of food or some clothing" (*Phil.* 307-309). What stands out here is that the sailors feel obligated to act with some level of human kindness, but are not so motivated as to give him passage home. Instead, they are only willing to offer him some clothes and βορᾶς,

[74] Prauscello, 2010, 199; she offers bibliography on several other scholars who have examined pity in *Philoctetes* from various angles.
[75] Prauscello, 2010, 206.
[76] Prauscello, 2010, 201.

food associated with animals.[77] As Prauscello notes, they are inclined to show him *eleos* pity, but only λόγοις, "in words".[78] In his wild state, Philoctetes cannot even share a meal with the sailors, and their feelings do not invite the opportunity for any real *philia*. Philoctetes does not hazard a guess as to why the various sailors were unwilling to take him home, but it is probably attributable to his stench and his wild cries. He is more of a burden than any limited relationship they have formed with him can sustain. Furthermore, the chorus responds to Philoctetes' description of the visiting sailors with Ἔοικα κἀγὼ τοῖς ἀφιγμένοις ἴσα / ξένοις ἐποικτίρειν σε, "equal to the strangers having come, I pity you" (*Phil*. 317-318). The chorus uses an *oiktos* word, demonstrating that at this point in the narrative, their estimation of Philoctetes is like that of the sailors: deserving of some pity, but not the kind that enacts positive change. Philoctetes has fallen so far in the order of things that even men who know his history, as the chorus has demonstrated they do, cannot rouse the energy to help in a substantial way.

Unlike Polyphemus, who has no real way to know how Odysseus should behave toward him, Philoctetes is fully aware of how Neoptolemus ought to treat him at this point in their story. Here also is an important point of the language of pity. Neoptolemus claims that he feels οἶκτος δεινὸς, "a terrible pity", for Philoctetes; in response to this, Philoctetes calls for the younger man to Ἐλέησον, pity, him (Philoctetes) (*Phil*. 965, 67). They use different terms for pity. Much like the visiting sailors felt οἶκτος-based pity for Philoctetes from l. 307, so too does Neoptolemus feel this kind of pity. However, in response to this, Philoctetes asks for the much more demanding form of pity, *eleos*. He not only wants a cessation of harm, but active action toward remedying his plight. It is at this point, this moment in which Philoctetes most desperately

[77] Schein, 2013, 177 n. 308-309.
[78] Prauscello, 2010, 206.

demands the full consideration owed to him as a *xenos* to Neoptolemus (or at least Achilles, perhaps) and a Greek, that Odysseus once more enters the stage.

These moments demonstrate the way that pity operates both for the internal characters and the external audience. Philoctetes repeatedly asks for the stronger form of pity, *eleos*, but receives only the lesser form, *oiktos*. He is excluded from the full expression of pity one would expect a fellow Greek to pay him because he has been marginalized and demonized by his injury and abandonment. This helps to reinforce the idea of isolation as a vicious cycle, and here one that Odysseus both began and helps to reinforce. The cycle is only broken, finally, with the entrance of Heracles who does not use any words of pity with Philoctetes, but nonetheless shows a clear expression of *eleos*-pity in his interaction with the man.

### (1.5) Heracles and True *Philia*

Heracles' sudden appearance in the final lines of the play is remarkable. Like the False Merchant, he must be played by the same actor that portrayed Odysseus. There is substantially less ambiguity in terms of his actual identity. Despite the fact that his speech ultimately helps Odysseus, he is almost certainly Heracles and not Odysseus in disguise.[79] When Heracles appears on stage, Philoctetes immediately recognizes his voice and rejoices at it, saying Ὦ φθέγμα ποθεινὸν ἐμοὶ πέμψας, "O you have sent to me a most longed for voice" (*Phil*. 1445). Philoctetes, with his ear for voices, would recognize his old friend.

[79] Roisman, 2005, 109-111. She offers the possibility that Heracles is merely Odysseus in disguise, though most other scholars do not seem to entertain the possibility; it is more active with the False Merchant.

Identity aside, Heracles' entrance to the stage is the dénouement of the play. He, with his divine and personal authority, is the only way out of the cyclical suffering that Philoctetes has experienced up to this point. His intervention here is significant on a multitude of fronts. At its most basic, his appearance brings the tragedy in line with the myth as the 5th century audience would have known it.[80] He is also a model for Philoctetes, as someone who suffered but still achieved greatness. [81] As noted above his speech mirrors that of Odysseus and to a lesser extent Neoptolemus, but because of his prior, and stronger, relationship with Philoctetes his words hold more weight.

When he enters the stage, Heracles immediately speaks in terms of reciprocity. He says ἥκω χάριν, "I have come as a favor" (*Phil*. 1413). He offers Philoctetes a gift, perhaps in return for lighting his pyre, though he already gave his bow.[82] The χάρις is also in essence an invitation to do something in return. In this case, obey his words. Heracles speaks in language that Philoctetes has been desperate to hear, and cultural custom through which he has been betrayed several times. However, the relationship of *philia* that the two have is such that he can respond favorably to the initial 'gift'. Even with the return of the bow at ll. 1291-2, saying ἀλλὰ δεξιὰν / πρότεινε χεῖρα, καὶ κράτει τῶν σῶν ὅπλων, "but extend your right hand, and be master of your weapons", Neoptolemus cannot overcome his initial deception. Blundell interestingly notes that Philoctetes' *philia* relationship is like that of Odysseus and Neoptolemus at the outset of the play, insofar as Philoctetes is relating to and obeying a "superior *philos*".[83] Heracles is the positive model for *philia* and *xenia*, juxtaposed implicitly against the negative model of Odysseus.

[80] Schein, 2013, 28; Blundell, 1989.
[81] Hall, 2012, 165.
[82] Schein, 2013, 30.
[83] Blundell, 1989, 222.

Heracles' suffering is another way through which he is able to wield more influence over Philoctetes. Heracles stands before Philoctetes as proof that suffering does not have to without meaning or reward, saying: ὅσους πονήσας καὶ διεξελθὼν πόνους / ἀθάνατον ἀρετὴν ἔσχον, ὡς πάρεσθ' ὁρᾶν· / καὶ σοί, σάφ' ἴσθι, τοῦτ' ὀφείλεται παθεῖν, / ἐκ τῶν πόνων τῶνδ' εὐκλεᾶ θέσθαι βίον (*Phil.* 1429-22).[84] Heracles here equates Philoctetes suffering on Lemnos with his own suffering and labors, and promises εὐκλεᾶ in return. This is, from the outset, what Philoctetes wanted: his first horror is at the thought that Neoptolemus did not recognize him (*Phil*. 251-2). Heracles, in his first few words, offers both the friendship and the glory that Philoctetes needed.

His appearance is a correction to the choices and deceptions of Philoctetes and Neoptolemus. Blundell accurately notes that Heracles appearance "guarantee[s] the purity of [Neoptolemus'] motivations".[85] She is specifically referring to returning the bow at l. 1291, but can be taken more generally to 'purify' Neoptolemus' final acts in the play. Because Heracles, and not Neoptolemus or Odysseus, finally convinces Philoctetes to go to Troy, the choice to go becomes one not between autonomy and subjugation but between selfishness and obedience to a friend and ally. Odysseus still 'gets his way', but through the traditional application of *philia*, not through deception.

**Conclusion**

The purpose of this chapter has been to lay out specific, pivotal moments in *Philoctetes* that exemplify the way that Odysseus creates and manipulates the concept of the 'other',

[84] Translation: "having labored persisted through such labors / I hold deathless fame, as you see (?) / and know clearly, it is fitting for you to suffer this / to make your life famous from these labors".
[85] Blundell, 1989, 223.

especially as it applies to Philoctetes. Through both his own actions and his influence over Neoptolemus, Odysseus wields social norms like *xenia* and *philia* as weapons in order to make these abuses against Philoctetes acceptable. Sophocles creates a thoroughly amoral and cruel Odysseus who is denied his ultimate goal—taking Philoctetes' bow—because of those same abuses. Heracles is proof of this: by correctly appealing to the *philia* between himself and Philoctetes, rather than using deception, Heracles is able to persuade rather than force Philoctetes to do what is necessary.

CHAPTER 2

## (1) Introduction

The interplay between *Cyclops* and *Odyssey* 9 is well studied; it would be hard to read the play without Homer's episode in mind. While perhaps easier to overlook, its connections to *Philoctetes* are multifaceted and help to elucidate and enrich readings of both plays. To that end, what follows will be an examination of the way that *Cyclops* both responds to *Philoctetes* and represents the fulfillment of the themes and characterizations, especially of Odysseus, that are introduced in the earlier play.

Location is fundamental to the *Cyclops* and its connection to *Philoctetes*: both plays are set on islands that are artificially depopulated and made barren, and this absence of people leads to the absence of other things, such as the gods. The gods and their absence are integrally important to understanding the preconceptions of the ancient and modern audience concerning the characters at play in the *Cyclops*. Part of the importance here is for how the gods' introduction, and specifically the introduction of Dionysus through wine, affects the various characters. Odysseus and the satyrs, more familiar with and respectful toward the gods and their rites and rituals, are able to use the introduction to their advantage. It is only Polyphemus, whose irreverence toward the gods and lack of access to wine, and agriculture generally, is set apart as barbaric and "other" from the outset of the story. This is no fault of his or Odysseus', but is instead an innate part of his character: he is naturally an "other" from the Greek point of view.

