ΟΥ ΜΗ ΠΙΘΗΤΑΙ: PERSUASION VERSUS DECEPTION IN THE PROLOGUE OF SOPHOCLES' *PHILOCTETES**

Odysseus in tragedy – particularly in Euripidean but also in Sophoclean drama – has traditionally been seen as the embodiment of the power of persuasion.[1] Despite the (much discussed) sophistic echoes[2] and the suspect moral quality of his rhetoric, Odysseus' λόγοι are always successful. Rhetoric both honest and dishonest is his forte. While the instances of directly deceiving are few,[3] the dramatic Odysseus sees his δόλοι carried out successfully.[4] The dramatic genre helps in that respect: a typical deception plot in drama is carried out successfully,[5] and the emphasis will fall on the moral consequences of the δόλος.

Yet in the Sophoclean *Philoctetes*, for the first time in extant Greek tragedy, a dramatic deception – and, more to the point, an Odyssean deception – fails. If we look closely at Odysseus' deception rhetoric (55–122), we come across an even more surprising occurrence, which is the character's inadequate engagement with persuasion in both its forms, honest and dishonest. As Malcolm Heath aptly notes, Odysseus in this play does not make many attempt 'to persuade anyone of anything'.[6] After the possibility of violence is dismissed in his initial dialogue

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[1] For Odysseus' rhetorical skill in drama, and its predominantly negative associations for the character, see more recently N.B. Worman, 'Odysseus *Panourgos* : the liar's style in tragedy and oratory', *Helios* 26 (1999), 35–68; eadem, 'Infection in the sentence: the discourse of disease in Sophocles' *Philoctetes*', *Arethusa* 33 (2000), 1–36; eadem, *The Cast of Character: Style in Greek Literature* (Austin, TX, 2002), esp. 120–2.

[2] For Odysseus in the role of a sophist, see for instance P.W. Rose, 'Sophocles' *Philoctetes* and the teachings of the Sophists', *HSPh* 80 (1976), 49–105, at 83; M.W. Blundell, 'The moral character of Odysseus in *Philoctetes*', *GRBS* 28 (1987), 307–29, esp. 321, 329. See also below, n. 16.

[3] For the primary meaning of δόλος I follow the definition in LSJ, s.v. δόλος 443 as 'any cunning contrivance for deceiving or catching', 'any trick or stratagem'.

[4] See for example Odysseus' and Diomedes' killing of Dolon in (Pseudo-)Euripides' *Rhesu*s 591–3, which, while making a passing reference to the murder itself, explicitly recalls their murderous ruse against the Trojan spy in *Iliad* 10.382–456. Likewise cf. Eur. *Cyc.* 449, 451–63, for Odysseus' scheme against Cyclops.

[5] For a typical deception plot pattern with a successful outcome, see for instance Euripides' *Medea* and Aeschylus' *Agamemnon.* The deception may, as in Medea and Euripides' *Electra*, cause untold misery to the perpetrator(s) but in *practical* terms it is invariably successful.

[6] M. Heath, 'Sophocles' *Philoctetes*: a problem play', in J. Griffin (ed.), *Sophocles Revisited: Essays Presented to Sir Hugh Lloyd-Jones* (Oxford, 1999), 137–60, at 146. Heath rightly stresses (147) Odysseus' sustained failure to attempt persuasion later in the play as uncharacteristic of the typical Odyssean fluency of the epic. Contra: R. Buxton, *Persuasion in Greek Tragedy*

with Neoptolemus, δόλος is simply imposed on Odysseus' collaborator but never justified in the narrative as the appropriate means of approaching Philoctetes. As for honest persuasion (πειθώ), the only time that it makes an appearance in the δόλος discussion it is dismissed and abandoned as a non-viable alternative by the very same man in the space of one line (103). Inevitably, the question arises: 'is there an underlying connection between Odysseus' unusual (for him) approach to rhetorical persuasion and the peculiar failure of his δόλος scheme?'

In this article I will discuss the uneasy relationship between the treatment of persuasion and deception in the *prologos* and its impact on our understanding of the play. I will then offer an alternative reading of the scene that sees *peitho* emerging through the narrative as a potential solution to the Achaean impasse. My key witness will be the very person who dismisses persuasion so forcefully, namely Odysseus.

ODYSSEUS' ARGUMENTATION IN FAVOUR OF ΔΟΛΟΣ

I begin with Odysseus' approach to δόλος. A cursory reading of the *prologos* makes it instantly clear that Odysseus presents deception as a given rather than a negotiable solution to the Achaean problem. Throughout the first half of what I shall call the basic 'δόλος speech' (lines 55–120), where he has the opportunity to set up his case for using deception, Odysseus in fact never truly offers anything resembling justification for his *dolos* plan. His lengthy monologue at 55–85 provides a resounding admonition on the necessity of 'stealing Philoctetes' ψυχή',[7] and guidance on what kind of particulars his lying tale should possess in order to secure his sympathy. What it refuses to offer, however, is argumentation on the inevitability of the deception as the only way out of the impasse.[8] In a play to Neoptolemus' subordinate position, Odysseus succeeds by forceful assertiveness, reflected in the use of imperatives[9] to indicate the urgency of the situation, and conditional clauses[10] to give a sense of a coherent argument. Yet nowhere does he indicate why deception is the only way to ensure that Neoptolemus will not give grief to the Achaeans (67).

The second part of Odysseus' speech, at 70–8, seems initially to be geared towards providing the much-sought-for answer to the reasoning behind the deception. However, if we look carefully at the nuance of his argument, we will find that the case for deception still remains elusive. Instead of stressing the reasons

(Cambridge, 1982), 125; J. Gibert, *Change of Mind in Greek Tragedy*, *Hypomnemata* 108 (Göttingen, 1995), 67.

[7] Cf. Soph. *Phil.* 54–5, τί δῆτ' ἄνωγας; τὴν Φιλοκτήτου σε δεῖ ψυχὴν ὅπως λόγοισιν ἐκκλέψεις λέγων. F. Gedike, *Sophoclis Philoctetes graece* (Bern, 1781), conjectured δόλοισιν instead of λόγοισιν.

[8] This must not be confused with what Odysseus does give, which is a series of reasons why Neoptolemus must take his place as a deceiver (70–3). But this does not adequately explain why δόλος is the only answer to their difficulties. I examine this in detail in the section below, 'Πειθώ suggested in the narrative' .

[9] Cf. Soph. *Phil.* 55, δεῖ ... ἐκκλέψεις'; 57, οὐχὶ κλεπτέον; 71, ἔκμαθε. See S.L. Schein, 'The chorus in Sophocles' *Philoktetes*', *SIFC* 6 (1988), 196–204, at 202, for the use of the impersonal constructions 'δεῖ' (982, 988) and 'πειστέον' (994) as justifications for the deception.

[10] Cf. 66–7, εἰ δ' ἐργάσῃ ... βαλεῖς; 68–9, εἰ ... μὴ ληφθήσεται, οὐκ ἔστι πέρσαι.

for deception as the only possible solution, Odysseus brings together arbitrarily but eloquently two separate notions, deception (77–8) and the need to win (81). Through his eloquence he appears to be justifying the connection of the two, while in truth never doing anything of the kind. The only extensive argumentation that he gives is to explain why it is possible for Neoptolemus but not him to approach Philoctetes without distrust or danger (σοὶ δ᾽ ὁμιλία πρὸς τόνδε πιστὴ καὶ βέβαιος, 70–1). Ironically, instead of favouring deception, this particular direction that his argument takes allows a window of possibility for *peitho* to prove effective, a possibility that I will examine later. Despite convincingly evoking τὸ σωθῆναι ('safety', 109) as the ultimate purpose of transporting Philoctetes to Troy, Odysseus offers no *justification* for the deception that will bring about this journey. While his eloquence together with Neoptolemus' youth and inexperience inevitably render his speech temporarily effective, Odysseus achieves credibility more through flattery[11] than logical coherence. Through focussing on the semblance if not the substance of credibility, Odysseus has succeeded in imposing the necessity of the δόλος not only on Neoptolemus but – with few exceptions – on the majority of Sophoclean scholars.[12] Despite the undeniable – and in fact predictable – conversion of his younger comrade, Odysseus' rhetoric leaves things wanting, creating an unease that is there to be picked up by the most perceptive of the audience.

PERSUASION AND ΓΛΩΣΣΑ

Persuasion therefore seemed destined never to come into the discussion. The appearance of *peitho* in Odysseus' rhetoric is so cursorily treated that it is misleading even to talk about a 'rhetoric of persuasion'. Apart from its brisk dismissal in line 103, the word itself occurs only ten times in the whole play and never in the mouth of Odysseus.[13] In itself, *peitho* in rhetoric and drama embraces all kinds of persuasion, both honest and dishonest.[14] Here however we are encouraged by the text itself to associate it specifically with honest persuasion, in as much as Neoptolemus clearly

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[11] See, for instance, 119: σοφός τ᾽ ἂν αὐτὸς κἀγαθὸς κεκλῇ᾽ ἅμα ('clever and valiant'). R. Scodel, *Sophocles* (Boston, MA, 1984), 92, notes that Odysseus' argumentation is not 'entirely consistent' in terms of the moral evaluation of the deception: at one time Odysseus seems to acknowledge the shame involved in his request (line 82), and at another to argue that through deception Neoptolemus will show himself 'wise and good at once' (line 119, Scodel's translation).

