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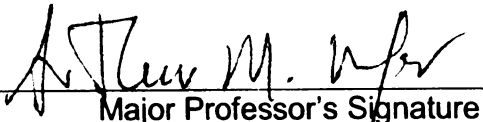
BOOK I OF THUCYDIDES' HISTORY OF THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR

presented by

Bernard J. Dobski

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POLITICAL HISTORY AND THE STUDY OF POLITICS
BOOK I OF THUCYDIDES' HISTORY OF THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR

Volume I

By

Bernard J. Dobski

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ABSTRACT

POLITICAL HISTORY AND THE STUDY OF POLITICS
BOOK I OF THUCYDIDES' HISTORY OF THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR

By

Bernard J. Dobski

This study offers an introduction to Thucydides' intent. It attempts to clarify how Thucydides, as a teacher of politics, conceives political history. I argue that his *History*, which appears limited to relating the practical events of a single political event and which offers no explicit teaching on politics, establishes the necessary foundations for those theoretical investigations traditionally associated with political philosophy. Thucydides' work does so because his unique treatment of the war between the Peloponnesians and Athenians, and especially his unique treatment of the speeches and deeds of the work's actors, captures a naïve or common sense understanding of practical political affairs. The virtue of his treatment of the "common sense understanding" consists in its power to invite political investigation without distorting the understanding that makes such an investigation possible.

To uncover Thucydides' intent, this study focuses on Book I of the *History* and the treatment of political justice and political power at its heart. The importance of Book I's presentation of political justice and political power follows from his effort to establish the surpassing greatness of the war he relates, an effort that requires him to reveal the clear truth about those things that have happened, including the oldest things or the first things. This treatment of Book I concludes that regimes like Periclean Athens supply the necessary political conditions for one to undertake theoretical reflection about justice, power and the first things -- conditions that Thucydides' indirect manner of procedure

both effects and reflects. And because it establishes the importance of Periclean political conditions to his theoretical intent, Thucydides' *History* offers a new understanding of the relationship between theory and practice.

Thucydides' conception of political history thus offers a supplement to the more direct and more explicit political studies of Plato and Aristotle while also pointing to their potential limits. This study differs from the more recent efforts to establish the moral relevance of Thucydides' political work because it situates his treatment of moral and political phenomena within his broader, theoretical concern for preserving the possibility of a genuine engagement with and study of political life.

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Para mi esposa Elisa Monica - for never ceasing to remind me that I am not Michael Jordan.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I have been told that there is no other scholarly activity quite like writing one's doctoral dissertation. While I lack the experience to determine with certainty the truth of this proposition, I am inclined to agree. Fortunately, such an experience has proved as rewarding as it was exacting. But such rewards would not have been possible without the help of a number of people, all of whom deserve my gratitude.

I would like to thank my undergraduate professors at Boston College: David Foster, the late Father Ernest Fortin, Susan Shell, David Lowenthal and Christopher Bruell. They not only introduced me to political philosophy, but in their classes and by their examples they showed me that the study of politics offered a calling whose demands were equaled only by its pleasures. I would like to thank Christopher Bruell especially. His undergraduate classes on Plato revealed to me the depth of my own concern for the good and showed me how the life of the mind could respond to such a concern. To this day, his classes represent the defining points in my education. Any thanks to him would be incomplete without acknowledging the grace, moderation and charm he exhibited both in lecture and outside of class. Dr. Bruell's example set a standard for teaching that has been unmatched in my experience.

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who combine the charms of collegiality, wit and generosity. Their contributions to my growth as a student are too numerous to record here.

Both Werner J. Dannhauser of Michigan State University and M. Richard Zinman of Michigan State University's James Madison College played special roles in my graduate education. More than anyone else, Dr. Dannhauser showed me how the study of political philosophy was, in its pains and delights, akin to falling in love. Through his example, he showed that the life of the mind, with all of its leanness and austerity, is one that abounds with the riches of friendship, love and humanity. To Dr. Zinman I owe my greatest thanks. As my teacher, he initiated me into the exhilarating world of Thucydides' political wisdom. And through his guidance both in and out of class, he showed me how intellectual daring necessitates both a reverence for one's subject and an awareness of one's limitations. For this I am most grateful. Dr. Zinman also proved a most able guide through the labyrinths of Thucydides' thought. At each stage of the dissertation, he offered a number of helpful suggestions. His comments saved me from numerous errors and led me to a deeper engagement with Thucydides and the themes at the heart of his work. I would also like to thank him for his good humor, his generous nature and his refusal to let me give into my own worst habits. My study owes many of its virtues to his excellent counsel.

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1

The Problem and Aim of the Study

I. Introduction

This study offers an introduction to Thucydides' intent in writing the "War of the Peloponnesians and Athenians." His "War," traditionally referred to as his *History,*[1] is a single work about a single event. Why Thucydides writes such a work becomes a question for us when we consider Thucydides' claim that this single work is a "possession for all time" (I.22.4). He claims that such a possession is to be eternally useful "for those who desire to investigate the clear truth about those things having happened and that will happen again in accordance with that which is human" (I.22.4). But how is it possible that such a work, devoted as it is to the practical affairs of a single 27-year war between two Greek cities, could merit the claim of being permanently useful? How could Thucydides intend such a work, as limited in its scope and focus as it appears, to help reveal the truth about those things that have happened and that have yet to happen?

At the very opening of his work Thucydides ties this claim for the work's permanent utility to the surpassing greatness of the war it is to relate (I.1-19). The ability to investigate the clear truth of those things that have happened and will happen depends

[1] It is widely noted that Thucydides' work bears no official title. The opening sentence, which Gomme refers to as the "title page" (1945, 89), merely states that "Thucydides, an Athenian, wrote the war of the Peloponnesians and the Athenians as they warred against each other..." (I.1). In fact Thucydides never refers to himself as an "historian," or of what he does as "history." For the purposes of the present study, however, I adopt the convention employed by virtually every commentator on Thucydides by referring to his work as the *History*. All translations of the Greek are mine, except where noted, and are based on the Oxford Classical Text's manuscript as annotated by Henry Jones with a critical apparatus by J.E. Powell. References to Thucydides' work are cited in the standard book, chapter, and where applicable, section form. Where the reference to Book I is clear, I cite only chapter and section.

decisively on the war between the Peloponnesians and the Athenians being greater and more noteworthy than all the wars that preceded it. But this isn't Thucydides' only word on the subject of his work's permanent utility. In his famous discussion of his treatment of speeches and deeds (I.20-22), Thucydides claims that his work and the war it relates will surpass that of the poets and prose-writers – and thus the wars they relate - on the grounds that his methods are superior to theirs (I.20-22). The surpassing greatness of the *History* – and not just the war between Athens and Sparta - consists in its content and its method. When seeking to understand Thucydides' intention in writing a single work about a single war, one must take into account the way he writes his *History* as much as the surpassingly great war his *History* relates. But the content of the *History* and the methods used to relate it are not merely separate considerations that happen to be of equal importance. His methods must take their cue, and thus their character, from that which they relate. His insight into what made the war surpassingly great must dictate his particular choice of method. For if the *History* is to represent the surpassingly great war between Athens and Sparta, then his manner of procedure in the *History* must capture and reflect what made the war surpassingly great.

This connection can be applied more generally. If Thucydides intends to reveal the clear truth of what is human by relating a purely political event, then Thucydides must be considered a teacher of politics. And this means that to the extent that Thucydides is a teacher of politics, then his education *in* politics, as a single record *of* a single political event, must take the shape of that which it relates. It must take the shape of a *political* education in the form of a singular *political* history.

These initial considerations of Thucydides' work allow us to put the question of this study on its proper footing. To address the question of Thucydides' intent we must first ask, "What is political history?" This study offers an introduction to Thucydides' intent by trying to clarify how he, as a teacher of politics, conceives political history. Only after we have a clearer understanding of *what* Thucydides wrote will we be able to address *why* Thucydides' wrote what he did the way he did.

To introduce Thucydides' intent and his conception of political history, this study focuses solely on Book I, or the first 146 chapters of the *History*, or Thucydides' treatment of those events leading up to the outbreak of the war. While the focus is clearly limited, such a narrow scope makes possible a close examination of Book I's content and Thucydides' methods of selection, arrangement and composition. I propose that a careful treatment of Book I -- its contents, the arrangement and treatment of its themes and the relationship between the two -- will supply the basis for conclusions about the *History* as a whole that bring the character and purpose of the work into greater relief. While much of this study will appear to take the form of a commentary on Book I, it will do so only by beginning from Thucydides' explicit comments about the character and intent of his work. In this way, this study will appear less like a line-by-line commentary and more like an attempt to situate Book I's episodes within the context framed by his few, explicit comments.

This approach to Book I and Thucydides' intent will reveal that his *History*, which appears limited to relating the practical aspects of a single political event and which offers virtually no explicit teaching on politics, establishes the necessary foundations for those theoretical investigations traditionally associated with political

philosophy. Through his *History* Thucydides articulates those pre-theoretical experiences necessary for theorizing about politics. He can do so because his unique treatment of speeches and deeds captures a naïve or common sense understanding of practical affairs that invites political investigation without distorting the common sense understanding that makes such an investigation possible. Thucydides' *History* presents the world to us as it is experienced by the citizen prior to making any explicit or conscious assumptions about what politics is and its study must be. His conception of political history thus preserves for his audience the possibility of a genuine engagement with and study of political life.

The understanding of Thucydides' intent I discover and defend presupposes an indirect way of writing. If Thucydides is interested in preserving the possibility of a direct engagement with and study of political life, then he cannot proceed by announcing this intention explicitly. To open by announcing that "This work hopes to establish the pre-theoretical conditions necessary for theorizing about politics...." is to announce a theoretical intention. It is itself to theorize about politics. One would thus begin by assuming that theorizing about politics is possible and that the conditions necessary for it already exist. These are two assumptions one should not make if one is at all interested in establishing those conditions that make theorizing about politics possible. To achieve his purpose, Thucydides must therefore proceed indirectly. It is this unstated intent that orders his work's composition, guides his selection of material and governs his treatment of speeches and deeds. It is this intent that determines his wide-ranging and seemingly inconsistent use of "evidence" - from his dependence on hard-core empirical findings and

an insistence on first-hand accounts, to his use of myths, rumors, gossip and reports by hearsay.[2]

Of course, Thucydides' indirection would be rather pointless if such a procedure did not at the same time make it possible for the reader to become aware of what Thucydides hoped to achieve. One would not become aware of the conditions necessary for theorizing about politics if Thucydides' work did not provide some clues as to his intent and thus some direct clues as to why he proceeds as indirectly as he does. His indirect work must therefore provide an indirect education. As we will see, this education requires the reader to take his bearings from Thucydides' few and brief comments about his work and his methods.

The conclusion that Thucydides intends to preserve the possibility of a genuine engagement with and study of politics seems innocuous. In fact, at first glance, it seems implied in what Thucydides himself says of his work – that it will be useful for investigating the clear truth of what is human. After all, his work would not be of much use – let alone permanently useful – if it offered his audience a false engagement with politics or if it afforded its reader an inaccurate study of human affairs. To be as useful as he claims, it must preserve the possibility of a genuine engagement with politics. Such preservation would seem to constitute a minimum requirement for those who understand Thucydides' work to offer lessons about imperialism, or the character of classical democracy, or the role of rational, public deliberation, or the causes of war, or the nature of speech and human meaning, or historical processes and patterns. The political insights

[2] The view stated by Steve Forde in *Alcibiades and the Ambition to Rule* (1989) most closely approximates this author's view of the *History's* unity. He writes that it is a "quasi-historical work governed by an investigative and didactic purpose of its own. This purpose dictates the striking omissions and emphases

such studies produce are vouchsafed only *after* one has secured the grounds for theorizing about politics, only *after* one has established that such insights are in fact possible. Because the establishment of these grounds constitutes a minimum requirement for political science, such studies tend to assume the possibility of genuine studies of politics. Or rather, they tend to assume that such a possibility existed for Thucydides. As such, they tend not to see the role that his work plays in making such inquiries possible.

To raise the question of science's possibility may seem strange to contemporary students of politics who have inherited a two millennia-long tradition of rationalism, including the fruits of Cartesian science, and for whom Thucydides represents the bedrock of scientific political realism. But such a question would not be so strange for Thucydides. For while he was clearly aware of the Homeric tradition in poetry and the works of Hesiod and Hellanicus, and was possibly familiar with Herodotus' work, one cannot claim that such familiarity constitutes the acceptance of some kind of intellectual tradition. Nor can one assume that general agreement existed as to the possibility of science. One must keep in mind that Thucydides' work predates Aristotle's distinction between philosophy and poetry on the one hand and history on the other (*Poetics*, 1451a36-b11). It also predates the distinction between philosophy and natural science and thus the distinction between philosophy and political philosophy. And Thucydides' work is too novel in its manner of procedure, too opaque in its intellectual commentary, too sparing in its personal discourses and too tightly focused on a single political event to determine how much he shares, imports, or agrees with the prevailing intellectual trends

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and is meant to be revealed through them" (2); "Thucydides has something to teach us and this teaching, rather than the historical task narrowly defined, governs his writing" (4).

of his day.[3] Thus the very question of the possibility of a science or knowledge of politics and human affairs cannot merely be swept aside on the grounds that Thucydides accepted such a possibility and wrote his work on the basis of that assumption.

Of course, if scholars did recognize such an assumption in their treatments of Thucydides' work, it is a question as to whether they would accept the implications that follow from it. Such a reading of Thucydides' statement of intent means that his political history must be governed by the distinction between genuine engagements and studies and non-genuine engagements and studies. This means he must be in a possession of a standard whereby he can judge various intellectual approaches to political affairs. Put differently, Thucydides must possess enough wisdom about politics to determine which methods reveal such wisdom and which do not. It further means that his work, as permanently useful, must employ those methods that do work. Being in possession of such a mighty standard also means that the *History* and the decision to write it must be governed by the insight that such engagement and study is somehow worthwhile both to the reader (to undertake) and to the author (to preserve their possibility). That is, Thucydides' wisdom about politics must include the insight into the proper role that politics and its study play in human affairs; he must possess an adequate understanding of human nature. Thucydides' "War between the Peloponnesians and Athenians" thus

[3] For the classic examples of those works who understand Thucydides to be formed by prevailing intellectual trends, see John Finley (1942, 36-75, 98 especially); J.B. Bury (1909, chapter 3); Jacqueline de Romilly (1963); F.E. Adcock (1963); W.T. Bluhm (1962, 15-35); C.N. Cochrane (1929); N.G.L. Hammond (1952); W. Kendrick Pritchett (1995); H.D. Westlake (1955); A.W. Saxonhouse (1978), and Simon Hornblower (1986, ch. 6) to name just a few. Edmunds discusses the presence of pre-Socratic and sophistic positions on art and experience in Pericles' understanding and links it to what he understands to be Thucydides' view in the archaeology (1975, 22-9). Francis Cornford, in his *Mythhistoricus*, argues that Thucydides was in the grip of intellectual trends (both scientific and poetic) of which he was insufficiently aware and which guided his method and the *History's* overall design (1907, Preface viii-ix, 76, 81, 129ff, 135). On the scientific origins of "historical research," see Werner Jaeger's *Paedeia*. He claims that "*historia*" was originally Ionian and connoted physical research, and the oldest type of history emerged during the beginning of natural science (1954, 382). See also chapter 1 of Bury (1907).

becomes the product of his thoroughgoing study not only of politics but of those concerns and questions that would today be classified under sociology, anthropology, epistemology, methodology, ontology, ethics, metaphysics, theology and psychology.

These implications are anything but self-evident and they are far from widely accepted by scholars of Thucydides. As a result of this, contemporary scholarship finds itself in the unenviable position of attributing to Thucydides' work genuine insights into the nature of politics, man and history while refusing to embrace the premises that such insights entail. Such an awkward position becomes apparent in the scholarship's frequently anachronistic categorizations of Thucydides as an historian, or a natural or social scientist, a political scientist or a political philosopher. This study hopes to distinguish itself from such efforts by trying to remain as faithful as possible to the utterly novel character of Thucydides' work. It thus will try to supply some sense as to why his *History* was the first, and perhaps *the only*, work of its kind.[4]

To say that the implications drawn above are not self-evident and are not widely accepted by Thucydidean scholars is not to say that they don't find any footing within the text. Thucydides' most explicit comments are ambiguous enough to lend themselves to a wide variety of interpretations, especially when they are studied in isolation and out of context. If we are to address properly the question of Thucydides' intent, it is helpful first to clarify the ambiguous character of these statements. Thucydides claims that his work will be useful to those who desire to investigate the "clear truth" (*to saphes*) of those things that have happened and that will happen again in accordance with "that which is

[4] A few scholars have attempted to do justice to the novelty of Thucydides' *History* and its relationship to theorizing about politics. See in particular the work of W.R. Connor (1984); James Boyd White (1984, 59-92); and J. Peter Euben (1986; 1990, 167-201). Simon Hornblower (1986, 8-12) notes the difficulty facing any attempt to categorize Thucydides, but he attributes this difficulty to two qualitatively different and

human" (*kata to anthropinon*).[5] Setting aside for a moment what Thucydides means by "that which is human," what exactly does he mean by "the clear truth"? Because the *History's* utility rests in part with those things that have yet to happen, its utility cannot merely be reduced to some factually accurate record of particular events. Thucydides does not promise to predict the future. His work will be useful for discovering the truth *about* such actions, and actions and the truth about them are not the same thing. Perhaps then Thucydides means his work will be useful for revealing the effectual truth behind human affairs. But again, what is meant by "effectual truth"? Thucydides never says.

This shouldn't surprise us inasmuch as his work is a tool for uncovering that truth. It will not state that truth in the pages of his *History*. Nor will it necessarily offer an explicit and detailed account of that truth so that future readers need only compare his *History* to some current event in order to see the truth of that event. In other words, the clear truth his work will help reveal does not exist solely within the body of his text. According to Thucydides' statements, the role the *History* plays in helping its reader achieve "the clear truth" consists in its ability to cast light, to make such a clear truth available or intelligible. Because it helps makes the clear truth available, the *History* must be understood as a tool, a means. As such, what is important is what is revealed (the end), and one cannot, without great difficulty, reduce what is revealed to that which reveals. Of course the meaning of "that which reveals" is also a question insofar as Thucydides never explains what kind of investigation (*skopein*) he intends his reader to use to uncover the clear truth. Is it merely a prudential and deliberative inquiry into practical political

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opposed elements in the *History*, elements which neither he nor his Thucydides resolve (ibid. ch.7). These works will be discussed throughout.

questions? Or is it a theoretical inquiry aimed at clarifying abstract questions about human nature? Or might there be some mix between the two, with different inquiries for different points he wants to reveal to different audiences? Clearly, the object pursued will dictate the kind of inquiry employed, and this brings us back to the question of "the clear truth."

The effort to understand the clear truth Thucydides has in mind gets further complicated by two additional considerations. First, the revelation of the clear truth through the *History* depends on the advent of extraordinary politics. According to Thucydides' opening statements (as well as the first 19 chapters), the *History's* lessons - whatever they may be - seem to require this singular, surpassingly great event in order to emerge, in order to become intelligible. It follows that while these lessons, or the clear truth the *History* helps reveal, may always be true about political life, political life in its many forms may not always embody these lessons. Those readers who understand Thucydides to have a cyclical view of history ignore these opening statements. They also place too much weight on the verb "will be" (*esesthai*) and almost completely ignore the qualification implicit in his reference to both "some such things" (*toiouton*) and "their like" (*paraplesion*)(I.22.4). The mere fact that something that has happened before might happen again (like the outbreak of a war), even if it occurs in the same way, does not allow one to conclude that history is cyclical.[6] Thus the permanent utility of Thucydides' *History*, dependent as it is on this war's surpassing greatness, necessitates a qualitative

[5] For an interesting treatment of "that which is human" (*to anthropinon*) as distinguished from "human nature" (*anthropeia phusis*) see Marc Cogan (1981, especially 185-9 and ff). See ibid. 173. For my disagreement with Cogan's interpretation of *to anthropinon*, see chapter 6 below.

[6] The emphasis on this "recurrence" thesis or cyclical view of history spans the range of scholarship on Thucydides. One will thus find it in the work of John Finley (1940, 121) and C.N. Cochrane (1929) as well as in that of Virginia Hunter (1973, 177,179 and 180). See Grene (1965, p.64-5) for a more theoretical treatment of the "recurrence thesis." The scholars cited here are all of very different stamps.

distinction between politics at its most extraordinary and politics at its most ordinary. The question then arises, which Thucydides does not address explicitly, "What distinguishes 'extraordinary politics' from 'ordinary politics'?" The temptation to explain "extraordinary politics" in terms of Thucydides' references to wealth, material resources, number of men, duration and so forth – all susceptible of progress or increase - must be curbed by his insistence that this war and thus his work represents a peak.

The second difficulty concerns Thucydides' statement in the first chapter that the clear truth about the most ancient things cannot be known (I.1.2). If one cannot uncover the clear truth about the ancient past, then one cannot uncover the clear truth about all past wars. And if one cannot possess the clear truth about all past wars, then one cannot possess the clear truth that this war surpasses them in greatness. This becomes an even bigger problem in the wake of the preceding paragraph. If Thucydides wrote the work to be permanently useful and its utility consists in revealing the clear truth about those things that have and will happen, then the inability to come to the clear truth about the past - and thus the inability to see the clear truth about the emergence of extraordinary politics - should pose serious consequences for Thucydides' intention in writing his *History*. "The clear truth" is the goal of the *History*. It is the reason behind his intention. Its attainment constitutes our object in studying Thucydides and the possibility of our attaining that object constitutes the fulfillment of Thucydides' aim.

One might try to address the problem concerning the "clear truth" by noting that Thucydides also claims his work will provide his readers with an error free judgment of those things that have happened (I.21). Although one will not possess direct access to the clear truth about the past – and thus the present – perhaps one can at least hope for a

judgment of the past that is not false. But this facile explanation doesn't solve the problem. It merely adds a further wrinkle that must be considered in any serious effort to confront the issue. In the first place, it sacrifices the clear truth, on which Thucydides appears insistent, for a judgment. Moreover, the clear truth seems to promise a positive insight into human affairs while the judgment referred to only promises to free one from error. And even if "the clear truth" and an "error-free judgment" were somehow comparable, a judgment of the past still lacks the comprehensive view of those things that have *yet to happen* which "the clear truth" was to afford us. One is left to wonder what it would mean to say that the clear truth about what has happened and will happen is best understood as an error free judgment of those things that have happened. How could these two very different statements be understood as versions of one another?

Answers to these queries are by no means clear. But it appears from a brief consideration of some of his explicit comments that Thucydides' fundamental intent in writing a single work about a single event that is useful for all time bears on his effort to establish the basis for revealing the clear truth about human affairs. And it appears he takes up this task in his *History* precisely because he recognizes not only that direct access to the past and the clear truth about it is unavailable (for whatever reason), but that such access is critical to any effort to understand the clear truth about the present. Thus despite an increasing sense of Thucydides' ambiguity, we have begun to advance the claim that Thucydides ranks various approaches to political study. Insofar as he intends his work to help make possible the clear truth of human affairs, then the *History* must make possible that kind of investigation which can reveal the clear truth of human affairs. This investigation must attempt to overcome the difficulties concerning "the clear truth"

and must see the importance of such overcoming for coming to terms with Thucydides' conception of political history and thus the question of Thucydides' intent. The study of politics for which Thucydides intends his work must be able to address this problem; it must not only try to resolve the tension but must first see that there is such a tension to be resolved. The recognition of such a tension is partly what is meant by recognizing that certain pre-theoretical conditions are necessary for theorizing about politics. Other, presumably non-genuine, studies would thus not only fail to resolve this tension, but would fail to see this tension as a problem related to Thucydides' intent and thus a problem that needs confronting. They would fail to see the connection between pre-theoretical conditions and theorizing about politics.

A serious study of Thucydides' intent would also recognize the connection between the character of the clear truth and the kind of investigation needed to uncover it. That means that a serious study of Thucydides' political history would be sensitive to the fact that the insights it seeks to reveal dictate the methods necessary to reveal them. A genuine *study* of politics must be sensitive to the need for a genuine *engagement* with politics. If the effort to uncover Thucydides' intent must begin by addressing the question of political history, then the genuine study of politics he hopes to effect must begin by addressing his unique manner of procedure. That Thucydides is alive to the distinction between various methods can be seen from his own effort to distinguish his work from that of the poets and prose-writers (I.20-22).

In light of the preceding it is not unreasonable to consider that Thucydides' permanent gift to us might consist in the *History's* effort to supply the grounds for future engagements with and studies of human affairs. At its most fundamental level, the

History would constitute the means to those other insights that seem to preoccupy so many scholars of the *History* -- insights regarding democracy, imperialism, statecraft, the patterns and processes of history and so on. This means, to state it pointedly, that all studies of Thucydides and his intent that do not address difficulties surrounding his intent must understand their conclusions as secondary and conditional in the most profound sense. They must remain secondary and conditional until the difficulties noted have been addressed and the fundamental character of Thucydides' *History* has been laid bare.

I do not pretend to lay that character bare. I merely aim to offer an introduction to the problem of Thucydides' intent, to address the issues surrounding any effort to solve that problem and to explore how Thucydides himself addresses the question of his intent in Book I. As such, I do not intend to cover every aspect of Book I. Other analyses of Book I treat Thucydides' "practice" of historical dating and chronology, the question regarding the composition of the work as a whole, his concern with the character of justice and necessity, the role of Athenian imperialism, and so on. This study is limited to an analysis of Book I as it pertains to Thucydides' intent. But I do not think its limited character reduces its relevance to those interested in a broader understanding of the *History*. Rather, I think the line of inquiry I propose addresses questions that anyone studying Thucydides' intent must eventually confront. Consequently, this study will attempt to proffer conclusions about the character of political history as Thucydides conceives it. And on the basis of such a preliminary sketch of political history, I will attempt a preliminary answer to the question as to why Thucydides wrote such a work in the way that he did. The generous reader will understand these conclusions to possess the conditional quality that belongs to all introductory studies that are limited in focus.

II. Book I and Thucydides' Intent

Political history as we find it embodied in the *History* constitutes Thucydides' response to the difficulties concerning the clear truth his work will reveal. Book I is critical to understanding Thucydides' response to such difficulties and how that response sheds light on his intent. What distinguishes Book I from the rest of the *History* such that it should merit the focus proposed here? In the first place, Book I, or the first 146 chapters, or the events which it details, sets itself apart from the rest of the work insofar as it is the only part that is not devoted to the events of the war itself. It stands apart as a single self-contained unit or episode, much like the plague at Athens, the Corcyrean civil war, the Melian dialogue and the Sicilian campaign. But unlike these episodes, Book I concerns pre-war events only. So while the aforementioned episodes stand out, they are nevertheless part and parcel of the larger conflict. The same cannot be said of the first 146 chapters. Book I is not the war. It prepares us for the war that is Thucydides' theme.

Book I also contains the greatest number of Thucydides' most explicit comments about his work and intent. The number of such comments in this section and the degree of their explicitness deserve note in light of Thucydides' remarkable reluctance to make self-revelatory statements of any kind. Thus of all the parts of the work it is the section leading up to the war in which Thucydides presents and "reveals" himself most fully. It would seem that if the rest of the work is devoted to the war, then the first 146 chapters are devoted to Thucydides. Book I should thus prove indispensable for treating the question of his intent.