Polyphemus' "otherness" is reinforced by Odysseus, and to a lesser extent the satyrs, throughout the play but most strongly through the symposium scene, which is the centerpiece of the play. There the wine, the only physical manifestation of the gods, becomes a nexus point

around which cultural norms are laid out and subsequently abused. It is at this point that Odysseus demonstrates full his ability to manipulate social institutions to his own ends, in this case to reinforce the image of Polyphemus as "other", although he is already non-human and wild. His use of the symposium, a system that is meant to create equals out of its participants, fulfills Odysseus' attempt in *Philoctetes* to dehumanize and other Philoctetes through the parallel institutions of *xenia* and *philia*. The important difference is that, as noted above, Polyphemus is already almost irredeemably inhuman rather than recognizably Greek and heroic. But, as with Philoctetes, the very act of trying to force (or reinforce) this "othering" results in the formation of sympathy, especially when seen in parallel with the more readily sympathetic Philoctetes. By abusing Polyphemus even as he engages the Cyclops in the symposium, Odysseus calls into question his own heroism and Polyphemus' monstrosity.

Alongside this central symposium, we see as in *Philoctetes* the systems of *xenia* and *philia* abused and manipulated. Odysseus is, on occasion, made a victim of these relationships; when this occurs, it highlights his own abuses of Philoctetes and reframes the hero in a harsher light. Finally, the chapter closes with an exploration of the metatheatrical elements of *Cyclops* that ultimately tie it back thematically to *Philoctetes*. In the metatheatre, we come to appreciate *Cyclops* as an answering echo to many of the thematic problems scholars have grappled with in *Philoctetes*. While time and influence flow only one way, Euripides' play offers answers to the lingering questions of Sophocles' narrative.

**(2.1) οὐ τάδε Βρόμιος: Or, Where Are the Gods?**

One of the major points of departure from the Homeric text, and thus of interest to scholars, is Euripides' choice to set the play explicitly and repeatedly in a Sicily devoid of humans and agriculture.[86] The island of the Homeric Cyclopes is never made explicit, and the real world Sicily was an inhabited, sophisticated locale; the lack of grain especially becomes ironic in the play, as Sicily was historically known as the "bread basket" of the ancient Mediterranean.[87] The change is attributed variously to historical concerns and other poets' innovations.[88] The importance of the change when compared to Homer should not be underestimated, but the focus on Homer distracts from the clear intertext with *Philoctetes*. Lemnos, too, was historically inhabited: Schein states that the audience of *Philoctetes* would have been "surprised, even shocked, to find Lemnos uninhabited."[89] Euripides, in writing a story about an isolated person victimized by Odysseus, looked to Sophocles for inspiration. The change highlights the isolation of Polyphemus and Philoctetes, and emphasizes the thematic connection between the two plays. The depopulated islands also create a space where the gods and their laws have purchase.

Laws defined and upheld by the gods, and the assumed divine retribution for breaking those laws, provided the structure through which humans could relate to and rely on one another.[90] They worked as the implied guarantors for good behavior on the part of guest, host, and friend. *Cyclops* takes place on a 'godless' island. We are told, from the beginning of the

[86] Torrance, 2013; O'Sullivan and Collard, 2020, 42-43.
[87] O'Sullivan and Collard, 2013, 134 n. 20; also, 147, n. 141-2.
[88] O'Sullivan and Collard, 2013, 42.
[89] Schein, 2013, 7; Kyriakou, 2012, 150.
[90] Consider, for example, Euripides' *Electra* wherein sacrifice to the gods is such a communal activity that strangers passing by are invited to be involved.

play, that the gods are not honored on Sicily, and, most distressingly for the satyrs, there is no Dionysus (*Cyc*. 26, 63). His absence—often a motivating factor in satyr play—has allowed them to be enslaved to Polyphemus.[91] Because he is absent, the establishment of Dionysiac rites becomes a theme of the play: Odysseus arrives with the avatar of Dionysus, his wine, and thus introduces the gods to the island. Somewhat contradictorily, the theme of Dionysus' absence exists in the play primarily because of his (re)introduction to Sicily is the nexus of the story.

Nonetheless, for a play ostensibly in part about the absence of Dionysus, there is certainly quite a lot of Dionysus to go around. His name is the first and (almost) last word spoken in the play: Silenus cries out Ὦ Βρόμιε in the first line of the play, while his sons say that they will be slaves to Bacchus (Βακχίωι δουλεύσομεν) after sailing with Odysseus (*Cyc.* 1, 709). Dionysus bookends the play and is, in the form of wine, a motivating factor throughout the story. Words with the stem Βακχ- appear 16 times, Βρόμ- six times, and Διόνυσ- five times.[92] Euripides constantly reminds the audience that this play is for and in some ways about Dionysus. The play is saturated by his name and presence, despite the constant reminders from the characters that he is in fact absent from Sicily.

The Dionysian aspects of *Cyclops* set it apart from *Philoctetes*, but this may be attributable to genre conventions more than anything else; there is no reason for Dionysus to be present on Lemnos, but he is necessarily at home in satyr play, as leader of the *thiasos*. Genre differences cannot, however, discount the complex parallels between the two plays, which are evident even in their engagement with the gods, especially at the end of the plays. There is no literal *deus ex machina* in the *Cyclops*, unlike in the *Philoctetes*. Instead, Dionysus through the

[91] O'Sullivan, 2017, 344; Konstan, 1990, 207.
[92] Shaw, 2020, 66, though his numbers differ slightly, as he counts verbal uses of the stems separately from Dionysus' name itself; my own numbers come from a TLG word frequency search.

medium of the wineskin becomes a pseudo-*deus ex machina*, insofar as it is through him that the plan is achieved, and Odysseus achieves a form of his end goal. Euripides is well known for his use of the convention of the *deus ex machina*, which appears in more than half of his extant plays.[93] That *Cyclops* does not contain a proper *deus ex machina* puts in it the minority. However, Odysseus' calls his idea to get the Cyclops drunk τι θεῖον, "something divine" (*Cyc*. 411). Hunter and Laemmle caution against seeing this as Dionysus' doing, despite the conflation of the god and his wine.[94] This is in keeping with the lack of overt divine presence in the play, but I posit this view overlooks the intriguing notion of the wineskin as non-speaking *deus ex machina*, as it effectively saves the day; this does not contravene the absence of gods generally, or at the end of the play, as the symposium occurs in the middle. Where Heracles appears at the end of *Philoctetes* as a correction to Odysseus' actions, even the curse of Poseidon is removed from the *Cyclops* and instead Polyphemus issues a vague oracle (*Cyc*. 699-700). This abrupt ending is similar to *Philoctetes*: once the divine message is relayed, the action is over. The implications of this parallel will be explored below.

The main—and arguably only—way that Dionysus himself is literally present in the play is through the wineskin, which operates in much the same way as the bow of Heracles in *Philoctetes*, despite their apparent differences. I propose that the wine of the *Cyclops* can be seen as a strange perversion of the bow of Heracles. I am not the first to suggest a connection: Marshall acknowledges that the two objects seem to be connected in the course of his argument for a production date for *Cyclops* of 408 BCE, as discussed above, but does not trace the thematic importance of this connection.[95] It was, like the bow, given to a hero as a *pista*, or

[93] For an overview of the use of *deus ex machina* in Euripides, I have referred to the dissertation of Hamilton (2017), who there builds on the work of several scholars.
[94] Hunter and Laemmle, 2020, 186 n. 411.
[95] Marshall, 2001, 234-236.

pledge of friendship, for services rendered. Odysseus kept Maron safe when he and his men sacked Ismarus, while Philoctetes aided Heracles in dying by lighting his pyre.[96] The wine is thus an almost divine object, valuable perhaps beyond casual use, associated with a god. This 'holiness' is made explicit in *Philoctetes* with regards to the bow, as Philoctetes tells Neoptolemus that he is the only living man to have handled the bow besides Philoctetes himself (*Phil*. 668-9). The bow is both holy and made holy by its treatment: while it is used as an object of reciprocal exchange, the establishment of *philia* and *xenia* are exchanges sanctioned by the gods and sacred in themselves.[97] The wine, on the other hand, is treated quite differently. It is made an object of trade by Odysseus, and dishonest trade at that. As is discussed below, trade and traders were not well thought of, and the equation of Maron's wine with some cheese and meat is an abuse of the gift both as a *pista* and as a divine object. This echoes and fulfills the attempted theft of the bow in *Philoctetes*: in that case, as we saw in the previous chapter, Neoptolemus briefly stole the bow instead of returning it as a completion of his and Philoctetes' ritualized friendship.

The wine is also the vehicle by which, or on account of which, cultural norms are abused. It is the way, like the bow, that Odysseus decides who is deserving of respect and humanity. The use of the wine is also inverted from the bow in this respect, as in *Philoctetes* Odysseus sought to remove the bow from the other man's possession. He instrumentalized both the living man and the inert object and denied bonds of *philia* in order to excuse his guilt for abandoning Philoctetes and abusing him further in pursuit of glory. In *Cyclops*, it is the giving of wine, not taking, that constitutes the abuse against Polyphemus. Odysseus chooses to value revenge and violence.[98]

[96] On Maron: *Od.* 200ff.
[97] Belfiore, 1993, 115-117. Her discussion here focuses on *pista* and their ritual value, primarily.
[98] Shaw, 2018, 75.