[12] See nn. 29 and 30 for bibliography.

[13] See lines 102, 485, 594, 612, 623, 624, 1252, 1269, 1278, 1394. In this count I do not include his three-word rejection of *peitho* (οὐ μὴ πίθηται, 103), as his only mention of the word is to reject it. It is not accidental that Odysseus' only utterance that could come close to even referring to persuasion takes place through the use of the deponent πείθομαι (πειστέον, 994), denoting obedience to a command rather than an attempt at persuasion. Similarly *R.P. Winnington-Ingram*, *Sophocles: An Interpretation* (Cambridge, 1980), 293, esp. n. 42. Buxton (n. 6), 127, considers Odysseus' attempt to force persuasion upon Philoctetes as a 'mockery of *peitho*'; P. Pucci, *Sofocle Filottete* (Milan, 2003), ad 993–4, 276, also sees πειστέον as a command: '"devi essere persuaso", cioè "devi obbedire"'.

[14] For persuasion in drama as inclusive of honest and dishonest argumentation, see Buxton (n. 6) 65; J. Hesk, *Deception and Democracy in Classical Athens* (Cambridge, 2000), 170–1, and esp. 171, n. 92, for deceptive persuasion in comedy. R.N. Lebow, 'Power, persuasion and justice', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 33 (2005), 551–82, at 554, discusses the meaning of *peitho* as a persuasion process and as a means of persuasion, and notes that 'Aeschylus, Sophocles, Thucydides and Plato recognize the double meaning of persuasion, and

separates *dolos* and *peitho* in 102, and Odysseus applies a similar meaning to the term in 103.[15] The potential of honest persuasion, which surfaces briefly here, does not re-emerge until Heracles' appearance at the end of the play as the alternative to the human deception and betrayal, more of which later.

Odysseus' first approach to persuasion is oblique, and takes place by means of a general reference to the power of the spoken word (γλῶσσα) as overshadowing anything that could be achieved through 'action' (τἄργα, 96–9). While this train of thought invites us to expect the discussion of rhetorical *peitho* as the realisation of this unequalled power of speech, Odysseus sidelines the possibility of persuasion as an alternative and focusses not on the universal power of rhetoric but on the capability of deceptive *logos* (γλῶσσα)[16] to prevail over actions. In other words, the wide hermeneutical spectrum of γλῶσσα, which can encompass all utterance, including rhetoric (both honest and dishonest), is here abruptly circumscribed to become a term that automatically suggests dishonesty.[17] While γλῶσσα in itself does not have exclusively sophistic overtones,[18] it is impossible not to see the term in the general context of flexible morality that Odysseus is articulating: γλῶσσα as the medium of speech rules everything, and thus everyone should trust in its power to get what they want.

If we were to harbour any doubt of the disassociation of γλῶσσα from honest *peitho* in this context, the text immediately removes it with Odysseus' exegesis of γλῶσσα, which is λέγω σ᾽ ἐγὼ δόλῳ Φιλοκτήτην λαβεῖν (101). If in Odysseus' argumentation 'tongue' can only signify deceptive communication, there is simply no room even to consider an alternative use of rhetoric as a means of persuasion based on truth.

In such a one-dimensional colouring of γλῶσσα as limited to deception, it is all the more surprising that, after almost fifty lines of 'δόλος rhetoric', it is Neoptolemus, a figure not traditionally linked to *peitho*, who puts forward the one question that Odysseus has failed to even consider: τί δ᾽ ἐν δόλῳ δεῖ μᾶλλον ἢ πείσαντ᾽ ἄγειν (102). Yet Odysseus simply dismisses out of hand the idea of per-

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like their modern counterparts, devote at least as much attention to the means of persuasion as they do to it as an end.'

[15] H.D.F. Kitto, *Form and Meaning in Drama* (London, 1956), 96, argues that deception is very clearly distinguished from persuasion in this context.

[16] It is important that the word itself appears only five times in the play, and Neoptolemus never utters it. The text itself is exposing Neoptolemus' distaste for the 'sophistic' use of γλῶσσα and perhaps hinting that it is exactly this distance that will condemn the δόλος. Interestingly, γλῶσσα also describes another *persona non grata* in the play, Thersites, who is likened to Odysseus in his being unworthy but skilled in rhetoric (see 440). J. Jouanna, *Sophocle* (Paris, 2007), 379–81, uses the sophistic influence in late fifth-century Athens to explain the different connotations of *sophos* in *Ajax* and *Philoctetes*, as well as the opposing representations of Odysseus in the two plays.

[17] S. Pfeiffer-Petersen, *Konfliktstichomythien bei Sophokles* (Wiesbaden, 1996), 125, comments on the artificial tone of the rhetoric on γλῶσσα: 'in der unverbundenen Eindeutigkeit der Argumentation mutet sie fast hölzern und damit gewissermaßen angelernt an'.

[18] See Blundell (n. 2) 327, esp n. 92, on the term's 'pejorative overtones' and its use in this and other Sophoclean plays. D.E. O' Reagan, *Rhetoric, Comedy, and the Violence of Language in Aristophanes'* Clouds (New York, 1992), 146, n. 39, talks of a 'post heroic' vision of society where the sophistic emphasis on γλῶσσα gives precedence to persuasion. D. Rosenbloom, 'Staging rhetoric in Athens', in E. Gunderson (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Rhetoric* (Cambridge, 2009), 194–211, at 201, brings together *Phil*. 98–9 and Cratinus' fragment 327, which argues for γλῶσσα as 'a prime mover in the democratic assembly', to demonstrate that in the *Philoctetes* passage 'oratorical prowess' is associated with 'personal power' and becomes 'a force in the world'.

suasion. Beyond an emphatic οὐ μὴ πίθηται· πρὸς βίαν δ' οὐκ ἂν λάβοις (103), there is no challenge or response to the idea of *peitho* as a possible solution to their dilemma. Having established, at least to his own satisfaction, the impossibility of taking the issue of *peitho* further, Odysseus simply turns the subject to violence, to stress the impossibility of aggressive action as a successful method of approach.[19] This dismissal of *peitho* is successful. Neoptolemus chooses to pick up on the theme of violence and explore his options there, while completely leaving the issue of persuasion aside. This small exchange therefore allows another thought-provoking realisation: having explicitly raised the possible use of persuasion as an alternative to trickery, the text, through Neoptolemus' eagerness to discuss the practicalities of a head-on hostile action, leaves the issue conspicuously unexplored.

The complete divorce between the arch-manipulator of the spoken word and the possible use of argument to win Philoctetes over is a puzzle. A possible, and obvious, answer would be that Odysseus' focus on deception is an inevitable consequence of his traditional role as a cunning deceiver *par excellence*. In that vein, his emphatic praise of γλῶσσα sits well with what the critical consensus has described as the quasi-sophistic[20] quality of his rhetoric. In that frame, the character is meant to revel in and make use of the flexibility of *logos* in all its forms, honest and dishonest. His choice of δόλος should therefore be considered neither unexpected nor unreasonable.

However, this approach carries the danger of oversimplifying Odysseus' inter-textual persona. His role both inside and outside the Philoctetes myth focusses on the character's *double* quality, the uniquely attractive combination of both *decep-tive* and *honest* rhetorical persuasion.[21] In his epic incarnation, though Odysseus is inescapably associated with false narrative (like the one in which he coaches Neoptolemus in our play), effective rhetoric (deceptive or non-deceptive) is also an integral part of his Homeric make-up. For instance, in the famous example of the embassy to Achilles in *Iliad* 9, Odysseus is not only one of a selected group of men chosen to approach the brooding Achilles, but he is particularly applied to by Nestor to use his rhetorical skill in order to achieve persuasion (πεπίθοιεν, 181).[22] In a similar manner, he speaks truthfully but persuasively to Nausicaa in *Odyssey* Book 6 to ensure her assistance.[23] Even within the Philoctetes myth, we can locate, through the fragmentary evidence, the joint working of cunning and *peitho* in Odysseus' portrayal to bring about the desired result, namely Philoctetes' journey to Troy. Thus in the Euripidean version of *Philoctetes*, Odysseus, while assuming a different identity, employs persuasion[24] to convince Philoctetes to refuse the promises of wealth and power made by the Trojan delegates.