Book I also recommends itself as the natural starting point because it is where one discovers the problems noted above concerning "the clear truth." It is only reasonable to

begin by confronting those problems in the context in which Thucydides placed them. It is also in Book I where Thucydides justifies his proposed topic, and thus articulates, albeit indirectly, what constitutes extraordinary politics. This is important because in Book I Thucydides presents his most explicit comments about his manner of procedure. If a relationship exists between Thucydides' choice of topic and his choice of method, then we should find the basis for that connection within Book I. And if the relationship between Thucydides' topic and his method bears on Thucydides' response to the problems concerning "the clear truth," as I will argue, then Book I reveals itself as the key to understanding political history as one finds it in the rest of the work.

These particular reflections on the importance of Book I are buttressed by a more general consideration that arises independently of particulars related to Thucydides. If Thucydides' work offers us any lesson, or any education in politics, then it stands to reason that Book I would be the first step in that education. And like all good first steps in an education, it should be crafted with a view towards the end or goal of that education. Book I should anticipate the complete education and be formed in light of that end. We should therefore be able to glean something decisive about the goal of Thucydides' education from the character and shape of Book I. This line of thinking receives support from the fact Thucydides opens his *History* by saying that he began his work as soon as the war began. But, as noted, the first 146 chapters concern *pre*-war events. It seems Thucydides turned to the question of the war's causes after he started his treatment of the war (and thus after the war started), a treatment he delays until Book II. In fact, evidence suggests that despite the obvious concern with pre-war events, Thucydides wrote Book I after considerable experience of the war, if not after the entire

war. It should therefore reflect his most mature perspective on the war and on his decision to write what he did.[7]

The concern with highlighting the novelty of political history, and not merely its content or character, also dictates that we begin with Book I. For Book I represents that part of the work which most easily lends itself to comparison with the representatives from classical and modern political thought. The importance of Book I to Thucydides' place within classical political thought follows in part from its importance to the character of political history. But it also follows from the absence in Book I of any explicit questions about the best form of government, the best way of life, what constitutes happiness, or justice, or friendship, or love and so on, questions traditionally associated with political philosophy.[8] Thucydides' numerous explicit comments in Book I, coupled with the fact that he offers lessons about politics, suggest that the absence of such questions is intentional and is best understood as a *refusal* to raise such questions. Thus Thucydides' conception of political history, understood as an indirect or non-explicit approach to the study of politics, may offer a supplement to the more direct and more explicit political studies of Plato and Aristotle while perhaps also pointing to the potential limits of such explicit approaches. Thus one might understand Thucydides to offer something of a preemptive criticism of the writings of Plato and Aristotle from

[7] For one of the earliest arguments on the essential unity of Book I, see Romilly (1963, 26-8, 153). Romilly also argues that the "ideas governing [the History's] composition were fixed from the very beginning in the form which they present today' (34, brackets mine). See also Finley (1942, 74-110; and 1940, 118). For an attempt to reveal the duality of the *History*, see Rawlings's thesis in *The Structure of Thucydides' History* (1981, 5-7). Rawlings understands this duality to supply the governing structure for the entire work, and thus the arrangement and treatment of its themes. For a more recent account of the unique nature of Book I and its cause for controversy, see Tim Rood (1998, 205). For a more comprehensive account of the didactic unity of Book I, see my discussion of the literature on this subject in chapter 2. For a different view of Book I, see Proctor (1980, 197) and Gomme (1945, 136, 362-364 and 466-7).

[8] The absence of such explicit questions leads Simon Hornblower to conclude that "Thucydides' vision was defective in another respect also: he allowed too little influence to theoretical ideas (such as sincerely held political beliefs) in his accounts of human action" (1986, Chapter 6 and p. 191).

within the classical tradition. One might also understand Thucydides to present his work as the necessary political primer for classical political philosophy. Because the discovery of Thucydides' special contribution to classical political thought must follow from the present study, I will reserve a treatment of that contribution for the conclusion.

Thucydides' place near the beginning of the Western intellectual tradition makes him an important point of comparison with modern political theorists. Book I facilitates such a comparison. In the first 19 chapters of the *History*, traditionally referred to as the archaeology, Thucydides sketches the emergence of Greek civilization out of original barbarism and penury. He charts the development of peace out of violence, wealth out of poverty, and art out of ignorance. Such an account of man's earliest times offers a classical parallel to the modern teachings on the state of nature and the social contract that one finds in the work of Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau. Thucydides' treatment of man's historical development as characterized by the slow but steady advance of material and technological progress further reflects the modern notion of progress as the means whereby man masters nature to improve his estate. This conquest of nature seems to be prepared by the archaeology's apparent rejection of any legitimate limit on the affairs of men; it traces law's origin to the rule of the strong over the weak. Thucydides' apparent refusal to entertain any notion of divine right thus "echoes" the legal positivism found in modern political theorists. Thucydides also appears to refuse to entertain notions of natural right. Of course, many modern political theorists speak at length of natural rights and of the common good and they devote much of their political writings to the securing of rights and the preservation of the common good. This would appear to distinguish Thucydides from modern political theorists. But by basing their conceptions of both

rights and the common good on the individual's natural concern for self-preservation one must wonder if Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau ultimately agree with this view of Thucydides.

These particular connections between Thucydides and modern political philosophers receive additional support from their respective approaches to traditional and religious authorities. To mention some of the more obvious examples, Machiavelli transforms the traditional values of justice, charity and generosity by subverting them to greed, dishonesty, ambition, and pride. He places the need to be feared above the desire to be loved. Hobbes savages the reigning Aristotelianism of the schoolmen, redefines cardinal virtues in terms of fear and self-interest, debunks the claims of revelation and refers to the Church as "The Kingdom of Darkness." Locke replaces traditional Christian charity with the deadly sin of infinite greed and demotes the role the church plays in political life. Rousseau locates the origins of man's natural goodness in the pre-political and asocial natural savage. And in his *Second Discourse*, he invokes the utility of religion to legitimize an otherwise fraudulent social contract. Similarly Thucydides characterizes Minos, a son of Zeus, as a merely human pirate. He characterizes the *Iliad*, that Bible of Greek heroic virtue, as the poorly told story of a rag-tag gang driven by poverty, fear and greed. He characterizes the Spartan regime, the bastion of Greek freedom and the home of the common good, as the legacy of a barbarian fratricide. And, in Book I, those speakers with whom he is most commonly connected – the Athenians –proudly assert the claim that men and states alike are governed by the law of nature that dictates that the weaker be kept down by the stronger (I.76).

In all of these respects, one might be tempted to classify Thucydides - and many modern political theorists along with him – in the same group as the pre-Socratic conventionalists. But by devoting his single work to *politics,* Thucydides (along with many modern political theorists) distinguishes himself from those pre-Socratics to whom he seems so similar. The insights he seems to share with the 5th Century B.C. Greek "Enlightenment" do not lead him to neglect the serious study of politics, as so many pre-Socratics did. These modern or proto- modern themes and interests are coupled with what appear to be no less modern concerns with method, scientific or objective accuracy and a preoccupation with the question of "cause." Thucydides appears a most modern ancient.

Judging from their own statements, it seems that Thucydides' *History* proved a powerful influence on modern theorists' understanding of political history. Hobbes not only notes that Thucydides is "the most politic historiographer that that ever writ" but also that Thucydides is "a workman no less perfect in his work... and in whom...the faculty of writing history is at the highest" (Introduction to Hobbes's translation 1989, xxi). Rousseau states that, "Thucydides is to my taste the true model of historians. He reports the facts without judging them, but he omits none of the circumstances proper to make us judge them for ourselves. He puts all he recounts before the reader's eyes. Far from putting himself between the events and his readers, he hides himself. The reader no longer believes he reads; he believes he sees" (*Emile*, 239; trans. Bloom). And Nietzsche notes, "My recreation, my preference, my *cure* from all Platonism has always been *Thucydides*...In the end, it is *courage* in the face of reality that distinguishes a man like Thucydides from Plato: Plato is a coward before reality, consequently he flees into the

ideal; Thucydides has control of *himself*, consequently he also maintains control of things" (*Twilight of the Idols* "What I owe to the ancients" no. 2).

This praise for Thucydides by Nietzsche, perhaps the most powerful critic of the Modern Enlightenment and its emphasis on reason's ability to solve the problems confronting human beings, suggests that Thucydides is no mere proto-modern. Again, Book I is critical for understanding the distance between Thucydides and modern political theorists. For instance, its uniquely modern elements are complemented by a unique manner of procedure. From Book II to Book VIII, Thucydides' narrative largely observes chronological order. In Book I he treats his subjects out of chronological order. He moves from later events to earlier ones and returns to later events only, once again, to present digressions about the past. In many cases he covers periods that he has already treated. And at points throughout Book I he explicitly departs or deviates from chronological order and from his stated concern with factual accuracy. These deviations and the structure of Book I suggest that Thucydides may not have remained true to the strictures of some proto-scientific method, or to the concern with objectivity or to a primary preoccupation with cause.

Such observations regarding Book I's themes and the treatment of those themes suggest that while Thucydides shares (or at least is aware of) some particularly modern concerns, he treats them in a considerably different manner. This suggests that he does not merely preempt modern findings, but that he anticipates such peculiarly modern concerns and offers his own approach to them. Thucydides thus comes to sight as an invaluable voice in the debate between classical and modern political theorists. Because he seems to be aware of peculiarly modern preoccupations without necessarily endorsing

or promoting the ends of such preoccupations, his classic work of ancient Greek history offers a vehicle to explore the differences between the ancients and the moderns.[9] The study of Book I that I propose thus holds out the promise of enabling one to situate Thucydides' work within a context that will allow the distinct character and importance of political history to emerge with force and clarity.

III. The Plan of the Study

My study of Book I will show Thucydides' political history to offer a solution to the problem concerning "the clear truth" by presenting a political teaching about politics. The *History's* political teaching about politics overcomes this problem – the lack of direct access to the past and the clear truth about it - by establishing on its own those grounds from which genuine political inquiry grows. One no longer needs direct access to the past to see its clear truth since Thucydides' work supplies the basis for coming to legitimate conclusions about all that preceded it and will follow it. My introduction to Thucydides' intent thus amounts to an elaboration of what it means to say that Thucydides offers a political history and not just a history of politics. It will show how one can take 'the political' as an adjective as much as a noun. And it attempts to explain why a political teaching about politics supplies a basis for a genuine study of politics.

This introduction proceeds in three phases or stages. The first phase (chapter 2) treats the secondary literature on the subject of Thucydides' intent and Book I. The second phase (chapters 3-5) presents my interpretation of Book I and its lessons

[9] For studies of the relationship between Thucydides and modern political theorists, see Arlene Saxonhouse (1978) and Laurie Johnson (1993). Both Saxonhouse and Johnson understand Thucydides to understand the nature of man, the origins of political communities and international relations in the same way that Hobbes and Machiavelli do. See also David Grene (1965, 57, fn. 6) and G.E.M. de Ste. Croix (1972, 23-6). For a treatment of the differences between Thucydides and modern political theorists see Forde (1992);

regarding Thucydides' intent. The third phase (chapter 6) attempts to show how the conclusions drawn in the second phase about Book I apply to the rest of the *History*. It also addresses the question of why Thucydides wrote what he did the way he did. The quest to discover Thucydides' intent is not an easy one. One has a great deal of detective work to do to uncover his teachings. In order to help the reader through the "leg-work" I have done, I open each chapter with a detailed account of that chapter's argument and findings. In order to avoid unnecessary repetition, my summary here will be brief.

A. The First Phase: What's New and What's True

Most of the secondary literature on Thucydides' intent adopts or inherits an understanding of history that found its first expression in Aristotle's *Poetics* (1451a36-b11). This understanding is based on the distinction Aristotle makes between universals and particulars, a distinction that assigns universals to the domains of philosophy and poetry and particulars to the domain of history. Aristotle's distinction here concerns merely the objects of study and not the manner in which one studies those objects. As such, the secondary literature on Thucydides' intent falls into two broad categories: those that understand his intent to be primarily practical and those that understand it to be theoretical.

Those who understand his work to serve a practical purpose base their arguments on Thucydides' focus on practical particular events. As we will see in the treatment of this literature in the second chapter, there is considerable merit to this approach. Thucydides' work clearly offers practical political applications. And it is rich enough for its lessons to be mined by a variety of scholars with a variety of interests. But if one

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Christopher Bruell (1981, especially 29); Clifford Orwin (1988); Ahrensdorf and Pangle (1999) and Bartlett (2001).

understands the *History* solely in terms of its focus on particulars, then Thucydides' work becomes rather pedestrian. To claim that Thucydides' work offers a teaching that can be applied at all times in all places is to ignore his insistence that his single work about a surpassingly great war hinges on the advent of "extraordinary politics." [10] This study hopes to respect the importance such "politics" to Thucydides' intent and manner of procedure.

Among those who understand his work to be theoretical, there are two divisions. The first may be said to understand his focus on practical politics to come at the expense of his theoretical work. Such readings contend that while theory aspires to the ideal, to some pure or abstract or complete intellectual discovery,[11] Thucydides' focus on particulars, with their infinitesimal variations, makes the attainment of that ideal impossible. For some, this focus on particulars represents his intentional decision to reveal the essential limits of any theoretical activity that aspires to base itself on political reality. Thucydides' theoretical intention thus goes no farther than a negative teaching. It does not offer a positive account of theoretical inquiry or why, according to Thucydides, such inquiry might be a good thing. While some of this literature respects the importance of "extraordinary politics" to Thucydides' insights, it nevertheless preserves the distinction between theory and practice, universals and particulars, and content and

[10] See Romilly 1963: "...in the final analysis Athenian imperialism is only the perfect example of a common experience whose nature is governed by universal laws" (312). See also Finley (1942, 108-9) as well as Kagan (1969, 374). Connor (1984, 29-30, fn. 28) provides a useful discussion of the grammatical and syntactic difficulties confronting a reading of Thucydides' statements at I.22.4.

[11] See Lowell Edmunds's argument in *Chance and Intelligence* on how Thucydides strives to get beyond the particular to the universal *to saphes* (1975, 161). On his equation between *to saphes* and the universal see 156. See also his comments about Thucydides aiming at the "*idea*" on 206 and the relationship between *to saphes* and Thucydides' rationalism on 213. On the difference between concrete physical evidence and *to saphes*, see Hornblower (1986 102, fn. 122). I will reserve my comments on the character of the *to saphes* until the conclusion of this work (Chapter 6.II.A). For a more complete treatment of this literature see chapter two.

method that one finds in Aristotle. Again, my concern in this study is to establish the relationship between Thucydides' subject matter and his method of writing in order to clarify why he wrote what he did the way he did.

The second group of those who understand Thucydides' intent to be theoretical understand his practical focus to be the necessary starting point for his theoretical work. As a result, these treatments also view Thucydides' unique conception of political history in terms of its manner of procedure as well as its objects of focus. The virtue of these treatments is that they strive to preserve both the importance of "extraordinary politics" to the *History* and the connection between content and his manner of procedure. The bulk of such studies may reasonably be classified as "Straussian." This designation derives from the scholarship's intellectual affinities with the work of Leo Strauss. Strauss is best known for his work on classical political thought, and in particular for his claim to have re-discovered the classical Greek political philosophers' teaching on natural right. Such a claim, and his subsequent efforts to restore this teaching, followed upon Strauss's rediscovery of esotericism, or the practice of "writing between the lines" (1980, 24). According to Strauss, until the 19th Century political philosophers employed this practice to convey their most serious teachings -- those they considered most dangerous to the well-being of political society and most offensive to conventional opinion -- to those few readers capable of understanding and appreciating them. While there are important differences among "Straussian" treatments of Thucydides - in both their approaches and their conclusions - their manner of reading Thucydides and their general treatment of him as a political philosopher, follows Strauss's own treatment of Thucydides, justifying this grouping.

The bulk of this literature tends to focus on Thucydides' treatment of ethical or moral phenomena. Its conclusions may be stated generally as follows. In his *History*, and especially in the speeches of his actors, Thucydides presents a subtle but thoroughgoing critique of the moral categories that define political life. This criticism becomes most evident in the *History's* presentation of those universal "laws" governing the affairs of men and cities known as the "Athenian thesis." And beneath his attention to the particulars of a single political event Thucydides offers a running sketch of the human psyche. Such a sketch, coupled with his criticism of moral and political life, points the attentive reader to the contemplative activity that characterized Thucydides' own life and which resulted in his *History*. Thucydides' political teaching thus points to the shortcomings of politics and implicitly indicates the superiority of the contemplative life.

For those familiar with Leo Strauss's work on Thucydides, and for those who read my study in light of chapter two, my work may appear Straussian. There is good reason for this impression. The questions I pose, the themes on which I focus, my refusal to accept the contemporary classification of Thucydides as an historian or pre-Socratic sophist or intellectual child of his times, and my insistence on beginning with Thucydides' own comments about his work, all bear the stamp of such scholarship. And for many of the insights I draw, I owe much to the work of Strauss and of those influenced by Strauss's work on Thucydides. But this study differs from so-called "Straussian" efforts to establish the moral relevance of Thucydides' political work because it situates his treatment of moral and political phenomena within his broader concern for preserving the possibility of a genuine engagement with and study of political life.

To be more specific, most Straussian treatments of Thucydides rest their analysis of Thucydides' treatment of moral and political phenomena on a group of speeches that usually includes Pericles' Funeral Oration, the Athenian envoys' speech at Sparta, the Mytilinean debate, the Melian dialogue and Alcibiades' first speech. The treatments of these speeches usually end by pointing to the speech of Diodotus as the single speaker in the work who most represents Thucydides' view (though such a conclusion is hardly unique to Straussians). But all of the speeches in the entire *History* represent less than a half of Thucydides' own "speech," which consists in both the speeches and the narrative. My study hopes to rectify this general neglect of Thucydides' narrative by examining Thucydides' treatment of both speech and deed and the place of that treatment in Thucydides' "speech" as a whole.[12] By addressing Thucydides' speech in this way, I hope to widen the scope of inquiry into moral phenomena by asking why Thucydides thinks such a focus is sufficient for revealing the clear truth about those things that have happened and will happen.

My study differs from perhaps the most comprehensive Straussian work on Thucydides, Clifford Orwin's *The Humanity of Thucydides*, because I address explicitly the question of Thucydides' intent and the relationship between intent and method. That is, I address explicitly the question of political history; Orwin begins from the themes of justice and necessity. This difference in questions asked means I also adopt a different point of departure. Both Orwin and I contend that Thucydides' intention in writing the *History* is ultimately theoretical. Orwin concludes that Thucydides intends to draw some

[12] Of the Straussian works, Forde's *Ambition* has had perhaps the greatest impact on this author. While I disagree with the conclusions Forde draws about Thucydides' intent and perspective in the work, his treatment of the Alcibidean character of Athens and his careful treatment of that narrative relevant to his thesis brought into greater relief many textual subtleties that escaped my initial notice. My thesis regarding

of his more careful readers to the study of philosophy through his artfully crafted picture of politics - its strengths and its shortcomings. But it remains a question whether Orwin can get to where he wants to go on the basis of his point of departure.

By beginning with Pericles and the Athenian thesis,[13] Orwin shows how Thucydides points out the shortcomings of politics. He thus shows the need for a more complete engagement with the human longings that fuel the "Athenian thesis," longings that lead one to political life and to see it as the greatest stage for human action. But from such an analysis it is not clear that the theoretical life best responds to such longings. It is one thing to show that politics falls short and to suggest that theoretical contemplation offers a more consistent treatment of our deepest longings. But it is quite another to establish that Thucydides wrote his work to lead some to philosophy or that his work offers a positive account of the life devoted to that activity. Indeed, such a procedure presupposes the possibility of philosophy for Thucydides, something that is far from self-evident. By beginning as Thucydides does and taking my guidance from Thucydides' explicit comments, I hope to ground Thucydides' theoretical purpose in the text. I thus hope to show that his work is constructed *from the outset* in such a way as to engage most fully those concerns that lay behind the emergence and demise of Athenian exceptionalism. In this way, I hope to offer a sketch of that theoretical activity Thucydides intends his audience to undertake.

Thucydides' intent is stronger for Forde's extremely sensitive work even as I intend to supplement his overall analysis.

[13] In the third sentence of *Humanity*, Orwin writes, "In recording the emergence of the study of politics out of its practice, [Thucydides] shows us how the most political perspectives imply a certain distance from political life" (1994, 3 brackets mine). Such a pregnant comment is arresting to this author both for its proximity to my thesis and for Orwin's refusal to elaborate on it. Orwin shows himself to be alive to the focus of this study without addressing it thematically.

My study differs from Leo Strauss's work by clarifying, and thus showing what is at stake in, Thucydides' unique manner of procedure. In an earlier essay on Thucydides, Strauss argued that to understand the *History* one must understand that for its author wisdom cannot be said or stated (1989, 91). This doesn't reject the possibility of seeing or possessing wisdom. It merely means one cannot transmit wisdom explicitly or openly through speech. Thucydides' *History*, according to Strauss, reveals wisdom to those capable of seeing it through the political picture it draws. Of course, Strauss's own work on Thucydides frequently reflects this very insight. He himself never openly states what Thucydides' wisdom is or what his intention in writing the *History* is.[14] Because his work on Thucydides is almost as dark as the *History*, I do not offer a complete exposition of Strauss's interpretation. Nevertheless, to state it succinctly, my study intends to contribute to Strauss's work by trying to state explicitly why Thucydides, as a teacher of politics, does not engage in explicit political discourses.[15] My treatment of Book I aims to show how his selection, arrangement and composition of themes reflects this pedagogical insight.

[14] A perfect example of such reticence comes at the conclusion of his culminating comments in the essay on Thucydides in *City and Man*. Strauss notes, "Only by beginning at this point will we be open to the full impact of the all-important question which is coeval with philosophy though the philosophers do not frequently pronounce it – *quid sit deus*" (1964, 241).

[15] In the essay "Persecution and the Art of Writing," Strauss notes that the expression "writing between the lines" is "clearly metaphoric. Any attempt to express its meaning in unmetaphoric language would lead to a discovery of a terra incognita, a field whose very dimensions are as yet unexplored and which offers ample scope for highly intriguing and even important investigations" (1980, 24). One might reasonably understand the current study, which tries to explain why Thucydides refuses to engage in explicit discourses and how that refusal bears on his choice of method, to offer a first step in sketching the contours of such a "terra incognita" from a classical perspective. Thus the explanation of Thucydides' manner of procedure proffered here cannot be reduced to the reasons Strauss adduced for "writing between the lines" that are noted above and which serve as the basis for his discussion in "Persecution." On Thucydides' manner of writing, see Nietzsche's *Twilight*, "What I owe to the ancients" no. 2. See also Strauss (1989, 96).

B. The Second Phase: My Argument About Book I

The argument about Book I unfolds in three stages. The first stage (chapter three) presents the problem Thucydides confronts in writing his *History*, the problem of revealing the clear truth of those things that have happened and will happen without direct access to the clear truth about the past. The second stage (chapter four) shows how Thucydides' conception of political history responds to that problem. The third stage (chapter five) justifies Thucydides' solution as laid out in the second stage.

Chapter three begins by sketching the unique character of Thucydides' methods, and specifically the blurring between speech and deed they effect. It then links his claim for the work's permanent utility to uncovering the truth about the ancient past. It thus establishes the pride of place that the question of foundations or of the origins of all things or of the first things, holds for Thucydides' single work. But to understand how the rest of the *History* bears on the question of "foundations" or "origins" or "first things" one must understand the connection between the content of the *History* and the method Thucydides employs to relate that content. He seems to hint in the archaeology that this connection is disclosed by understanding the connection that men make between political right and political power. The archaeology further suggests that to come to such an understanding one must undertake what can only be called a careful study of "erotics," of the individual's intense longings for certain goods. How a study of erotics bears on Thucydides' treatment of speech and deed and the violent war that treatment captures is the subject of chapter 4.

Chapter 4 addresses Thucydides' concern with the origins and causes of the war. Far from a preoccupation with individual human longings, Thucydides' treatment of the

causes of the war appears to focus on the grandest designs of cities and empires, on politics as it rises far above the plane of the individual citizen. But an examination of his treatment of causes will show that the origins of the war can be found in the connection citizens make between political right and political power. This chapter's treatment of the connection between a legitimate political limit on the pursuit of self interest and the means to secure one's advantage will show how at the very heart of politics a longing exists for both political actors and political communities to become universal, or whole. From the perspective of the political community, one might understand "becoming universal" in terms of the unlimited pursuit of empire, such that a community will pursue rule over all other cities forever. But this public effort to "become universal" is perhaps more profitably understood as the product of the longings of certain citizens within the community to confront and satisfy fully those needs that constantly dog men. Such imperialism pursued in accordance with the concern for right or justice further suggests that the political moral categories that define Greek communal life emerge as a response to the individual's longings for complete wholeness. By showing how his manner of procedure helps reveal these lessons, this chapter will show how Thucydides' methods lead the reader to pull back the veil from what I have called Thucydides' study of erotics. The question remains how such a study reflects on Thucydides' primary question.

Chapter 5 begins with the claim that Thucydides' study of erotics possesses a tragic character. For while politics might be defined by the longing to become universal, as the speeches of the actors make clear, Thucydides' narrative seems to detail the inevitable failure and frustration of such longings. This claim suggests that Thucydides rests content with charting the tragic character of those longings that led the Greeks to

pursue imperial politics. But while he recognizes the impossible strivings of political communities, he nevertheless attempts to preserve the universalizing character of political life through his *History*. This chapter thus explores Thucydides' effort to ground the permanent utility of his unremittingly political work. And it does so by charting his establishment of the political horizon of all those investigations traditionally associated with sociology, anthropology, metaphysics, theology and so on. Through the establishment of this "horizon," Thucydides reveals the relevance of the connection between the study of individual longings and the articulation of political power as political right (chapter 4) to the question of foundations, origins and first things (chapter 3). It shows that a study of individual longings within a particular political context (such as Periclean Athens), allows one to come to the clear truth about the ancient past. And by drawing a connection between the character of such a "horizon" and the character of Thucydides' methods, this chapter shows how the very fabric of Thucydides' *History* preserves access to this past and thereby makes possible a genuine engagement with and study of political life.

C. The Third Phase: Thucydides' Intent and the History as a Whole

The concluding chapter begins from the insight that the individual's concerns for certain goods are not satisfied by political right, even as one requires a certain manifestation of politics to help one in the proper quest for such goods. It suggests that the private concerns that lead to political life do not find their fulfillment in that life, but in Thucydides' *History* and the cultivation of the wisdom guiding the composition of that *History*. This wisdom rejects the value of explicit discourses about universals and particulars and explains Thucydides' unique manner of procedure in revealing the truth

about political right and preserving the conditions that make possible self-knowledge. Consequently, Thucydides' *History* not only makes it possible for future generations to undertake the study of politics. And it not only invites certain readers to undertake a theoretical inquiry into the roots of both justice and injustice, a theoretical inquiry that amounts to a personal odyssesy for both Thucydides and the reader. The *History* also offers an example of the character that odyssey should possess. It offers an affirmative (if implicit) defense of the life of theoretical inquiry that characterized Thucydides' own efforts and a positive account of what that theoretical activity looks like.[16]

This concluding chapter also includes a sketch of the relationship between Book I and Books II-VIII. If Book I presents the necessary conditions for the genuine study of politics, then Books II through VIII should show that such conditions prevail. That is, if Book I reveals that the success of the *History* stands or falls with Thucydides' ability to engage the individual's concerns to possess certain goods and to know that those goods are genuine, then Books II-VIII represent Thucydides' effort to engage these concerns.