The wine is a much more active 'participant' in the abuse of Polyphemus, but occupies the same category.

Despite its humorous flair, the *Cyclops* has almost uncharacteristically serious ruminations on the gods and their honors. As noted above, the first concern of the play is that absence of Dionysus and the subsequent lack of his rituals and honors. Those concerned with this lack—Silenus and Odysseus, and the chorus—are more sympathetic, as they are closer in outlook and attitude to the audience itself. First and foremost, then, their ability to recognize that the absence of wine, and grain, marks them as more human. Meanwhile, Polyphemus—opposed to all gods but wealth and his own stomach—is rendered 'other' and perhaps lesser for the audience from the outset.[99] An ancient (and even modern) audience is thus predisposed to approach the 'godless' Cyclops with trepidation; we may see a little of the afflicted Philoctetes even in this. Though not blasphemous himself or on purpose, his diseased foot made him nearly ἀνόσιος, unholy, though the word is only used to describe the Greek leaders (*Phil*. 257). Piety, and the ability to be pious, is a cornerstone upon which humanity in another is recognized.

While Silenus and Odysseus are not without blame in terms of their piety towards the gods, Polyphemus is the most vocally dismissive of the gods and is framed over the course of the play as monstrous. His most extensive denunciation of the gods comes in response to Odysseus' request for *xenia* and for him to honor the custom of hospitable treatment of suppliants. O'Sullivan describes this as the point at which "the gulf separating man and monster becomes clear" and that throughout the speech he reveals himself as a "figure of greed, lawlessness, impiety, and debauchery".[100] This is at face value a fair assessment. Polyphemus at the outset of

[99] *Cyc*. 335, Polyphemus claims that he makes sacrifices to the greatest of all gods, his stomach.
[100] O'Sullivan, 2017, 349.

the play is a solitary, autocratic figure, bent on his own pleasure and satisfaction. His attitude is both a caricature of a sophist and tyrant, and simultaneously one that might be espoused by one unfamiliar with Greek culture and custom. Even O'Sullivan, who rarely sees anything redeeming in Polyphemus, acknowledges that his disdain for the gods may at least in part stem from his "know[ing] nothing of such blessings", referring to agriculture and wine, the mainstays of Greek culture.[101] As he is exposed to it, primarily through the avenue of wine, Polyphemus becomes a social creature. That his only teacher is Odysseus makes his inability to engage properly with cultural norms an inevitability, as the symposium later demonstrates. A comparison to Philoctetes may be useful here: Philoctetes, too, was solitary and a creature to be feared at the outset of the play *(Phil.* 150-8). Neoptolemus serves as a nexus of reintegration, encouraging the older man to behave in a way more suited to civilization, but this is complicated by the influence of Odysseus.[102] Polyphemus has no Neoptolemus to 'soften' Odysseus.

The introduction of the wine, as referenced above, moderates Polyphemus' attitude toward the gods. This is primarily expressed in his opinion that gods ought to live in fitting places. While not strong praise, he says οὐ τοὺς θεοὺς χρῆν σῶμ᾽ ἔχειν ἐν δέρμασιν, "it is not fitting for the gods to have their bodies in skins" (*Cyc*. 527). This is an acknowledgement that the gods deserve more divine housing/clothing than an animal skin.[103] His words do not express the piety a human mortal would, but it still marks a change from his earlier bravado.[104] It remains, however, that he is cut off from true communion with gods or men despite his softening tone, as

[101] O'Sullivan and Collard, 2013, 148 n. 123-4.
[102] I am specifically thinking here of Neoptolemus keeping Philoctetes from killing Odysseus, though Neoptolemus consistently encourages Philoctetes to be reintegrated.
[103] Hunter and Laemmle, 2020, 211 n. 527; O'Sullivan and Collard, 2013, 198 n. 527.
[104] O'Sullivan and Collard, 2013, 198 n.527.

his cannibalistic ways immediately exclude him from the rites and sacrifices that bind the human sphere to one another and the gods.

Having thus seen how Polyphemus comports himself with regard to the gods, it may seem strange to then pair him with Philoctetes. However, more than just superficial language and description—isolated men in isolated places—connects them. They each help to explain aspects of the other: Philoctetes offers a humanizable, and humanized, look at the Cyclops while Polyphemus is the culmination of isolation. They exist at near opposite ends of the spectrum of 'other'.

**(2.2) The False Merchant: Odysseus Redux**

Philoctetes and Polyphemus are also connected in their relationship to Odysseus, which we can call at best antagonistic. Odysseus in *Cyclops* is able to fulfil what was in the background of Sophocles' play: the full, irredeemable othering of another. The Odysseus of *Cyclops* acts out in reality what the Sophoclean Odysseus only attempted, namely the instrumentalization of another human being for his own gain. The following examines a specific characterization of Odysseus, which maps onto the implications in *Philoctetes*, as a merchant figure.

The entrance of Odysseus and his interaction with Silenus, leading up to the entrance of the Cyclops, is a major point at which the Euripidean Odysseus echoes and answers the Sophoclean one. We do not get here the abuse or belittlement of the eponymous character; we get instead a broader characterization of Odysseus and the realization of his use of the merchant-messenger in *Philoctetes*. There, Odysseus assigned the persona of merchant to another character, who does no trading but acts instead as a messenger; in *Cyclops*, he adopts the persona

himself. Euripides plays with the association of mercantile efforts and the burgeoning *philia* between Odysseus and the satyrs. When all is said and done, neither Silenus nor Odysseus are in the right, though only Silenus is really punished in the narrative. Konstan lists sale, theft, and pillage as the operative concepts in this scene, and the play as a whole.[105] In this paradigm, Silenus takes on the role of thief and pillager, which leaves Odysseus the role of salesman. Odysseus enters into this bargain on false premises, as he seems to recognize that the cave to which he has come does not belong to the satyrs, but a Cyclops (*Cyc*. 129).[106] Thus, when he begins to bargain for goods with Silenus, he is doing so with the knowledge that they are probably not Silenus's to trade; the accusation of piracy from Polyphemus becomes slightly more accurate (*Cyc*. 223).[107]

Mercantilism was not a favorable source of employment in the Athenian Greek mind.[108] Merchants "belonged to the lowest social and economic plane" according to Hasebroek.[109] However, Reed writes in opposition to this view arguing that the necessity of food imports specifically in Athens may have worked to overcome the enmity toward traders.[110] He claims that the traders were probably *xenoi* not metics, and the "rhetoric of otherness" that scholars have used with regards to foreign traders in Athens is "premature."[111] The distinction between *xenoi* and metics for Reed is that *xenoi* were transient and present only as often as trade dictated, while metics were a constant, 'foreign' presence in the city, with specific legislation that kept them

[105] Konstan, 1990, 214.
[106] Hunter and Laemmle, 2020, 125 n. 129. They here argue that Odysseus understands the situation through his knowledge of the *Odyssey*. They go on to note at p. 126 n. 131 that he "wants to make the most of the Cyclops' absence". These are admittedly context clues and not stated outright in the text.
[107] Hunter and Laemmle, 2020, 146 n. 223. They note here that unlike in Homer, Odysseus has not actually stolen anything; still, they argue that the "proper exchange has been done, though not with the rightful owner".
[108] Schein, 2013, 216 n. 576-7 and 144 n. 128.
[109] Hasebroek, 1978, 27.
[110] Reed, 2003, 61.
[111] Reed, 2003, 55-56.

from accessing political power in Athens.[112] The temporary presence of merchants, assuming they were visiting *xenoi* and not resident metics, would make it difficult to cultivate broad negative stereotypes in the real world as they would be, as he puts it, "seldom 'underfoot'"; presumably this is in comparison to the metics, though that is not explicitly stated.[113] The importance of this distinction for the argument at hand resides primarily in the possibility of real-world attitudes differing from those expressed in the theatre. The Athenian audience may have been unperturbed in their daily life by the status of merchant traders, but understood the implications in the theatrical realm**.** His argument is useful for real-world understanding of social status in Athens, but not the theatrical portrayal. Theater uses stereotypes and shorthand for different groups that may differ from the more nuanced reality of Athenian attitudes to foreign traders.[114] Satyr play especially is recognized as a genre that plays into theatrical simplification of identity in order to reaffirm the identity of the audience.[115] The audience would recognize that a merchant on the stage, and perhaps especially an epic hero as a merchant, was meant to have negative connotations.

Odysseus' engagement in trade, where his Homeric equivalent immediately invoked *xenia*, certainly casts a pall over the character of Odysseus from the start. In Homer, Odysseus and his men are well provisioned, and their visit to the Cyclops' cave is couched in terms of curiosity (Hom. *Od.* 9. 172-176). The Homeric Odysseus chooses to wait for the occupant of the cave as a test, to determine whether the owner honors Greek custom; Polyphemus, of course, does not. The Odysseus of the *Cyclops* claims he needs sustenance. He immediately frames his endeavor in terms of trade, using the verb ὀδάω, "to export or sell" (*Cyc*. 98). The word has

[112] Hasebroek, 1978, 23.
[113] Reed, 2003, 55-57.
[114] Griffith, 2015; Hall, 1998.
[115] Griffith, 2015, 90-91.

associations with "unheroic mercantile trade," and it is also used to describe the sale of Dionysus to pirates earlier in the play.[116] The idea of basic trade and the sale of people is thus connected, at least in this play. Shaw sees a connection between Odysseus and the pirates who hold Dionysus captive, since Odysseus also possesses Dionysus in the form of wine.[117] Regardless, the conflation of trade with piracy, if only at the level of repeated word use, signals that Odysseus' activities here are not without problem. He may be the default hero of the story, under the circumstances, but Odysseus is not a good person.