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[19] Neoptolemus' willingness to take up arms against an invalid has often been considered an indication of his less than complimentary portrayal in the play. See, for example, C. Greengard *Theatre in Crisis: Sophocles' Reconstruction of Genre and Politics in* Philoctetes (Amsterdam, 1987), 80; J. Badger, 'Friendship and politics in Sophocles' *Philoctetes*', *Interpretation* 27 (1999–2000), 185–204, at 187. Such a tactic has to be seen in its larger context, however, which is (as Neoptolemus perceives it) preventative action against an enemy.

[20] Cf. note 2.

[21] G.M. Kirkwood, 'Persuasion and allusion in Sophocles' *Philoctetes*', *Hermes* 122 (1994), 425–36, at 428–9, rightly focuses on Odysseus' double role in pre-classical literature (and espe-cially *Iliad* 9) as a deceiver but also as an honest negotiator.

[22] See *Il.* 9.180–1. Similarly, cf. *Il.* 3.216–24; *Il.* 2.636.

[23] See *Od.* 6.148: αὐτίκα μειλίχιον καὶ κερδαλέον φάτο μῦθον.

[24] I follow S.D. Olson, 'Politics and the lost Euripidean *Philoctetes*', *Hesperia* 60 (1991), 269–83, at 275–6, who contends that it is Odysseus' responsibility to argue the case against the

While, as Kirkwood rightly notes, 'cunning of mind and deceitful, persuasive speech are the essence of the πολύτροπος of the *Odyssey*',[25] Odysseus' skill at *logos* works together with his cunning to form a formidable picture of a master of both honest and dishonest persuasion. Thus to accept deception as an inevitable choice for Odysseus in the Sophoclean *Philoctetes* understates the remarkable paradox of his representation in the prologue. For we are faced by an arch-rhetorician who rejects the potential of argument in favour of crude falsehood.

The simple trickster persona presented in this play was not imposed on Sophocles by the tradition; and measured against that tradition it is surprising. The limitations of this Odysseus become more pronounced, if one compares him with the Odysseus we meet earlier in Sophocles. In contrast with his namesake in *Philoctetes*, Odysseus in *Ajax* is committed to persuasive rhetoric as a means of conciliation. Though here, too, he can be self-centred and pragmatic,[26] Odysseus' argumentation defers to the traditional morality of his audience (internal and external).[27] He insists when insistence furthers his moral and practical aims (bury Ajax because it is morally appropriate towards the dead hero, but also a pragmatic nod to the inescapable realities of mortality and death), and desists when it does not (thus not attending the funeral, out of respect for the dead man's enmity towards him and to avoid rekindling strife between the Achaeans). This ability to rationalise without losing sense of the moral sensitivities of your audience, and to anticipate the practical complications if you do, is a skill that the Odysseus of this play, despite his ingenuity, does not possess. I discuss this innovative engagement with Odysseus' character below.

This paradox in such a skilful character is followed by another, this time on the part of the commentators. While the majority of Sophoclean scholars acknowledge Odysseus' limitations in the play,[28] they still choose to agree with his casual dismissal of *peitho* in the light of the impasse that the Achaeans are facing.[29] As

Trojans in the Euripidean *Philoctetes*, and so he does. Yet the play ultimately indicates the defeat of persuasion. For, as Olson goes on to argue (278), after Odysseus' identity has been revealed, Philoctetes departs 'for the most part unwillingly', an indication that the latter succumbed to the 'persuasion of necessity'. Cf. Cass. Dio 52.2.

[25] Kirkwood (n. 21), 429.

[26] For an interesting and convincing image of Odysseus' expediency in the play, see M. Heath and E. Okell, 'Sophocles *Ajax*: expect the unexpected', *CQ* 57 (2007), 363–80. They argue, among other things, for a possible trilogy between *Ajax* and two non-extant Sophoclean plays, *Teucer* and *Eurysakes*, which could put the conciliatory end of the play (and Odysseus' conduct) in a more problematic light than the one assumed so far.

[27] He is self-serving (*Ajax* 1367 ff.), yet respectful of human defenceless towards fate (121–6, 1365) and of the prevalence of the gods (*Ajax* 80–8, 1332–69), thus emerging (perhaps understandably) as a figure much more in tune with human weakness than Athena (*Ajax* 80–1). For Athena's cruelty in this play, see J.L. de la Vega, *Sófocles* (Madrid, 2003), 139: 'la obra abre con un prologo a cargo de la diosa, que nos cuenta con delectacion la amarga burla'. For Odysseus' rhetoric in the play as worthy of his Homeric *polumetis* persona, see E. Barker, 'The fallout from descent: hero and audience in Sophocles' *Ajax*', *G&R* 51 (2004), 1–20, at 15–17. For a 'moderate' Odysseus in the play, see E. Lefèvre, *Die Unfähigkeit, sich zu erkennen: Sophokles' Tragödien* (Leiden, 2001), 66–9.

[28] More aptly see Blundell (n. 2) 327, who points out the various inconsistencies in Odysseus' rhetoric and rightly suggests caution when labelling Odysseus, based on this performance, 'as a man of λόγοι'.

[29] Hesk (n. 14), 194, argued that 'the play makes it clear that Philoctetes would never be persuaded by any articulation of that prophecy from Odysseus or anybody else who admitted that Odysseus was with them'. E. Schlesinger, 'Die Intrige im Aufbau von Sophokles' *Philoktet*', *RhM* 111 (1968), 97–156, at 100, underlined – in relation to all three *Philoctetes* versions –

far as I am aware, *peitho* has never been systematically explored as a potentially successful alternative from the beginning of the play.[30] It is easy to see why the employment of deception and the dismissal of persuasion appear to so many critics as an inevitable concession to pragmatism. However, this scholarly agreement with the inevitability of deception, while recognising the practicality on which Odysseus' position is founded, still fails to account for the short and emphatic but abrupt appearance of *peitho* in the play. For the question I am setting is: why does the dramatist allow *peitho* to appear at all as a possibility if it is to be dismissed in one sentence and without the remotest semblance of justification beyond blunt assertion? Is there a dramatic purpose in allowing a glimpse of an alternative route, only to swiftly bury it until it emerges through the disastrous result as a viable course of action? Moreover, in terms of the story as staged by Sophocles, is δόλος a sound enough option to pursue while dismissing all alternatives? On the surface it appears so. In facing an adversary, should working by stealth perhaps render better results than open tactics?

Yet this is precisely the heart of the matter. Philoctetes, despite his hatred for the Achaeans, is not a Trojan adversary and cannot automatically be included in the stereotypes that favour the subjugation of enemies by any means necessary.[31] It is in fact his potential susceptibility to a fellow Greek, and one unsullied by past actions, that Odysseus takes into account when expounding Neoptolemus' suitability for the job. There, I argue, is where the possibility of persuasion creeps unintentionally into the foreground.

PEITHO SUGGESTED IN THE NARRATIVE

This scenario is in fact first hinted at, twenty lines into Odysseus' δόλος rhetoric, by the man himself. In the second part of his speech at 70–8, Odysseus, in his own words, proceeds to give an answer to the question of why it is possible

the Achaeans' need to deal with Philoctetes through cunning: 'Es wird nötig sein, sich ihm mit großer Umsicht und List zu nähern; denn nur ein sorgfältig vorbereiteter und gut ausgeführter Plan hat Aussicht auf Erfolg'. P.E. Easterling, '*Philoctetes* and modern criticism', *ICS* 3 (1978), 27–39, at 33, rightly highlights the limitations in Odysseus' *dolos* rhetoric, but also acknowledges Odysseus' choice of δόλος as a pragmatic necessity (ibid., 28). M.W. Blundell, *Helping Friends and Harming Enemies: A Study in Sophoclean and Greek Ethics* (Cambridge, 1989), 203, 209, acknowledges that Odysseus had the opportunity to decide on a different means of approaching Philoctetes, but goes on to argue that persuasion had no chance of success, citing lines 624 ff. I use these lines to counter this argument later on in this article.

[30] Buxton (n. 6) 124, 130, acknowledges the importance of *peitho* only '*post factum*' when arguing that 'the use of *dolos* created an atmosphere of mistrust which undermined the operation of *peitho*'. See similarly M.E. Payne, 'Three double messenger scenes in Sophocles', *Mnemosyne* 53 (2000), 403–18, at 417. B.M.W. Knox, *The Heroic Temper* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA, 1964), 119, went even further and argued for persuasion as being 'obviously' the right choice from the beginning, an opinion that has been rightly criticised, however, as there can be no obvious solutions at such an early point in the play. It is a different thing altogether to talk about the hidden potential of persuasion, which could have been exploited but was never even properly considered as a solution. Finally Lebow (n. 14), 567, aptly notes that Odysseus creates 'a seemingly irreconcilable conflict' between being honourable and being successful; he does not, however, put forward persuasion as potentially a way to honour and success.