I have thought it best to present the question of Thucydides' intent as it arises directly from the text, as he himself presents it to us. This procedure requires that one already have some experience of the text, or at least enough experience to wonder how one could hope to offer a political teaching that would be permanently useful by writing a work exclusively devoted to the events of a single war. Such a procedure may not immediately recommend itself to those who possess no experience of the *History*. But it possesses the virtue of approaching the text as Thucydides might have expected his own

[16] By pointing to such an account, this study differs from the conclusions drawn by White (1984) and J. Peter Euben (1986 and 1990). For a similar conclusion regarding Thucydides' theoretical intent and his showing "us something of the philosophic life in action" see the concluding remarks of Christopher Bruell (1981, 29).

readers to - naively, with one's own interests and concerns, without the residual prejudice or bias that can come from taking one's bearings from the reigning scholarship. It should thus prove of interest to the casual reader of the *History* as much as it should prove of use to scholars of Thucydides' work. As for the contemporary relevance of this study, I will leave it to those interested enough in the question of Thucydides' decision to write what he did the way he did to follow this study to its conclusion. For those who do, the conclusions I draw bear not only on a better understanding of one of the classic works of political history and of classical political thought generally. They also bear on contemporary efforts to ground rationally the moral character of liberal democracy. Perhaps most importantly, my conclusions should underline the importance to political science of those regimes devoted both to articulating the natural basis of government and to defending what is by nature right for men. For political scientists who seek to possess a greater understanding of the activity to which they devote themselves and its relationship to practical politics, such a study will, I hope, prove illuminating.

2

What's New and What's True

The first thing that strikes any student of the secondary literature is that there are various competing interpretations of Thucydides. Some agree about the *History's* fundamental teachings, but disagree as to how its specific details reflect those fundamental teachings. Others disagree as to what constitutes the *History's* fundamental teachings. These differences compel one to ask which interpretation offers the most help in understanding Thucydides. Or might a combination of some parts of the various interpretations prove most fruitful?

The effort to answer such questions, however, encounters difficulties, not the least of which is that Thucydides never claims to present a teaching in his *History.*[1] In fact, a few comments aside, Thucydides never offers open instruction about political matters. If his work does have a single primary teaching, then it is a teaching that needs to be ferreted out from the text and explicated. There is perhaps no clearer evidence of the text's didactic ambiguity than the fact that conflicting, yet plausible, interpretations of Thucydides possess wide currency. One possible reason for this ambiguity is that the *History* presents no single objective teaching on politics. Another is that Thucydides encourages his readers to develop different and/or subjective interpretations. Of course, an objective understanding of Thucydides' intent may also be possible, but difficult to uncover. Whatever the case may be, it seems certain that if Thucydides' work presents political lessons, it presents those lessons in a way that allows reasonable people to

[1] Other reasons include the difficulties posed by the Greek language itself, as well as any possible assumptions that may have accompanied a 5th Century B.C. Greek to which 21st audiences may not have

disagree about what constitutes those lessons. Why his work appears to permit so many conflicting yet plausible interpretations is one of the main interests of the present study.

The preceding comments suggest that if one is to uncover Thucydides' intent, one must be open to the possibility that Thucydides' pedagogy is more sophisticated than it appears. A first step towards understanding his pedagogy is understanding which approaches "work" and which do not. Put less starkly, one needs to outline the most plausible approaches to his intent. One can begin to do this by sifting through the virtues and vices of the leading treatments of Thucydides. At the least, this chapter hopes to show how the best of the competing treatments of Thucydides bear on Thucydides' intent. It also hopes to show what place these treatments give to Book I in their understandings of Thucydides. At the most, it hopes to indicate that the competing interpretations of Thucydides reveal the need for a new and more comprehensive introduction to Thucydides' intent. Later chapters will try to show that the investigation I propose in the first chapter satisfies this need.

I. Two Considerations

One should never lose sight of the fact that conflicting interpretations of Thucydides possess wide currency. To help sift through the virtues and vices of those interpretations I introduce two considerations. The first concerns the problematic character of the *History's* political teachings. What is at stake in Thucydides writing a single political history about a single political event? Is the *History* only concerned with practical politics? Or do broader considerations guide it? The second concerns how one approaches the *History's* political lessons. Does one take Thucydides' own claims about

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equal access. But more important than any of these difficulties is Thucydides' reticence regarding his work and the lessons it might reveal. This point is considered in *section B* below.

his work seriously? Does one take one's cues for understanding Thucydides from Thucydides himself, or does one import considerations from outside the text? Approaching the secondary literature on Thucydides in light of these two considerations will show that one's approach to the lessons of the *History* (the second consideration) affects how one understands, or solves the problem of, the *History's* political teachings (the first consideration).

A. The Character of the History's Teaching

To get a sense of what is at stake in the scholarship's various answers to the question of Thucydides' intent, it will help to refer to some brief comments made by Thomas Hobbes regarding the utility of Thucydides' *History*. In the preface to his translation of Thucydides, Hobbes writes that it is the "principal and proper work of history... to instruct men and enable men, by the knowledge of actions past, to bear themselves prudently in the present and providently towards the future" and that "there is not extant any other (merely human) that doth more naturally and fully perform it, than this of my author" ("To the Reader," xxi). And at the close of Hobbes's "Of the Life and History of Thucydides," which follows his translation of the *History*, he bids us to consider Justus Lipsius's "most true and proper commendation" of Thucydides: "[he is] sound in his judgments; everywhere secretly instructing and directing a man's life and actions" (586, brackets mine). Based on these comments, one might reasonably conclude that according to Hobbes (and presumably Lipsius) one of the aims of Thucydides' *History* is to direct men's conduct in their daily lives.

But this is not all. Hobbes writes that "a man of understanding" may "profit now, by attentive reading" of the *History*, drawing "out lessons to himself" (xxii). Later he

states, "I supposed the history might be read with very much benefit by all men of good judgment and education (for whom it was also intended from the beginning by Thucydides)" (xxiv). And again, near the close of his "Life and History," Hobbes, citing Marcellinus, claims that Thucydides "was obscure on purpose; that the common people might not understand him. And not unlikely; for a wise man should so write, (though in words understood by all men), that wise men should only be able to commend him" (584). He goes on to note that it is "impossible not to be obscure to ordinary capacities, in what words soever a man deliver his mind" (584). If Thucydides "be not easily understood; it is of those only that cannot penetrate into the nature of such things, and proceedeth not from any intricacy of expression" (584).

The circle of the *History's* intended audience narrows and it narrows not in terms of those who are capable of action, but in terms of those who are capable of understanding the *History's* wisdom. This may only mean that prudent action requires wisdom. And since few are capable of wisdom, the *History* may only direct the lives of a few men. However many the work is intended for, understanding "the truth" of the *History* (576, 579, 580, and 581) is clearly a prerequisite for prudent action. This is the same as knowing that the direction Thucydides supplies is, in fact, prudent.

But prudent action's need for understanding, at least as Hobbes presents it, may be in tension with the simple need to act. Why? Political action is frequently urgent. It requires that one not wait. And such urgency is incompatible with what may be necessary for understanding the *History* (See xxii, 577, 584, 585 and 586). To act effectively political men must understand the limits of what is possible. To act well they must

understand what is good - both for the city and the individual citizens.[2] For the *History* to supply effective and sound practical guidance it must offer an articulation of what is possible and a defense of what is good. This means one must engage in theoretical considerations. The utility of the *History* may not be merely practical. It may be theoretical; it may even be primarily theoretical. The importance of the character of theory's relationship to practice in the *History* becomes clearer when one considers that the work antedates the division of the sciences, and thus antedates the division of the studies among various objects of interest. Thucydides' *History* may therefore offer one of the first analyses of how theory emerges out of practical political concerns, and thus how a concern with political life as it is and not as it ought to be bears on theoretical efforts.

If we believe Hobbes that the *History* enables men to act prudently in the present (and is there a more qualified guide to understanding Thucydides?), then the work's usefulness must include practical political affairs. But Hobbes's second set of comments implies that the *History* casts a broader net, one that makes understanding the truth of politics a greater priority than acting. Does such an understanding of politics come at the expense of guiding men's practical affairs? Or might Thucydides combine his apparent interest in guiding practical political affairs with an interest in intellectual education? If he combines the two, how do the practical political elements relate to Thucydides' theoretical interests, and vice versa? Or, finally, does his work possess separate aims for separate audiences, which Thucydides manages to keep distinct? One may best understand (or categorize) current competing interpretations in terms of how they answer these questions. This brings us to the second consideration.

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[2] Cf. Socrates' rejoinder to Callicles' reference to the threat of law courts at the end of the *Gorgias* 521d7-522e7; his arresting remarks to Alcibiades in the *Alcibiades I* 109b6-110a1, 112a1-d10 and 134b11-e1,

B. Approaching the History's Teaching

To judge the secondary literatures' best answers to these questions one needs to consider how they approach the text. Specifically, one needs to consider how they understand Thucydides' explicit comments about his work and the war it relates. Why? I noted above that the fundamental teaching(s) of the *History* are by no means evident. To judge between the competing interpretations one must possess some kind of standard. But it is the standard that is in question here. How then can we proceed?

It seems safe to say that an understanding of Thucydides' intent requires - at least - understanding both what Thucydides says explicitly *and* what Thucydides "does." Privileging what Thucydides says about his work *at the expense* of his presentation of his work, or vice versa, introduces unfounded assumptions at the very beginning of one's investigation. To understand one part of the work to speak about the whole *History* – prior to any investigation of the text - is also to proceed arbitrarily. One must at least begin with an accurate understanding of what Thucydides says about his work in his own name.

The difficulty of uncovering Thucydides' intent suggests that one cannot merely rely on Thucydides' explicit comments about his work and the war it relates. If one could, there would be considerably less room for disagreement. Or would there? Thucydides says remarkably little about his work, some of his later comments seem to disagree with his earlier remarks, and competing interpretations disagree over what his explicit comments mean. It seems his explicit comments may not, in the end, be very explicit. Of course, this does not mean that one can ignore what Thucydides says about his work, the war it relates and so on. What it does mean is that coming to terms with

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135d7-10; and Aristotle's treatment of the gentleman's education in Book 7 of the *Politics*.

what he says about his work and the war it relates is a necessary, though perhaps not sufficient, step.

In the first chapter, I presented some observations on Thucydides' comments about the war's greatness and the work's utility, and the logical implications of such comments for the *History* as a whole. Let me briefly restate the conclusions of those observations. Thucydides' *History* is a possession for all time because it will help men investigate the clear truth about those things that have happened and will happen and their like, human nature being what it is (I.22.4). Thucydides' work can do this because the war it relates is surpassingly great, or at least greater than all the wars that preceded it. Whatever the *History's* lessons may be, they seem to require this singular, surpassingly great event in order to emerge, in order to become intelligible. It follows that while these lessons, or the clear truth the *History* reveals, may always present the truth about political life, political life in its many forms may not always embody that truth. The permanent utility of Thucydides' *History*, dependent as it is on this event's surpassing greatness, necessitates the qualitative distinction between politics at its most extraordinary and politics at its most ordinary.

Because the lessons of the Peloponnesian war depend on the war's singular noteworthiness (or its surpassing greatness), posterity can benefit from such lessons only if Thucydides' *History* captures or reflects that war's noteworthiness (or its surpassing greatness). The lessons Thucydides teaches, whatever those lessons may be, dictate the *History's* construction. And his work owes its lessons to the Peloponnesian war and not merely to his artistry. Or rather, the construction of his single political work and his treatment of the political and military events it relates (his artistry) depend upon his

experience and assessment of the war. Thucydides was not so clearly free in his selection of his theme and in his treatment of that theme. All of this suggests that Thucydides' intent and treatment of his subject are related.

As noted above (chapter 1), Thucydides is ambiguous about what constitutes the clear truth his work will reveal. It will be *about* those things that have happened and will happen, and their like, human nature being what it is (I.22.4). This may mean that his work will only describe *how* political events unfold under a given set of circumstances. It may also mean that his work will provide insight into *why* things happen, which may include, on the one hand, men's motives and passions, and on the other hand, scientific explanations of political and natural phenomena. The clear truth may also consist in the knowledge of that whole within which political or human affairs find their place. In this case, the *History* would supply that perspective from which one can rightly understand political phenomena. And if this is true, then the character of Thucydides' political investigation can range anywhere from an historical investigation, guided by interest in the specific details of a single event, to a philosophic inquiry, guided by the broadest, most abstract questions. This ambiguity means Thucydides' intent may consist in the cultivation of purely theoretical knowledge -- knowledge which is not always reducible to practical applications -- as much as in guidance for political practice. The clear truth to which Thucydides refers seems broad enough to support any of these possibilities.

As a result, if one is going to employ a narrow reading of this passage then it belongs to that interpreter to rule out - as much as is possible - the competing alternatives that Thucydides' ambiguous statement would reasonably bear. Of course, this applies to readings that understand Thucydides' intent to be primarily theoretical as well as those

that understand his intent to be primarily practical. And in making a case for Thucydides' intent – whether practical or theoretical - one must never abandon the qualitative distinction between extraordinary politics and ordinary politics – a distinction on which the permanent utility of Thucydides' *History* rests.

The comments on the war's greatness and the *History's* utility are not the only comments of Thucydides that bear on his intention. Nor are they his last words about the *History*. But their place at the beginning of the *History* and the fact that they are his most explicit statements about the utility of his work make them an important place to start. As such, the preceding observations about I.22 and the war's greatness present something of a standard that all legitimate conclusions regarding the lessons of the *History* must at least address, if not satisfy. Even if one's interpretation deviates from the implications noted above, then that interpreter is required to show how Thucydides' work modifies such implications. If one can approach the secondary literature in terms of how it understands the *History's* practical and theoretical interests, then perhaps one can begin to assess the plausibility of competing treatments by the attention they pay to what Thucydides says in his own name.

II. The Secondary Literature

The disagreements in the secondary literature range from how the specific details of the *History* reflect the work's fundamental teaching to what constitutes the *History's* fundamental teaching. The most serious and, for present purposes, the most important disagreements are over what constitutes the *History's* fundamental teaching. The question of the *History's* fundamental teaching gets at the heart of Thucydides' intent. After all,

one cannot ask why Thucydides wrote a single political history unless one has some sense of what that political history does.

I concluded the preceding discussion of Hobbes by noting that one may best understand (or categorize) the competing interpretations of Thucydides in terms of how they understand his apparent interest in practical political phenomena and in guiding men's actions and his apparent interest in intellectual education. That is, some understand the *History's* primary intent to be the direction of political conduct. Some understand it to be the intellectual education of the reader, one that cannot be reduced simply to practical political guidance. And in some of these cases, Thucydides' concern with an intellectual education is understood to come at the expense of his practical political guidance. Finally, some understand the *History's* intent to be a combination of practical political guidance and theoretical education. What all competing contemporary interpretations share are the assumptions that Thucydides *has* a position on practical politics and intellectual education, that the *History* reflects this position, and that one can uncover this position through a careful study of the *History*. But Thucydidean scholarship did not always respect such assumptions.

As any student of the secondary literature knows, the study of the stages of the *History's* composition (the *Thukydidesfrage*) dominated nearly a century of scholarship on Thucydides. Since some parts of the text were clearly written after the war and some apparently written as the war occurred, it seemed insensible to speak of a single intention governing the thematic and structural integrity of the whole *History*, an intention which gave life to and ordered a work with apparently multiple (and subordinate) aims. Instead, one could reasonably speak only of the intention of this or that Thucydides writing a

particular section at this or that time. But the further the philologists delved into Thucydides' language, the harder it became to single out the judgment of any particular "Thucydides." There soon emerged the "Thucydides of this paragraph" or the "Thucydides of this sentence." And the closer these scholars looked, the harder it became to differentiate the products of "early Thucydides" from the products of "late Thucydides." Fingerprints of the more mature Thucydides seemed to be smudged everywhere. This line of investigation resulted in a text of undifferentiated linguistic mass, a finding that rendered implausible the very effort to determine when parts of the work had been written. Such a "vain and insoluble problem" (Romilly 1963, 6) was largely jettisoned in the mid-20th century in the landmark works of John Finley (1942) and Jacqueline de Romilly.[3] Thankfully, Thucydides, author of the entire *History* reemerged.

Finley and Romilly supplied the initial confidence that one could profitably understand Thucydides' *History* as a unified (if perhaps incomplete) whole governed by a single underlying intent – one that dictates the *History's* matter and arrangement.[4] The work of Finley and Romilly, respectively, presented the two most comprehensive and sophisticated understandings of the *History's* utility as primarily practical. Of course, much of the scholarship on Thucydides since the publication of their work has in one way or another sought to modify Finley and Romilly's conclusions. But none of it has sought to overturn the position that a single intent governs Thucydides' work.

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[3] One should see Romilly's treatment of this literature (1963, 3-10). One should also see K.J. Dover "Strata of Composition" in Gomme, Andrewes, and Dover, (1945-81, 384-444).

[4] For even earlier arguments regarding Thucydides' intent one should see Werner Jaeger (1954), Adcock (1963), Bury (1909), and Cochrane (1929). None of these were as comprehensive as Finley's and Romilly's efforts. Nor were any of these as persuasive.

For both Finley and Romilly, Thucydides intends to educate future "Pericleses" – statesmen who, using the *History* as a guide to both historical patterns and the dynamics of political life, could foresee the pitfalls facing human affairs. Armed with this knowledge, these politicians of the future would be able to steer their communities toward the fulfillment of the "Athenian ideal" Pericles envisioned but failed to realize.[5] To "arm" its intended audience sufficiently, the *History* must disclose what constitutes a uniform human nature. In the case of Finley, it must show how human nature, in conjunction with regular historical principles, generates recognizable patterns in human affairs.[6] In the case of Romilly, it must spell out the political, psychological and philosophic laws that govern human affairs. The particular political and military events the *History* details reveal the universal laws of politics and history – they constitute the theoretical knowledge needed to conduct one's practical affairs effectively.

According to these readings, the *History* subordinates theory to practice. Action is the end, theory the means. The value of theoretical knowledge then is judged by its contribution to effective action. Of course, one must acknowledge that political action is (almost) never an end in itself. It too is a means to something else - to ends like glory, peace, freedom and empire. But according to both Finley and Romilly's treatments, Thucydides' *History* supplies no end. At least it does not present a *defense* of ends like glory, peace, freedom and empire.

The theoretical knowledge supplied by the *History* then is like theoretical science. Theoretical science supplies one with knowledge of the laws of politics. Equipped with this knowledge, one can more effectively pursue practical science. Theoretical science

[5] Finley (1942, pp. 50, 58 and 104 especially, as well as 29, 83 and 323).
[6] See ibid. 313, 108, and 292-4 especially; also 81, 83-4, 311 and 324.

does not provide insight into why one should "do" science, or why one should pursue the practical implications of theoretical science. That would require one to articulate a defense of "values," a defense of "better" and "worse." And such a defense runs contrary to the practical intent of the *History* as Finley and Romilly understand it.

But the *History* is not value neutral. For both Finley and Romilly, it is pro-Pericles, pro-democracy, and pro-empire. Finley traces Thucydides' work and preferences to the sophistic influences on him.[7] Under the spell of the belief in reason's power and the complete intelligibility of the world, he employed sophistic "arguments from likelihood, expedience, and the law of nature [which were] more than mere tools of persuasion. They seemed to provide a searching ... insight into human nature" (1942, 98; brackets mine). Finley "liberates" himself from the text by finding the source of Thucydides' intent in an intellectual climate to which we do not have complete access and information which is impossible to know (What did Thucydides read? How did what he read influence him?). According to Romilly, the work is the product of Thucydides' love and admiration for Pericles and Periclean Athens. And these preferences Thucydides owes to his own personal political experiences; experiences which the *History* does not relate, and to which we have no reliable access (1963, 109, 369).

While Finley and Romilly find the source or justification of Thucydides' "preferences" outside of the pages of his *History*, both understand the *History* to reflect his primarily practical intent. The content of Book I in particular is crucial to their interpretations. According to Finley, the key to understanding Thucydides' intent stems from his reading of Thucydides' explicit comments about the *History's* utility. When

Thucydides states that he wrote his *History* as a possession for all time, he means that his work would be useful for discovering the "nature" of the things that have happened and will happen again, human nature being what it is. And this recurrence manifests itself in the constant efforts to secure what Finley calls "higher forms of political life," efforts which produce conflict "between champions of the old and of the new society" (1942, 302). This pattern is in turn fueled by the cycles of material increase and technological innovation, patterns Finley initially finds in Thucydides' archaeology (I.1-19).

Thucydides first presents a paradigm of the lessons the *History* will teach. Then he states his intention to present such lessons in the work that is to follow. Finley thus understands the utility of the first 19 chapters – and thus the paradigm of the *History* – in light of chapter 22. And convinced by his strict or narrow reading of I.22, Finley does not try to establish Thucydides' intent as practical *as opposed* to theoretical. Because the apparent flexibility of the passage at I.22 is never an issue for Finley, the ambiguity of Thucydides' intention noted in my discussion of Hobbes never emerges here. Now one might wonder why Thucydides would present his stated intention *following* the paradigmatic lesson his work intends to expound. Would it not make more sense to state one's intention in presenting a lesson and then present the lesson? Finley never addresses this question.

For Romilly the relationship between theory and practice in the *History* is more complex than it is for Finley. In her case, action is still the end, and theory is still the means. But Thucydides' concern with practical politics serves dual purposes. First, the *History's* practical guidance aims at addressing a theoretical problem. But this problem

[7] See ibid. pp. 29, 30, 36, 38, 42, 68-9, 79, 84, 250, 291, 311 and 324. This understanding of Thucydides as the intellectual child of his times (and thus his belief in the power of reason, historical forces, and a uniform

only emerges as a result of Thucydides' attention to political and military events. Practical politics therefore supplies the raw material for the *History's* theory. This is the second purpose served by Thucydides' focus on practical politics. Now what, according to Romilly, constitutes this theoretical "problem" for Thucydides?

Romilly argues that the unity of the text consists in the thematic regularity of Athenian imperialism.[8] And Thucydides was interested in Athenian imperialism because he wanted to improve on Pericles' imperial record. He wanted to do so because, in the end, Pericles' imperialism failed. The failure of Pericles, claims Romilly, represents the practical failure of principled or idealistic politics. But Thucydides recognized that the problems facing Pericles were not merely practical problems endemic to Periclean democracy. They presented problems all cities face. They thus point to the essential limits of political life. In other words, the problems Pericles encountered revealed that the ideal Pericles embodied and Thucydides admired would always and everywhere eventually succumb to the rule of the stronger – a rule that abandons justice in favor of self-interest.

Instead of turning to the theoretical life to address these problems, as Socrates did, Romilly argues that Thucydides, consumed with guiding political practice, continued to emphasize action (1963, 369-79). He wanted to employ his theoretical insights on politics and psychology to promote Periclean imperialism. But in light of his *philosophic* insight into the inevitable rule of the stronger, his practical intentions in writing the *History* must

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human nature), reflects the work cited in chapter 1, fn. 2.

[8] According to Romilly, the theme of Athenian imperialism conspicuously presents itself in almost every aspect of the work (1963, 9). Since the publication of her work, scholars possessing widely divergent backgrounds and understandings of Thucydides and political history have examined the role Athenian imperialism plays in Thucydides' *History*. See for instance Bruell (1973); Orwin (1994); Forde (1989); Palmer (1992); Strauss (1964); Rawlings (1981); J. Peter Euben (1986) and (1990); Johnson (1993); Farrar (1988); Galpin (1983-4); and Saxonhouse (1978).

be seen as futile. His apparent insistence on practical guidance in the face of those insurmountable difficulties presented by the philosophic law – the most fundamental teaching of the *History* – stems from his profound attachment to Pericles and Athenian imperialism. The insight made possible by his attention to practical politics conflicts with his intended practical political guidance.

Romilly bases much of her argument about Thucydides' admiration for Periclean Athens on Thucydides' sympathetic representation of Pericles' Funeral Oration, as well as his assessment of Pericles at II.65. Unfortunately, Romilly does not try to reconcile what Thucydides says in his own name in Book II with what he says in his own name in Book I. Nevertheless, her understanding of Thucydides does owe much to Book I, even if she does not focus on Thucydides' explicit comments there. Specifically, Book I introduces Thucydides' political, psychological, and philosophic insights and begins to establish their relationship to one another. Thus in his treatment of Minos and Agammemnon, Thucydides begins to sketch that psychological "drive for more" that is the root of all of Athens's political pursuits. The archaeology that follows prepares his audience for the importance of sea-power, a crucial ingredient to the success of Athens's imperial politics (i.e., means to effect the drive for more). And the Athenian envoys' speech at Sparta outlines the contours of that "law of the stronger" initially embodied in the rule of Minos and Agammemnon, and developed with such care throughout the *History*. By introducing this "law," the envoys' speech points to the moral dilemma that confronts Thucydides' efforts throughout the work. Finally, the Pentecontaetia that follows the congress at Sparta sets up Thucydides' thematic concerns and reveals his

disposition towards those concerns.[9] Romilly's appreciation of Book I's importance to the whole *History* reflects her contention that "every single word in [the *History*] seems to imply choice and arrangement" (1963, 3).

The fact that Finley and Romilly's theses are based on conjectures about what Thucydides' personal political and intellectual background may have been, makes it difficult to assess their respective claims.[10] But could they have proceeded any differently? Might this not be the fate of all those who understand Thucydides' intent to be primarily and ultimately practical? In other words, any attempt to justify one's direction of practical politics requires that one have access to a standard independent of practical politics. After all, practical political guidance assumes the existence of a standard from which it takes its direction. And the mere existence of political guidance cannot supply sufficient justification of the standard. How then can the reader be confident the *History* supplies prudent or sound direction?

As we saw in the discussion of Hobbes above, the need to understand Thucydides' guidance *as prudent* puts action on the backburner. The evaluation of Thucydides' standard and its justification and not political practice becomes the priority. If the *History's* utility consists primarily in directing men's practical affairs, then to be

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[9] Romilly states that, "... the Pentecontaetia, being more especially concerned with imperialism, more compact in its presentation of events provides the first center of interest. The features which guide Thucydides in his selection of actual incidents to discuss will be more easily noticeable in the Pentecontaetia, for he will certainly have selected them more rigorously in this part of the work. Because it is more concise, the Pentecontaetia will bring out more clearly the principles that will direct his choice. Yet these principles will be of interest to us insofar as they recur in other parts of the work. For they will enable us to make out not the attitude governing a particular series of chapters, but a more fundamental disposition and Thucydides' first approach to the general fact of Athenian imperialism" (1963, 58).

[10] According to Romilly, Thucydides distinguishes between his political and moral judgments. He approves imperialism in the name of an ideal, "like that of Pericles and the Athenians in Book I." And he deplores the imperialism of *realpolitik*. But in the end, as "long as it remains prudent, imperialism merely follows the way of the world" (1963, 339). What is the basis for his preference for political idealism over political realism? Moreover, the implications of Romilly's distinction here run contrary to her understanding of Thucydides as a supporter of Periclean idealism.

effective it must presuppose such theoretical considerations. The ends directing practical politics must be given or asserted. But this has the strange consequence of subjecting the very effort to liberate the *History's* audience from previously unknown historical and political forces to preferences or ends that remain beyond the reader's vision. To use the *History* as Finley and Romilly understand it, the reader must be willing to suspend judgment as to whether Thucydides' practical political guidance is in fact prudent. The *History* would require readers who are willing to forego those concerns that make Thucydides' *History* worth reading in the first place.