Odysseus' character is closely tied to what we have already seen in *Philoctetes*, specifically with regard to the False Merchant. There, the merchant is an agent of Odysseus, not Odysseus himself, but his actions are dictated by Odysseus. Ironically, the False Merchant does not engage in any trade, except for information. Instead, he says that he will προστυχόντι τῶν ἴσων, "obtain his share", for the information he has (*Phil*. 552). He is not there to trade goods with Neoptolemus but does still require some form of payment.[118] The False Merchant also acknowledges his low status, requesting that Neoptolemus not jeopardize his standing among the Trojan army (*Phil*. 583-4). He is a necessary, tolerated aspect of the expedition but also understands that he is not in a position of power. Schein notes that the False Merchant would rely on the army economically.[119] All of this is to say that it was more generally economically necessary for the False Merchant to be engaging in trade, and he did not; it is not Odysseus' natural inclination or occupation, but he immediately turned to trade rather than more elite-heroic means.

[116] Hunter and Laemmle, 2020, 117 n. 98; Konstan, 1990, 213. He notes here that the term appears nowhere else in extant literature, but may have been a slang term in use in contemporary Athens.
[117] Shaw, 2018, 103-104.
[118] Schein, 2013, 213 n. 551-2. He notes that this is a common trope with messenger scenes.
[119] Schein, 2013, 216 n. 582-8.

After exchanging barbs and information about the island and its inhabitants, Silenus and Odysseus set to the exchange itself. Odysseus once introduces the exchange by saying ὅδησον ἡμῖν σῖτον, οὗ σπανίζομεν, "sell us food/grain, which we lack" (*Cyc*. 133). It is framed as a command, which also seems to be at odds with the usual emphasis on offering *xenia* to strangers; instead, we encounter a demand. The repetition of ὀδάω in a relatively colloquial phrase reinforces the perception that this is not an exchange based on *philia* or *xenia*: no reciprocity, aside from some form of monetary payment, is expected and this exchange is not meant to establish ties of *philia* between Silenus and Odysseus. The language is casual, rather than the more formulaic and ritualized speech that Odysseus employs later, when invoking *xenia* and the right of suppliants.

Silenus' lack of hospitality toward Odysseus is notable. Throughout the play he proves himself capable of the worst evils of the Euripidean Odysseus, without any claim to a utilitarian outlook toward the group as a whole; he is purely selfish. Silenus is a slave, but there is precedent for slaves to honor *xenia* and behave in socially acceptable ways in the ancient corpus, most notably in the *Odyssey* itself. The Homeric text is ever in the background and offers Eumaeus as a comparand to Silenus. Odysseus and Eumaeus' meeting in the *Odyssey* is one of the paradigms of good *xenia* despite the swineherd's limited means (Hom. *Od*. 14. 58, 80). He offers Odysseus food and drink before asking his name, after which he outlines a clear conception of *xenia*.[120] It is clear that Eumaeus fully understands the importance of honoring *xenia*. Silenus is a "well read" character, as he appears to know his literary history and the

[120] Homer, *Odyssey* 14.56-58.

*Odyssey*.[121] He is, arguably, well versed in the way he ought to behave toward guests or strangers but is uninterested in honoring those traditions unless it suits him.

When Odysseus agrees to the exchange, Silenus' main concern is his monetary gain: "tell me, how much gold will you give?" (σὺ δ' ἀντιδώσεις, εἰπέ μοι, χρυσὸν πόσον) (*Cyc*. 138). Scholars agree that this is an early demonstration Silenus' "venality".[122] He is not interested in offering Odysseus *xenia*, despite his clearly disparaging assertion that both the land and the Cyclops are ἄξενον. As a creature not necessarily bound to the same concerns as mortal men, Silenus does not seem to view it as an imperative that he treat strangers—even famous ones—with the customary offering of food and gifts. Instead of the gold Silenus desires, Odysseus offers him wine. Hunter and Laemmle argue that when Odysseus denies that he has gold, and instead has wine to offer as payment, he is "too good a tradesman" because at least according to Homer he most certainly had gold.[123] This may well be true, but it is more a marker of his dishonest nature than anything else. Even the False Merchant in *Philoctetes*, who acknowledged the negative perception of merchants, called for an equal (ἴσων) exchange between himself and Neoptolemus (*Phil*. 552).

Once the older satyr has had a taste of the wine, the deal is sealed. At this point, when Odysseus knows he will get what he wants, he offers Silenus νόμισμα, coinage (*Cyc*. 160). The use of this word is generally accepted as an anachronism.[124] Hunter and Laemmle say "[the anachronism] is in part softened by the context of bargaining that precedes it" which I cannot disagree with, exactly, but their view does seem to overlook the fact that by introducing this,

[121] Torrance, 2013, 249; Hunter and Laemmle, 2020, 113-119.
[122] O'Sullivan and Collard, 2013, 150 n. 138.
[123] Hunter and Laemmle, 2020, 127 n. 139.
[124] Seaford, 1998, 133 n. 160; Hunter and Laemmle, 2020, 131 n. 160.

Odysseus almost certainly lowers the suggested "price" from Silenus of χρύσον to whatever sort of metal is implied by νόμισμα.[125] This makes him appear a far less reputable tradesman, if he ever was perceived to have a positive reputation in the first place. Odysseus' offer also almost directly contradicts his earlier assertion that he has no gold; commentators point out that νόμισμα is not necessarily χρύσον and so we cannot say that Odysseus lied outright. It remains still that he is disingenuous with his offer in their exchange, though this is simply a symptom of the exchange as a whole.

The trade is revisited once the Cyclops has entered the scene and Silenus has made his allegations against Odysseus. Odysseus attempts to cast the trade in a legitimate light. He does not go so far as to invoke *xenia* at this point in the narrative or as an excuse. Instead, he introduces the exchange not with ὀδάω as before, but by saying that he came "wanting to make a purchase of food" (βορᾶς χρήιζοντες ἐμπολὴν λαβεῖν) (*Cyc*. 254). This is still a phrase steeped in trading, but perhaps does not evoke the same "unheroic" sense that is attached to ὀδάω. The Polyphemus of the *Cyclops* is closer to an Athenian aristocrat than the brute of the *Odyssey*. He argues like a sophist, and discusses food and cooking like a gourmand.[126] Beginning his defense this way may be an implicit acknowledgement of the negative view of trade in the upper echelons of society; Odysseus did not need take this into consideration when dealing with satyrs. Instead, here he uses such phrasing to attempt to emphasize the legitimacy of the trade, specifically from his side. He also, in calling for *xenia* and the rituals of epic elite heroes, attempts to set Polyphemus on the same rung of the social hierarchy as himself.

[125] Hunter and Laemmle, 2020, 131 n. 160. They acknowledge that this is a "'step down' from Silenus request for gold" but do not then make any suggestions from this observation.
[126] For sophistic speech: *Cyc*. 316-355; Hunter and Laemmle, 2020. 164 n. 316-317; O'Sullivan, 2017, 349-350.

Odysseus goes on to then fully acknowledge that the attempted trade was built on false premises, recognizing that they were not Silenus' goods to barter. Odysseus specifically uses the word λάθραι to describe Silenus' bartering (*Cyc*. 260). If we are feeling charitable toward Silenus, we might translate this word as "stealthily" or "without the knowledge of," but we may also understand "treacherously." This description is also applicable to Odysseus.[127] Thus, although his rebuttal of Silenus is true, Odysseus cannot lay the blame for the trade itself only on Silenus. He was willing to effectively steal from one who might have been his host, even if signs from Silenus pointed toward the inhospitable disposition of the Cyclops.

### (2.3) Silenus: A Treacherous, Odyssean *philos*

Alongside recasting him as a merchant, Euripides throws Odysseus' abuse of *philia* into sharp relief by assigning similar abuses to Silenus. Just as he was a poor steward of his master's goods, Silenus proves to be an even more faithless friend. Over the course of the hundred lines between Odysseus' entrance and Polyphemus', a relationship verging on *philia* had come into being. It is mostly an implied relationship, but Odysseus refers to the chorus—and perhaps Silenus by extension—as φίλοι (*Cyc.* 176). There is then some sort of relationship established between the satyrs and Odysseus, one that might preclude abuse against each other. As already noted, *philia* is one of the main ideas at play both here and in *Philoctetes*. While it is not Odysseus here who abuses the custom, the motivations in each are similar: both Silenus and Odysseus betray a *philos* for material or personal gain. Euripides subjects Odysseus to the same

[127] O'Sullivan and Collard, 2013, 163 n. 259-60.

treatment that Odysseus gave Philoctetes by repurposing Odysseus' behavior and assigning an Odyssean character to the old satyr.