[31] For the 'helping friends – harming enemies' pervasive motif in popular archaic Greek ethics, see more recently E.S. Belfiore, *Murder Amongst Friends: Violation of Philia in Greek Tragedy* (New York and Oxford, 2000).

for Neoptolemus but not him to approach Philoctetes[32] without distrust or danger (70–1).

Odysseus gives three perfectly valid reasons for Neoptolemus' ability to hold a communication with Philoctetes that is 'based on trust' ($\pi\iota\sigma\tau\dot{\eta}$, 71)[33] and 'is also safe' ($\beta\dot{\epsilon}\beta\alpha\iota\sigma$, 71).[34] First, Odysseus remarks that Neoptolemus is, unlike himself, free from 'any kind of oath' ($o\ddot{\upsilon}\tau$' $\ddot{\epsilon}\nu\sigma\rho\kappa\sigma\varsigma$ $o\dot{\upsilon}\delta\epsilon\nu\dot{\iota}$, 72) to force him to take part in the Trojan expedition.[35] His second reason is that, in contrast to Neoptolemus' freedom of choice, Odysseus' own decision to join in was to a large extent based on compulsion ($\dot{\epsilon}\xi$ $\dot{\alpha}\nu\dot{\alpha}\gamma\kappa\eta\varsigma$, 73).[36] Third, in a rare moment of self-evaluation, Odysseus invokes Neoptolemus' virtuous past as the final reason of his suitability as an agent. The young man, free from any associations with the first expedition ($\pi\rho\dot{\omega}\tau\sigma\upsilon$ $\sigma\tau\dot{\sigma}\lambda\sigma\upsilon$, 73), which brought about Philoctetes' banishment,[37] can approach the man with a confidence that no other Achaean can enjoy. Yet if we revisit the meaning of these three conditions we will find that, despite their sound basis, they also both expose Odysseus' *dolos* rhetoric as flawed and also pave the way for a successful alternative approach to Philoctetes.

In practical terms, what is the purpose of these conditions? They prove Neoptolemus' suitability to approach Philoctetes securely and successfully. What, however, does Odysseus conclude from them? He states that both he and the boy should employ deception for the purpose of stealing the 'invincible weapon' (77–8). We are confronted with a *non sequitur* so well hidden that it actually passes nearly unseen. For why should the established need for Odysseus to remain in the background (cf. 75) indicate *deception* as the method of dealing with Philoctetes? If the man has to be confronted by an Achaean who is not sullied with the injustices of the past, why cannot Neoptolemus approach him through the means of honest persuasion? Through this leap of thought, Odysseus unwittingly introduces the basis for honest persuasion into his rhetoric. Even though he eventually manages to win over Neoptolemus' doubts – albeit temporarily – this *non sequitur* invites the question that Odysseus refused to answer in line 102. Can persuasion really not ensure a successful end for the expedition at Lemnos?

There is no point in constructing hypothetical scenarios around Philoctetes' reaction to an approach based on *peitho*, as though there were an historical reality beyond the text of the play. The play does not point to a precise answer to the 'what if' question and nor can we. It is striking, however, that we are offered an insight into the potential of *peitho* as an alternative way forward in the play, even before Philoctetes' entrance on stage. Even more intriguingly, this potential is revealed through the words of the very person who seems to dismiss *peitho* so brusquely. To demonstrate this, we need to explore the meaning of the 'safe'

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[32] $\dot{\omega}\varsigma$ δ' $\ddot{\epsilon}\sigma\tau$' $\dot{\epsilon}\mu\sigma\dot{\iota}$ $\mu\dot{\epsilon}\nu$ $o\dot{\upsilon}\chi\dot{\iota}$, $\sigma\sigma\dot{\iota}$ δ' $\dot{\sigma}\mu\iota\lambda\dot{\iota}\alpha$ / $\pi\rho\dot{\sigma}\varsigma$ $\tau\dot{\sigma}\nu\delta\epsilon$ $\pi\iota\sigma\tau\dot{\eta}$ $\kappa\alpha\dot{\iota}$ $\beta\dot{\epsilon}\beta\alpha\iota\sigma\varsigma$, $\ddot{\epsilon}\kappa\mu\alpha\theta\epsilon$. (70–1).

[33] Cf. $\pi\iota\sigma\tau\dot{\eta}$, 1272.

[34] Transl. J.C. Kamerbeek, *Philoctetes* (Leiden, 1980) ad 70–1, 37.

[35] Largely accepted as an allusion to the suitors' oath of Tyndareus. See R.C. Jebb, *Philoctetes*, ed. P.E. Easterling (London, 2004), ad 72, 19; also T.B.L. Webster, *Philoctetes* (Cambridge, 1970), ad 72, 73–4. This freedom that is Neoptolemus' privilege alone is the catalyst for his reversal and the failure of the $\delta\dot{\sigma}\lambda\sigma\varsigma$.

[36] For the *Palamedes* story in the *Cypria*, see Jebb (n. 35), ad 1025, 164.

[37] Cf. 46–7. However, see also 5–7 ff., where Odysseus implies that he has been following orders. Contra: 1025–8.

and 'trusted' approach (πιστὴ καὶ βέβαιος ὁμιλία) that Odysseus is seeking to establish with Philoctetes through Neoptolemus.

PERSUASION AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO ΔΟΛΟΣ

(i) Narrative seed

In my interpretation, *peitho* works as a narrative seed in the text. This narrative term, which I borrow from De Jong,[38] recognises *peitho* as a 'seed' of information that is casually offered to the narratee at a particular point in the narrative, and whose significance will only become clear as the play progresses.

In applying the language and principles of narrative theory to Greek drama I am following a relatively new development in classical studies. A play is a story, and the narrative (in the larger sense, incorporating speech and action) must therefore form part of the hermeneutic framework within which we examine the play.[39] Consequently, narrative theory becomes a useful tool to decode dramatic action. The narrative seed as a narrative device is not Sophocles' innovation, and can in fact be found not only elsewhere in his plays[40] but also in earlier literature.

A particularly striking use of the seed can be found in *Od.* 9 (ironically for our purposes associated with Odysseus), when the narrative flags the wineskin to our attention as a useful tool when facing a savage man.[41] The device is also found in rhetorical handbooks, where the seed appears under the term προκατασκευή.[42] In all its occurrences the narrative seed is deliberately placed in the text to provide a piece of information that will later on play a crucial role in the development of the story or argument. As its name implies, it is not a transparent, developed piece of information, but a detail whose significance becomes more apparent as the narrative progresses. In the case of *Philoctetes*, the full significance of the reference to persuasion only emerges as the failure of deception becomes gradually clearer. It cannot therefore be instantly picked up by the audience, but only eventually, as

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[38] For a definition of the 'seed', see I.J.F. De Jong, R. Nünlist and A. Bowie, *Narrators, Narratees, and Narratives in Ancient Greek Literature* (Leiden, 2004), xviii; I.J.F. De Jong, *A Narratological Commentary on the* Odyssey (Cambridge, 2001), xvii–xviii. For the use of the term in epic, and a series of epic examples, see ibid., 14, 147–577.

[39] For employment of narrative to analyse drama, see recently B. Goward, *Telling Tragedy: Narrative Technique in Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides* (London, 1999); A. Markantonatos, *Tragic Narrative*: *A Narratological Study of Sophocles'* Oedipus at Colonus (Berlin, 2002); De Jong (n. 38), 254–68.

[40] For its use in Sophocles, Prof. Carey has pointed out to me the repeated presence of the theme of birds in *Antigone*, whose constant presence (e.g. Creon's decree 29–30, 698; Antigone's involvement with the burial 424–5) hints at the end result and its disastrous consequences for Creon (1000–4, 1080–3).

[41] Hom. *Od.* 9.196–215. De Jong (n. 38), ad 196–215, 237–8; ad 297, 241, points out that the wineskin reference is a 'seed' preparing us for its role in Cyclops' incapacitation later on in the narrative.

[42] Ancient Greek rhetorical sources used the term προκατασκευὴ to describe the anticipatory introduction of an argument, thus making it similar to (although not the same as) the narrative function of the seed. See the use of προκατασκευὴ for instance in Hermogenes, Περὶ εὑρέσεως, 3.2.1–38, where he gives a definition and function of προκατασκευὴ as providing in advance the arguments that will follow so that the audience can always keep them in mind during the orator's speech; cf. 3.2.64–70.

the play's close allows reflection and deliberation on the missed opportunities, the 'road not taken' in the play.

It is important to stress the seed's retrospective quality. The audience is not required – and arguably in most cases is unable – to piece things together instantly. This does not mean, however, that they are completely unaware of the logical gaps created by the seed. The sudden dismissal of persuasion, and the equally sudden change of subject in line 103, are small indications of a major crisis to come, one that will see the deception dramatically failing and a new approach belatedly attempted, the very one that was so emphatically dismissed at the beginning, namely honest persuasion. However, the option earlier rejected will still fail. For when Neoptolemus eventually attempts honest persuasion, he will not be believed.[43] In that respect, Sophocles adds an extra ironic twist to the use of the seed and the missed opportunities in the play. The narrative seed in the play is planted by the one person who so firmly opposed persuasion, Odysseus himself, when he outlines the factors that make it easier for Neoptolemus to deceive Philoctetes. I will argue that his words ironically indicate a possible way of approaching Philoctetes honestly instead of using deception.