Romilly's interpretation can avoid these problems. But it can do so only by insisting that the *History* teaches prudent or wise action based solely on self-interest, as distinct from action based on what Thucydides considers to be legitimate principle. And this has the rather nasty side effect of making Thucydides' *History* an equally effective practical instrument in the service of a position Romilly claims Thucydides deplores. But if the *History* equally serves two opposed ends, then where is Thucydides' *guidance*?! If the *History* is value neutral then it cannot guide, and if it hopes to provide wise guidance then it must justify the wisdom of the direction it supplies. Romilly tries to have it both ways. Wherever she ends up, both her and Finley's interpretations seem to stretch the limits of understanding Thucydides' intent as primarily and ultimately practical. Can one understand Thucydides' intent in this way and avoid the problems Finley and Romilly encounter? [11]

[11] Later interpretations do manage to argue more effectively for a primarily practical intent. But these interpretations (and we'll see one of the better ones in Forde's *Ambition* (1989)) are crafted in the wake of several competing interpretations of Thucydides' intent, interpretations that alter the relationship between theory and practice that one finds in the pioneering works of Finley (1942) and Romilly (1963).

Much of the literature that followed the work of Finley and Romilly attempted to answer this question (whether consciously or not) by presenting a new understanding of the relationship between Thucydides' practical interests and his apparent intellectual interests. The bulk of this scholarship understands the theoretical lessons of the *History* to supply the framework within which political action can be understood. And in almost every case, this literature understands such theoretical lessons to take their bearings from Thucydides' interest in the conduct of practical political affairs. These readings *do* elevate the status or dignity of theory's place in Thucydides' intent. But they do so not because theory is more important than practice, but because theory affords a view of the limits to practice. For the most part then, practical politics still sets the theoretical agenda. Not surprisingly, one sees that the more scholars understand Thucydides' *History* to reveal the limits of practical political guidance, the more those scholars understand his intent to be primarily theoretical.

Lowell Edmunds' *Chance and Intelligence* (1975) presents one of the first arguments that the *History* reveals the limits facing practical politics. Specifically, Edmunds modifies the extreme view of Thucydides' confidence in the power of reason to predict future events and thus, to some extent, control human affairs. The heart of Edmunds' analysis concerns the two polar postures embodied in Athens and Sparta towards human reason's ability to predict and control human affairs. From the conflict of these two postures emerges the permanent utility of Thucydides' *History* – the clear truth about what is susceptible of rational prediction, planning, and control and what is not (1975, 147). Unlike Finley and Romilly, and much of the scholarship that followed him, Edmunds does not contend that the events Thucydides' details embody this clear truth.

The events of the *History* point to it or reflect it.[12] Edmunds refines the connection between what he calls the general principle and the contingent particulars when he notes that unlike "Plato, Thucydides never separated from its temporal manifestations what he believed was the eternal clarity he had attained, and he did not give his principles an existence independent of this world" (1975, 169). It seems Thucydides wrote his *History* as an attempt to preserve "this world" so that the "eternal clarity" he attained would continue to be visible.

Thucydides preserves "this world," and thus the valid basis for his theoretical insights, through the factual accuracy (*akribeia*) of the particular deeds he reports. In other words, Thucydides' theoretical wisdom is inextricably tied to the particular deeds he relates. Precisely because Thucydides' wisdom is inextricably tied to political reality, Edmunds preserves an element of Finley and Romilly's pioneering research. According to him, the *History's* rootedness in political life as it is circumscribes, and thus limits, Thucydides' theoretical endeavors. Why?

Thucydides' wisdom depends on politics as it *is* and not as it ought to be. And political reality, politics as it *is*, also provides the grounds for practical political guidance. Thucydides' dependence on political reality thus reveals a fundamental preoccupation with practical political life. Edmunds thus implies that the theoretical life strictly understood does not concern political experience as it is.[13] The theoretical life depends on

[12] He claims that the *History's* teaching: "emerges from the facts, the contingent particulars, and thus comes to be opposite of the particulars as being freed of the contingent... Thucydides does not seem to believe that his work will be useful in defeating chance in practice, but only intellectually. That is the *History* will free the mind from chance by allowing the mind to distinguish sharply between 'to saphes', the general principle, and the particulars which are, from the practical point of view, to some extent always unpredictable and to that extent always a matter of chance" (1975, 156-7).

[13] According to Edmunds, Thucydides' *History* presents historiography at its best because it embodies the dual perspective of political actor immersed in history and the author who possesses a distanced or privileged view of history. Because of this combination the work is a mixture of pure principle and the

rationality, order, logic; it emphasizes art *as opposed to* experience (1975, 208-10). Thucydides identifies art *with* experience. Because experience is always subject to chance, it (and the *History*) will always be bound up with disorder and thus doomed to "a certain irrationality" (1975, 209).

Edmunds' understanding of the distinction between the theoretical life and the active political life seems to explain why he concludes as he does, with Thucydides straddling the fence between the two, oscillating between his desire for immortality and his desire for truth (1975, 213-4). But why, according to Edmunds, does philosophy necessitate this distinction? Is it not possible to understand the theoretical life as equally dependent on political reality, on politics as it is and not as it ought to be, without reducing it to a life devoted or semi-devoted to active political involvement? Edmunds never makes clear how the philosophic life avoids that "certain irrationality" to which political action, and thus Thucydides' *History*, is doomed. One must wonder if Edmunds' distinction does not commit an injustice against philosophy, or at least against the possibility of taking philosophy seriously. After all, no one lives in "pure theory." And "pure theory" never protected one from tyranny, war, or the vicissitudes of chance.

To restate, Edmunds concludes that Thucydides in his *History* straddles the fence between active political involvement and the theoretical life. This conclusion about the aim of the *History* and the relationship between theory and practical guidance depends largely on Edmunds' insistence on the importance of *akribeia* to Thucydides' work. After all, the concern with factual accuracy ties Thucydides to political reality, keeping him

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purely random (ibid. 147). Pure principle seems to be the object of philosophic investigations as distinct from historical investigations. One should also see the passage at 169 previously cited.

from the theoretical life. And Edmunds insists on *akribeia's* importance because factual accuracy solves a problem Book I presents.

According to Edmunds, Thucydides' comments regarding the greatness of the war and the permanent utility of the work imply that the events the work relates are contingent particulars, the product of adventitious events. Chance and contingency disrupt the order necessary for rational planning and understanding.[14] But Thucydides' comments also suggest that the events the *History* relates will recur, human nature being what it is. As such, there is a whole, or cycle, to the events that the *History* constitutes and can be rationally comprehended (1975, 145). The problem becomes how one can capture or reflect this whole if particular events are in fact contingent and adventitious (the problem of the antithesis between what can be rationally comprehended and what stands outside rational comprehension, or what Edmunds refers to as the *gnome – tyche* antithesis). Thucydides' solution, according to Edmunds, is the factual accuracy of the deeds he relates. For, if "what had happened was to happen again, then it was enough...to state exactly what had happened" (1975, 204). As such the factual accuracy of the deeds he records allows Thucydides to move "past the separate views of the moment toward a future that will be the same as the past. The *History* itself is a complete cycle and, as such, will be a 'possession forever'" (1975, 204).

Edmunds understands the rest of Thucydides' explicit comments in Book I to refine the reader's sense of this utility. Thucydides' statement on method at I.22 shows that the work's utility depends on the deeds he will relate as opposed to the speeches –

[14] As Edmunds claims, "For how perfect could rational calculation be, how useful could the *History* as a handbook of such calculation be, if the laws of human nature and of politics never manifested themselves but in adventitious forms?" (ibid. 150). Edmunds thus clarifies the logic implied in such comments. And in

largely because the speeches do not observe strict factual accuracy (they are a combination of the "ideal" and the "actual") (1975, 4-5). Thucydides' restatement of the war's greatness at I.23 further refines this utility by distinguishing between deeds of human origin and deeds of non-human origin, and excluding the latter from the work's utility. That is, the work's usefulness applies only to human action. Again when Thucydides speaks of the work's utility at I.22 he clarifies those for whom the *History* is intended - namely those who desire the clear truth about what has happened and what will happen. Thucydides' comments at I.20 and I.21 further distinguish this audience from the mass of careless readers. In Thucydides' distinction between "cause" (*prophasis*) and "blame" (*aitiai*) at I.23, Edmunds finds further support for the distinction between general principles and contingent particulars he believes is reflected in the *History* as a whole. And of course, Book I reveals that non-practical, primarily intellectual, character of the *History's* utility. All of these elements of Book I are understood by Edmunds to introduce and thus found that combination of the ideal with the actual that limits, or circumscribes, Thucydides' theoretical aspirations.

W. R. Connor's *Thucydides* (1984) presents a twist on the relationship between political reality and theoretical considerations in the *History*. Like Edmunds, Connor claims that Thucydides' *History* is concerned with the objective record of the events his work relates. This objectivity cultivates (and thus is the means to) a subjective intellectual posture towards history. But while Edmunds' Thucydides straddles the fence between theory and political action, Thucydides' theoretical interests become dominant for

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doing so he further modifies Finley's and Romilly's narrow understanding of the *History* as primarily and ultimately practical.

Connor. Theory is ascendant; but its ascendancy is ultimately curtailed[15] by the *History's* literary character, which eschews any attempt at reducing Thucydides' political, historical, and moral perspectives to the constituents of some philosophic position.

One gets to the heart of Connor's contribution to the discussion about theory and practice if one understands his argument that the *History's* literary quality is an essential element of genuine historical writing as Thucydides conceived it. Thucydides' historical writing focuses on capturing "the complexity and irreducibility of events" (1984, 236). Thus Thucydides' concern with an objective historical record. But instead of precluding artistry, Thucydides' understanding of objective history requires it. The *History's* "startling juxtapositions, contrasts, abrupt transitions, shattered parallelisms" (1984, 11) allow the reader to grasp the "minimal variations" (1984, 235) that characterize historical progressions. The very nature of history requires art to make a record of it objective.

This respect for "the complexity of historical developments and the cumulative effects of changes that are individually almost infinitesimal" (1984, 235), and the aesthetic craft that such respect calls forth, does not obstruct the emergence of a coherent political perspective. Quite the contrary, the objective representation of such infinitesimal changes embodies the broader, more visible progressions in the work that effect the its chief intent – namely, the cultivation of a reader who is "engaged, freed from cliché, and ready for the continuing assessment of political decisions and forms" (1984, 242). The theoretical goal of the *History* rests on an objective picture of political life that, in its very accuracy, its very objectivity, limits the substantive content of that goal.

[15] Connor (1984) never flatly denies that Thucydides' *History* could have embodied a political philosophy, though the trend of his argument moves that way. He does however deny that if Thucydides' did have a political philosophy that it directed the composition of the *History*, and thus could be uncovered by reading the *History*.

Book I provides the basis for Connor's argument about Thucydides. It not only presents in miniature the trajectory embodied in the *History* as a whole, but it also presents the first step in that trajectory. This first step becomes more than just a first step when one considers that while the *History* transforms, alters, and amplifies its initial steps, it always does so in a framework that retains the essential validity of those steps. To begin from the latter point, Thucydides' introduction "implies a highly rational view of history, a confidence in the ability of reason to uncover the past and determine sources and patterns of power" (1984, 242). Thus, at the opening of the archaeology the greatness of the war consists in the number of men, ships, and provisions as well as the length and geographic range of the conflict - all things that can be rationally comprehended. But the conclusion of the archaeology redefines the war's greatness in terms of the misery and suffering brought about by human and non-human means during the war. And the sources of this suffering remain beyond the reach of rational prediction and control. Thucydides' view of the war's greatness here no longer emphasizes *logos*, but *pathos*. In fact, according to Connor, it emphasizes *pathos* at the expense of *logos*.

In the end, however, the truth captured in political history preserves the integrity of both perspectives without subjecting one to the other.[16] The experience of the archaeology, just like the experience of the *History*, prepares the reader to modify his current understanding and expectations as circumstances unfold. But if one wonders "Modify them with a view to what?" one gets no answer from Connor or his Thucydides. In fact, neither he nor his Thucydides provides any defense as to why cliché, or even tradition and convention, are inferior to the open-ended intellectual disposition the

[16] In this way, Connor (1984) adopts that understanding of reason found in Hegel, which Edmunds eschews (1975, 213).

History cultivates. But perhaps this is not so surprising since any such defense would require taking a definite position, or staking out a standard, something that Connor claims the *History* intends to avoid even though the very basis of its intent requires such a stand.

Both Romilly and Edmunds's analyses take their bearings from the bulk of the *History*, and not just Book I. Thus Romilly finds evidence for Thucydides' partisan preferences in the Funeral Oration and in Thucydides' digression at II.65 – both outside of Book I. And whatever the role the Pentecontaetia may play in Book I or in the work as a whole, Romilly's understanding of this section as "introductory" seems unduly influenced by her sensitivity to Athenian imperialism throughout the *History*. In *Chance and Intelligence*, Edmunds presents his substantive findings regarding the bulk of the *History* in the first two parts of his book. His treatment of Book I follows in the third and final part. One gets the sense from this approach (and not only this approach) that Edmunds first investigates the *gnome-tyche* antithesis in the rest of the work, and then reads the results of his inquiries there back into Book I. This would not present such a problem if Book I was not also supposed to introduce those very themes Edmunds had already examined.

Connor, on the other hand, lets Book I introduce him to the work as a whole. Not surprisingly, it provides the core of Connor's analysis. By introducing Thucydides' emphasis on political reality, with all of its complexity and infinitesimal changes, it points to how the concern with that reality effectively limits the development of a full-bodied theoretical position with any positive content. The development of an intellectual disposition may be Thucydides' primary intent, but the objective political orientation (i.e., politics as it is) of this education serves as the ultimate check on Thucydides'

theoretical aspirations. While the verdict is still out on Book I's importance to Thucydides' overall intent, it is hard to gainsay the claim that one should understand Book I on its own before understanding it in terms of later developments. Connor's approach respects the place of Book I in the *History* and his conclusions preserve its importance to the whole work. If one must begin where Thucydides begins (as seems only natural), then Connor's approach may support the contention that the *History's* intent is primarily theoretical as opposed to practical.

However this may be, beginning with Book I does not mean that one will end up with Connor's conclusions. Both Peter Pouncey and J. Peter Euben begin with Book I and come to widely different understandings of Thucydides' theoretical interests. For Pouncey, the *History* embodies a pessimism that limits any possible practical political guidance it might intend. According to Pouncey, the bedrock condition of all of its lessons is the constancy of human nature. Not surprisingly, he understands the *History's* fundamental lesson to concern the substance of that nature. Specifically, Thucydides' work reveals that human nature "carries within itself drives that are destructive of its own achievements, that they are in fact the same drives as those that build historical achievements in the first place, so that in a sense the way up and the way down are the same" (1980, xiii). One cannot hope that the *History* will equip one to change political life or affect the dynamics of its rise and the inevitability of its fall. Nor does the *History* result, in multiple, subjective and equally plausible views of history. Rather, it provides a single theoretical position that moderates one's expectations of political life.

This suggests that Thucydides' intent must be more theoretical than practical. But it does not mean that his work then enters the orbit of philosophy inhabited by the likes of

Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. To put it differently, pessimism about the possibilities of political life does not lead Pouncey to see Thucydides' theoretical interests trending towards the contemplative life. As in the case of the works considered above, Thucydides' apparently objective political focus and its need for accuracy obstructs any concerns with "morality and evaluative judgments"(1980, x) that one might be tempted to impose on him or his work. For Pouncey, the historian's legitimacy consists in his attempt to explain *only* "the causes of the events he describes" (1980, x). Questions about right and wrong belong to another sphere of inquiry.[17]

For Pouncey, the connection between Thucydides' theoretical interests and his interest in practical politics can be summed up in two points: 1) His pessimistic theory of human nature arises out of Thucydides' focus on practical political affairs; and although this theoretical pessimism springs from the *akribeia* of the political and military events Thucydides records, the very necessity of focusing on *akribeia* is dictated by his historical "muse." 2) His pessimism has a practical aim – it intends to temper political utopianism, thereby preventing those (frequently dangerous) efforts to change what cannot be changed.

Again, Book I sets up the agenda for the *History* as a whole. Thucydides' statement on the *History's* permanent utility at I.22 supplies Pouncey with his confidence that the work rests on human nature's constancy. And from this constancy and the notion of recurrence it implies, one gets the basis for Thucydides' faith in his method's accuracy. Of course, Pouncey recognizes that a mere chronological record is insufficient

[17] This is Pouncey's claim and he sticks to it. Or at least he tries to. If right and wrong belong to another sphere, then how can Pouncey claim that Thucydides' work details his growing disillusionment and bitterness during the war? After all, aren't disillusionment and bitterness the result of a moral perspective that has been overturned?

for a genuine history. It requires Thucydides' artistry to produce a "unity that is interesting and compelling" (1980, 12). Any tension that might exist between the need for accuracy and the historian's interpretative needs only constitutes a *creative* tension and not a tension that compromises the *History's* objectivity.

Human nature's constancy (with its implied recurrence) also grounds Pouncey's understanding of the archaeology as the model of human patterns in the *History*. In other words, if what happened in the past can happen in the present and will happen in the future, then the archaeology should reveal the essential dynamics of all of political life. Thus the fear, the self-interest, and the law of the strong ruling the weaker that one finds in the ancient past will remain dominant characteristics of political communities. The same goes for the political importance of wealth, resources, and navies laid out in the first 19 chapters. Such thinking seems to be behind Pouncey's denial that any changes in political life that Thucydides might note in the opening of his work are essential transformations, or changes that qualitatively alter the dynamics of human behavior. Finally, Book I establishes the importance of speech and public deliberation to political life, such that when public debate can no longer occur, as in Book VIII, healthy political life collapses.

Pouncey's work reminds of much of the work already discussed.[18] It is perhaps telling then that the distinction between the active life of politics and the contemplative life is more prominent in Pouncey's Thucydides than in the "Thucydides" of other

[18] Pouncey shares the sense of scientific "objectivity" belonging to Finley and Romilly. And with them, he understands Thucydides' posture towards history to be the result of an intellectual legacy he inherited (1980, xiii). With Edmunds, Pouncey modifies what human beings can expect from practical politics. They also share the specific claim that *akribeia* follows from and depends on Thucydides' notion of recurrence (see Edmunds 1975, 204). Like Connor, Pouncey begins with Book I, understands the archaeology to model the patterns of human life that the *History* will relate, and views the *History* as the unfolding of

scholars. But the apparent ascendancy of the contemplative life over political affairs in Pouncey's understanding does not stem from an even appreciation of the two. Theory is ascendant for Pouncey because Thucydides' focus on political reality, a focus dictated by his concern with history, revealed the essential character of human nature and thereby the limits facing all political endeavors. Theory's ascendancy is the result of standards and preferences that he inherited from his concern with history (as opposed to the study of natural science or philosophy). And this particular understanding of history he inherited from one of the prevailing intellectual traditions.

Theory's ascendancy then is not the result of Thucydides taking politics on its own terms and showing how its weaknesses or deficiencies point to the contemplative life. An approach that reflects a graduated movement or trajectory beyond politics, whose origins are within politics itself, might establish much more convincingly the superiority of the contemplative life to the life of political action. Pouncey's Thucydides does not take such an approach. This may partly explain why, according to Pouncey, Thucydides' theoretical work does not enter into those moral or evaluative discussions that seem to be the hallmark of both political life (as Pouncey's own analysis of the *History* attests) and political philosophy.

J. Peter Euben's scholarship (1986 and 1990) puts forward the position that the limits facing Thucydides' theoretical aspirations are, according to his own investigations, the limits facing all attempts to uncover a substantive and meaningful theoretical perspective. In other words, whatever limits may face Thucydides' theoretical interests, they do not stem from the unfortunate selection of his topic or from accidents of birth,

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Thucydides' own experience with the war. And like all four, Pouncey reinforces the impression that one focuses on political reality at the risk of limiting one's theoretical aspirations.

social status, environment, or education. They stem from the very character of human meaning. Thucydides' *History* then intends to "rearticulate and redescribe the speeches and deeds and practices of actors in order to expose the implicit framework by which they give meaning to what they do" (1986, 361).

Like Connor and Pouncey, Euben understands Thucydides' theoretical interest to be clearly ascendant. And also like Connor and Pouncey, Euben understands Thucydides' theory to be concerned with political reality. But this concern with political reality is not the result of his concern with political life's complexity and infinitesimal variations or of his inherited intellectual tradition. It is due to his focus on human meaning and those internal dynamics belonging to all human meaning – subjects worthy of study by anyone interested in discovering truth about the world. This means that Euben, unlike the previous authors, does not insist on distinguishing between the proper objects of non-philosophic, theoretical inquiry and the proper objects of philosophic inquiry. Euben's conclusions therefore do not rest on some prior understanding of what constitutes history.

Euben (and his Thucydides) focuses on human meaning because "there is no neutral language from which men and women can speak about their lives as if they were not living them... [O]ur concepts have us as much as we have them. As lenses through which we see and structure the world, they are the bounds that make us whole" (1990, 189). This connection between language and meaning allows one to see the essential limits to meaning by tracing the fate of political speech in the *History*.

Speech is primary for Euben's Thucydides. To get to Thucydides' speech, one must examine Athenian political speech. Why Athenian political speech? Because the collective political meaning behind Athenian speech is not just one manifestation of

corruptible political meaning among others. First, the emergence of the Athenians' collective vision of themselves and the world out of their victory over the Persians at Salamis demonstrates those conditions necessary for collective theorizing to occur. Athenian political speech also reveals the extreme (though not complete) malleability of the world to human meaning, as one sees in the near success of their *almost* insane attack on Sicily (1986, 375).[19] And finally, in showing the malleability of the world to human meaning, Athenian political speech reveals the limits to all human meaning. That the collective vision inspired by the Athenians' victory at Salamis finds its conclusion in the civil war at Corcyra, where language unravels, the world falls "out of joint" and men go "mad" shows all collective visions to be bereft of objective meaning (1990, 187). In other words, the fate of Athenian political speech reveals Thucydides' fundamental insights about meaning and politics - that all political language, all political meaning possesses an internal dialectic that leads to its own decay.

All of this means, that from Thucydides' perspective, what the actors in the *History* consider to be true, is not true. It is given, unreflective, and the product of accident.[20] While some perspectives are broader, less partial and more in tune with the limits imposed by the physical world, none of them has a claim to universal legitimacy or applicability. The only thing that escapes this disintegration is the perspective, the distance, on such corruption afforded by the decay of Athenian political speech. Thucydides' speech, the speech guiding the *History* as a whole and leading the reader to

[19] According to Euben, the Athenians are "collective theorists" with the capacity to "envision the world as other than it is and reconstitute the world to realize that vision" (1986, 375). Of course, there are limits to this: the external world (land powers cannot pretend they are sea powers; one cannot interpret the plague out of existence) and internal limits, whose explanation follows in the text.

[20] Euben states that "the way he construes Athenian practices, Thucydides not only makes them clearer and more explicit, he breaks the bonds of familiarity and givenness that typically tie citizens to them and to

this conclusion, possesses this distance. Euben's Thucydides thus seems to begin from what is true of all political life – even though he begins with an exceptional embodiment of that life - and arrives at a theoretical perspective freed from the vices that plague practical political meanings. The corruption of Athens leads to the incorruptibility of Thucydides.

But while Thucydides' speech is less corruptible and less partial than the political speech that fills his *History*, and while his speech rises out of the very decomposition of political speech, it is nevertheless inextricably bound to practical political meanings. Thucydides' theoretical perspective is ascendant. But it is ascendant only to the extent that it has turned back in on itself - on that collective vision that gives meaning and a mode of being to the Athenian empire - to reveal the principles and dynamics at work in all meaning. As a result, the ascendancy of Thucydides' theoretical wisdom depends on the unique events the *History* relates. This means his political thought can never transcend the relative, questionable, and ungrounded political interpretations from which it emerged. His focus on practical politics makes an objective theoretical understanding impossible. Because Euben's analysis does not insist on some prior distinction between philosophy and history, or, for that matter, on any division of theoretical inquiries, he raises more clearly than our other authors the question of whether, according to Thucydides, an objective, universally grounded understanding of the human condition is possible.

Euben does not attempt to provide an exhaustive analysis of Thucydides' *History*. However, his two essays – "The Battle of Salamis" (1986) and "Corcyra" (1990) -

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each other. He loosens the unreflective moorings of meaning, forcing them to appear contingent, relative and questionable" (1990, 192, fn.47).

present an argument that accounts for the *History's* intent. Much of his understanding of that intent is based on his interpretation of the Athenian victory at Salamis and what that victory came to mean for the Athenians' conception of their political community. Book I of the *History* details this victory and provides some of the most powerful examples of Athenian self-understandings. This suggests that the content of Book I, or at least parts of Book I, play critical roles in establishing the *History's* fundamental teaching. It also means, as Euben argues explicitly in "Battle," that Book I (or parts of Book I) reveals those conditions that make collective theorizing possible. Book I thus makes possible the teaching that the rest of the *History* relates. It also begins to establish the primarily theoretical character of Thucydides' intent.

Up to this point, all of the literature reviewed either has understood Thucydides' intent to be practical as opposed to theoretical or has understood his political focus effectively to limit his theoretical efforts. To the extent that Thucydides' intent is understood to be primarily theoretical, its theoretical character, according to this literature, is understood as distinct from that of philosophic, or purely theoretical, inquiries. The more one understands Thucydides' focus to be political reality, or political life as it presents itself to all those with eyes to see, the less one understands Thucydides' theoretical interests to enter the orbit of pure theory or philosophy. This literature thus implicitly distinguishes between theoretical investigations in terms of their proper objects of interests, specifically between the proper objects of philosophic inquiry, on the one hand, and the proper objects of non-philosophic theoretical (i.e., historical) inquiry on the other hand. Of course, most of the literature acknowledges that Thucydides' *History* precedes the division of the sciences, and thus precedes the distinction between historical

inquiry and philosophic inquiry. Despite such acknowledgements, the conclusions these scholars reach suggest that they in fact do read Thucydides in light of the philosophic tradition that follows. After all, it is only in light of this distinction that they can conclude that Thucydides' focus on political reality precludes his treatment of those themes that belong to classical political philosophy.

Of course, this literature tries to base the distinction between the objects of historical and philosophical inquiry on Thucydides' assessment of those events his work relates. But the conclusion that his intent is primarily practical, or primarily theoretical, but limited by its concern with and treatment of political life *as it is embodied at all times and all places* (what constitutes Thucydides' art), follows from a failure to address how his explicit comments about the war and his work bear on the character of his *History's* lessons. I noted earlier that Thucydides' explicit comments imply that the clear truth his work will reveal depends on a singular and surpassingly great event. This dependence means that the work's lessons are not likely to be embodied in every day experience. The *History's* utility depends on the qualitative distinction between politics at its most extraordinary and politics at its most mundane. The literature just reviewed[21] tends to ignore that qualitative distinction.