When the Cyclops emerges onto the scene, he catches sight of Silenus and comments that he looks as though he has been beaten up (*Cyc*. 226-7). The audience and the other characters know that he is simply drunk; however, the comment gives Silenus the inspiration to escape punishment from Polyphemus, by claiming that he was in fact protecting the Cyclops' goods, not attempting to sell them (*Cyc.* 230). In doing so, he commits the first and primary breach of *philia* on display in the play. The extent to which Silenus betrays both Odysseus and his children is breathtaking; O'Sullivan calls it a "gross violation of *philia*" and asserts that the language he uses makes him equal to Polyphemus in impiety.[128] He not only "throws Odysseus under the bus" but includes his children as collateral. Whether we may call Odysseus and Silenus *philoi*, the *philia* between family members is presumed.[129] The chorus and Odysseus have already expressed friendship with one another. Following Blundell, this makes Silenus and Odysseus *philoi* by the transitive property.[130] The association between this and Odysseus' behavior in *Philoctetes* is felt more strongly, then, as this may have been the form of *philia* that he and Philoctetes had shared. Silenus' treatment of his sons and Odysseus here is an appropriately mercenary reiteration of Odysseus' own treatment of Philoctetes, levelled at Odysseus himself.

When Odysseus denies his account, Silenus swears an oath O'Sullivan calls "as ludicrous and sycophantic as it is false".[131] It is of particular note here because of its rhetorical violence against Silenus' sons. He rounds out his ridiculous oath with "may my children, wretched ones,

[128] O'Sullivan, 2017 348.
[129] Blundell, 1989, 40-41.
[130] Blundell, 1989, 47-48.
[131] O'Sullivan, 2017, 348.

perish wretchedly, whom I love most of all" (ἢ κακῶς οὗτοι κακοὶ οἱ παῖδες ἀπόλοινθ', οὓς μάλιστ' ἐγὼ φιλῶ) (*Cyc*. 268-269). Silenus' willingness to forgo and abuse *philia* with his sons while simultaneously swearing a false oath marks him as particularly malicious. Greek philosophical thought is consistent in its view that the bond of *philia* between father and son(s) was one of the strongest; it must be acknowledged that Silenus' abuse of his sons also appears in *Trackers*, and so may have been a common feature of the genre.[132] Nevertheless, the perversion of *philia* here speaks to the specific themes of *Cyclops* as a response to the abuse of *philoi* in Sophocles. Silenus chooses to sacrifice this bond at least briefly for his own benefit.

We might compare Silenus' betrayal of his sons to Odysseus' betrayal of Philoctetes. Both cases are a betrayal of existing or potential (military) allies: Odysseus and Philoctetes were certainly allies, while Odysseus and Silenus had that potential and as noted above, the connection between Odysseus and the chorus ought to have encouraged a parallel relationship between the two. The *Cyclops* does not allow Odysseus to trust his new *philoi* as he was able to feel he could trust Neoptolemus and the soldiers in *Philoctetes*. The whole of his plan rested on Neoptolemus obeying orders, to the extent that we do not see Odysseus himself on stage for the majority of the play.[133] Odysseus' potential *philoi* in the satyr play are much less reliable, in part because they are more like him. Silenus, in his willingness to betray Odysseus and his own children for potential material benefit is much like Odysseus in mythos behind *Philoctetes*.[134] Euripides thus creates an Odysseus-like figure in opposition to Odysseus himself, highlighting the hero's own villainy in his literary past. Silenus also becomes, if only slightly, a Neoptolemus-figure in that

[132] For Greek thought on *philia:* Blundell, 1989, 40-41. For *Trackers:* O'Sullivan and Collard, 2005, 165.
[133] Danes, 2019, has an interesting discussion of Neoptolemus' reliability as a subordinate military officer and Odysseus' choice to leave him largely unsupervised.
[134] Schein, 2013, 118 n. 6. He notes that Odysseus is portrayed as one who "claims to represent his community and is prepared to treat other treacherously and violently" to achieve his goals.

he is able and willing to side with the 'monstrous' figure over the 'civilized' Odysseus. This turns out poorly for Silenus in the end.

The chorus recognizes the injustice of Silenus' oath. It is false, and everyone except Polyphemus knows it. As O'Sullivan points out, Silenus is punished for his perjury, but not until later in the play.[135] In this moment, the chorus displays a surprising amount of courage to both denounce their father and ask clemency from the Cyclops. They cement their *philos* relationship with Odysseus at the same time and demonstrate this in part by mimicking his language at 261.[136] They respond αὐτὸς ἔχ᾽. ἔγωγε τοῖς ξένοις τὰ χρήματα / περνάντα σ᾽ εἶδον: εἰ δ᾽ ἐγὼ ψευδῆ λέγω, / ἀπόλοιθ᾽ ὁ πατήρ μου: τοὺς ξένους δὲ μὴ ἀδίκει, "keep that [curse] yourself. I myself saw you selling the goods to the strangers: if I speak false, may my father be destroyed. And do not harm the strangers" (*Cyc*. 270-272). The chorus throws the curse back on Silenus. That they are willing to forsake their father is significant, given that familial bonds of *philia* are meant to be quite strong; Silenus' behavior here demands that they treat him accordingly. It is equally significant that they offer a rebuke to the Cyclops by asking him not to harm the ξένοι. Hunter and Laemmle call this a foolish endeavor, given what they know about the Cyclops' eating habits, while O'Sullivan calls the act courageous.[137] I am inclined to side with O'Sullivan, as reading the moment through the lens of *Philoctetes* gives traction to his view. The satyrs' attempt at keeping Odysseus safe, whatever their reason, recalls Neoptolemus' protection of the same man from Philoctetes, though the circumstances are quite different (*Phil.* 1301). Both appeal to higher ideals: the chorus to *xenia*, Neoptolemus to the idea of what is morally καλός (*Cyc*. 272, *Phil*. 1304). While not a social institution like *xenia*, the concept of "nobility" is at

[135] O'Sullivan, 2018, 348.
[136] O'Sullivan and Collard, 2013, 165 n. 270-272. The connection seems to be primarily that they reference telling lies, as Odysseus does in 261; but on closer inspection it is perhaps a specious observance.
[137] Hunter and Laemmle, 2020, 155 n. 272; O'Sullivan, 2018, 349.

play throughout *Philoctetes*, and engages with a similar social stratum to *xenia*. The association between the two serves to raise the tenor of the satyr chorus, as Neoptolemus is a misled but ultimately good person in *Philoctetes*. The satyr chorus will prove to lack Neoptolemus' steadfastness, but the urge is commendable.

This act effectively realigns the satyr chorus away from Silenus and toward Odysseus. The relationship between the latter two becomes the operative one in the second half of the play as they unite against Polyphemus, while Silenus is somewhat sidelined. They become the *symmachoi* that Odysseus and Silenus might have been and are fully added to those with whom Odysseus shares a bond of *philia*, whom he calls his *philoi*.[138] As noted above, the satyrs are not as trustworthy as Odysseus' usual allies. They cannot engage with Odysseus as his men do in this play and *Philoctetes*, both literally and metaphorically: they are bound to the *orchestra*, and their status non-human prevents them from engagement with Greek custom. The *philia* relationships in *Cyclops* emphasize the connection to *Philoctetes* not through exact replication of those relationships but by demonstrating concern with similar abuses of those relationships. Silenus' abuse of his *philoi*, both his sons and Odysseus, and his subsequent punishment—he is made the "Ganymede to Polyphemus' "Zeus"—recalls Odysseus' exclusion from what Schein calls the "happy ending" of *Philoctetes* (*Cyc.* 585).[139] Silenus, similarly, is excluded from the ending of the *Cyclops*, though his exclusion evokes a much more satyric 'justice' for his abuse of *philoi*.

[138] Konstan, 1990, 217.
[139] Schein, 2013, 20.

**(2.4) Odysseus as "*Xenos*" and Suppliant**

The betrayal of *philia* in the preceding section is followed by further abuse of cultural norms, namely supplication and *xenia*. These two categories of stranger share certain qualities, the most important of which is that they are protected by the gods and meant to be treated with respect.[140] It would be hard to ignore the importance of *xenia* to the story, especially when keeping in mind Homer's original. The impetus for that episode, and the *Odyssey* at large, is the question of whether a person or group will honor the gods and the cultural customs the Greeks held dear. We have already seen the importance of *xenia* at the level of language; *xen*- based words appear frequently throughout. Supplication is also important, both here and in Homer (*Od.* 9.269-70). We have also seen that Euripides' Odysseus is concerned with *xenia*, but only when it is more profitable than trade. In all of this, the reliance on Philoctetes' willingness to engage with Neoptolemus as a supplicant and *xenos* lingers in the background. Odysseus needs Polyphemus to respect these institutions as much or more than he needed Philoctetes to do so; his life was not directly on the line in *Philoctetes*.

As examined above, Odysseus' first exchange with Silenus is couched in terms of trade, not *xenia*. He does, however, acknowledge the importance of the concept after asking to barter with Silenus, when he enquires φιλόξενοι δὲ χῶσιοι περὶ ξένους, "are [the Cyclopes] hospitable and pious toward strangers" (*Cyc*. 125). This is a concern shared between the Homeric and Euripidean Odysseus, though not the Sophoclean one. The Odysseus of *Philoctetes* almost explicitly relies upon the assumption that Philoctetes will adhere more closely to social norms than Odysseus himself would; as ever, Odysseus is more concerned with whether others 'follow

[140] Gould, 1973 seems to be the go-to place for discussions of suppliants, and the relationship between them and *xenoi* among other social categories.

the rules' than he is about whether his actions do follow those same rules, too. This repetition of ξέν- words highlights his concern and builds up the juxtaposition between desire and reality as Silenus answers his question: γλυκύτατά φασι τὰ κρέα τοὺς ξένους φορεῖν, "they say the flesh of strangers is sweetest to have" (*Cyc.* 126). The audience is already aware of the Cyclops' culinary preferences from Silenus' earlier comments. It is only Odysseus who is surprised.