(ii) πιστὴ καὶ βέβαιος ὁμιλία

Let us now look at the meaning of the πιστὴ καὶ βέβαιος ὁμιλία that Odysseus is proposing. Ὁμιλία is an interesting word in itself, here indicating 'talk with, approach'.[44] It appears only once in the play and four times in the whole of the extant Sophoclean corpus, one in each of *Electra*, *Philoctetes*, *Ajax*, and *Oedipus Tyrannus*, three of which are dealing with deception from or against their main character.[45] It is a subtle term, not least because its spectrum is wide enough to enclose all kinds of negotiation, both friendly and hostile. Yet, significantly, for such a context-specific term, the text chooses to enhance this ὁμιλία with two of the most ambiguous expressions in the play, πιστὴ and βέβαιος. Both words hold a special and indeed double resonance in the context of the δόλος speech.

Βέβαιος is used to allude to Neoptolemus' unique ability – through his freedom from the past and unlike any other Achaean – to communicate with Philoctetes in relative safety (βέβαιος, 71). It is also an obvious reference to his Achillean descent, on which Odysseus counts so heavily – albeit indirectly – when he asks Neoptolemus to reveal his true identity during the δόλος (57).[46] However, both βέβαιος and πιστός are commonly found in Sophoclean and extra-Sophoclean classical (and pre-classical) texts to hold meanings that transcend the 'security' or 'credibility' of one's actions. Starting with the latter texts, Plato in his *Symposium* uses βέβαιος to indicate the 'steadfast' friendship between Aristogeiton and

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[43] See 1393–4: 'what am I to do, if nothing I can say will persuade you?'; also 1402: 'if you wish, let us depart!'

[44] All translations in the present article are based on the (various) Loeb editions unless otherwise noted. Ὁμιλία is more commonly found to indicate 'association' or 'company': see LSJ, s.v. ὁμιλία, 1222. A particularly apt (and decidedly ironic in the *Philoctetes*' case) example is Demosthenes' *Epistulae* 1.12.2, where he uses ἐξ ὁμιλίας precisely to stress the need for persuasion instead of violence.

[45] *Aj*. 872; *El*. 418; *OT* 1489; *Phil*. 70.

[46] This is a feature not found in the *Philoctetes* plays by the other two tragedians. The deceiver who is encouraged to use his own identity to deceive is a mark not only of Odysseus' confidence in his plan but also of Sophocles' innovative engagement with deception.

Harmodius that brought down the oppressive regime of Hipparchus (φιλία βέβαιος, Pl. *Symp.* 182c). Aeschylus also employs βέβαιος in *Prometheus Bound* to highlight people's desperate need for dependable signs that can help them understand the workings of nature (τέκμαρ ... βέβαιον, Aesch. *PV* 456).[47]

This use of βέβαιος, however, appears to be a norm in Sophocles' oeuvre, too,[48] where it is employed to emphasise *moral* firmness and reliability. See for instance his use of the word in both *Antigone* and *Trachiniae*, where a pattern emerges of associating βέβαιος with divine force or certainty (Teiresias warning Creon in *Antigone* 1086; Lichas reassuring Deianeira about the success of his upcoming mission in *Trachiniae* 620–1).[49] The association of βέβαιος with morality in the corpus is perhaps clearest in fr. 201d, which places βέβαιος in the context of ἀρετή.[50] Thus the term βέβαιος can be legitimately used to denote a 'dependability' that is excluded from Odysseus' myopic understanding of it as simply 'credibility'.

Πιστός is also a particularly appropriate word in this context. As Odysseus uses it here, it could be taken to mean 'believable' and 'trusted'. In fact, with the exceptions of Kamerbeek and Pucci, Sophoclean commentators have chosen to translate the word in this context as 'trusted' or 'credible'.[51] However, πιστός can also hold the meaning of 'faithful', 'accurate', 'worthy to be trusted', rather than simply 'convincing'.[52] This is why πιστός becomes a formulaic expression in Homer to describe a comrade who is trustworthy and dependable in the face of danger (πιστὸν ἑταῖρον, 331). It is this very quality that women lack, according

[47] Interestingly, LSJ, s.v. βέβαιος, translates βέβαιος in πιστὴ καὶ βέβαιος ὁμιλία as 'steadfast, durable'. 'Steadfast' is in itself an interesting word because it can be taken to mean 'unwavering' as well as 'reliable, dependable' (http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/steadfast). For a similar use of βέβαιος see Isoc. 4.173, εἰρήνην οἵόν τε βεβαίαν ἀγαγεῖν.

[48] Βέβαιος ισ a rare term for Sophoclean drama, used only four times in the whole of the corpus: *Ant.* 1086; Soph. *Frag.* 201d; *Trach.* 621; *Phil.* 71.

[49] Cf. *Ant.* 1085–6: ἀφῆκα θυμῷ καρδίας τοξεύματα βέβαια, τῶν σὺ θάλπος οὐχ ὑπεκδραμῇ; *Trach.* 620–1: ἀλλ' εἴπερ Ἑρμοῦ τήνδε πομπεύω τέχνην βέβαιον, οὔ τι μὴ σφαλῶ γ' ἐν σοί ποτε. The association of βέβαιος with the divine in Teiresias' speech is clear. Lichas' case is subtler, as he skilfully employs the divine sanction of a messenger's duty (τέχνην βέβαιον) to inspire credibility. At the same time, this example also makes a case for the use of βέβαιος in a context of deceptive irony in two of its four uses in Sophocles. Aside from its use in *Philoctetes* 71, in *Trachiniae* we find βέβαιος in a context rich with irony, which manifests itself within the various levels of deception in this play. There is deep-seated irony in Lichas' promise to Deianeira in *Trachiniae* 621 to 'exercise reliably' his messenger duty, divinely sanctioned by Hermes, and hand the robe directly to Heracles (*Trach.* 620–3), a promise given in ignorance of Deianeira's intended purpose for the robe (to trick Heracles into loving her), in itself a further irony when taken together with the final outcome of Lichas' duty (i.e. Heracles' death). The irony in the messenger's βέβαιος claims for his duty is ever sharper in view of his failure to carry out that function in a βέβαιος way earlier, when he lied to Deianeira about Iole. Taking both contexts together, the association of the term βέβαιος with the gods by contrast highlights human ignorance and limitation.

[50] Soph *Frag. ΕΡΙΦΥΛΗ* 201d: ἀρετῆς βέβαιαι δ' εἰσὶν αἱ κτήσεις μόνης.

[51] Jebb (n. 35); Webster (n. 35); G. Markantonatos, Σοφοκλέους Φιλοκτήτης (Athens, 1982); R.G. Ussher, *Sophocles:* Philoctetes (Warminster, 1990), ad loc.

[52] I am more therefore more in agreement with Kamerbeek's translation of πιστὴ as 'intercourse based on trust and safe' (Kamerbeek [n. 34], ad 70, 1). Similarly, Pucci (n. 13), 166, translates πιστὴ as 'affidabile', meaning 'reliable, dependable'. For the meaning of πιστὴ as trustworthy see e.g. *Il.* 15.331; Pi. *P.* 1.88; Aesch. *PV.* 969; Xen. *An.* 1.5.15. Note also the irony of calling Heracles πιστός in *Trach.* 541 and in the reference to πιστά τεκμήρια in Aesch. *Ag.* 272, 352.

to the bitter ghost of Agamemnon in the underworld, who famously argues: 'for no longer is there faith in women'.[53]

These double meanings create space for competing interpretations of the proposed πιστὴ καὶ βέβαιος approach to Philoctetes. If we accept the first meaning of πιστὴ and βέβαιος ('credible and secure'), Odysseus' suggestion is not only amoral but also highly ironic. In that interpretation we see him in the typical role of the unscrupulous deceiver who wants Neoptolemus to take full advantage of Philoctetes' good faith. His believable λόγοι will constitute the perfect vehicle for the deception: his interaction with Philoctetes will indeed be πιστὴ and βέβαιος, convincing and safe, rather than trustworthy and steadfast, but still effective.

If, however, we then apply the *second* meaning of the terms to the conversation, which implies a 'faithful', 'accurate' (πιστὴ) and 'steadfast' (βέβαιος) approach (ὁμιλία), we are faced with an Odysseus whose words ironically offer the foundation for an alternative to the δόλος policy, and that is honest persuasion. His arguments, in establishing that Neoptolemus has the nobility and unblemished past that he himself does not have, alert us to the potential for his dependable λόγοι to prevail over Philoctetes' resistance. In abusing the language of honest communication, Odysseus is providing an insight despite himself into a potential he misses. There is a decided irony in his suggestion, but it is an irony lost on him.