Thucydides' statements about what his work will reveal and in what exactly its utility consists are ambiguous at best. They may support "practical" or "theoretical"

[21] The most notable exception to this is Euben's analysis (1986, 1990). His work comes closest to appreciating the unique character of both Athens and the events the *History* relates. This is why the alternative Euben poses will remain a serious alternative throughout my discussion of Thucydides. I include Euben in this group, however, because like the others he too understands Thucydides' focus on political reality to limit Thucydides' theoretical efforts. This is also not to deny the validity of Edmunds's analysis of the adventitious and contingent particulars out of which the universal lessons of the *History* arise. But Edmunds's understanding of *akribeia* and its role in the *History* runs contrary to the implications of Thucydides' statement at I.22 about the work's utility that Edmunds himself spells out. For a view similar to that of Euben's see White's treatment of Thucydides in *When Words Lose Their Meaning* (1984, 59-90).

readings. By not addressing what Thucydides' comments may reasonably be taken to mean, these scholars do not sufficiently establish their respective understanding of the *History's* practical political elements. And because they does not distinguish their own readings of Thucydides' explicit comments from other equally plausible readings, they do not make the best case for their understanding of the *History's* theoretical elements. These two shortcomings do not refute their theses. The positions they hold on Thucydides' intent may, in the end, be right. But to place their arguments about Thucydides on a more solid footing, they must begin by respecting the distinction between extraordinary and ordinary politics. They must also account for what Thucydides says in his own name and how the *History's* lessons either support or modify what he says. It should be clear that such a case and such an account are still necessary.

At least two distinct possibilities remain. First, it still seems possible to consider Thucydides' intent as primarily practical without encountering the problems that dog Finley's (1942) and Romilly's (1963) work. Understanding might still be a priority, but the practical nature of the advice would be understood in terms supplied by political practice itself. The issue does not become justifying practical guidance. Nor does it become a neutral, technical analysis. The issue becomes those conditions necessary for political greatness as understood within the confines of the city, or the conditions necessary for the pursuit of what the city understands to be great. Second, is it not also possible for Thucydides' apparent concern with political reality to be the necessary basis for his theoretical inquiries without limiting such efforts? Might not Thucydides' focus on political reality give rise to theoretical investigations that transcend practical political life, that enter into the realm of pure theory? Or put differently, it still seems possible that

Thucydides' *History* could show political reality to be the necessary and proper object of interest for purely theoretical, or philosophic, investigations that in turn lead to an objective and grounded understanding of the world.

Of the many competing interpretations of Thucydides that exist, some do begin with the singular and surpassingly great character of the war. Most of these interpretations can be reasonably classified as Straussian. Despite the single classification, important differences exist. These differences fall along three familiar lines: Thucydides' intent as primarily practical, Thucydides' intent as primarily philosophic, and a reading that straddles the fence between practical and philosophic readings. Such differences serve to remind us that while beginning with Thucydides' explicit comments - and taking those comments most seriously – is necessary, it does not guarantee identical outcomes. In short, it is not enough to appreciate Thucydides' explicit comments. After considering this literature, one will still need to try to resolve disagreements over Thucydides' intent.

The best of the competing Straussian interpretations all agree that the war Thucydides' *History* relates represents a unique moment in Greek civilization. The surpassing greatness of this singular event makes possible revelations about the nature of politics and human life that would otherwise remain concealed. It generates an intellectual experience nothing else could generate. Thucydides' intent in replicating this "revelation" may be practical or theoretical.[22] The virtue of these readings does not necessarily stem from their content. It is rooted in the fact that they do full-justice to the qualitative distinction implicit in Thucydides' comments about the war and his work: the

[22] Forde (1989, 4-6, 21-2, 24-5, 47, 174); Orwin (1994,5, 193); Bruell (1974, 11) and (1981, 29); Strauss (1964, 154-63) and (1989, 81).

History may reveal the truth about all political life, but all political life does not reveal that truth. This virtue of this scholarship is enhanced by its respect for the ambiguity of Thucydides' comments about the content of what his work will reveal.[23]

But even respecting the ambiguity of Thucydides' comments and acknowledging that qualitative distinction are insufficient. One still has to ask why Thucydides wrote a single political work about a single event. As noted, three broad answers exist. One can group these broad answers as Straussian in terms of those themes they think most fully reveal Thucydides' intent. And one can distinguish these readings from each other in terms of how they understand Thucydides to treat these themes. The manner in which he treats his objects of interest indicates his intention.

Straussian readings of Thucydides take their bearings from Thucydides' treatment of what is called the "Athenian thesis." [24] This (mostly) Athenian articulation of political behavior holds that all men and all political communities act in accordance with the motives of fear, self-interest, and honor, in the pursuit of the greatest political objects - freedom and empire. As a corollary, this thesis maintains that the stronger will always use their strength to their advantage in ruling over the weaker. Justice enters as a point of consideration only when the contending parties are equally matched in power.[25]

Contrary to those treatments of the Athenian thesis that understand its primary lesson to be the weakness of justice in the face of necessity -- that it teaches "might makes right" -- Straussian scholarship understands Thucydides to reveal the strength of

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[23] Forde (1989, 9); Orwin (1994, 4); Bolotin (1986, 8-9, 17).
[24] Forde (1989, 5 and 27); Orwin (1994, chapter 1); Bruell (1974, 12-3); Palmer (1992, 51); Bolotin (1986, 13-4, 17).
[25] Orwin (1994, 56, 104-5, 193-206); Bruell (1974, 13) and (1981, 26); Palmer (1992, 52, 55, 65); Bolotin (1986, 14).

the human attachment to justice. [26] So even when the Athenians articulate most forcefully the principle of acting in accordance with self-interest, as in the Melian dialogue, they ultimately understand themselves to be acting admirably. They thus implicitly understand themselves to act freely, in accordance with justice and nobility, as opposed to bowing to the compulsory power of fear and self-interest. But legitimate problems do confront justice. The most serious stem from the contradictions between what are taken to be the demands of justice. Put crudely, the concern for what is traditionally taken to be justice reveals that just attention to the common good earns one a just reward. But the pursuit of and concern for what one deserves on account of his attention to justice runs contrary to that requirement of justice that one look to the good of the whole (whether that whole is an army, a city, or all of Greece) and not merely the good of one's self.[27] Justice simultaneously requires that one seek the good of others as distinct from one's own good, and that justice also be what is good for one to seek.[28]

Behind this apparent contradiction, is the consistent argument, articulated by Diodotus, that human beings will always pursue what they perceive to be good for them. The sway of moral imperatives over human nature will always pale in comparison to the compulsory power of the apparent good, fueled as it is by the erotic longing for necessities (and even superfluities), by the hope for success and by the apparent prospects

[26] Forde (1989, 5,6, 9, 27; and for contrasting view of Melian dialogue see 27, 51); Orwin (1994, 53-6, 114, 196, 201); Bruell (1981, 26-8); Palmer (1992, 50, 52, 56, 60); Bolotin (1986, 14,19-22).
[27] Forde (1989, 7,9, 13, 27); Orwin (1994, 53-56, 114-8); Bruell (1974, 16-7); Palmer (1992, 9-10, 61); Bolotin (1986, 13, 18, 26, 27).
[28] The Athenian pursuit of empire reflects this contradiction because the Athenians ultimately understand their rule over fellow Greeks to be the just reward for their attention to the freedom and equality of those same Greeks. The just reward of imperial rule for their attention to the common good requires the essential abandonment of that concern that made them worthy of the reward in the first place. See Forde (1989, 27, 32-3, 38); Orwin (1994, 53-4, 174, 208); Palmer (1992, 9-10); Bolotin (1986, 18-9).

of good fortune.[29] And to blame men and cities for failing to restrain their pursuit of what they perceive to be their own good involves introducing the conflicting claim that restraining the pursuit of one's own good is good for an individual.

Thucydides reveals these lessons through his careful attention to political reality, through his truthful account of political life as it is. This means that the substance of his lessons is subject to his method of teaching them. And this means that the focus on his intent moves from the objects of his study to the manner in which he approaches them. Straussian readings tend to agree that Thucydides' emphasis on political reality does not limit his theoretical efforts. Political reality is disclosed most fully through his artistic treatment of speeches and deeds. This artistic treatment does not merely condense or clarify the historical truths that escape our limited vision because we do not live long enough or because we possess too narrow a perspective.[30] Rather, Thucydides' art serves a qualitatively different function: it creates those conditions necessary to reveal a truth that under all other conditions would remain concealed. The wisdom made possible by the *History* is possible *only* on the terms the *History* establishes. Put differently, their understanding of Thucydides' treatment of political reality, or his art, follows from their appreciation of the war's (and the work's) surpassing greatness.[31]

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[29] Strauss (1964, 231-6); Bruell (1974, 16-7) and (1981, 27-8); Orwin (1994, 146-168, 200-6); Palmer (1992, 62, 63, 116, 121); Bolotin (1986, 28-32); and for a slightly different view see Forde (1989, 43-4).

[30] For Edmunds, Thucydides' art captures within a single book a whole "cycle" of the interplay between chance and necessity that lasts longer than a human life (1975, 203). In the *History's* speeches, one sees his art through the combination of the "ideal" and "actual," a combination reflecting the two elements of the cycle. For Connor, Thucydides' art brings into specific relief the "minimal variations" that over time will constitute major historical progressions. For Pouncey, Thucydides' art turns a chronological laundry list of events into a unified story tracking his personal, transforming experience of the war (1980, 164). Thucydides' artistry merely amounts to the editing of a twenty-seven year documentary, revealing what all could see if they only had time and patience enough to watch the whole thing.

[31] To see more clearly the difference between this understanding of Thucydides' art and those discussed above, one should merely consult the differences between Hobbes's responses to Dionysus of Halicarnasus at 581 (in response to Dionysius' third objection) and 584 (in response to the charge of Thucydides' "obscurity") of his "Life and History of Thucydides" (1989). The thrust of Edmunds's, Connors', and

That Thucydides begins from political reality does not necessarily limit his theoretical interests. But this does not mean that his intent is primarily theoretical. One may understand the different Straussian readings of Thucydides' intent in terms of their differences regarding the *specific* role political reality plays in the *History*. Their differences with respect to Thucydides' approach to political reality (and thus his intent) correspond to whether they understand Thucydides to identify with Pericles or Alcibiades on the one hand, or with Diodotus on the other. Since these latter differences are more visible, I begin with them.

Steven Forde argues that Thucydides' intent is primarily practical. He claims that if "Thucydides' project is to educate or to make wise, it seems directed more toward perfecting future statesmen than toward creating future historians or writers on politics, more towards understanding the high and the low in practical politics than toward advancing the cause of a theoretical life for its own sake" (1989, 175, see also 11). The *History* provides this practical political education by revealing the inadequacies and inconsistencies of conventional moral categories. According to Forde, the relationship between Alcibiades and Athens illustrates most clearly some of the limits of conventional morality. In particular, this relationship forces one to reconsider the traditional view of the statesman's role within the city. And it does so because Alcibiades embodies most completely that shameless daring, that generosity of soul and that erotic love of freedom that distinguishes Athens. His character reflects the "individualism" and ambition behind Athenian imperialism; he is the greatest flowering of Athenian soil.

Pouncey's analysis stops at the explanation given at 581. Straussian readings tend to cover what Hobbes says at both 581 and 584. Of course, whether Hobbes is right remains to be seen.

While Alcibiades' triumphs represent the triumphs of Athens, his leadership poses a danger to Athens. He poses a threat not because he is tyrannical or inept. Rather, Alcibiades' tremendous virtues (including his capacity to benefit the city) and his profound attachment to what he believes he deserves on account of these virtues, threaten to place the statesman on a par with the community he leads, allowing him to place obligations on her just as the city traditionally placed obligations on her citizens. In short, Alcibiades' ambition *and* virtue threaten the city's status as the sole object worthy of devotion. And the problems facing Alcibiades are not limited to his relationship with Athens alone. They plague the very interests of Alcibiades himself. Alcibiades desires to rule Athens by himself through the open acknowledgement of his superior virtue. He desires to rule Athens in particular because of the city's fierce attachment to freedom and her devotion to public deliberation about the city's policies. But in the very acquisition of his desires – ruling *over* the Athenians without question - he must sacrifice what initially made ruling so desirable.

Alcibiades' fate is not parochial. It fate parallels Athens's fate. And his fate reveals the limits facing all political communities and all statesmen. Forde argues that the fate of Alcibiades (and thus the intent of the *History*) applies to all politics because his fate is exclusively political. This is because those qualities he embodies are exclusively political. Thus in Book I, Forde's Thucydides sketches the emergence of uniquely Athenian daring and erotic love of freedom out of original barbarism and penury. This daring and erotic love of freedom found their home in the city of Athens, making Athens the appropriate political response to these human qualities. The traits that belong to Athens find their fulfillment within a free city capable of preserving the freedom of her

citizens – that is, they find their satisfaction entirely in political life. They do not point beyond political life. Book I not only introduces the themes that unify the work, but it also introduces the horizon within which the rest of the work is to be read.

Book I's treatment of Athenian daring and erotic love of freedom reveals that the cause of the war is not so much Athenian imperialism as it is the Athenian character coming into its own on the political stage. And this means that the results of the war - the destruction of Athens's empire and the reduction of the city - are the effectual products of those characteristics that initially generated its empire and secured its freedom. One might think that such a conclusion (like the fate of Alcibiades) is tragic. Forde, however, does not think Alcibiades' fate is tragic because he claims Alcibiades possesses a semi-ironic posture towards politics. Moreover, the fate of Alcibiades' in Athens is not tragic because Alcibiades is liberated from an attachment to any one city. Finally, Forde does not think that political life is essentially tragic because Thucydides adopts a purely, or unremittingly political perspective – that of Alcibiades, who embodies at its peak that perspective. Thucydides' perspective in the *History* does not identify with that of Diodotus, whose policy recommendations must not be confused with Thucydides' own thought. But how can one identify with what amounts to an inconsistent political perspective when a consistent argument can be found within the pages of the *History*?

Forde argues that any attempt to take politics seriously on its own terms does not lead beyond itself to an alternative perspective from which it can then be rightly understood. The manner of approach, not the object of focus, distinguishes what Thucydides does from philosophic inquiry. It is in his treatment of political reality, of politics as it is and not as it ought to be, that he reveals his manner of approach.

According to Forde, political life as we experience it, and as it is portrayed in the *History*, is immediately accessible, immediately intelligible on its own terms. Political life does not present itself to us as in need of being understood from a broader, more comprehensive horizon. Part of political experience is the awareness that life in a political community is the most authoritative and most comprehensive human involvement. This is partly because the legitimate authority of every ruling political power rests on its understanding of what constitutes the greatest human goods and its ability to secure those goods for its citizens. Thus freedom, empire, and undying glory are the themes of the *History* - the high stakes of political action and thus human life.

Of course, injustice always plagues political practice and any objective picture of politics will need to capture this sad fact. But the existence of injustice and the shortcomings of moral imperatives do not mean that the greatest goods and highest peaks of political life do not exist or that they are not goods or peaks. Because the *History* represents political life within its own horizon, Thucydides does not provide sufficient distance from politics to make possible a critical evaluation of such ends. Even if Diodotus embodies the theoretical alternative to political action, and even if Thucydides himself does not "take at face value all the city's claims to seriousness" (1989 44), there is no way on the basis of the *History* to draw the conclusion that the contemplative life is superior to the life of political action. Thucydides preserves the greatness of those goods and the height of their peaks as they present themselves to us within the confines of the city. Thus his conception of political reality, how he treats the objects of his study, implies a refusal to sacrifice the goods and peaks of political life to whatever moral ambiguity plagues political excellence. This explains why Forde concludes that the

History is not tragic even though this work reveals that the city's most brilliant flowerings, the individual embodiments of the most political qualities, pose dangers to the community, dangers that must be removed to preserve the city's health.

For Forde, Thucydides may be said to identify with Alcibiades as opposed to Diodotus, with political life as opposed to the contemplative life, and thus with the mass of men who are not philosophers. For these reasons one may understand Thucydides' work to be humane even though it details at great length the exigencies and vicissitudes of the political world. The very title of Clifford Orwin's *The Humanity of Thucydides* (1994) suggests a similar conclusion. But for Orwin, Thucydides' intent is not exclusively practical. It is primarily theoretical. But while the *History* may be primarily theoretical - even philosophic - Orwin refrains from supplying the reader with Thucydides' philosophic motivations. Orwin's understanding of the specific role of political reality in the *History* seems to ground his reticence in this matter.

From the outset, Orwin's analysis starkly contrasts with Forde's. According to Orwin, "Thucydides seeks to articulate an understanding of human affairs that transcends that fostered by any regime. His study is comparable to that of Plato or Aristotle, or any other of the greatest political thinkers" (1994, 11). Such comments, and his treatment of the *History*, reveal that Orwin understands Thucydides to view politics from a perspective outside of and superior to the political horizon. His intent seems primarily theoretical. But does he use this superior perspective to cultivate future writers of history? Does he try to introduce some of his readers to this perspective, and thus to the life outside of political activity?

Orwin claims that the *History* details the gradual development of the Athenian thesis from what one finds initially in Pericles' Funeral Oration. Like the other Straussians, Orwin finds Thucydides' treatment of this thesis to reveal inconsistencies, contradictions, and unrecognized hopes. In justifying their deviation from justice on the grounds of necessity's compulsion, the Athenians reveal an attachment to justice and in their defense of themselves as the plaything of compulsion display a "wish for an ultimate triumph over necessity" (1994, 199); in their constant (and favorable) distinction between narrow Spartan self-interest and Athens's generous concession to necessity, they belie a concern for the noble; in their confidence in reason's power and the superiority of what can be seen with one's own eyes, they reveal a hope about what remains unseen; and their candid disregard for the gods when defending their empire ultimately points to the pious longing for the gods to reward the virtue of the just.

While he begins with the political vision articulated by Pericles, Orwin does not understand Thucydides to identify with Pericles or Alcibiades. Orwin identifies Thucydides' perspective with that of Diodotus. According to Diodotus men will always long for certain goods and this will be fueled by the hope for success and by the role of chance (by the very fact that failure is not certain). The danger is that under the undue influence of their passions, their hopes and the prospects of success, men and cities will pursue what is either impossible to attain or what is not in their interests. The only way to avoid this danger is to understand both what is possible and what is in one's interests. One must understand the limits of politics and the limits of human nature. But such understanding reveals that men and cities tend to be impervious to reason. Viewed from

Diodotus's perspective, political life appears to be a madhouse with the inmates running the asylum.

In the end, the kind of political moderation Diodotus advises – action in accordance with knowledge of what is and is not possible – does not find much of a home in the city or in political life. To acquire and maintain the kind of moderation embodied in Diodotus's speech requires a life outside of political action. The internal contradictions of the political arguments throughout the *History* point the reader in this direction. Is this, in the end, Thucydides' highest intention? Orwin refuses to take this step when addressing why Thucydides may have written his possession for all time. One might be inclined to think that the bulk of *Humanity's* insights point to this conclusion and that Orwin backs off out of a desire not to appear dogmatic. But Orwin's reticence here may be supported by arguments he puts forward regarding the specific role of political reality in Thucydides' work.

Like so many of the preceding works, Orwin's understands Thucydides' presentation of political reality (his truthful account of politics as it is) to be the solution, or part of a solution, to a problem the *History* also presents.[32] For Orwin, the problem facing the reader's political education concerns the tension between depending on hearsay about the most important matters, which includes "the basis of received authority – of hearsay which is, on the basis of hearsay, preferred to all other hearsay" (1989, 350) -- and the thoughtful man's need to rely on what he can see and judge for himself. This tension arises in the *History* when Thucydides asserts, on the one hand, that the war on which his work's permanent utility depends is greater than all wars that preceded it, and

claims, on the other hand, that one may not know with certainty the truth about the most ancient things. If we cannot be certain about the war's greatness, can we share Thucydides' confidence in the usefulness of his work? Thucydides elaborates this problem, according to Orwin, in I.10, where he shows how inferences can be made about the past in view of the truth about the present. The question becomes how one uncovers the truth about what is before our eyes.

Orwin understands Thucydides to provide an answer through his treatment of the speeches in the *History*. In his embellishment of the speeches, Thucydides contributes to the general scheme of an actual speech those things necessary to reveal the truth about the speech. In other words, Thucydides does not make the speech truer by adding "the things needful." He adorns what actually happened to elicit the truth of what happened.[33] Because his adornment serves the truth, Thucydides surpasses the poets, whose beautification of the truth distorts the truth. He is thus able to reveal the truth about how men are, and thus the truth about how men were. In reading Thucydides' speeches one does not have to sacrifice the superiority of seeing for one's self in order to know the truth about the past. Through his treatment of the speeches Thucydides transcends those understandings of human affairs "fostered by any regime" (1994, 11; see also 1989, 351, the turn to philosophy in particular) and leads the reader to an understanding in accordance with the nature of things.

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[32] Again, for some, this truthful account meant revealing the cycle of human affairs, for others it meant revealing the complexity of history and the infinitesimal variations that characterize it, and for yet others it meant showing the internal limits facing the integrity and objectivity of all human meaning.

[33] Thucydides observes both the "arguments advanced by the actual speaker" (Orwin 1989, 355) and the need to bring out more fully the truth of the speech. His embellishment makes the speeches "apt to convey to the discerning a deeper understanding of the war as a whole or war in general, or...the speaker's own comprehensive grasp of the situation that he confronts" (ibid. 358).

But Orwin leaves Thucydides' adornment of the truth to the speeches. When it comes to the deeds, Thucydides apparently aspires to perfect objectivity, mistrusting the reports of others and even his own opinion as to what happened "in order to achieve exactness" (1989, 353). Clearly, the deeds and speeches are to be read together (see ibid. 358-9), with the embellished speeches serving "our comprehension of the unadorned facts" (ibid. 359). But then why not also adorn the facts? Might it not be Thucydides' insistence on the objectivity of fact, on exactness, on impartial accuracy that obstructs our understanding of Thucydides' intent as an effort to cultivate future political philosophers?

The apparent insistence on factual accuracy may obstruct such an understanding of Thucydides' intent because this representation of what happened embodies political life as "statesmen and citizens live it ... as a domain in itself, intelligible in its own right"(1989, 345). After all, as Forde argued, politics as a domain in itself does not lead beyond itself to some superior perspective. The very concern with politics as it is (which is intelligible in its own right) embodied in Thucydides' treatment of the deeds, may undermine the claim that Thucydides intends to draw future students to the study of philosophy. His treatment of the deeds may explain Orwin's reticence to conclude that Thucydides primarily intends to "help" "those who in their concern for the truth most resemble himself" (1994, 205). At any rate, Thucydides' treatment of deeds presents that element of the *History* that least fits traditional conceptions of philosophic examination.

All of the preceding comments about Thucydides' methods and the tension between the need to rely on hearsay about the most ancient things and the superiority of seeing for one's self are drawn from Orwin's treatment of relevant aspects of Book I. Book I presents the problem Thucydides will solve, the means by which he will solve it,

and the criteria by which he surpasses the poets. And as one sees in Chapter 2 of *Humanity*, the narrative and the speeches that follow Thucydides' statements of method introduce the polar themes of justice and compulsion, between which themes the drama of the *History* will unfold. Book I introduces the outline of the trajectory by which one can move from politics as we experience it and see it to a more coherent experience and a more objective view of political life from which politics can be rightly understood.

I began my account of the secondary literature's treatment of Thucydides' intent by focusing on how each author understood the practical and theoretical elements of the *History*, considerations I introduced through a glance at Hobbes's comments on Thucydides. It should be clear that the competing interpretations of Thucydides understand whether his intent is primarily practical or primarily theoretical in one of two ways: either they understand Thucydides' intent in terms of the objects he focuses on or they understand it in terms of the manner in which he treats the objects of his interest. For each approach one finds scholars on different sides of the theoretical-practical fence. But whereas some understand Thucydides' manner or method to supply the basis for his philosophic (and thus not merely historical) intent,[34] Hobbes seems to view Thucydides' manner as the basis for distinguishing philosophy from history. Thus he claims that "Digressions for instruction's cause, and other such open conveyances of precepts, (which is the philosopher's part), he never useth; as having so clearly set before men's eyes the ways and events of good and evil counsels, that the narration itself doth secretly instruct the reader and more effectually than can possibly be done by precept." (1989,

[34] As seen in Orwin above and as I will show in the treatment of Leo Strauss below. The analyses of Bruell, Bolotin and Palmer also understand Thucydides' intent to be primarily philosophic. I set aside a direct analysis of Bruell, Bolotin, and Palmer because their conclusions are largely covered by Strauss' exhaustive work. I do not adopt Palmer's assumption that one should begin by assuming Thucydides is a

575). Philosophers instruct by open precept, historians instruct through secret narration. If this is true, then however we understand Thucydides' intent (whether as practical or theoretical) we must understand it as distinct from philosophy. A closer look, however, suggests that Hobbes blurs this distinction.

As noted, according to Hobbes, Thucydides secretly instructs through narration. This "secret instruction" seems to be addressed to the narrow audience to whom the lessons of the *History* are fully disclosable – the wise who can penetrate into the "characters of men's humours and manners" (1989, 584). It is not the manner that is obscure as much as it is the subject with which he is concerned – the characters of men's humours and manners. According to Hobbes, Thucydides writes about this "obscure" matter in such a way "that the common people might not understand him...that wise men only should be able to commend him" (1989, 584). But is this concern only the preserve of historians? Might not Plato and Aristotle also want the commendation of the wise, as opposed to the common people? Might they not therefore be compelled to write about these obscure matters? Moreover, it seems reasonable to assume that philosophers as well as historians are concerned with men's humors and manners, and consequently they too must secretly instruct even if they do not employ narrative. Hobbes himself writes on the characters of men's humours and manners, a study which, as he says, his audience can only judge through introspection – that is, not through open demonstration (*Leviathan*, Introduction, sec. 3-5).[35] What Hobbes says about both the substance of what his *Leviathan* will reveal and the substance of what the *History* will reveal are remarkably

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political philosopher (1992). Such an assumption obscures the novelty of Thucydides' work, especially with respect to how political history relates to political philosophy. It thus obscures his intent.

[35] Compare what Hobbes says is required of those who read men's hearts in his Introduction to *Leviathan* and what Hobbes claims, quoting Plutarch, about what Thucydides' method does for and requires of the

similar. They would therefore seem to speak to similar audiences and employ similar "secret instruction" -- despite the fact that Hobbes teaches by way of precept, his mark of the philosopher.[36] In the end, secret instruction does not seem to stem from method simply as much as from the subject matter and the needs of the reader; both of these Hobbes and Thucydides share. If these observations are correct, then one must ask what (if anything) constitutes the difference between narrative and precept? What is the essential difference between Thucydides and Hobbes?

These observations are not sufficient to conclude that Hobbes thinks Thucydides is a philosopher. But his comments do blur the distinction between philosophy and history. This is important. In blurring this distinction, Hobbes suggest that Thucydides' intent is not only primarily theoretical, but philosophic in character. Of course, we should not hang our interpretive hat on these few observations. After all, even if this is the correct conclusion about Hobbes's understanding of Thucydides, what does this tell us about Thucydides himself? Is Hobbes right? Leo Strauss is the one modern commentator who does the most justice to the ambiguous relationship between Thucydides' apparent historical interests and apparent philosophic interests. Strauss's work on Thucydides' intent captures that ambiguity we find in Hobbes's understanding of Thucydides. And Strauss does so without abandoning the attempt to identify the distinctive character of political history.