The concept, and the related institution of supplication, reappears after Silenus' betrayal: it becomes expedient for Odysseus to both supplicate Polyphemus and invoke *xenia* in a vain effort to save himself at this juncture.[141] Hunter and Laemmle call the speech an "amusingly inept attempt" to persuade the Cyclops.[142] Odysseus calls himself and his men φίλους, "friends", which is preposterous *(Cyc*. 288). They have done nothing that would warrant such a title or bond, as presumably keeping safe the temples of gods was more duty than *pista*. It is not a strong opening salvo. All of Odysseus' arguments are predicated on the idea that Polyphemus is mortal like Odysseus and his men, which Hunter and Laemmle note as a strange way to frame his supplication.[143] The attempt to ingratiate himself this way demonstrates that Odysseus is doing this out of convenience more than anything else.

Odysseus then, finally, frames his encounter with the inhabitants of the cave in terms of *xenia*, though they are once more false terms. He asks for gifts and hospitality because it is the custom to ἱκέτας δέχεσθαι ποντίους ἐφθαρμένους ξένιά τε δοῦναι, "receive suppliants having suffered shipwreck and to give guest-gifts" (*Cyc.* 300-01). This mention of shipwreck is playing

[141] O'Sullivan and Collard, 2013, 169 n. 300-3. They offer Aeschylus' *Suppliants* as an example of an extant work where the rights of *xenoi* and suppliants are conflated.; Gould, 1973, 79. He uses Odysseus' own supplication of the Phaeacians as a case study for the parallels between the two categories.
[142] Hunter and Laemmle, 2020, 157 n. 284-346.
[143] Hunger and Laemmle, 2020, 161 n. 299-303. There, they say "it is not, however, obvious why the Cyclops should be moved by an appeal to the customs of θνητοί."

on the Homeric tradition, though it is patently untrue in the narrative of the *Cyclops*; he previously claimed he had been driven to the island by a storm (*Cyc*. 109).[144] His change of story reflects the Homeric narrative, but also bolsters his claim to aid: being driven off course and being shipwrecked are problems of rather different magnitude. This is also in line with the Homeric tradition, as that is what Odysseus wanted when he chose to remain at the cave and meet the inhabitant of it (Hom. *Od*. 228-29). These guest gifts do not include the food and drink for which he came to the island. Instead, he pivots from trading to *xenia*, the stronger and more culturally acceptable avenue through which to acquire goods. Invoking it here is an attempt to escape both unscathed and with goods, and carries with it the subtle threat of divine retribution if the rights of suppliants and *xenoi* were denied.[145] Odysseus attempts to maneuver his relationship to Polyphemus in a way that will benefit him.

The Cyclops responds to Odysseus' request for *xenia* with a (perhaps expected) perversion of that same request: ξένια δὲ λήψῃ τοιάδ', ὡς ἄμεμπτος ὦ, / πῦρ καὶ πατρῷον ἄλα λέβητά θ', ὃς ζέσας / σὴν σάρκα δυσφάρωτον ἀμφέξει καλῶς, "you will have such guest gifts, as I am blameless there, fire and a kettle of bronze, which when boiling will cover your flesh nicely" (*Cyc*. 342-344). This is of course a monstrous thing to do. Regardless of whether Polyphemus is in fact a cannibal—and Odysseus certainly thinks he is—eating a Greek soldier is not going to endear him to anyone.[146] One cannot fully escape the negative characterization of cannibalism. However, the implication of cannibalism also appears in *Philoctetes* which may help to elucidate the discussion here. We saw there that Philoctetes was 'devoured' by his illness,

[144] Hunter and Laemmle, 2020, 161 n. 300. They note here that the phrase can also mean generally suffering at sea, but then point out the Homeric connection, namely that there Odysseus also claims shipwreck.
[145] O'Sullivan and Collard, 2013, 168 n. 299.
[146] Konstan, 1990, 210. Konstan discusses the triangulation of edible and non-edible in the Cyclops. Also, Dougherty, 1995, discusses whether we can actually call Polyphemus a cannibal.

a sort of auto-cannibalism at the heart of his distress and abuse. This disease prevented him—and the rest of the Greek fleet—from engaging in sacrifice. Cannibalistic appetite is thus as a barrier to accessing aspects and activities of the human sphere. Neither Philoctetes nor Polyphemus can be integrated fully into society until their cannibalistic tendencies are done away with. Where the crux of *Philoctetes* hinges on Philoctetes' reintegration, *Cyclops* operates within the mythic narrative and therefore denies Polyphemus this opportunity for reintegration. Whether Polyphemus would take it is perhaps not at issue: within the constraints of myth and narrative, Odysseus cannot allow him to enter human society.

**(2.5) Dys-posium: A Symposium Corrupted**

From what we have seen of the Cyclops thus far, and from his literary past, we might assume that he would make a poor symposiast. The Polyphemus of *Cyclops* lives on a depopulated Sicily that lacks wine and grain; his Homeric counterpart knew about wine and grain, but did not grow it for himself (Hom. *Od*. 9.110). In both cases, the communal institution of the symposium is absent, even where wine is known. We would also expect Polyphemus to behave poorly in such a collective experience, as his response to Odysseus' previous entreaty was to eat some of the group. However, Polyphemus proves to be the 'best' symposiast of the participants present: Polyphemus, Odysseus, and Silenus. While ignorant of Dionysus and the ritual aspects of the symposium, he is very aware of its inherent communality. It is in fact Odysseus, and to a lesser extent Silenus, who prove to be the poor (or downright abusive) symposiasts. The inversion of expectations here—that Polyphemus would be an inherently bad symposiast, while Odysseus would be a good one—creates space for understanding Polyphemus as a redeemable other, just as Philoctetes is.

The scene begins with the chorus commenting on Polyphemus' poor singing, calling it ἄχαριν, "graceless" and ἀπωιδὸς, "out of tune" (*Cyc*. 489, 490). Both terms mark the cyclops as unpracticed in the realm of symposium and communal gathering, and his out of tune singing is another mark of his barbaric nature. When all actors are on stage, Odysseus and the satyrs set to 'educating' Polyphemus about wine and the god, while preventing him from engaging with the most important part of the symposium, sharing and coming together.[147] By keeping him alone, Odysseus and the satyrs further pervert the purpose of the symposium, rather than using the communal nature of a gathering of Cyclopes away from Polyphemus' cave to escape.

They continue the scene with a discussion of the nature of Dionysus. Polyphemus does not understand the connection between Dionysus and ὁ Βάκχιος (*Cyc*. 521).[148] He knows that Dionysus is a god, but does not understand his connection to wine. We already know that the gods and their gifts are absent on the island, as Odysseus established this before he attempted to trade with Silenus. He asks there about the presence of Demeter and Dionysus, gods of food and wine, in an attempt to establish whether Sicily is a 'civilized' place; Silenus responds that it is not (*Cyc*. 121-4). I include this to highlight once more two things. First, that this is early in-text evidence that Polyphemus has no association with, or perhaps access to, Greek culture. Second, that Odysseus was well aware of this fact, and proceeds alongside the chorus to exploit this fact for his own gain. The ἀπαίδευτος Polyphemus is easily manipulated by their combined forces in the course of their 'teaching.' This education they offer will ultimately be the medium through which Polyphemus is isolated and overcome. This isolation through social institution ought to

[147] Hunter and Laemmle, 2020, 210.
[148] O'Sullivan and Collard, 2013, 198 n. 521; they comment that the apparent contradiction between Polyphemus' knowledge of Dionysus as demonstrated at the beginning of the play, but ignorance of Bacchus, is that he has not made the connection between the two names.

put the reader in mind of Philoctetes, who was subject to similar treatment, though Neoptolemus works there more as a mitigating rather than **e**xacerbating force as the satyrs are.

The real outrage begins at l. 524, where Odysseus says οὐδένα βλάπτει βροτῶν, "he harms no mortal". Seaford says of this statement is "of course a lie" while Hunter and Laemmle call Odysseus "as economical with the truth as ever."[149] The idea that Dionysus, or wine generally, never hurts mortals is flatly wrong, and Polyphemus' dismissal of divine things once again works against him. In this case it is not just Bacchus doing the harm, but Odysseus through Bacchus, as represented by the wine.