This reading demonstrates the intricacy and depth of Odysseus' δόλος rhetoric. For it makes *persuasion* present in a speech that is meant to extol *deception* as the only route forward. Though *peitho* when employed by Neoptolemus in the prologue ultimately fails, it is finally vindicated through divine agency. Heracles in his double function as both Philoctetes' trusted companion and also divine emissary is able to prevail on Philoctetes to go to Troy. But one does not require hindsight to see the potential of *peitho* as an alternative. The option was already present in Odysseus' argumentation, which so eloquently proved Neoptolemus' ability to hold both a trustworthy and a credible interaction with Philoctetes. The ambiguity of the 'approach' terminology brings us back to Odysseus' one-dimensional take on rhetorical persuasion. He is shown arbitrarily to separate πίστις and βεβαιότης from their moral dimension, while dismissing an approach that would encompass both honesty and credibility. Persuasion is proven in that sense to exist in Odysseus' agenda only as rhetoric of falsification or at best deceptive manipulation.[54]

Through the presentation of *peitho* as a narrative seed, the dramatist complicates the plot and ensures that the audience becomes gradually more and more uneasy about the employment of δόλος as the most appropriate course of action. Not so uneasy as to shout the solution at Neoptolemus – this is tragedy, not pantomime – yet perturbed enough to allow them to think back to the alternative that was so easily dismissed in Odysseus' argumentation. In doing so they would find that persuasion's presence at the prologue hinted at its future reappearance through the divine agency and rendered the success of divine persuasion *retrospectively* inevitable. In that vein, Pucci in his commentary has very rightly read πιστὴ and βέβαιος ὁμιλία as foreshadowing the future resolution of the play.[55] Yet, even

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[53] Hom. *Od.* 11. 456, ἐπεὶ οὐκέτι πιστὰ γυναιξίν.

[54] See D.S. Allen, *Talking to Strangers: Anxieties of Citizenship since Brown v. Board of Education* (Chicago, IL, 2004), 141, for persuasion as an advocate of trust and inimical to manipulation.

[55] Pucci (n. 13), ad 70–6, 166, rightly suggested that πιστὴ καὶ βέβαιος ὁμιλία possibly foreshadows the future. Again, however, this does not show the real potential of πειθώ as an alternative solution.

beyond foreshadowing, the terms are present *at the time* of the δόλος rhetoric to indicate to the most perceptive of the audience a different route of approach, namely an honest engagement with Philoctetes. The ambiguous meaning of πιστός and βέβαιος, together with the hermeneutical flexibility of ὁμιλία, throw into sharp relief the multifaceted notion of persuasion and the questions it poses to the δόλος narrative.

PHILOCTETES' REACTION TO ΠΕΙΘΩ

There is however one obvious objection to the viability of *peitho* as an alternative to deception, and that is Philoctetes' response. His conduct subsequent to his entrance was obviously not available to Odysseus and Neoptolemus when deciding to employ deception against him. Even so, this conduct has been employed by critics as *post factum* evidence that excludes the possibility of a successful approach based on persuasion.[56] I propose to argue instead here that Philoctetes' appearance on stage further establishes the potential of persuasion into the narrative frame. In that vein, we should look at his conduct and references to *peitho* before and after the deception.

(i) Before the deception: Philoctetes' reaction to peitho before the dolos

The text provides ambiguous signs regarding the interpretation of Philoctetes' stance on persuasion. The first issue to consider is his past and present attitude towards the Greeks. Philoctetes had been a friend of the Achaeans. Even after the revelation of the deception, when he is wishing for everybody's death (κακῶς ὄλοισθ᾽, 1035), he bitterly admits that he joined their cause at Troy, unlike Odysseus (1025), through his own will (ἑκόντα πλεύσανθ᾽, 1027). More significantly, even after ten years of solitude, he is still affectionate towards everything Greek and longs for ὁμιλία with Ἕλληνες (234–5). His desire is laid bare by the repeated use of φίλτατον as a sign of endearment in order to describe both Neoptolemus' speech (φίλτατον φώνημα, 234) and the wind that brought him there (τίς ἀνέμων ὁ φίλτατος, 237).[57] Even Neoptolemus' homeland is referred to nostalgically as 'dear land' during his discussion with the young man (φίλης χθονός, 242).

Philoctetes is also a man who admires the Greek pre-war spirit of nobility, and sees Neoptolemus as the embodiment of this nobility of *psyche*.[58] His positive response to a man who combines a Greek origin and that very spirit of nobility that allowed Philoctetes to raise him, at least initially, to a prototype of a son and a γενναῖος Greek[59] is not difficult to fathom. It is, in fact, this very combination of

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[56] See, for instance, Blundell (n. 29), 203; R. Drake, 'Natural and divine orders: the politics of Sophocles' *Philoctetes*', *Polis: The Journal of the Society for Greek Political Thought* 24 (2007), 179–92, at 188.

[57] See E. Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-definition Through Tragedy* (Oxford, 1989), 177, for Philoctetes' 'pride' in hearing Greek language after his long years of exile (cf. 225, 234–5). Similarly, J.R. Ferreira, 'A dialéctica da amizade no *Filoctetes* de Sófocles', in A.P. Jiménez, C.A. Martín and R.C. Sánchez (edd.), *Sófocles el hombre: Sófocles el poeta* (Málaga, 2004), 153–62, at 154.

[58] E.g. 475–6, 668–9, 779, 801, 874.

[59] E.g. 241, 300, 327, 466, 468, 475, 478, 799, 801.

virtues that provides Neoptolemus with the necessary 'credibility' to become – as we saw in Odysseus' rhetoric – the perfect candidate for the deception.

Undeniably, however, Philoctetes' expressions of affection turn to hate in describing the men who have betrayed this very notion of nobility. His feelings of animosity for both Odysseus and the sons of Atreus are unmistakable and often declared in the text,[60] and his attitude to the men that betrayed him is a clear-cut reaction to an ἐχθρός as understood in the fifth-century context.[61] The Argives have destroyed any possible ties of duty to his former *philoi* and, in accordance with fifth-century sentiment of *philia*, Philoctetes' *sympheron* was to oppose them.

Can we then surmise his reaction to an attempt at *peitho* by a Greek? The text significantly allows the invalid to make an announcement in relation to persuasion even before he is aware of the δόλος against him. When he learned through the merchant's announcement that Odysseus meant to 'take him' (λαβών, 617) either willingly (ἑκούσιον, 617) or unwillingly (εἰ μὴ θέλοι δ', ἄκοντα, 618), he emphatically declared that he would simply not be persuaded to be brought to the Achaeans (κεῖνος, ἡ πᾶσα βλάβη, ἔμ' εἰς Ἀχαιοὺς ὤμοσεν πείσας στελεῖν, 623). In so saying however, Philoctetes is violently reacting to the possibility of persuasion through the agency of *Odysseus*, not persuasion *tout court*. In that vein, the Hades metaphor perfectly underlines the revulsion inspired in him by such a prospect.[62] Yet his revulsion at Odysseus' 'cajoling words' (λόγοισι μαλθακοῖς, 629), which he bitterly parallels with the sounds of the serpent that incapacitated him, cannot foreshadow Philoctetes' reaction when faced by *Neoptolemus'* rhetoric.[63]

Thus if we revisit Philoctetes' reaction to the messenger's prediction of capture (603–21), we will find that the emphasis is not so much on πεισθήσομαι as on κεῖνος (622). This makes all the difference. Given his all-consuming hatred for Odysseus, Philoctetes reasonably refuses to even contemplate the possibility of persuasion (πεισθήσομαι) through such a hateful agent. Even so, the text cannot be used as evidence that he would not have listened to the young man's proposition with the same equanimity as at least Neoptolemus' father when he received the representatives of the Achaeans (*Il.* 9.312). The embassy to Achilles might have been doomed to failure; yet that should not render all attempts at honest persuasion equally pointless.[64]

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[60] E.g. 264–5, ὃν οἱ δισσοὶ στρατηγοὶ χὠ Κεφαλλήνων ἄναξ ἔρριψαν αἰσχρῶς; 315–16, τοιαῦτ' Ἀτρεῖδαί ... ἐμοῦ παθεῖν; 322–3, πανωλέθροις ... ἔγκλημ' Ἀτρείδαις.

[61] See Blundell (n. 29), 26–59, esp. 50–9. Blundell, however, indicates the many variations of this friendship and enmity motif and the contrasting obligations that it often incurs.

[62] See 624–5: πεισθήσομαι γὰρ ὧδε κἀξ Ἅιδου θανὼν πρὸς φῶς ἀνελθεῖν, ὥσπερ οὑκείνου πατήρ.