I noted above that one could understand the differences among Straussian readings of Thucydides' intent in terms of the specific role they gave to political reality in

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reader ("To the Reader," xxii). For a more "recent" statement of this view, see Bury's comparison of Thucydides and Machiavelli (1909, 143).

[36] I am aware of the apparent tension between what Hobbes says is required to see the truth of men's hearts and the open-precept approach he seems to employ in the *Leviathan* (Introduction). This may merely mean

their interpretations. I also noted that these differences corresponded to whether they understood Thucydides to identify with Pericles or Alcibiades or Diodotus. According to Strauss, Thucydides may be said to identify with Diodotus's perspective; his chief intent therefore is philosophic. This would suggest that Orwin and Strauss come to similar conclusions.[37] But Strauss seems to go farther in exploring the character of Thucydides' Diodotean moderation.

According to Strauss, Thucydides' moderation is an intellectual moderation. This moderation not only concerns what is and is not politically possible, but what is and is not intellectually possible. It ultimately consists in the awareness of those conditions under which political knowledge is possible, and thus also of the limits facing the pursuit of the clear truth about human things (1989, 80 and 1964, sec. 9). For present purposes, Strauss's argument can be divided into three steps. The first step concerns Thucydides' attention to the character, importance and fate of law in the *History*. According to Strauss, law in the *History* is the political embodiment of right or justice. And by "law" Strauss means the laws that govern particular cities as well as those that govern affairs between cities (i.e., treaties; 1964, 179). It is the means by which political moderation enters political life (1964, 147-8; see here Sparta's moderation through her regime and its laws). The dignity of law stands or falls with the absolute or unqualified character of the

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that one has much work to do after comprehending his open-precepts. It may also mean he has different audiences.

[37] Both Orwin and Strauss understand the fate of political moderation to be a central theme in Thucydides' *History*. Both understand genuine political moderation, a moderation which distinguishes between what is noble and what is right on the one hand and what is pleasant on the other hand, to prove too weak to command legitimately men's obedience. Instead of that political moderation embodied in Nicias and Sparta, both Orwin and Strauss understand Thucydides' moderation to consist in "conduct in accordance with the nature of human things" (1964, 229), a moderation which depends on understanding the limits to political justice. But in what then does Thucydides' moderation consist? Orwin's *Humanity* seems to stop with the shortcomings of political right, and the resulting suggestion that the contemplative life (a la Diodotus) may offer a more consistent and more coherent alternative.

right it articulates. It is the lack of qualification, or at least law's pretense to avoiding qualification, that supports its claim to the citizens' unquestioned obedience. But as I noted, according to Strauss, the *History* shows that genuine political moderation is not possible. The right or justice embodied in law is, in fact, susceptible of qualification.[38]

This becomes important to Strauss's conclusion about Thucydides' intellectual moderation because Strauss understands the right embodied in law to make possible those distinctions that stand at the core of human life and thus at the core of human understanding. Specifically, Strauss understands law to make possible rest, Greekness, and war (1964, 178-9). And if rest presupposes and issues in motion, and justice presupposes and issues in injustice (and so Greekness in barbarism, peace in war – 1964, 190; 1989, 82-3), then law issues in both war and peace, rest and motion, and so on. Of course, this is only the case, according to Strauss, if one considers the question of right independent of the gods. The gods seem to serve as guarantors of that unqualified right embodied in treaties, a right that does not issue in or presuppose injustice (1964, 191). If treaties make possible Greekness, rest and war, then the gods also stand as guarantors of the clarity of the distinctions following from law (i.e., rest that can be understood completely independent of motion; justice that can be understood apart from injustice – an unqualified, absolute, justice as such).

Because these distinctions point to the core of human life, law seems partly responsible for the coming into being of that core.[39] But law does not by itself issue in

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[38] See his comments about the importance of permanently binding covenants to Thucydides at *City and Man,*(1964, 191). The conclusion at 191 follows in part from what he says about the character of right at *Natural Right and History* (1953, 101-3, 104-7), which law is to embody.

[39] This appears to follow from what Strauss says about treaties at 178 (1964) and what he says about human nature as the ground of its effects at 159. Also see Strauss 1989, 83 – the biggest movement presupposes the biggest rest, the biggest war the biggest peace, Greekness - barbarism, speech - deed. Understanding these is to "grasp fully the whole of human life" (1989, 83).

justice. Laws, or at least treaties, are only possible if there is a presumption of justice between the parties to the covenant. A sense of what constitutes justice precedes treaties. The fate of right and thus of law in the *History* concerns the fate of those distinctions that give life to and thus direct politics. Just as one learns that the right embodied in laws and treaties is susceptible of qualification, so one also learns that those distinctions at the core of political understanding are also susceptible of change (1964, 146-7). One might also reverse this. If law itself makes possible war, Greekness and rest that presuppose and issue in their opposites, then this might indicate that the presumption of right behind the law possesses a similar character, a justice presupposing and issuing in injustice. This particular fate of law would compel one to understand the issue of right "entirely by itself" (1964, 190), apart from the gods. If so, then this might explain why the very distinctness of these articulations of right and wrong can get blurred (see 1964,178, the "confusion" *of*, not over or about, the treaty; see also 1964, 146-7 and Thucydides I.146), why the clarity of the distinctions is not vouchsafed. This character of human understanding may serve as a commentary about the authority behind laws.[40] To give just one example, it may be impossible to understand fully something like a justice that does not issue in and presuppose injustice – a justice as such, unqualified or absolute justice. To the extent that human understanding is essentially political, and thus depends on the clarity of such distinctions, one learns the limits facing human understanding. Awareness of and respect for such limits in his own intellectual efforts seem to constitute

[40] This line of argument follows from what Strauss says, on the one hand, about Thucydides' taste at 146-7, the upshot of which is that something is understood in terms of its relation (or "kinship") to what is like it (as well as its opposites and what is like its opposites) and what he says, on the other hand, about what treaties make possible (cf. Strauss 1964, 190, the "kinship" between injustice and motion, and justice and rest; also fn 56). And this needs to be connected with the fate of treaties in footnote 38 ibid. If things are only understood in their relation to one another, and if that which makes these relations possible is capable of change, then the relations may change, and thus the manner in which we understand them may change.

Thucydides' moderation, or what Strauss calls the "chaste character of his piety" (1964, 153).

This brings us to the second step. One has to ask why Strauss considers law to be so important for political understanding, or rather how it is that treaties make possible distinctions like Greekness and barbarism, rest and motion, and peace and war? Why is it that law is responsible for the coming into being of those distinctions necessary for political understanding? It should come as no surprise to discover that Strauss does not answer these questions explicitly. After all, he contends that wisdom cannot be said or spoken (1964, 230-231; 1989, 91). According to Strauss, Thucydides' wisdom consists in the unity of the universal and the particular, of speech and deed (1989, 80-1). And according to Strauss, law embodies the unity of speech and deed, the universal and particular (1964, 179; 1989, 94). If law's ability to make possible those categories necessary for political understanding requires such unity, then perhaps the wisdom behind this unity can only be grasped but not articulated. The question becomes how Thucydides indicates or points to this wisdom, this unity.

An additional difficulty arises in connection with this question. The truth about law depends on the origin or source of law. The question as to whether law secures genuine, unqualified political right, is the question as to whether it secures that right that is unchanging, or that is always (1953, 84). This means that the authority of law depends on law's relationship to those things that are always. Because those things that are always are necessarily among the first things, law's authority depends on its relationship to those first things that are always.[41] But, as Thucydides notes, certain knowledge about the most

[41] "From the point of view of the ancients, however, the question of origins is of decisive importance because the correct answer to it clarifies the status, the dignity of civil society and of right" (1953, 96).

ancient things is not possible. How then can Thucydides uncover the truth about the law? This is the same question confronting his so-called certainty about the greatness of this war.

Thucydides' solution to all of these problems is his treatment of political reality, or his art or manner of procedure – the third step. According to Strauss, Thucydides' art consists in his ability to reconcile the need to rely on hearsay about the most ancient things with the superiority of that evidence that one can see for oneself. That is, Thucydides can present political life as it is because he has clarified the origins of civil society and he does so by revealing the truth about the past in terms of that evidence we can see for ourselves. It should be noted that the desirability of seeing the truth for oneself is tantamount to the desirability of uncovering the truth by one's unaided human efforts. And this phrase "one's unaided human efforts" is itself a proxy for the pursuit of wisdom by unassisted reason, or what is known as philosophy. Now because Thucydides presents his insights through his speech (1964, sec. 4), he forces the reader to rely on Thucydidean hearsay. Both the speeches and the deeds of the *History* are subject to his art, or his speech. In this way, Thucydides gives speech primacy over deed, or hearsay primacy over seeing for one's self. In doing so, Thucydides appears no different than the poets (Thucydides' "contest *with* Homer" – not against him at 1964, 158; Thucydides and Homer on causes at 1964,182, fn. 49; and his "consummation of Homeric wisdom" at 1989, 80). Thucydides differs from the poets in the kind of hearsay on which he expects the reader to rely.

According to Strauss, Thucydides' "hearsay" or his speech (the artful treatment of speech *and* deed – 1964, 164, fn. 27 and context) enables the careful reader to see the

truth about those things to which we have no direct access because it imitates the true speech (as opposed to the political speech – 1989, 95), which is the incomplete speech. Thucydides' speech captures or reflects the true speech, the incomplete speech, because his manner of procedure – by including both speeches and deeds – preserves the dependence of deeds on speech, without eliminating speech's distortion of deeds (1989, 92). In other words, according to Strauss, the primacy of speech over deeds stems from the fact that speech reveals the causes of the deeds (the otherwise unstated intention behind an act); speech makes manifest what is immanifest. But the very fact that speech makes manifest what had hitherto been concealed suggests that speech is the first indication that anything had been concealed at all. In other words, if deeds are completely what they are only when speech makes the immanifest manifest (if the greatest war can be the greatest war only after speech has revealed the truth about what caused it), then speech is necessary to complete the being of deeds. Speech antedates deeds essentially (1964, 165; 1989, 92). It is thus primary *and* has primacy over deeds. In making the hidden causes of deeds manifest, speech reveals what had been immanifest and this revelation in the present allows for an investigation of the deed's status in the past. But this too is insufficient, since political speech (non-Thucydidean speech in the *History*) makes excessive and thus inaccurate judgments about deeds. Political speech aspires to an articulation of right and wrong that admits of no qualification. It aspires to capture a level of certainty and distinction between what is just and unjust (1964, 166) which seems impossible to attain, especially if treaties and the distinctions they make possible are susceptible of "confusion." Political speech thus brings into being deeds in a way that distorts deeds and thus distorts the clear truth about the past. Thucydides' speech corrects

this problem by revealing this problem; that is, by quietly revealing their mistakes, he points to the truth behind their mistakes (1964, 166).

This "secret instruction" rests in the details of Thucydides' presentation of political reality, his artful treatment of both speeches and deeds. The effectiveness of this art supplies the basis of Thucydides' confidence in the greatness of the war and the permanent utility of his work. And this procedure constitutes for Strauss the distinctive quality of political history as opposed to poetry. Political history reveals the character of political right, the relationship between right embodied in laws and political understanding, and how the fate of laws bears on the fate of political understanding, or the possibilities of political insight. Thucydides' political history thus offers its readers a sense of those conditions under which political investigations are possible. By presenting his "hearsay" in a way that allows the reader to see the truth about political things with his own eyes, Thucydides' "solution" justifies the possibility (and perhaps even desirability) of pursuing answers to the most fundamental questions by way of unaided human reason or political philosophy. In this way, he liberates his readers from the need to reexamine those conditions under which political philosophy can commence (1964, 141: Thucydides was "compelled" in his manner of procedure while Plato who followed was freer in his "art"). At its most historical, Thucydides' work also comes closest to being most philosophic.[42] In stark contrast to Euben's analysis, Strauss concludes that Thucydides' *History* provides the grounds from which one can raise the questions that animate political philosophy with greater clarity and urgency (1964, 239).

[42] For Strauss' treatment of the apparent differences between Thucydides and Plato see 1964 (99-102) regarding the status of the high and view of the whole; see 1964 (139-141) regarding hearsay and seeing for oneself, at 1964 (143) regarding the singular war vs. the singular life of Socrates, in 1964 (236-9) regarding archaeologies; between Thucydides and Aristotle regarding universals and particulars in 1964 (141-3);

The preceding argument about Thucydides' moderation is rooted largely in Strauss's appreciation of Book I. After all, as Strauss points out in several places, it is in Book I that one finds Thucydides' explicit comments about the role of speech and deed. It is also in Book I that he initiates the reader into his approach to the tension between hearsay and seeing for one's self. Book I thus introduces that particular Greek wisdom -- that insight into how to uncover the truth about the past without foregoing the natural superiority that belongs to seeing for one's self -- that issues in his political history. Book I also provides the connection between speech and causes, or the first things, and thus indirectly points the reader to speech's power to make visible what had hitherto remained out of sight. Book I is where Thucydides justifies his "superior" approach to the truth about the past. Finally, if one follows Strauss's understanding of political right and the character and fate of law embodying that right, then one must do as his analysis bids, and return to Book I to examine the importance of the treaty and its "confusion" to the war and to the development of Greekness, justice and rest. Strauss derives support for these observations from the composition of Book I as a whole (1964, 180-2).

My argument about Thucydides' intent owes much, both in general and in particular, to Strauss's interpretation. Of especial importance to my argument is Strauss's contention that the *History* is governed by the insight that wisdom cannot be said. But why can't wisdom be said? And if it can't, then how does this fact affect Thucydides' effort to lead students to wisdom about politics? I do not try to put into words what, according to Strauss, Thucydides thinks cannot be put into words. I try to show why he thinks that one cannot explicitly state such insights and I try to do so on the basis of Book

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between Thucydides and Hobbes regarding "silent conveyance," power politics and the humane see 1964 (143-5).

I. My effort becomes clearer in light of Orwin's conclusion about Thucydides' statement of methods (1989). He concludes that Thucydides' treatment of speeches and deeds serves the truth by adorning the truth. But Orwin does not make clear what that adornment consists in. Nor does he make clear why the truth is served by such adornment. One might therefore understand the following study to attempt to articulate the reasons behind Thucydides' manner of procedure, to explain why he thought it was necessary and desirable to proceed as he did, and thus to show how his particular insight into the truth about politics governed the selection and treatment of his work's unremittingly political content.

Several competing, and apparently equally plausible, interpretations of Thucydides' intent exist. In this chapter I have tried to show how the best of those interpretations understand Thucydides' intent and the place of Book I in establishing that intent. These interpretations range from understanding Thucydides' intent as primarily practical, to primarily theoretical, but curtailed in its efforts by its focus on practice, to a primarily theoretical and even philosophic. These differences correspond to different understandings of Thucydides' treatment of political reality. Some understand Thucydides' treatment of political reality to dictate Thucydides' practical intent, others understand it to serve as the basis for his theoretical interests, thereby effectively limiting such interests. And yet others understand Thucydides' specific treatment of political reality to serve as the basis for his philosophic intent. I noted at the outset that Thucydides' treatment of political reality (his manner of procedure or his art) follows from his assessment of the political and military events his work relates. The competing, yet apparently equally plausible, interpretations of Thucydides' intent therefore follow

from how the interpreters understand Thucydides' own assessment of the single political event his *History* relates. And this means their understandings of Thucydides' intent follows from how they understand his comments about the war's surpassing greatness and the permanent utility of his *History*. For this reason, among others, all of the various attempts at understanding Thucydides' intent understand Book I of the *History* to play a crucial role in introducing and establishing the character of that intent. This common trait lends support to the line of inquiry proposed earlier, and the conflicts among these interpretations make it necessary to take up this study anew. To examine Thucydides' intent we must consider how he treats political reality, and to do this we must begin with his assessment of the events his work relates. That is, we must begin with what Thucydides says about the greatness of the war and the utility of his work.

3

Thucydides' Problem: the Problem of Political History

I claimed in the first chapter that Thucydides wrote his political history about a single political event in order to preserve the possibility of a genuine engagement with and study of political life. Thucydides preserves these possibilities by offering a political education about politics. Such propositions about Thucydides' work and intent are anything but self-evident. To make such claims about the *History* is especially strange since it is almost completely devoted to the practical affairs of a single political event. Moreover, it is remarkably devoid of explicit teachings, to say nothing of commentaries regarding politics and knowledge or politics and its study. To come to such an understanding of Thucydides' intent as I claim one must understand the connection between politics and education or politics and science. But to understand this connection, one must understand what it means to say that Thucydides offers a political teaching about politics.

We can begin to uncover this "political" teaching about politics by first clarifying the unique character of Thucydides' work. To this end it helps to recall that most of the scholarship on Thucydides' intent approached the *History* in terms of Aristotle's distinctions among poetry, philosophy and history, distinctions Aristotle made in terms of their objects of focus. According to him, history differs from poetry and philosophy because history focuses on particulars (e.g., a particular war and its causes) while poetry and philosophy focus on universals (e.g., war as such or the causes of all wars). For the historian uninformed by poetry, philosophy and the universal standards to which they have access, the study of history must view all particulars as equally worthy of attention.

By adopting this approach from the beginning, one assumes an understanding of history and political history before one ever reads Thucydides. One assumes to understand him– who understood this war to be *most noteworthy (axiologotaton*, I.1) - better than he understood himself.[1] For such an approach, there exists no qualitative distinction between extraordinary politics and politics as one sees it at all times and all places.

If we are not to begin with these assumptions, then we should return to political history as Thucydides, the father of such history, presented it. The only reasonable starting point for such an inquiry into the question of political history ("What is it?") is what Thucydides chooses to tell us about his intent and what he says about the methods he employed. To prepare us to appreciate the importance of what is at stake in his conception of political history, and thus the importance of his explicit statements about his work, this chapter will proceed in three parts.

The first part addresses Thucydides' statements about his manner of procedure. The need to approach the war's greatness in light of his statements about his methods, as opposed to beginning with his statement of intent or his comments about the war's surpassing greatness, is dictated in the first place by our interest in the question of political history. But it is also the case that Thucydides' statements about his manner of procedure exert their full power only if one puts their character into specific relief. By allowing the curious character of his manner of procedure to emerge first on its own, independent of its broader context, this approach will better prepare the contemporary reader to accept the political and theological implications of his choice of method. Such a

[1] According to Bury, it was the Aristotleian school of philosophy which first attempted to address why people study history (or as Bury states it "antiquarianism") (1909, 245). But to distinguish a group of particulars from another group of particulars – as Thucydides does - on the grounds that one is more noteworthy than the other requires ranking them in terms of some universal standard. And according to

beginning possesses the further advantage that it appeals to that prejudice of the modern students of Thucydides (be they historians, political scientists, or classicists) in favor of beginning with method while at the same time highlighting the dangers that come from such a beginning. A complete look at his statement on method on its own helps establish that one cannot merely begin with "method."[2]

Part I will first clarify Thucydides' treatments of speech and deed by showing how those treatments are not as distinct as they initially appear. This part will then try to show what is at stake in his treatment of speeches (that it is a treatment of universals) and his treatment of deeds (that it is a treatment of particulars) considered on their own. It will therefore point out what is at stake for Thucydides' *History* in his failure to preserve the distinction between speech and deed, and thus in his failure to keep distinct universals and particulars. This should bear on our effort to understand how a particular work about a particular war can reveal universal lessons about human affairs. Of course, if this investigation of Thucydides' methods leads us to conclude that he does blur the distinction between speeches and deeds, such that he also blurs the distinction between universals and particulars, then what prevents him from saying this in his statements on method? We will begin to see an answer to this question at the close of chapter 4.

I address Thucydides' comments about himself and his intent in the second part. The opening sentences of the *History* connect his intention in writing to his

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Aristotle's distinction, this requires poetry or philosophy. It is reasonable to believe then that Thucydides knew why he wrote what he did.

[2] This approach is perhaps best contrasted with that of Rawlings. Rawlings, oddly enough, begins with the archaeology sketched in Book VI and understands Thucydides' treatment of Book I in light of his handling of the "second war" (following the peace of Nicias; 1981, 252, 255). Rawlings's approach becomes less surprising when one factors in his contention that "...Thucydides' work is indeed a possession for all time: once we have learned the proper method of analyzing and interpreting history we shall always have the tools with which to understand its lessons" (ibid. 261). For Rawlings, the concern with method takes

understanding of the war's greatness. But his opening comments about the war's greatness (I.1-2), as well as his "final" statement on the matter (I.23), lead us to wonder what, exactly, constitutes the war's surpassing greatness. Thucydides clarifies what is at stake in the question of the war's surpassing greatness, and thus what is at stake in his writing, when he addresses the inferiority of the wars related by the poets. A careful study of Thucydides' criticism of Homer's *Iliad* will reveal that he understands its authority to consist in its claim to reveal the truth about the divine origin of political justice. If Thucydides' *History* is to surpass Homer's *Iliad*, then it must reveal more completely the truth about political justice. Thucydides' sketch in the first 19 chapters of the genesis of political justice out of human neediness and the concern to possess certain goods, a sketch that identifies political justice with political power, clarifies the parameters of his contest with the poets. At the heart of this contest is the question "does political power, understood in terms of political right, have its origin in human nature or in the authority of the gods?" To begin to answer this question we must understand what he means by identifying political justice with political power. The second part of this chapter presents some preliminary considerations on this score.

The third and final part of this chapter ties together Thucydides' comments about his intent (and himself) and his comments about his manner of procedure through an investigation of his claims regarding the war's greatness. The surpassing greatness of this war as preserved by his *History* makes it more noteworthy than the Trojan War commemorated by Homer. And the surpassing greatness of Thucydides' work consists in his manner of procedure in relating the Peloponnesian War, a manner that surpasses the

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priority. The same holds true for all those approaches to Thucydides that interpret him using purely the tools of linguistic analysis. Tim Rood (1998) offers a prime example of such scholarship.

methods of Homeric poetry.[3] Thucydides' superiority to the poets consists in his power to reveal the truth about the human origins of political right or justice through his unique treatment of what men say and do. His superiority is thus predicated on his beginning from articulations of justice and injustice as expressed by contemporary political men, articulations of justice as power. By joining content and method, Thucydides joins his treatment of speech and deed with his substantive criticism of the divine basis of political right. He thus forces us to seek the connection between the blurring of universal and particular that his method effects and the grounds for his rejection of political right's divine authority that his work reveals.

I. Speech and Deed in Thucydides' *History* (I.20-22)

Thucydides opens his work by asserting the greatness of the war his work will relate. He then presents an historical survey of the most ancient times up to the present war between the Athenians and the Spartans. This survey ostensibly tries to establish the weakness of all past wars – or rather the inferiority of the past generally (see the difference between statements I.1.1 and I.1.2). Following what seems to be the justification of his subject as a matter most worthy of attention, Thucydides turns to how he will proceed in the coming history.

His work will contain both speeches (*logoi*) and an account of the deeds (*erga*) that happened before and during the war (I.21). Taking up the speeches first, Thucydides says that he had a hard time remembering both those speeches he heard himself and those others reported (I.22). No speech is recorded verbatim as it was delivered. Thucydides also does not merely rely on what he could best recall either of what he heard himself or

[3] On this point see also Orwin (1989, 346).

what others reported to him.[4] Moreover, he does not succumb to the vagaries of memory, letting the chips fall where they may. Thucydides sets down the speeches in accordance with two criteria: 1.) what things would seem to him most necessary (*ta deonta malista*) for a speaker to say given the circumstances in each case and 2.) the whole outline or sense of the speech (*xympasa gnome*). [5]

Each criterion has a different source. The "seemed to him"(*edokoun emoi*) indicates that the needful things (*ta deonta*) of what each speaker would say ultimately depends on Thucydides' opinion or judgment. Because the whole sense or outline of the speech establishes the parameters (*ekomeno hoti eggutata*) of how he set down what seemed to him, one can attribute the *xympasa gnome* to a source external to him, presumably the speech as it was actually delivered, or things having been truly spoken (*tone alethos lekthentone*). Thucydides may thus *add* to the speeches what seemed to him most necessary under the given circumstances, all the while sticking as closely as possible to the whole sense or whole outline of the speech that was given. What

[4] There are translation difficulties here (I.22.1). The Greek seems to support the reading that Thucydides emphasizes the difficulty *he* had in remembering the speeches he heard himself and in remembering those reported by others. Given Thucydides' talents, I do not think he means he alone suffers from memory loss (for a contrary view, see Pearson 1947, 41). But it is unclear how much stock to place in this apparent self-deprecation on Thucydides' part. The emphasis on *his* difficulty narrows the seeming to what seemed to Thucydides alone. The clearest thing one can say on this score is that what matters here, regardless or because of possible memory loss, is *Thucydides'* judgment.

[5] Thucydides' statement on his treatment of speeches and deeds is a notoriously difficult passage. Its exact meaning is thus highly controversial, especially with respect to what is meant by *xympasa gnome* and *ta deonta*. I concur with much of Clifford Orwin's analysis regarding what Thucydides has in mind in this passage (1989, 345-364). I do not agree with the basis of Orwin's understanding of *ta deonta* as necessary for making the speech truer (in particular his "narrow" focus on I.10 and context). I also do not share Orwin's strict distinction between Thucydides' treatments of speech and deed (ibid. 353). I shall explore this difference below. On the notorious difficulty of reading Thucydides' speeches see Finley (1942, 270). He writes that Dionysus of Halicarnassus "found the speeches extremely hard and said that few people at the time could have read them without a commentary. Cicero had gone even further, calling them scarcely intelligible." One cannot fault the knowledge of ancient Greek of Dionysus or Cicero since one *was* an ancient Greek and one *knew* ancient Greeks. See Dionysus' *On Thucydides*, 51, and Cicero's *Orator*, 9,30 as cited by Finley.

constitutes the basis for his addition of the things needful and what purpose that addition serves is not immediately clear from his comments.

When it comes to the deeds, Thucydides appears to eschew both what seemed to him and what seemed to others. Instead he pursues something akin to scientific objectivity by trying to account for the partiality (or favoritism, *eunoia*) and poor memory of those who delivered reports to him. He tries to rely only on what he saw himself (as opposed to what *seemed* to him) and what could be uncovered through his investigations. How successful he was in his investigations, or even what constituted these investigations, is unclear.

Much ink has been spilled over his statements on method, and little purpose would be served going over all of the relevant treatments here.[6] Suffice it to say that the vast majority of the literature understands Thucydides to provide distinct treatments for speeches and for deeds. On the basis of what he himself *says*, this certainly appears sensible. His explicit comments lead one to think that "what seemed to Thucydides" colored his treatment of the speeches more than his treatment of the deeds. He reserves his "art" for the speeches, while he treats the deeds "scientifically." What Thucydides *does*, however, regarding speeches and deeds calls this distinction into question. In fact, even the distinction he makes about those sources informing his composition of speeches is questionable.

A. Thucydides' Judgment and Historical Fact

Thucydides states that when he composed the speeches he looked to what was necessary for each speaker to say in every case under the circumstances (or "the things before one") he faced at the time of the speech. For this to be true, one must assume

Thucydides had a grasp on what constituted these circumstances. These would include who the speaker was, the post he held and the charges of that post. The circumstances would also include the make up of the audience, what the dispositions of the speaker and audience were towards the matter at hand as well as each other, the time at which the speech was delivered, and the specific policy under consideration. All of these are factual considerations.[7] Thus the *ta deonta*, which initially seem to owe their source exclusively to Thucydides' judgment also depend on those things that serve as the basis of the whole sense of the speech as it was delivered.[8] There is then an overlap between Thucydides' judgment and historical fact.