After debating the nature of the god, Odysseus tells Polyphemus μένων νυν αὐτοῦ πῖνε κεὐθύμει, Κύκλωψ, "now remaining here drink and be of good cheer, Cyclops" (*Cyc*. 530). Odysseus, by beginning the line with μένων, begins his quest to convince Polyphemus to remain alone and isolated. Shaw notes that if Odysseus allowed Polyphemus to go to his fellow Cyclopes, the whole crew could escape, but his "need for retribution" means that this is not an option.[150] I would also argue that Odysseus here begins to exhibit more narrative consciousness; unlike in *Philoctetes,* Odysseus has not been in control up to this point. As Silenus and Polyphemus lose their grasp on the situation, Odysseus is able to assert more control, both of the stage and story. Polyphemus responds with a relevant and reasonable question from one who has no experience with the symposium: οὐ χρή μ' ἀδελφοῖς τοῦδε προσδοῦναι ποτοῦ, "is it not necessary to give a share of the drink to my brothers?" (*Cyc*. 531). When Polyphemus asks this question, he is asking in ignorance but expressing the right motivation. The symposium was a shared experience, and so his desire to include his brothers is commendable. This desire to share

[149] Seaford, 1984, 204 n. 524; Hunter and Laemmle, 2020, 211 n. 524.
[150] Shaw, 2018, 57.

the wine may also be construed as an impulse to teach his fellow Cyclopes about the "blessings" of the Olympians and so spread the practices so conspicuously absent on Euripides' Sicily. Polyphemus, in his naïve curiosity and willingness to share, invites our pity: he has this chance at social integration, but we know both from the text itself and literary history that Odysseus is not genuine in his offer of symposium and purposely uses that system to isolate him further.

Odysseus' response is to disingenuously begin persuading Polyphemus not to share with the others by invoking τιμή (*Cyc*. 532). Odysseus is appealing to a very aristocratic Greek sentiment, while the Cyclops is here focused on "communal values".[151] Odysseus had previously, in his conversation, framed this persuasive technique as a way to isolate him (*Cyc*. 452-3) This is a reversal from their earlier stances, where Polyphemus was very independent, and Odysseus worked for the group; Odysseus' line of persuasion seeks to reinforce this. Of course, Odysseus is working for a group: his own. As in *Philoctetes,* Odysseus uses the isolation of the individual to the advantage of the group. There, both in initially abandoning Philoctetes and by offering him companionship through Neoptolemus only for it to be false, Odysseus manipulates social conventions and uses them as a weapon. He does the same here through his false symposium, misusing the institution for his own gain. By making Polyphemus the 'better' symposiast at this point for trying to share with his Cyclopean brethren, Euripides gently pushes the audience toward a more nuanced view of the Cyclops: while still monstrous, he is capable of human desires for companionship. The introduction of wine—and the god—has 'civilized' Polyphemus, to an extent. In this, Polyphemus mimics the transformation of Philoctetes, who had regressed to an almost primitive state.

[151] Hunter and Laemmle, 2020, 212 n. 532-3.

Polyphemus continues the thread, arguing that in giving he would be more useful to his *philoi*. The cyclops of the beginning of the play would not have cared about his *philoi*, presumably, but filled with the god his priorities have changed. Odysseus and the satyr chorus, were they good teachers, would perhaps have an obligation to honor the concept of *philia*, but as we have seen in *Philoctetes*, Odysseus only values those social conventions when they are useful to his purposes. Konstan uses an interesting framing for understanding the change in attitude of the cyclops. He argues that it is not a reversal of solitary existence toward communality, but from "self-sufficiency [to]…the presocial identification of the horde".[152] Thus, Konstan does not see this scene as the moment in which Polyphemus becomes more 'human', but one in which he becomes perhaps more satyric. I do not entirely disagree but think that the juxtaposition of this change to the one Odysseus has undergone is important to highlight. Polyphemus may not be seeking a proper symposium with his ἀδελφοί, but his instincts toward communal reveling are more 'civilized' than Odysseus' push toward solitary drinking. Odysseus takes the isolating, barbaric stance, effectively switching places with Polyphemus and underscoring the extent to which he worked to reinforce the categorization of the Cyclops as 'other'. By denying that Polyphemus ought to benefit his friends, Odysseus violates a core tenant of Greek thought.

As the exchange continues, Polyphemus demonstrates again that he understands some small part of what a symposium is meant to be. He tells Odysseus ἠλίθιος ὅστις μὴ πιὼν κῶμον φιλεῖ, "anyone who does not love drinking at a revel is foolish"(537), which Hunter and Laemmle call a "quasi-proverbial utterance."[153] We see here reiteration of Philoctetes' desire for community and communality in the *Cyclops*. Granted, as noted above, Polyphemus' desire is not

[152] Konstan, 1990, 219.
[153] Hunter and Laemmle, 2020, 214 n.537.

for ‘culture’ but for the companionship of his fellow Cyclopes; still, the solitary monstrous figure held back by a ‘communally minded’ Odysseus is clearly echoed here. Odysseus has established the Cyclops as an entity undeserving of proper sympotic communality, and of social integration by extension. His response, that those who are drunk and remain home are σοφός, "wise," caps off this attempt (*Cyc*. 538). He creates here a false reality for Polyphemus, that to be alone is in fact wise, and perhaps implies he has the Cyclops’ best interests at heart. He acts, as he does with Philoctetes, as though he is a benefactor to his victim.

Eventually, Polyphemus puts the choice in Silenus’ hands. The old satyr, selfish in his desire to keep the wine for himself, advocates staying put. He is perhaps motivated here by helping Odysseus, but his desire to help is subsumed by his rapacious drinking (*Cyc*. 430).[154] As we have already seen, Silenus is as likely as Odysseus to abuse cultural norms if he perceives a benefit to himself from the action. In this case, remaining solitary and ignoring the collective nature of the symposium guarantees him a larger share of the wine. This, alongside his perjury before the gods, will lead to his punishment.[155] The rest of the symposium is primarily taken up by Polyphemus and Silenus humorously bickering over the placement of the wine, with accusations against Silenus of hoarding it for himself (545-6, 551-560). Silenus’ antics add to the image of the symposium as perverted from the norm, as although he ought to be teaching Polyphemus how to drink properly, he also drinks too much. His placement of the wine behind his back, and Polyphemus’ acknowledgement that this is incorrect procedure, is also important (*Cyc*. 545-8). Hunter and Laemmle note that placing the mixing bowl in the middle was integral to the symposium and a “manifestation of the principles of equality and openness,” qualities

[154] Hunter and Laemmle, 2020, 214 n. 539-40.
[155] Ringer, 2016, 295-6.

conspicuously lacking in this symposium.[156] We thus see that, despite Silenus and Odysseus' best efforts, Polyphemus is aware of some of the social aspects of the symposium and could learn more, if given the opportunity. Instead, it is used as a weapon against him.

### (2.6) Narrative Control and Prophetic Ends

The discussion so far has concentrated on the figure of Odysseus, and the way that his character and role in *Cyclops* enact and develop aspects of his character in *Philoctetes*. A final and related point of contact between these two plays is the role of metatheatre. Although much has been said about metatheatre in satyr play and *Cyclops* specifically, another way of reading the metatheatre of *Cyclops* is by understanding the play as both a commentary on and fulfillment of the *Philoctetes*. Odysseus especially becomes more interesting when we examine him as a character aware of his past selves, both in regard to his ability to manage the stage and his treatment of Polyphemus. His more overt narrative control represents a progression from Sophocles, where he was primarily active in the background of the stage.

Satyr play is commonly acknowledged to be a self-aware genre.[157] It is self-referential and essentially aware of its own existence on a stage, engaging both with previous satyr play and tragedy. Odysseus and the satyrs specifically seem to be aware at points that they are in a story; Polyphemus is aware of the mythic backstory but does not seem to evince the same metatheatrical awareness.[158] This is important for its implications concerning the idea of Odysseus as an internal stage manager. We have already seen how Odysseus plays the role

[156] Hunter and Laemmle, 2020, 215 n. 547.
[157] Shaw, 2018, 69; Torrance, 2013; O'Sullivan and Collard, 2013.
[158] Shaw, 2018, 98-100. Shaw notes Polyphemus somehow knows about the Trojan war.

throughout *Philoctetes*, an absent presence. He has a similar role in the *Cyclops*, though here his role is more explicit but his control more limited. As Polyphemus and Silenus lose control of the stage in their drunkenness, Odysseus (re)asserts narrative control, going so far as to direct the satyr chorus. The Odysseus here literally and figuratively manages the action of the stage, where his function in *Philoctetes* was primarily figurative.

It is commonly acknowledged that the satyrs- both the chorus and Silenus- are aware of their past selves.[159] This is apparent from the beginning of the play, where Silenus begins listing off his various exploits (*Cyc*. 5-9). We have no evidence that the Gigantomachy was the subject of a satyr play, but it does not seem farfetched.[160] Regardless, he is making direct reference to his own literary past. This is not to say that mere mention of the past makes this a self-aware genre. Rather, it is one facet of the self-referentiality of the satyrs. Frequent references to Dionysiac worship, reveling, and satyr play itself constantly remind the viewer of the story's status as a play.[161] The complex intertextuality of satyr play is far beyond the purview of this study, and has been addressed elsewhere.[162] Instead, I will here focus on the way that the intrinsic metapoetry of satyr play interacts with and expands the connection to *Philoctetes*.