[63] I am unconvinced by the view of A.F. Garvie, 'Deceit, violence and persuasion in the *Philoctetes*', in *Studi Classici in Onore di Q. Cataudella* 1 (Catania, 1972), 213–26, at 215, n. 8, on the potential of Neoptolemus attempting persuasion himself. Garvie argues that, if Sophocles was forced 'to provide such an explanation [to the question of why Neoptolemus is not attempting a deception], he would no doubt answer that Neoptolemus is not yet in any position to take the initiative, dominated as he is by his superior'.

[64] Webster (n. 35), 7, advocates such a line in the introduction to his commentary, where he uses the example of Tecmessa's failure to persuade Ajax to live to argue, bizarrely, that 'the parallel of Ajax and Tecmessa suggests that Philoctetes could not yield'. Philoctetes is not Ajax; though Sophocles' heroes share some key characteristics, it is a mistake to reduce them to a single template.

(ii) After the deception: Philoctetes' reaction to peitho *after the* dolos

A pivotal scene in the play depicts Philoctetes' bitterly passionate outburst after he realises that he has been duped for a second time and, this time, by the one person that he had dared trust after ten years of isolation (cf. 662–70, 691–5, 719–20). In the study of δόλος, this scene is of interest not only for its emotional intensity, but primarily because Philoctetes' bitter declaration of defiance, stating first his crippled foot and then deception as the reason he is 'captured', holds the key to the deception–persuasion debate (947–8). The difference in Philoctetes' tone is nuanced yet striking. The cripple admits that Neoptolemus would never have captured him without trickery, even in his current weakened state (948). This fact, taken together with Philoctetes' angry rejection of Neoptolemus' proposition – after the latter had a change of heart – has led many commentators to believe that persuasion would never have succeeded.

   Yet Philoctetes' reaction after the δόλος cannot be treated as transparent evidence for or against the potential of *peitho*. Philoctetes' reaction as portrayed in the play is a direct outcome of Neoptolemus' deception and betrayal. Philoctetes has passed from a state of trust and sympathy for the young man to utter estrangement, disappointment and anger. Lines 927–62 are a forceful denunciation of everything Philoctetes had held to be true about the young Achaean, and his language clearly depicts this dramatic change. From τέκνον (see 249, 276), Neoptolemus has now become 'fire' (πῦρ, 927), 'total horror' (πᾶν δεῖμα, 927) and a 'hateful masterpiece of dire villainy' (πανουργίας δεινῆς τέχνημ' ἔχθιστον, 927–8), and has ultimately 'deprived him of life' (ἀπεστέρηκας τὸν βίον, 931). This shift in perception and in language is part of Philoctetes' realisation that he was faced with dishonesty for at least half of his interaction with Neoptolemus. In such an emotionally charged frame of mind, his angry declaration at 947–8 should be seen as a direct by-product of the shock caused by this elaborate deception.

   Even if we were to take his words literally, Philoctetes here is not outlining deception as the only way of finding himself on his way to Troy. What he does is to acknowledge δόλος as the sole medium to bring about his *capture* (εἷλεν, 948). However the use of persuasion would render 'the capture' of Philoctetes unnecessary. *Peitho* can offer the potential of Philoctetes' re-entry into Greek society, which covers both needs: the presence of both the man and the bow at Troy, and the banishment of the problematic issue of Philoctetes' unwilling participation in the scheme. While *peitho* would not rewrite the past, it would, literally, ease the past wounds as it would secure for Philoctetes a smooth transfer to Troy and, from there, a chance for restoration to health and cooperation with the new generation of Achaeans (Neoptolemus) towards victory. In a word, Philoctetes would be offered all the promises that the god makes at the end of the play without the unnecessary moral and practical complications of the δόλος 'approach'.[65]

   As it is, the story demanded that Neoptolemus fails to see this double side of ὁμιλία … πιστή. Thus he simply follows Odysseus' lead to become a believable

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   [65] Drake (n. 56), 188, uses Philoctetes' expression of mistrust for the Achaeans (1357–60) to argue for the soundness of Odysseus' choice to deceive as the only possible way forward. To use Philoctetes' hatred for the Achaeans as expressed in the last third of the play to argue against persuasion makes little of persuasion's abrupt dismissal in 102, of the ambiguity of πιστὴ καὶ βέβαιος ὁμιλία and of Philoctetes' explicit denunciation of persuasion in relation to Odysseus (and then, only after the betrayal, in relation to Neoptolemus himself).

and untruthful agent (103). There has to be a subtle irony embedded in the double appearance of πιστός in the play. First, πιστός is used, as argued above, to indicate the certainty and safety of the approach (70–1); it is then used for the last time when the deception has defined the meaning of πιστός as 'credible', and in fact deceitfully so (1272). This is the word Philoctetes uses to sum up the problematic quality in Neoptolemus' rhetoric: it has been 'credible, but secretly deadly' (πιστός, ἀτηρὸς λάθρᾳ 1272).

Moreover, through its handling of *peitho* in both its forms (honest and dishonest), the text goes beyond a simple criticism of the 'immorality' of the deception. Through its presentation of a problematic and self-defeating δόλος rhetoric, it lays emphasis on the dangers of a one-dimensional biased handling of deliberative rhetoric, where potential solutions are essentially mishandled from the start. While it is impossible to argue for persuasion's definite success if employed from the beginning of the play,[66] its potential is shown to be present both before and during the deception. The irony of *peitho*'s treatment is that it is only given the opportunity to be tested when it is too late to be successful.

ODYSSEUS IN THE *DOLOS* PLOT

This unusual development of an Odyssean δόλος raises questions about the presentation of Odysseus in a play that belongs to the late Sophoclean dramaturgy. This is an Odysseus who lacks his most characteristic quality, namely *polutropia*. Goward notes that, in the *Odyssey*, the hero 'defines himself in terms of δόλος'.[67] Yet it is the versatility and ingenuity that go with his deceptive plans that render him *polutropos*, and it is precisely this quality that the Sophoclean Odysseus lacks. Odysseus' cursory and one-dimensional engagement with the situation ties in with what can only be described as an egocentric attitude throughout the play, which manifests itself in the character's inability and/or unwillingness to engage with his interlocutor's psychology, which in effect renders him short-sighted in relation to both his agent and his purpose.

Throughout the play, Odysseus is fluent, and indeed successful in freely attributing to Neoptolemus the same desires and criteria (glory, safety, victory)[68] as he himself possesses. Yet he fails to even consider the possibility that Neoptolemus could view Philoctetes in any other way than as an obstacle to be overcome in the pursuit of victory at Troy. Even though he does underline the unsuitability of Neoptolemus as an agent of deception (79–80),[69] he is still unable to 'think outside the box'; he cannot allow space for alternatives and, significantly, not even once does he so much as contemplate the possibility of deception's failure.[70] Sophocles

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[66] Contra Knox (n. 30), 119. See also n. 30.

[67] Goward (n. 39), 40. Cf. *Od.* 9.19–20.

[68] See, e.g., *Phil.* 81–5, 109, 119.

[69] For the idea that this Odysseus is conscious from the beginning of the difficulty that Neoptolemus' Achillean nature poses for the scheme, see R.J. Tarrant, 'Sophocles, *Philoctetes* 676–729: directions and indirections', in M. Cropp, E. Fantham and S.E. Scully (edd.), *Greek Tragedy and its Legacy* (Calgary, 1986), 121–34, at 133, n. 43. Tarrant does not, however, associate this with persuasion and its potential.

[70] Even though naturally, for the purposes of credibility, Odysseus would be unlikely to stress the weaknesses of his *dolos* rhetoric, it is his almost obsessive certainty about deception's viabil-

therefore creates not so much a caricature villain as a caricature Odysseus, whose traditionally penetrating mind is replaced by a decided sense of self-belief[71] and an equally obvious penchant for deception. It is this obsessive engagement with deception that eventually condemns the expedition to failure.[72]

THE RESOLUTION OF *ΠΕΙΘΩ*?

Though *Philoctetes* creates space for honest persuasion by means of the road not taken, it is important not to read it as an optimistic morality tale about the potential of *peitho*. The play retains elements of ambiguity in relation to *peitho* that extend beyond the prologue, and reach their peak in its treatment by Heracles as a *deus ex machina*. The divine epiphany in the play is a theme too large to be adequately addressed here. However, it is vital for the understanding of *peitho* in the prologue to establish its *partial* resolution in the play's conclusion.

There have been many attempts to see the end of miscommunication through the – unusual for Sophocles – concluding device of the *deus ex machina*.[73] This is understandable given the doubly significant role of Heracles as not only a divine messenger, with all the divine authority that that entails (τὰ Διός … βουλεύματα, 1415), but also a human *philos*, an individual with links to Philoctetes that take the audience both in and out of the tragic sphere,[74] and straight into their mythology and religious observances.[75] In other words, if any divine agent was to restore credibility in human *logos*, that would be Heracles. However, as often with Sophoclean endings, the close is marked by ambiguity, and the longed-for resolution of the problems of communication is withheld.