In the case of his treatment of the *xympasa gnome* (which as we have seen rests on those things that were truly spoken), Thucydides also seems to rely on what seemed needful *to him* – and not just the actual speech. For instance, he had to select which speeches to present and emphasize. Because facts as facts do not disclose their own importance, Thucydides' decision to present and arrange the *xympasa gnome* of some speeches over the *xympasa gnome* of others had to operate by a principle independent of the facts of any given speech. In other words, his judgment of what was important affected his treatment of the *xympasa gnome*; the "whole sense" was subject to his judgment. Finally, Thucydides was not present for every speech that he presents in the *History*. He had to rely on reports about the *xympasa gnome* of what was said. But nothing suggests that reports of the *xympasa gnome* of speeches were less subject to those vices that plague the reports of deeds (poor memory, partiality). On what basis then, aside

[6] Orwin (1989) presents a thorough analysis of the scholarly disagreements on this subject.
[7] For the objective or factual character of the *deonta* see Seth Benardete (1965, especially 293-8).

from his own judgment, could he base the whole sense of a speech as it was delivered? If the "whole sense" entirely depends on Thucydides' judgment – as it seems in some cases it must – then how could it serve as a *limit* on his judgment in composing the speeches? [9]

Nowhere in Book I does the influence of Thucydides' judgment on what was actually said emerge more clearly than in his comments preceding the Athenian envoys' speech at Sparta (72). Thucydides, who was not present, notes here the envoys' intentions in speaking before the congress at Sparta, part of which (their interest in demonstrating their power) appears nowhere in the envoys' own comments about their intention in speaking. If we are not to assume artlessness on his part here, then we must wonder why he chose to introduce the speech this way. If Thucydides' judgment is to be respected, then one must remain open to the possibility that he understands the intention of the speakers better than they do and he wants the reader to understand how these speakers fail to understand themselves. Or perhaps he wants to show us how the speech delivered contributes to their intention *properly* understood, as both he and the envoys may

[8] The very fact that there is an overlap in the composition of the speeches between Thucydides' judgment and what really happened does not change the fact that differences may exist between what may have seemed needful to Thucydides for an actor to say and what an actor said.

[9] It is interesting to observe that, if we allow ourselves to leave Book I for a moment, there are those speakers within the *History* of whom we have no other record and whose names and speeches suit their respective occasions in a manner that can only be described as artful. The name of one of the speakers in the Mytilenaean debate, Diodotus, means "gift of Zeus." What greater gift of Zeus could the doomed Mytileneans hope for than this Athenian's successful intervention on their behalf? But perhaps his greatest gift is reserved for the Athenians. After all, what could be a more divine gift for a city than the convergence of its self-interest (and the power to satisfy that interest) with what is right for it to pursue? Diodotus's call to preserve Athens's empire by giving revolted confederates an opportunity to capitulate coupled with his plea not to destroy the blameless (though perhaps not innocent) presents such a convergence (III.42-8). There is also the example of Euphemus (VI.82-2). It is a curious coincidence that a speaker so-named should present a moderate defense of Athens's presence in Sicily in terms of fear alone (as opposed to fear, honor and profit as in the envoys' speech at Sparta, I.75-76) when her very presence in Sicily stems from her most immoderate desires for honor and profit. In his essay "Thucydides' View of Athenian Imperialism," Christopher Bruell notes that in Euphemus' speech the Athenians are trying to renew an alliance "with a people who are among their intended victims. The situation seems to call for euphemism if not for a spokesman called Euphemus" (1974, 13). Might these speakers themselves be products of Thucydides' craft? Might these speeches, in their entirety, satisfy what would seem to Thucydides most fitting, or most needful, to say under the circumstances?

understand it. [10] Whatever the case may be - and the meaning of Thucydides' intervention here is widely disputed - it seems that his judgment of the speech governs the reader's consideration of any of the envoys' statements. It is perhaps even more accurate to say that the actual sense or outline of the speech is important only insofar as understanding it helps the reader bridge the gap between the envoys' candid comments and Thucydides' candid comments. In at least this case then, the *xympasa gnome* may be said to serve what was needful in Thucydides' view. [11]

It is unclear just how much of what seemed needful to Thucydides actually governed his composition of the speeches. One must be open to the possibility that "what seemed to Thucydides" plays a much larger role in both the speeches and the deeds than one might first suppose.[12] Of course, even if this is the case, there is no reason based on what he says in the text to assume either that the speeches have *no* basis in what actually happened or that the speeches as we find them in the *History* could not have been performed as he presents them. [13] But if the speeches could have been delivered as

[10] It is possible, after all, that the envoys had this as their intention, but left it out for obvious rhetorical purposes.

[11] Some commentators find other examples of Thucydides' art in the presentation of the *xympasa gnome* of Book I's speeches. They point to the first words of the first two speeches in the *History*. *Dike* (right or justice) introduces a speech by the Corcyreans that rests the majority of its arguments on necessity. *Ananke* (necessity) introduces a speech by the Corinthians that rests the bulk of its arguments on justice. Some see these two words as representing – and even introducing - the poles between which the drama of the *History* unfolds (Strauss 1964, 174; and Orwin citing him (1994, 38, fn21).

[12] Regarding how much of each (what seemed to Thucydides and the actual speech) goes into the composition of the speeches, Lowell Edmunds (1975, 169) splits the difference. On the pleasure afforded by Thucydides' artistic treatment of the speeches, see Bury (1909, 111-2.)

[13] In this case, I think Kagan's argument does the most justice to the political realism of Thucydides' work and thus the very real limits the *xympasa gnome* of actual speeches imposes on his treatment of speeches: "...no one has shown that there is a single speech in Thucydides ... that could not have been given in something like its Thucydidean form" (1975, 77). Kagan, however, goes too far in insisting on the importance of factual or scientific accuracy to Thucydides' credibility (ibid. 78 and 93). It may be sufficient merely to show that some deed or speech was possible, that it could have happened the way he presents it. But to say that some speech was possible does not mean Thucydides was bound to record events as they actually happened. See also Gomme (1937, 180); Dover (1973, 27) and Grene (1965, 23). De Ste. Croix explains Thucydides' deviation from the *xympasa gnome* in terms of the need to make the speeches more candid since "political and diplomatic speeches are seldomly entirely candid" (1972, 7).

Thucydides presented them, if they are not deviations from political reality, if they are not merely the result of his subjective artistry, then why add the *ta deonta* at all? Are the *ta deonta* artistic substitutes for verbatim speeches?[14] What is the connection between Thucydides' art and the "actual" events of the war his work relates?

Similar questions arise when one considers Thucydides' treatment of the deeds. First, his apparently objective account of the deeds must still rely on reports from others. He could not have been everywhere at once to see things for himself. He certainly was not in Athens during his twenty years of exile. Nor was he in Sicily to see the Athenian campaign there. But if reports of what happened can be corrupted by memory or partiality, then how will he be able to bring out the truth of the various reports of the deeds? Whom will he trust and on what basis? Thucydides does not say. Merely compiling a consistent account of the deeds from several reports does not solve the problem since the accounts could be consistently wrong. As with the speeches, narrating the deeds requires artful selection, arrangement, and emphasis, which is to say that the narrative of the deeds, like the composition of the speeches, also depends on his judgment about what deeds were important.[15] It could be then that Thucydides' truthful account of

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[14] For a different treatment of the *ta deonta*, see Edmunds (1975, 166-9) Finley (1942, 95-8): "...*ta deonta* are the instruments of conveying the tendencies of society and human nature on which alone foresight can be based," 294-6). See also Dover (1973) who contends that the *ta deonta* do not include Thucydides' judgment as to what was necessary (for the weak basis of his argument see 22). De Ste. Croix on the other hand thinks the *ta deonta* will appear as needful only to an "audience of Thucydideses" (1972, 12). In his "Contest" (1989), Orwin argues that the *ta deonta* manage to beautify or adorn the truth. Thucydides' adornment differs from poetic magnification because his adornments are adornments in the service of the truth, of bringing out the truth of the speeches and deeds. I agree. But Orwin never makes sufficiently clear what it is about the truth as Thucydides' understands it that requires his unique brand of adornment. He also never makes clear what constitutes that "adornment." What does adornment to serve the truth mean?

[15] One should consider that Thucydides tells us very little about the role of the Megarean decree in the cause of the war. The fact that Thucydides mentions this decree (three times in Book I) without detailing its importance sharpens the sense that Thucydides - fully aware of this decree - *rejects* this view of its importance. Rood contends that "For the moment, Thucydides' silence [on the Megarean decree], must remain our silence" (1998 215, brackets mine). This silence on an economic decree of such importance should prove troubling for Kallet-Marx's thesis in *Money, Expense and Naval Power*. Kagan (1969, 271

the deeds of the war required certain *ta deonta*, or what seemed to be needful to him, to be seen as true.

If all of this holds true then what happens to political reality, or speeches and deeds as they in fact happened? If things as they in fact happened do not serve as a limiting guide to the composition of speeches and the narration of deeds, then why be concerned with historical accuracy at all? One might try to support Thucydides' explicit concern for factual accuracy by claiming that apparent deviations from the *xympasa gnome* of what was said and apparent errors regarding what was done may yet be proven historically accurate through recourse to a more complete historical record. But Thucydides' insistence on the permanent utility of his work obviates the need for some additional, "more complete" historical record. Moreover, one does not escape the problem facing the "historicity" of Thucydides by relying on another historical document whose own veracity requires additional, external confirmation. One cannot reduce the permanent utility of the work to historical accuracy. If there are factual errors then factual inaccuracy must not affect the work's permanent utility.

One also gets no further if one tries to jettison the entire question of "historicity" and instead falls back on the claim that the entire work is merely the result of Thucydides' subjective perspective. [16] To do this one would have to ignore his insistence

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and ff as well as 321-25) provides an historical analysis of the Megarean decree. See also Finley (1942, 119-120). For Thucydides' contemporaries who understood the Megarean decree to be the cause of the war, see Aristophanes' *Acharnians* (lines 524-39) and *Peace* (lines 605-11, 615-18), Andocides (III.8), Aeschines (II.172-6), and Diodorus (XII.39-41), who also works from Ephorus. See also Plutarch's *Pericles* (29-32). Cornford contends that Pericles' imposition of the Megarean decree was due to the political power of the tradesmen based in the Peiraeus (1907, 30-2). Like much of Cornford's work on Thucydides, this position seems dubious.

[16] Or "Thucydides' truth" as Rawlings concludes (1972, 272). See also Hunter (1982, 102). Tim Rood (1998) makes just my point in his opening: "To see Thucydides' History as a fragmented and precise (or imprecise) assembly of facts is to ignore its interpretive function, its striving to explain what happened and what might happen: history never offers a neutral, value free account of what happened" (5). Rood's connection between Thucydides' treatment of the narrative and his intention in writing parallels my own

that in the construction of his *History* he did in fact look to what happened. It seems we must trust Thucydides' judgment that what happened did in fact happen as he relates it. If we are to take Thucydides at his word, then one should not think of history - as we find it in the pages of his work - as some neutral, stand-alone collection of facts that exists independently of his singular judgment. What should be important is Thucydides' judgment of what constitutes true history or that standard by which he judged the objective, or universal, truth regarding what men said and did in this surpassingly great war.[17]

B. The Distinction Between Speech and Deed

The previous section pointed to an overlap between Thucydides' judgment and what in fact happened. This overlap introduces an ambiguity into Thucydides' professed distinction between what seemed to Thucydides and what was truly said and done. This ambiguity makes Thucydides' profession of their difference all the more curious. Why does he insist on this explicit distinction when there is sufficient evidence within the account itself to call the severity of that distinction into question? We can answer this question if we briefly consider how the ambiguity of the distinction between Thucydides' judgment and what in fact happened bears on the distinction, made equally explicit, between speech and deed. If Thucydides blurs the distinction between his *treatment* of

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(see his comments about Thucydides' literary brilliance and his historical aims, 9). We differ however on the relationship between narrator and author (see his comments about works of fiction at 10). Rood's reading of Thucydides is also purely historical or apolitical (16). For a view closer to my own, see Parry (1973, 48) on the *auta ta erga*.

[17] On Thucydides' concern with the *akribeia* (accuracy) of deeds here, see Hornblower. He explains that *akribeia* "need not mean more than 'conformity with reality'" (1986, 37). This would seem to allow Thucydides considerable latitude in his treatment of the deeds. For a similar latitude in Thucydides' use of technical terms, see Hornblower's analysis on Thucydides' "vocabulary of evidence" (*marturion* (witness), *semeion* (evidentiary sign) and *tekmerion* (proof)) (1986, 100-9).

speeches and deeds – a distinction his comments insist upon - then perhaps the subjects of his treatment (speeches and deeds as he understands them) are not so distinct.

Prior to his statement on method Thucydides states that if one considers "the deeds (*erga*) done in this same war it will show itself to be greater than any of those having happened before" (I.21, brackets mine). Does he mean by this that the greatness of the war will reveal itself only in the events of the war and not in the speeches? If the war's greatness makes possible the *History's* permanent utility, then the speeches cannot be part of the work's usefulness. But if this were the case, what purpose would the speeches serve? Edmunds (1975, 150) argues that Thucydides employs speeches in his *History* to compensate for the lack of pleasure produced by his merely useful account of the deeds. Edmunds bases this claim on two points.

First, he claims that the speeches depend on a prior understanding of the deeds. But Thucydides never says this. Why is it not just as likely for a proper understanding of the deeds to follow from the speeches? Edmunds might have room to make a case, but he never clearly establishes the basis of deeds' primacy over speech or speech's dependence on deeds. He also never confronts the fact that the deeds of the war ultimately depend on Thucydides' speech if they are to exist for the reader (and thus be permanently useful). Second, according to Edmunds, Thucydides assumes it is unpleasant to hear a factually accurate account of deeds. Does this mean then the speeches, which are pleasant, are mythic and thus not accurate? Edmunds does not account for Thucydides' insistence on sticking as closely as possible to the gist of what was in fact said when composing the speeches. Moreover, if it is only the deeds which are useful, and thus serve as the basis for our education in "universals," then are we to conclude that Thucydides understands

education in universals – something he presumably thinks is good for us - to be unpleasant?

In the end, Thucydides never excludes the speeches from the work's utility. Indeed, the close tie between the work's utility and its greatness noted earlier demands that one understand the speeches to be a critical part of the war's greatness and thus the work's permanent utility. First of all, the speeches represent some of the most outstanding moments of the entire work. To see that this is the case, one should merely consider some of the more memorable moments of the *History* – the golden words of Pericles' Funeral Oration (II.35-46), the inspired humanity of Diodotus's call to save Mytilene (III.42-48), and Alcibiades' daring equation of his desserts with his city's benefits (VI.16-18). The greatness of these speeches rests not only in their rhetorical flourishes but in what they can teach us politically. These speeches reveal how some of the ablest political men attempt to resolve the greatest problems that cities anywhere can face. They point to political solutions and they hint at the limits of what is possible politically. They also shed light on a speaker's motives, his grasp of the situation before him and his understanding of his audience's psychological disposition. Such lessons are nothing if not useful for a student of politics. [18] Moreover, if we are to take seriously Thucydides' statements about the war's greatness consisting in the suffering endured (I.23), then the speeches, which give voice to such suffering (consider the Plataean's

[18] Marc Cogan (1981) presents a similar argument on the role of speeches in the *History*. But he goes further. According to Cogan, the speeches - and especially those eight cases where speeches are presented as part of a debate – are used to illustrate "policy decisions as deliberate choices...choices as initiating actions of change and movement can be perceived only by reference to some fixed point which renders the movement apparent" (5). They thus introduce and explain policies or radical departures in policies (ibid. 7). This understanding of the role of the speeches and the debates is critical to Cogan's view of the "movement" of the *History* as a whole (see his chapter 4).

piteous speech at III.53-9 or the hopeless "prayers" of Nicias at VII.61-4), must be included in the work's greatness and thus its permanent utility.

For further evidence that the work's greatness and utility includes speeches, one should compare the statement about the war's greatness as suffering (I.23) and the kinds of suffering men endured as detailed in Thucydides' narrative at II.48 and 50 ff, III.82-3, and VII.87. In each of these cases – the plague at Athens, the Corcyrean civil war, and the Athenian disaster in Sicily – the suffering of the men is expressed through lamentations, includes dejection of the mind, and involves an overturning of men's hopes and beliefs. In some of the more memorable episodes of the work then, speech makes suffering, and thus the greatness of the war, manifest. And in the case of the Corcyrean civil war, the physical suffering men inflicted on each other was partly the consequence of changes in speech, of changes in the meanings and referents of words. One should also consider the *changes* in the meaning of words in the Corcyrean civil war in the light of his comment about the war as the greatest motion *(megiste kinesis)* (I.1). Simply put, even Thucydides' narrative of the deeds testifies to the importance of speech, and thus the speeches, to the greatness of the war and the work that relates it.

Including speeches in the war's greatness would mean however that we consider speeches kinds of deeds, a species of the class deed. Is this so unreasonable? After all, the speeches delivered are themselves deeds. If the fundamental character of the war's speeches and deeds is, at bottom, deed-like (i.e., if they are both members of the class "deed," both "*erga*"),[19] then one might still distinguish them in terms of verbal deeds (Pericles' Funeral Oration) and non-verbal deeds (Pericles leading the siege against

Samos). But if this overlap between speech and deeds holds up -- like that overlap between what seemed to Thucydides and what in fact happened -- then one might wonder what kind of deed (*ergon*) the war is. After all, the war as Thucydides presents it seems to encompass both speeches and deeds as fundamentally *erga.* And yet Thucydides insists on the genuine differences between what men say and what men do. If the *ergon* that is the war encompasses both speeches and deeds, and if we are to take seriously Thucydides' insistence on a distinction between what men say and what men do, then we must be open to the possibility that the war as an *ergon* is qualitatively different than the non-verbal deeds that Thucydides distinguishes from the speeches at I.22. The war may be that particular deed that transcends, or cannot adequately be understood with reference to the criteria that differentiate verbal from non-verbal doings.

But what kind of deed is it that transcends, or cannot be understood with reference to, those terms that distinguish deed from speech? How does one understand the war as belonging to a class that subsumes speech and deed without sacrificing their differences? Whatever the case may be regarding the class to which war belongs, it is clear that the verbal character of speech distinguishes it from otherwise "pure" deeds. The war's speeches, as verbal doings, thus seem a step removed from "doings" of the actors that are deeds without qualification. The verbal character dilutes or modifies their status as "deeds." The deeds of the war are therefore more fundamentally deeds than the speeches of the war. When it comes to the war itself, *ergon* is primary to *logos*- like *ergon*. Every

[19] For the "original" statement of such a position, see Hobbes's comments that the "speeches are of the contexture of the narrative" in Hobbes's *English Works*, VIII. 8. See also 16-17, 18, 19 and 22. See also Macleod (1983, 146).

political action the *History* relates, from sieges to orations, is fundamentally *ergon*; the very character of political life seems fundamentally *ergon*. [20]

This, of course, is not the end of the story. Deeds as they exist in the *History* require speech to come to life. There is no deed in the *History*, no deed of that surpassingly great war, that exists outside of the speech required to relate it. In fact, some deeds are only deeds to the extent that they are captured in speech, like treaties and letters.[21] Moreover, Thucydides' use of the distinct forms that one might reasonably reserve for speeches and deeds (direct discourse and narrative, respectively) calls the verbal/ non-verbal distinction between speech and deed into question. As William West's essay points out,[22] speeches in the *History* exist in direct discourse (as distinct from the deeds) and in indirect discourse. While all direct discourse is reserved for what men say, not everything in indirect discourse is a speech. Indirect discourse relates what men said as well as what they thought, judged, perceived, heard, desired and so on. In other words, the treatment of speech shares a manner of relating with those actions (perceiving, hearing, desiring, etc.) that are not necessarily verbal. Thucydides also reports some speeches in the same *narrative* breath that he reserves for the deeds of the *History* (see

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[20] For a similar view of the *logos-ergon* antithesis, see Parry (1973) as well as his doctoral dissertation "*Logos* and *Ergon* in Thucydides" (1957). Lionel Pearson (1947, 37) notes that the difference between what Thucydides says and does with respect to speeches and deeds calls the distinction between the two into question. But on the basis of this observation Pearson concludes, I think mistakenly, that one must offer a further division of erga: recorded facts and those requiring personal judgment.

[21] See Leo Strauss (1989, 94).

[22] West (1973, 3-15). See also Dover (1973, 23); See Rood (1998) and David Gribble (1998) for deft treatments of the way in which traces of Thucydides' judgment and that of his actors can be found in his handling of the deeds. On the blurring between speeches and narrative see Gribble (ibid, 47). Connor, writing long before Gribble and Rood notes that, in the wake of "recent" work by classicists on Thucydides, "Thucydides may have left [his principles] 'out of the picture' but the frame, composition, the subject matter and the coloration of the picture all derive from them." Thus "the text is often the best possible commentary on itself" (1978, 298). This is perhaps the best response to Hornblower's deprecation of Thucydides' theoretical influence, noted above.

Themistocles' speech I.91, the first chronological speech in the *History*; Pericles' second "speech" at II.13, Pisander's speech – the last speech of the work at VIII.53).

Finally, Thucydides' *History* is itself the result of a deed, a life's activity devoted to bringing the Peloponnesian war into being through speech. It is in speech then that a permanently *useful possession* - a tool made of speech to perform some deed - exists. The "deed" (or might it be more accurate to say "activity?")[23] that this tool is to be useful for (I.22) is itself speech-like in character. It is speech-like because the investigation (*skopein*) into the truth of those things that have happened and will happen is, because of its focus on what might have happened and might yet happen, ultimately theoretical or speculative. The truth of these things can only exist in speech. Whereas the *ergon* that is the war governed the speeches delivered during it, Thucydides' *logos* governs the deeds that it relates. Because these deeds owe their existence to, or come to light for the reader through speech, they take on a fundamentally speech-like character. Speech – at least Thucydides' speech understood as both what he says and does- takes primacy over those deeds that are subject to it.

The speech of the *History* then cannot be understood with reference to those criteria that distinguish the speeches from the deeds of the actors in his *History*. It transcends the criteria that distinguish verbal doings from non-verbal doings because it imposes on the deeds it relates an essentially speech-like character. Perhaps this explains how Thucydides can insist on distinct treatments of speeches and deeds even when the action of his speech ignores that distinction. His statements about the speeches refer to those speeches that are delivered by the actors of the *History* and possess a deed-like

character. They do not refer to his own speech. [24] Thucydides never speaks openly about his own speech.

Only if one takes seriously both Thucydides' statements about his methods *and* how he goes about treating them can one can be confident that Thucydides' *logos* and the *ergon* that is the war are qualitatively different from the verbal and non-verbal doings his work relates. By being qualitatively different, his speech gains a distance from the speeches of the actors. By being confident in this "distance" one can also be confident that Thucydides' speech, being qualitatively different from the speeches of the actors in the *History* and yet clearly governing the *History* as a whole, serves as a commentary on the status of the distinction between verbal and non-verbal doings noted at I.22.

We can now present a possible answer to that question posed at the beginning of this section (Why does Thucydides insist on the explicit distinction between his treatments of speech and deed when there is sufficient evidence within his account to call the severity of that distinction into question?). Thucydides might insist on the explicit distinctions between speech and deed and between his treatment of speeches and deeds, even as he acts to the contrary, in order to bring to light the character of such distinctions. This answer may also supply the necessary insight for understanding Thucydides' use of *ta deonta*. What seemed needful to Thucydides under the various circumstances may have been what was required in his view to reveal the truth about the distinction (or lack of distinction) between speeches and deeds. This "answer" – that Thucydides' speech sheds light on the distinction between the speeches and deeds of the actors in his *History*

[23] Aristotle provides an account of activity (*energeia*) that differs from action (*praxis*) simply. One should see *Nicomachean Ethics* X.6 and *Politics* VII.3. Might Thucydides' work be rightly seen as something useful for an activity, so understood, and not an action?

- may offer the best hope for reconciling the apparent differences between what Thucydides says and what Thucydides does without forcing us to discount any of his explicit statements.

At this point one must ask, "Why doesn't Thucydides raise explicitly *as a theme* the character of these distinctions?" Why is he so subtle in revealing that his own speech might supply a commentary on the status of the distinction between speech and deed? It may be that the truth regarding speech and deed can only be revealed through the manner Thucydides adopts. After all, if Thucydides' speech eschews (for whatever reason) the strict distinction drawn between the speeches and deeds of the *History's* actors, he can hardly be expected to draw the distinction between his speech and the speeches and deeds of the war so distinctly.

We should recall at this point that the character of Thucydides' speech, the character of Thucydides' manner of relating the Peloponnesian war, is at the heart of this initial foray into the character of political history. Political history, understood here both as Thucydides' statement on his methods and how he employs his methods, comes to sight as a commentary on the character of what men say and do. But precisely for this reason, we have to ask what exactly is at stake in the differences between the speeches and deeds of the war and Thucydides' speech. If Thucydides' speech as a whole serves as a commentary on the character of the speeches and deeds he relates, then in what does his commentary consist? What is so important about the distinction or lack of distinction between speech and deed that it calls forth a work detailing the events – from the most insignificant to the grandest - of a single war?

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[24] One should consider that his comments about *erga* at I.21 refer to the war he has yet to relate and they follow 20 chapters of Thucydides' own speech. For a different reading see Edmunds's comments on I.22.4

C. Thucydides and the Poets and Prose-writers: The Importance of Thucydides' Ambiguity

Before turning to the archaeology, we must understand what is at stake in Thucydides' ambiguous treatment of speech and deed. One must keep in mind that Thucydides' statements about how he will proceed in his *History* come in the midst of his attempt to distinguish his work from the works of the poets and prose-writers. Thucydides distinguishes himself from the poets on the grounds that the truth of what they compose is unverifiable. The claims embedded in their works are predicated on privileged access to the ancient past, a kind of access which their listeners, including Thucydides, do not possess. If the truth of the claims found in their works do not admit of verifiability -- and Thucydides denies that they do -- then one must accept on trust their claim to possess such privileged access. But in his own claims regarding this war's surpassing greatness, Thucydides himself lays claim to access to the ancient past. Thucydides thus separates himself from the poets and prose writers on the grounds that the truth of his work, which must also rest on authoritative knowledge about the past, will lend itself to verification. It will not rely on trust; it will allow his readers to see for themselves the truth of his work. Thucydides' access to the ancient past must come from a different source than the poets' privileged access. That source is the unique character of this surpassingly great war. Of course, one must eventually square his certain claims about the character of this war (dependent as they are on knowledge of the inferiority of all past wars; see I.1, 21, 23) with his equally confident claim that the clear truth about the past cannot be known (I.1.2).

1. Pleasure and One's Own

(1975, 156) as well as my comments on Orwin (1989) throughout.