In Odysseus' first appearance on the stage, we get a taste of the way that the metatheatre of *Cyclops* helps to characterize Odysseus. Odysseus introduces himself as "lord of the Cephallenian land" (*Cyc.* 103). The satyrs immediately know who he is and how he is often characterized, and recognize his father as Sisyphus (*Cyc*. 104). It is an "appropriately satyric" view of Odysseus, but demonstrates their knowledge of Homer and other tragedy.[163] There is

[159] Shaw, 2018; O'Sullivan and Collard, 2013; O'Sullivan, 2017; Torrance, 2013.
[160] Hunter and Laemmle, 2020, 85 n. 5-9.
[161] On audience relationship to the chorus: Griffith, 2015, 27-36.
[162] Torrance, 2013; Shaw, 2018.
[163] Hunter and Laemmle, 118-120 n. 104.

also a parallel here with the way that Odysseus is thought of in *Philoctetes*: there too he is called a "Cephallenian" and a son of Sisyphus by Philoctetes (*Phil*. 264, 791).[164] Schein notes that this was probably a way to mock Odysseus here, too, though "Cephallenian" appears nowhere else in tragedy as an insult for Odysseus.[165] The understanding the satyrs have of Odysseus is thus both fitting for satyr play and its lower register when compared to tragedy and its intertextual relationship with *Philoctetes*.

We also hear resonance between the two plays in the later episodes. When Silenus makes his outrageous claims against Odysseus to Polyphemus beginning at l. 230, he specifically accuses Odysseus and his men of planning to, among other things, sell Polyphemus (*Cyc*. 239-40). The accusation is an invention of Silenus and Euripides, and while it needs no specific inspiration, in the context of the parallels between the two plays, it stands out as a reiteration of Philoctetes' own fear. Part of the way through the scene in which the False Merchant appears, Philoctetes becomes concerned that the stranger is attempting to treat him like merchandise (*Phil*. 578-9). There, the stranger is only pretending to be a merchant and so Philoctetes has nothing to fear with regards to being bought and sold literally.[166] The False Merchant was simply an agent of Odysseus, though some scholars argue that he may have been Odysseus in disguise.[167] This would make his mercantile ways in *Cyclops* a more explicit realization of his choices and portrayal in *Philoctetes*: not only is he willing to use trade to his benefit, he is willing to do so openly and undisguised. But, regardless of whether it was Odysseus or his agent

[164] Hunter and Laemmle, 118 n. 103. They offer up an alternate reason for the use of Cephallenian here from Paganelli (1979), but consider it unlikely.
[165] Schein, 2013, 170 n. 264.
[166] Schein, 2013, 216 n.578-9; Schein here notes that Philoctetes does not know the FM is Odysseus' man, but fears out of his own insecurities.
[167] Kyriakou, 2012, 159. She also discusses here scholarly opinion on whether Heracles was Odysseus in disguise, though largely discounts that view.

in *Philoctetes*, the accusation against Odysseus in *Cyclops* picks up on the expressed fear there. For the astute viewer, the accusation becomes more than a ridiculous lie: it serves as a further indictment of the Odysseus in both plays.

As noted above, Odysseus begins to exert more control as Silenus and Polyphemus lose it. Thus, he does not have the same power that the Odysseus of *Philoctetes* exerted from the beginning; there, he 'set the stage' from the first moments of the story and attempted to direct it throughout. In *Cyclops* we begin to see the stage manager-Odysseus in the false symposium, as he manipulates and directs Polyphemus into remaining isolated. Polyphemus attempts to control Silenus and orders Odysseus about, but wields little actual power (*Cyc*. 555-570). It is at this point, after Polyphemus and Silenus leave the stage, that Odysseus is left fully and irrefutably in charge of both the narrative and the satyr chorus. Satyr drama, with its self-awareness, allows for the more specific stage direction that Odysseus then engages in; he achieves in the foreground what he had to enact in the background in *Philoctetes*.[168] Most blatantly, Odysseus gives specific stage directions to the satyrs concerning Polyphemus' blinding, to seize the torch. There, Odysseus gives direct directions to the chorus to seize the torch (*Phil*. 630-31). The irony is, of course, that even with this newfound power to direct events, the chorus cannot in fact help him. They are bound to the orchestra.[169] His explicit inability to enact his will on the satyrs mirrors his more abstract inability to direct Neoptolemus and Philoctetes in Sophocles' play. There, stage conventions had nothing to do with the failure of his plan; instead, it is Neoptolemus' growing awareness of Odysseus' amorality and his own moral agency. In both cases, Odysseus relies on

[168] For the escalation of tragic topos in Athenian comedy, see Jendza 2020: 201- 206.
[169] Hunter and Laemmle, 2020, 232 n. 631. They note that the satyr chorus will remain in the orchestra both by "stage convention and cowardice".

his ability to manipulate those around them into doing his bidding, but overestimates how able he is to do this.

One of the points at which the *Cyclops* becomes a fulfillment of *Philoctetes* is at the close of the play. Both end quite abruptly, as scholars have commented upon.[170] Polyphemus is blinded, Odysseus' real name is revealed, the Cyclops offers a prophecy and Odysseus and the satyr chorus make their getaway, all within 50 lines (*Cyc*. 665-709). As usual, the abruptness of the satyr play is explained by its Homeric intertext: the audience would know what was going to happen once Odysseus left Sicily, and so Euripides need not draw out the end. Furthermore, the godlessness of Polyphemus up to this point would make an invocation to his father Poseidon tonally awkward. Instead, Polyphemus' vague prophecy fulfills a similar role, while echoing Homer at several points.[171] It also, importantly, echoes and answers *Philoctetes*. There, Heracles somewhat unexpectedly appears to set the story back on its mythic path, at which point the action stops (*Phil.* 1409ff). Heracles calls his speech a *mythos*, but it fulfills much the same role as a prophetic utterance. In both plays, a divine or semi-divine character is given unique access to knowledge of the future, though to rather different ends.

The prophecy given to Polyphemus was that Odysseus would answer for his crimes after having wandered on the sea for many years (*Cyc.* 698-700). In Homer, this is specifically because Polyphemus calls down a curse from Poseidon (Hom. *Od*. 528-535). Here, it is still punishment for Polyphemus' blinding, but a preordained punishment. By ending on a prophecy, or semi-prophetic utterance, Euripides offers Polyphemus a certain vindication: Odysseus will not go unpunished, even if that punishment will not stem from Polyphemus himself. This

[170] O'Sullivan and Collard, 2013, 225 n. 708-9; Hunter and Laemmle, 2020, 246 n. 696-98.
[171] Hunter and Laemmle, 2020, 246 n. 698-700.

extremely limited justification is felt primarily when we read it through the lens of *Philoctetes*. Heracles' speech there is meant as a correction, even perhaps a rebuke, of Odysseus.[172] Heracles never mentions him by name, but his presence is felt throughout the speech. Polyphemus is not given the same chance for reintegration or glory, but he is cast in the same position as Philoctetes; each is rewarded for their suffering, though to far different degrees.

The prophetic, abrupt end also offers an answer to what Sophocles was doing in *Philoctetes*. There, the introduction of a divinity is necessary as a representation of Philoctetes' chance at social 'rebirth'. Heracles is the appropriate entity to appear here, as he also reaffirms the connections of *philia* that Neoptolemus and Philoctetes had established. We are reminded then at the end of *Cyclops* of Polyphemus' own semi-divinity and in being cast as his own Heracles figure, he is perhaps offered some semblance of glory for his suffering.

[172] Schein, 2013, 334 n. 1409-1417. Schein here discusses the way that Heracles' language mimics that of his language in *Odyssey* 11 in a way that assigns to Philoctetes the praise originally given to Odysseus.

## CONCLUSION

This study was born out of an interest in the way that Greek tragedy depicted and engaged with the "other". This is a nebulous term, one that to my mind encompassed practically anyone who would not fit the ideal of an Athenian male citizen. I wanted to understand how that category was created and how it operated both internally and for an ancient and modern audience. Tragedy, it is well acknowledged, was engaged in "the purging of pity and fear through catharsis" by displaying such things on the stage and asking the audience to, for a few hours, experience the world through different eyes. Often these eyes were the eyes of women, foreigners, people with disabilities, monsters: I needed to know how such people could be relatable to an audience of elite Athenian men. The Cyclops, Polyphemus, has ever been one of the ultimate, vilified "others" of ancient Greek literature: monstrous in both form and appetite, he is rarely acknowledged as someone deserving of the pity and fear tragedy invites. Yet, when paired with Philoctetes, a classic Homeric hero made "other" by events beyond his control, we may see a way through to pity for the reviled Cyclops.

The issue with this was, then, the date. As discussed in the introduction, the date of *Cyclops* cannot ultimately be determined with certainty. However, I hope that I have contributed to this discussion on the side of 408 BCE in the course of my argument. While not my primary goal, in choosing to read the plays with the understanding that *Philoctetes* is the earlier of the two, my argument has added to those of Seaford and Marshall. The verbal similarity in δι᾽ ἀμφιτρῆτος is merely a starting point, as the rich confluence of thematic parallels—isolation, abuse of *philia* and *xenia*, Odysseus as a primary actor—makes the connection between the two all the more apparent.

Throughout these chapters, I have attempted to trace the way that *Cyclops* offers commentary on *Philoctetes* and responds to many of the themes in the earlier play. While each of course stands on their own as a piece of literature, they are enlightened and enriched when viewed together. Up to this point, scholars have largely ignored the way that reading each in light of the other provides depth to the satyr play and answers to the lingering questions in the tragedy. We cannot know which came first, but their thematic connection can hardly be denied. In comparing them, we see more clearly the way that isolation, both physical and social, breeds an isolated mindset and how Odysseus manipulates both levels to his own ends, whatever they may be.

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