The god's intervention, as all similar divine appearances, addresses the play's concerns selectively, in this case solely focussing on the future and leaving the rhetoric of the past decidedly unsettled. The divine *mythoi* tell us of the imminent

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ity as the only alternative, which comes without an attempt to validate his point, that renders his rhetoric suspicious.

[71] See also H. Roisman, *Sophocles:* Philoctetes (London, 2005), 50, who suggests that Odysseus in the play is 'too clever for his own good'.

[72] In pursuing this direction, I distance myself from attempts to 'soften up' Odysseus' image as *a priori* sympathetic to Philoctetes' plea: i.e. Drake (n. 56), 179–92. To argue for the presence of running water next to Philoctetes' cave as an indication of Odysseus' considerate side when he abandoned him (ibid., 180–1) is to work against the grain of the text. If Odysseus wanted to appear sympathetic, he would have stressed this 'pity' approach in his argumentation to Neoptolemus, which is something he does not do.

[73] R. Parker, 'Through a glass darkly: Sophocles and the divine', in Griffin (n. 6), 11–30, at 11–12, gives six instances of a divine presence in the whole of Sophocles' oeuvre. The bibliography on the *deus* function in the *Philoctetes* is extensive. For a helpful discussion on the divine *mythoi* versus human *logoi* in the divine epiphany see particularly R.J. Rabel, 'Sophocles' *Philoctetes* and the interpretation of *Iliad* 9', *Arethusa* 30 (1997), 297–307, at 300–6.

[74] *Trachiniae*, while not directly referring to Philoctetes as a mythical figure, ends precisely where the Heracles–Philoctetes tradition starts: the preparations for Heracles' death on the fire. For the gradual build-up of Heracles' appearance in *Philoctetes,* see H.C. Avery, 'Heracles, Philoctetes, Neoptolemus', *Hermes* 93 (1965), 279–97, at 290–6, who argues for a father–son relationship between Heracles and Philoctetes. See also C. Gill, 'Bow, oracle, and epiphany in Sophocles' *Philoctetes*', *G&R* 27 (1980), 137–46, at 137–9.

[75] For Heracles' cult and its invocation in the play, see S.J. Harrison, 'Sophokles and the Cult of Philoktetes', *JHS* 109 (1989), 173–5. For a contrary view, see S.L. Schein, 'Herakles and the ending of Sophokles' *Philoktetes*', *SIFC* 19 (2001), 38–52, at 46.

glory for Philoctetes individually (1409–40) and for Neoptolemus as his companion in sacking Troy (1433–7), but pass in total silence over the deceptive *logoi* and their consequences. While it is not the job of a *deus* to address or justify the whole of human activity in the play,[76] the complete absence of any reference to the (ab)use of persuasive speech, which dominated the plot for three-quarters of the play, has to be significant. As Winnington-Ingram puts it, 'it is … important to consider what he [Heracles] says and what he does not say'. [77] One of the issues that the god does not discuss is the basis of communication that Philoctetes will share with his fellow Achaeans. Of course, the divine *mythoi* command that Philoctetes will be '*judged* first of the army in valour' (1425) and 'will receive the greatest prize of the army' (1429), but how exactly is this *judgement* to come about? Does it suggest that Philoctetes simply rejoins the comrades who have, after refusing to approach him honestly from the start, betrayed him twice? Does he happily go about fulfilling his traditional mission to Troy without a backwards glance? We really cannot say.[78]

Adding to the uncertainties of persuasion in Philoctetes' future, its treatment in his past and present (immediately before and during Heracles' appearance) also leaves a lot to be desired. The one person whom Philoctetes – after a considerable struggle[79] – re-admitted as a *philos*, Neoptolemus, failed to sway him. Then, the young man's skilfully ambiguous responses till the very end (for instance, dexterously avoiding discussion of the story of his 'deprivation of arms' by the Achaeans),[80] whether Philoctetes is aware of it or not, puts his new-found honesty in an interesting light.[81] The god's oblique reference to the dangers of *asebeia* (1440–4), addressed (for any theatregoer who knew their Homer) to the very person who appears to have just reclaimed the right to trustworthy speech, points to damage already done by dishonest rhetoric that goes beyond the momentary resolution offered by the divine *mythoi*.

These uncertainties in human communication are almost a requirement in a play that is based on the ambiguity of speech and its potential for manipulation. They neatly tie in *peitho* with the two endings of the play (before and after Heracles' appearance) and, rather than cancel, require their co-existence.[82] The first ending

[76] Parker (n. 73), 13.

[77] Winnington-Ingram (n. 30), 299; Blundell (n. 29) 222.

[78] Lefèvre (n. 27), 202–3, sees a continuation of Philoctetes' irrevocable hatred. Contra: C. Segal, *Tragedy and Civilisation: An Interpretation of Sophocles* (Cambridge, 1981), 322, who speaks of Heracles' presence as extending the horizons of Philoctetes' goodwill. Easterling (n. 29), 38, notes that the dramatist is careful 'not to raise the question of just how Philoctetes and, say, Agamemnon, will greet each other at Troy' and finds this 'absence of naturalism' necessary for the success of the epilogue.

[79] Philoctetes expresses doubts over Neoptolemus' veracity up until line 1290: εἰ λέγεις ἐτήτυμα.

[80] See 1373–4. Neoptolemus' response to why he helps the Achaeans when they have 'betrayed' him is a clear evasion of the subject altogether: 'What you say is sensible, but none the less I wish you to put your trust in the gods and in my words …'.

[81] W. Deicke, 'Zur Interpretation des sophokleischen *Philoktet*', *Hermes* 127 (1999), 172–88, at 174, rightly challenges the honesty of Neoptolemus' rhetoric even after his change of heart: 'Es kommt also nirgendwo in dem Stück zu dem Versuch einer wirklich ehrlichen πειθώ, die These von der angeblichen Taubheit oder dem Starrsinn Philoktets übenimmt die Sichtweise des Neoptolemos 1387'. Similarly, O. Taplin, 'The mapping of Sophocles' *Philoctetes*', *BICS* 34 (1987), 69–77, at 70.

[82] To the usual two endings, (1408) and (1471), O. Taplin, 'Significant actions in Sophocles' *Philoctetes*', *GRBS* 12 (1971), 25–44, at 35–7, adds another (1217). For the often open-ended quality of endings through divine epiphanies, see e.g. Goward (n. 39), 123.

crystallises human persuasion as impossible (1408); the second restores persuasion in the sphere that Heracles represents, one that wavers between the human and the divine, but really belongs to neither (1471). While one can rejoice[83] in Philoctetes' ability to trust (for example, in Neoptolemus' words even before Heracles' entry,[84] or the γνώμη φίλων after it),[85] the conditions for a trustworthy, persuasive speech remain uncertain. The conclusion of the play raises as many questions as it answers about human communication, its variety and the parameters for its credibility.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, we can argue that the prologue dramatises the presentation of a problematic and self-defeating δόλος rhetoric. Odysseus' one-dimensional approach is in perfect accordance with the play's well-acknowledged political character, which reflects the late fifth-century unease after the violent political shifts of 411–410 B.C.[86] Thus the 'road not taken' indicated by the narrative seed of *peitho* problematises the deliberative process in Athenian politics, where the inversion of both words and values inevitably undercuts political stability. Persuasion's presence at the beginning of the play and its ultimate reappearance at the end establishes, through a kind of ring composition, its importance for the play. Yet in the Sophoclean *Philoctetes*, even more than any other Sophoclean play, the ambiguity in the representation of *peitho* saves it from the danger of oversimplification. The *Philoctetes* is not a morality tale and *peitho* is not put forward as the solution to all problems. What the play does is to underline, in an almost Gorgianic fashion, the power and ambiguity of the nature of persuasive speech. Thus persuasion's ambiguous treatment in the play constitutes a rhetorical as well as a political statement, less overt than the Euripidean *Philoctetes* but – perhaps through its ambiguity – even more effective.

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[83] Easterling (n. 29), 36–7.
[84] See 1351, ὅς εὔνους … παρήνεσεν.
[85] See 1467, γνώμη τε φίλων. For a thorough reconciliation indicated by the γνώμη τε φίλων, see V. Di Benedetto, *Sofocle* (Firenze, 1988), 213: 'la tragedia si chiudeva con Filottete che si avviava fuori scena appoggiato e sostenuto dal suo φίλος'.
[86] Greengard (n. 19), 10, n. 8, and 74, offers the following useful summary of the events: revolt of the Athenian allies in the Ionian coast (413–412 B.C.); establishment of the Committee of the 400 (411 B.C.); overthrow of the 400 and restoration of democracy (410 B.C.). A.M. Bowie, 'Tragic filters for history', in C. Pelling (ed.), *Greek Tragedy and the Historian* (Oxford, 1997), 39–62, identifies parallels between Sophocles' *Philoctetes* and Alcibiades' recall in 410 B.C.