Thucydides never explicitly mentions trust as the basis of the poets and prose-writers' authority. He does, however, mention that most men pursue the truth carelessly (20, beginning and end). They usually believe whatever explanation is nearest to hand and trust in accounts of events before their own time without examination. This tendency to believe what is closest to hand is especially true in the case of those stories having to do with one's own country. This means most men take as true those accounts of the past supplied by local custom and local tradition. And the closer to hand an account of the past is, the more authoritative or credible its interpretations of the past. Those stories that are closest, which are most embedded in one's common life, which are accepted as a matter of course, are those stories that have been around the longest or those that are oldest. The oldest accounts of the past tend to be accounts about the oldest things, or about the first things, those things that are always. As such, these accounts tend to be things that men have not seen for themselves, accounts that must rely on hearsay.

Thucydides also refers to the greater delightfulness of what the poets and prose-writers compose. By being both delightful and near at hand (or embedded in and supported by local ancestral custom), the compositions of the poets and prose-writers present a combination lethal to the vigorous pursuit of the truth. Thucydides thus implies that most men, before ever undertaking an investigation into the most ancient things, either already possess or are susceptible to certain ideas about what constitutes the truth regarding these matters, about what form the truth must take or about what criteria it must satisfy in order to be credible. In short, it must be pleasant and it must correspond to those traditions that possess local authority, that are "one's own" ancestral tradition.

The example he gives about the common opinion of the Athenian tyrannicides seems to support this reading as it expands upon it (20). By making Hipparchus (not Hippias) the ruler at the time of the murder, the commonly held opinion of the tyrannicide prevents one from asking why Harmodius and Aristogeiton would settle on killing Hipparchus if he was not tyrant. The error, easily corrected by recourse to a more reliable tradition and verifiable by physical evidence, conceals the real motive. The error within the common opinion disguises unseemly personal grudges as devotion to the cause of Athenian freedom. The common opinion (the opinion of the *demos*) creates a unity between pleasure and "their own" because it establishes the nobility of the origins of the Athenian democracy's power. In this case, the delightfulness or pleasure of the legend follows from the identification of what is the demos' own (in this case, a democratic regime) with what is worthy of devotion (freedom from tyranny); their particular tradition enshrines their regime in noble origins.[25]

The difference between Thucydides and the poets then does not so much consist in the delightfulness of each (since both possess some delightfulness)[26] as much as it consists in their disposition towards the reader's posture towards particular ancestral traditions. If Thucydides' work is more truthful, if less delightful, than those of the poets and prose-writers, that truthfulness should not rest on the identification of what is noble, or worthy of devotion with what is one's own, an identification that particular ancestral traditions may enforce. Thucydides' work may therefore ask the reader to make certain sacrifices on behalf of a truth that is not merely one's own, a truth that does not depend

[25] "As legends become suspect and subject to critical analyses they are seen as disguising the past while commemorating it, as making it more, less, and other than it 'really' was and is not presented as being;" (Euben 1986, 362). Forde writes, "The legend became a keystone of the democracy's self-understanding, and a parable in particular for the city's extreme love of freedom" (1986, 441).

on particular customs or traditions but applies to all men and is accessible to them as such. The success of the *History* as a political primer may therefore demand a selflessness, or capacity for devotion, on behalf of its readers that is more genuine than that cultivated by particular, ancestral traditions. The difference in "delightfulness" between Thucydides and the poets seems to be a product of the differences in their treatments of men's love of their own, itself a product of their different approaches to the distinction between self-interest and self-sacrifice.

Thucydides follows this distinction with his discussion of how he will proceed in the coming work – a procedure presumably different from the poets and prose-writers. As I have tried to point out, Thucydides' speech appears to offer a commentary on the status of the distinction between speeches and deeds of the *History's* actors. If we are to understand Thucydides' *History* as distinct from the work of the poets and prose-writers, then perhaps the difference consists in how each side approaches the distinction between speech and deed. If Thucydides' speech sheds light on the questionable character of this distinction, then the works of the poets and prose writers – by implication – preserve too sharp a distinction between speech and deed. If most men presume the truth to consist in that delightful identification of the noble, for instance, with what is their own (or if the authority of local tradition is reinforced by its delightfulness), then the reigning authority of poets and prose-writers suggests most men find this identification in works that observe or reinforce the strict distinction between speech and deed. What might be the connection between preserving or upholding such a distinction and the unity of what is noble with what is one's own? How is the status of this distinction related to the

[26] Based on this section, Hornblower claims that the recitation will be a joyless one (1991, 60). This reading seems unfounded to me.

competing claims of Thucydides and the poets and prose-writers to possess the clear truth about the most ancient things? We approach something of an answer when we reconsider briefly the secondary literature on this point.

2. Universals and Particulars

Much of the secondary literature tries to understand Thucydides' *History* in terms of the relationship between the particular events it relates and the universal lessons it hopes to reveal. Specifically, most scholars understand Thucydides' focus on particulars, on political reality (what was truly spoken and those deeds that in fact happened) to serve as the basis for the universals his work intends to relate. While the conclusions they draw from this are not so evident (that his emphasis on political reality limits his theoretical intent), they do call attention to an important point. The speeches and deeds of the war (its *erga*) are all particular events and they point to or uncover the truth about universals, like war as such, war as it is at all times and in all places. This would mean then that the universal lessons one learns from these particular deeds (about war as such, or democracy as such, or political life simply) are not themselves deeds. There would seem to be no particular war that fully embodies the class or category "war" such that it is WAR, just as there is no single particular feline that so fully or so singularly embodies the class "cat" such that it is CAT. Universals, like the truth about "War as such," or "War" as a classification of particular violent actions among men, must therefore exist only in speech. Particular deeds are classified as wars then to the extent that they participate in or possess the criteria that define the class "War." Understood this way, universals supply distinctive meaning to groups of particular deeds. What distinguishes particular members of a class from each other (what makes one war different from another war) is incidental

to the particular events. The variability of particular wars does not bear on the character of the universal class "War" to which they belong.[27] Speech is radically distinct from deed.[28]

But as we have seen, Thucydides' own speech, insofar as it governs the speeches and deeds of the war, seems to call this distinction into question. While speech and deed may still exist at polar ends of a spectrum, there seems no clear division where speech retains its complete universality and deed assumes its radical particularity. Thucydides' treatment of speech and deed suggests that no universal exists apart from the deeds that constitute it, just as no deeds (or particulars) exist independent of membership in some class. No particular exists that is the sole member of its class or that is completely classless or a-categorical. Moreover, one would face great difficulties in trying to produce the criteria that define the class without reference to the deeds that constitute the class.

As a result, whatever characterizes deeds (there is no deed as such or in itself) may also characterize the class in speech of which they are members (no universal as such or in itself). The differences between particulars are no longer incidental to particulars, but reflect the variable character of the class. The understanding of universals may then, in fact, depend on or follow from the particular deeds that constitute them. One might wonder if it follows from this that some deeds, like the Peloponnesian war, can

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[27] One seems to find a teaching like this in Plato's theory of the forms or ideas (*Republic* 503b-511e). For a treatment of the universal and particular in the speeches of Thucydides, see Hammond (1973).

[28] Such a distinction would reinforce the strict division between practical political concerns and theoretical concerns that dominates the secondary literature on Thucydides. Hornblower characterizes this "impossible" blurring as a "struggle between objectivity and subjectivity" (1986, 46) and a sign that "two hearts beat in Thucydides' breast" (1986, 45). To see that such a "strict distinction" belongs to the modern conception of history, one should consider R.G. Collingwood's *The Idea of History* (1946). Collingwood distinguishes historical knowledge from mathematical or scientific knowledge and theological knowledge on the grounds that the objects of historical inquiry are finite and plural and occur during a specific space and time (1946, 5). By blurring the distinction between speech and deed, between universal and particular, as he does Thucydides shows his political history to be of a decidedly different stamp than that we find today.

approach the status of universals.[29] After all, it is through this particular war (an *ergon* that subsumes both speech and deed) that Thucydides intends to reveal the clear truth about those things that have happened and will happen. Perhaps the action of this particular war embodies the universal truth about the relationship between speech and deed, a truth that is revealed *to posterity* only through Thucydides' speech.

In this light, one should recall my previous comments about the speech-like character of the *History*. If Thucydides' speech cannot be understood with reference to those criteria that define the speeches and deeds of the actors in his *History*, then perhaps the universal lessons his particular work is to reveal cannot be understood with reference to the criteria that keep universals and particulars distinct. One can draw out the implications of this further. If Thucydides' speech intends to communicate the questionable distinction between universals and particulars and if particular things are what they are insofar as they belong to some universal category, then Thucydides' extremely subtle commentary on speech and deed also amounts to a commentary on the limits of what universals and particulars can *be*.[30] It amounts to a commentary on "being." By raising a question about the integrity of universal classes and particular deeds and things in this way, Thucydides' methods also raise a question about belief in things that are always as well as about first things (which may not always exist).

When we put these observations together with those of the preceding section we come to the following conclusion. The success of Thucydides' political history over the works of the poets and prose-writers must consist, at least in part, in its ability to point to

[29] Michael Palmer (1992, 6 – 8) makes this claim about the Peloponnesian War. He does not suggest what might be at stake in such a claim.

the problems facing the hopes that most men have for their own or of what most men hope their own to be. If the insights informing Thucydides' choice of methods are correct, then one cannot hope for one's regime to take part in any pure or complete category of the "noble." One cannot understand one's own merely in terms of a universal class or category, independent of what makes it distinct from other members of that category. What such limitations mean in everyday, practical political terms at this point must remain an open question. The real strength of these tentative and abstract conclusions about Thucydides' methods consists in connecting them to the lessons of Thucydides' work, lessons embodied in the practical details of the war between the Athenians and Spartans. To this end, one must wonder about the relevance of the distinctions between speech and deed and universals and particulars in a work that is exclusively limited to the everyday political details of one war. Establishing the relevance of *this* focus on practical political events to his comments on method is the work of the archaeology. To join Thucydides' content with method, to show how the war's greatness dictates the methods he employs to relate it, we must first understand what makes the war surpassingly great.

II. The Archaeology

A. The Question of the War's Greatness

1. The Problem of the War's Greatness

Thucydides opens the *History* with two different statements about the war's greatness. The first statement is based on Thucydides' expectations about the war that is to come. He states that the coming war will be greater and more noteworthy than all

[30] In a similar vein Euben argues that Thucydides' methods "reveals human beings as creators of meaning in the context of political struggle. Or, to use a contemporary idiom, political understanding appears here

previous wars because of the number of men already allied with Athens and Sparta as well as those intending to join the conflict, and the advanced state of readiness of both combatants (I.1.1). The second formulation states that the war *was*[31] the greatest motion among the Greeks, surpassing all things past, *wars or otherwise* (I.1.2).[32] Whatever Thucydides may mean by the "greatest motion" is unclear, but it is clearly not the mere equivalent of war. Moreover, to possess this latter perspective of the war one must have considerable experience of the war, if not experience of the entire war. The latter view of the war's greatness enlarges the earlier view, expanding a perspective limited to wars to include virtually all human affairs. Thucydides' second statement is further distanced from the first by the fact that he makes his first statement in the third person, attributed to some "Thucydides, an Athenian." He states the post-war perspective in the first person. Whether Thucydides still identifies with Athens is unclear from the latter statement.

The pre-war and post-war perspectives are clearly different. The question is whether they can be reconciled. As his first statement makes clear, his expectations for the coming war's greatness were responsible for his initial interest in writing the war as it began. If his view of the war changed over the course of the war, one has to wonder how such a change affected his initial intent in writing the war. If Thucydides wrote parts of his work in light of his more mature perspective, one might plausibly argue that Book I, which concerns pre-war events and is *about* the war (i.e., not the war itself), was written in this light. After all, as the first sentence of the work makes clear, Thucydides started writing the war as soon as it began, events which he does not relate until Book II and

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not as a 'mode of knowledge, but a mode of being'" (1986, 361; see also 362).

[31] The Greek here is *egeneto*, the imperfect tense of the verb *gignomai*.

[32] To stress the difference between the two statements even more, Thucydides' post-war perspective states that the *kinesis* that was the war reached all the Greeks, the barbarians, and "so to speak" all nations. This

which make up the events of the war. According to the first sentence, he did not start writing two or three years prior to the war, the period with which Book I is concerned. The perspective presented in the second sentence requires a complete view of the war. This suggests his introduction came later, either near the end of the war or after the war. These variations suggest that somewhere between the beginning of the war and its end twenty-seven years later Thucydides' view of its greatness changed.

The question Thucydides poses to his readers in the first two sentences is why his view changed. How did his experience of the war cause him to change his understanding of the war's greatness? By opening his work with the pre- and post-war perspectives, Thucydides compels us to read the following chapters in light of the questions they pose. Thucydides' statements also refine the question of the war's greatness. He doesn't just indicate that his view changed. He supplies the broad criteria defining the views to and from which he moved. Thucydides measures greatness prior to the war in terms of the number of men, resources, and allies, criteria presumably connected to Thucydides' identification with Athens. In terms of his post-war criteria, Thucydides measures the war's greatness, albeit obscurely, in terms of it being a "motion" and surpassing all things past, criteria which may not translate into any specific or narrow political partisanship. If this reading of the opening of the *History* is correct, if Thucydides' view of the war's greatness did in fact change, if his intent in writing this work did evolve, then the methods he employed must follow from his more mature, post-war perspective.

Most commentators understand Thucydides' statements in the first chapter to present a single, unified view. They also understand his third formal statement about the

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"so to speak" suggests that it did not extend to all nations. The "so to speak" implicitly takes a step back from the importance of number of men, a criterion on which the first perspective relied.

war's greatness (at I.23) to bookend Thucydides' introduction to the *History.* [33] I think it is more accurate to understand chapters I.1-19 to introduce the *History* as a whole while chapters 20-23 introduce the war itself. Thucydides' statements on method refer to the speeches and deeds that follow and not to the preceding 19 chapters. They thus cannot introduce the work as a whole. That they come so late in the work reinforces this point. Moreover, Thucydides states, in a reference to the first 19 chapters, that they only allow one to form a judgment of the past that will not err. They do not, by themselves, prove the inferiority of the past to this war. Such a claim requires additional proof. As such, these chapters require the war that follows, which "*will show itself* to be greater than those having happened" (I.21, emphasis mine), which is to say that the proof of its greatness is coming (i.e. – it has yet to be shown). Part of this proof must consist in

[33] Gomme merely notes that the first sentence represents something of a title-page and follows the traditional practice of opening with proemiums (1945, 89); Finley (1942) opens with a discussion of these statements (3) and discusses them at length in chapter 3, though he goes no farther than arguing that these opening lines were written after the war ended (404 B.C.) (74-80) and thus represented Thucydides' mature view; see also Finley (1940, 153, 164-5); see also Romilly (1963, 221-4, 228-9); de Ste. Croix understands Thucydides to be wholly devoted to Athens and an Athenian until the end (1972, 24); see Loaruax (1986) and Hammond (1952); Immerwahr, following Hammond, contends that the proemium is a unified whole and represents the standard introduction for a history (1973, 17); Gribble adopts a similar view (1998, 44); Kagan (1969, 1) understands Thucydides' final judgment to confirm his initial expectations; Edmunds (1975, 33) notes the shift from the first few statements about the war to his later statements about the suffering in the war, but he fails to pick up on the changes between I.1 and I.2. Pouncey argues that Thucydides experienced a transformation over the course of the war and he makes much of the first sentence in this regard (by identifying Thucydides as an Athenian), but he doesn't note the important differences that follow directly (1980, 3). Similarly, while Connor doesn't note the subtleties of the first two lines, he does contend that Thucydides' view progressed over the course of his experience of the war, from a concern with rational prediction and control (I.1-2) to misery, suffering and loss (I.23) (1984, 31) from uncertainty to greater certainty (ibid, 27). As a result, Connor sees no tension between Thucydides' two different statements about *to saphes* (at I.1 and I.23). Forde (1989) seems to gloss the difference between his opening statements at I.1, 2 by claiming that the greatness of the Sicilian expedition vindicated his early expectations regarding the great suffering of the war (12). Forde's comments are ambiguous enough to leave open the possibility that he understands greatness at I.23 to confirm Thucydides' "second" statement, but this is speculation on my part. See also Parry (1973, 49). Rawlings (1981, 62) understands the opening comments to refer solely to the first 10-year Archidamian war and not the work as a whole. Rawlings's inattention to these subtleties leads him to argue that the two archaeologies, "begin identically, make similar, indeed parallel points, and often in the same language" (ibid 67). I do not think that the text supports this reading of the two archaeologies. For agreement on the "mature view" of Thucydides, see ibid 252. For a very different view of Thucydides' presence in the *History* see Rood's "ontological" separation

showing that the terms by which one measures the past's inferiority are, in fact, the correct terms. Under this reading, the "war itself," which begins in Book II, is properly understood as a *part* of the *History,* albeit its greatest part, and not the whole *History.* The question then becomes what part the war plays in the whole of the *History.* Such a question at this point takes us too far astray.

In the case of Thucydides' third formal statement on the war's greatness (I.23), greatness is measured in terms of the amount, duration and source (human and non-human) of suffering endured. While this statement is not identical to either of the first two statements, it is, as a necessarily post-war perspective (how else could Thucydides comment on the suffering endur*ed*?), closer to that view found in the second sentence. This reinforces the sense that Thucydides wrote Book I and the war from his later perspective. Thucydides also refers here to the source of suffering – human and non-human, or super-human sources. Earthquakes, droughts, famine, eclipses and the plague could not have been suspected beforehand to contribute to the war's greatness. Because Thucydides could not have anticipated them, they can not be part of his original reasons for writing the war. Their inclusion in the war's greatness therefore distinguishes this third statement from the first sentence.[34] Perhaps the super-human "punishments" bear on the change in Thucydides' understanding of the war's greatness. The question, in this case, becomes how the war, understood as the greatest motion and greater than all past human affairs, can also be understood in terms of the suffering endured in this war. It thus poses a *new* question for the reader to address in the chapters that follow (24-146).

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of Thucydides the author from Thucydides the narrator (1998, 10). For a treatment of the technical character of *xunegrapsein* (to write; I.1.1) see K.J. Dover (1973, 3).

[34] These additional considerations speak against any impression that the reference to *length* and *duration* of suffering at I.23 suggests a connection with the first statement, which places importance on numbers.

Reading "greatness" at I.23 this way frees us to focus on the first 19 chapters by themselves and to wonder how they bear on the questions raised by the first two sentences: What is Thucydides' understanding of the war's greatness? What changed his view of the war's greatness and thus his intent in writing this work?[35]

2. The Ostensible Aim of the Archaeology and Its Limits

The first 19 chapters of the *History* chronicle the emergence of Greek civilization and its wealth and power, out of barbarism and its initial penury and weakness. The ostensible aim of the archaeology is to show the inferiority of all past wars (I.1.1), and perhaps of the past generally (I.1.2). Due to the scarcity of those goods needed for daily life, stronger and self-interested individuals (like Minos) greedily pursued the acquisition of goods for themselves. Out of this greedy pursuit, the stronger produced an excess of wealth and resources. This excess offered an escape from that original scarcity plaguing the weaker; those incapable of providing for themselves placed themselves under the power of the stronger in return for the protection and sustenance that the greed of the stronger made available. The group effort to protect the excess that made sustenance of the weak possible was the original foundation of communal life. Necessity compelled these early groups to create walls, develop navies and found colonies. The dynamics that characterized the relations between strong and weak individuals came to characterize relations between early communities; stronger cities ruled the weaker cities, just as stronger individuals ruled the weaker individuals.

[35] As noted, Rawlings doesn't begin where Thucydides begins. He begins with the "second archaeology" starting at V.24 because "the difficulties raised by its *archai* are clearer and simpler than those of the first" (1981, 14). Reflection on the two archaeologies is no doubt fruitful. But if these sections were meant to be read in this order, then why doesn't Thucydides begin the work this way?

The dynamics that generated early political life also animated the expedition that went to Troy. Fear of Agamemnon's superior strength and not oaths to Tyndareus compelled men to join the expedition. Lack of wealth, not the intervention of the gods or the valor of the Trojans, prolonged the war's duration. From the end of the Trojan War up to the present, periods of peace, rest and prosperity alternated with great conflict, the dissolution of cities, the expulsion of people from their homelands, and massive innovations in technology. Eventually, the remaining forces checking the progressive, growing power of Greek cities – domestic tyrants and the threat of the Persians – were quelled. But instead of a great period of rest, Greek cities began to war with one another along the lines of those leagues created during the Persian invasions. Sparta and Athens's constant "practice with danger" from the Persian wars on and the great power they amassed during that time promised to make the conflict that followed greater than all those preceding it.

Based on this summary one might be led to conclude that Thucydides understands all of political conduct, from the earliest piracy of individuals to the later attempts at colonization and empire, to be governed by fear and self-interest. There is no natural rightful limit on the selfish pursuit of individual goods. No genuine limit – natural or divine - on the pursuit of one's interests exists apart from human agreement, culture or convention. In short, necessity, not considerations of right or justice, characterize human conduct. As a result, the steady march of material and technological progress, the goals and means driving human self-interests, characterizes human history. This perspective was not new to Thucydides' audience. It was a position frequently associated with the

Greek Enlightenment of 5th century B.C..[36] If this represents Thucydides' most genuine perspective, then Thucydides must already be in possession of a standard by which to judge the inferiority of the past. If he is convinced of the past's inferiority, then he must already be convinced of the superiority of his work over those of the poets and prose-writers.

Such certainty, at least in this early part of the work, seems misplaced. One would have to disregard Thucydides' indications that the archaeology does not *establish* the war's greatness.[37] According to his comments at I.21, one can see the Peloponnesian war's surpassing greatness when one compares it to the wars of the past. One cannot see its surpassing greatness by looking at the past alone. Proof of the Peloponnesian war's greatness thus requires two steps. One must establish the character of the past on those terms that are not unduly prejudicial to one's case; one should give the past the benefit of the doubt and judge it on those terms by which it is favorably understood (I.21). Then one must establish that the current war surpasses past wars on these same terms. But Thucydides does not do this in the archaeology. He does not present the greatness of the Trojan War as we find it in Homer's *Iliad* and then show how the Peloponnesian war meets or surpasses that greatness. Instead, he "imposes" his own criteria on Homer without even trying to prove that such criteria apply to Homer. This is as unfair to Homer as the application of Aristotle's understanding of history is to Thucydides. If the poets, the guardians of the past, are not taken on their own terms, can one say that they have been really confronted? If they have not, then one cannot say that they have been refuted. Their accounts of the past stand unmet and unchallenged. If this is true, then good

[36] For scholarly support of this contention, see the literature cited in chapter 1, footnote2.
[37] For a similar view, see Pearson (1947, 38-9).

reasons exist to suspend judgment regarding the weakness of the past and the inferiority of the poets.

To say that the archaeology does not *establish* the war's greatness is not to say that it does not reflect Thucydides' most considered judgment. Thucydides could be laying out a genuine theoretical position about the past, the evidence for which will follow in the pages of the *History.* But while the study of how "men are" which follows the archaeology may vouch for this analysis of the past, one cannot, on the basis of the archaeology alone, understand this analysis to be his established perspective. Of course, if Thucydides is laying out his genuine theoretical position here – albeit hypothetically - then it must apply to Homer as well. The hypothetical sketch may therefore provide clues as to the weakness of the Homeric position.

According to the summary above, Thucydides understands the past's lack of greatness in terms of its limited progress. But the careful reader should question the completeness of this summary. In the first place, the emphasis on material and technological progress runs contrary to his claim that this surpassingly great war and the permanent utility of the work represent peaks. If material and technological progress were genuine criteria for greatness, then another even greater war would be inevitable. And if the greatness of Thucydides' work derives from the greatness of the war, then Thucydides' explicit claims for the permanent utility of his work must be understood as the boasting of a fool. Perhaps Thucydides does not understand greatness – or at least the greatness of his work as distinguished from the greatness of the war - in such terms. And perhaps the most important evidence of Thucydides' distance from the outline sketched

above (and which so many think to be true), can be found in his treatment of the Trojan War, and thus in his treatment of Homer.

3. Thucydides and the Trojan War

According to Thucydides' opening statements, the surpassing greatness of the war he relates and thus the work that relates it depend in part on the inferiority of all past wars. The two greatest rivals for the title "greatest war yet" are the Trojan War and the Persian War. Thucydides quickly dismisses the Persian War at the beginning of I.23. The claim about the greatness of the Trojan War, according to Thucydides, suffers from three problems. First, the Trojan War was not some glorious attempt by fellow Greeks, aided by gods, to right a wrong committed by a barbarian, himself aided by other gods. The Trojan War was the unprovoked attempt by Agamemnon to reduce a foreign and apparently peaceful city, an effort assisted only by those who feared Agamemnon's superior strength (9). Second, Thucydides asserts that if one averages the number of men by those in a Boeotian ship and those in one of Philoctetes' vessels, one will find that the number of men who went to Troy was not very great. They were certainly less than those in contemporary wars (10). Finally, the Greek expedition lacked sufficient wealth and resources to press the siege with its entire force. Because they had to split their force into a fighting contingent and a supply contingent, the Greeks could only carry the battle with part of their strength (11). This explains why the siege lasted as long as it did.

Thucydides' first and third points simply abstract from the Trojan War story as the Homeric tradition hands it down, introducing considerations utterly alien to the tradition. He denies the gods' role in the war and forgets Paris' grave injustice that sparked the conflict. Thucydides also explicitly rejects the great wealth of the Greek

contingent, the suitors' loyalty to Agamemnon and the oaths to Tyndareus, and the valor of the Trojans in defending their city – points that Homer goes to great lengths to establish. Thucydides, in short, debunks Homer.[38] Such debunking is strikingly out of character for Thucydides, a man who goes to great lengths to give even his own military foes a fair shake. His references to the *Iliad* indicate that he was aware of the Homeric tradition. He must have known he was deviating from Homer's version. The second point seems to indicate such awareness.

Thucydides states that the average man per ship multiplied by the total number of ships results in a contingent that was not very many. But a careful reader should actually do the math (which Thucydides does not do in the pages of the *History* but must have surely done in his own mind) and take the average of 120 and 50 men per ship (or 85) and multiply it by 1,200 ships. The sum total of the Greek expedition to Troy was 102,000 men,[39] an expedition the size of Athens's entire free population! The size of the Greek contingent alone exceeds that of any that takes part in the Peloponnesian war, a size that is all the more impressive when one considers the supposed lack of wealth to furnish this contingent, the distance of the enemy from home, and the naval technology used to transport such a group. [40]

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[38] For a different treatment of Thucydides' "use" of the poets see Pouncey (1980, 47). Again, for a view similar to my own, one should see Orwin (1990). On Thucydides' imaginative reading of the *Iliad*, see Orwin (1990, 351).

[39] Connor (1984, 21 n.6) notes this, as does Gomme (1945, 114) and Hunter (1982, 35). But Connor understands Thucydides not to have done the math. According to Connor, Thucydides unwittingly disproves his own thesis about the Trojan War. Such carelessness runs contrary to Connor's thesis on Thucydides, built as it is on the intricate use of language throughout the *History*. Neither Gomme nor Hunter explain why Thucydides might pretend this number is slight.

[40] Compare Pericles' and Agnon's expeditions to Epidaurus and Potidaea, respectively (VI.31) with Nicias's suggestion of no fewer than five thousand men for the first Sicilian expedition (VI.25). A second equally large contingent was sent to Sicily to reinforce the first (VII.42). One might safely say then that the expeditionary forces in Sicily totaled between ten to twelve thousand. This would cover the number of those who perished in the quarries at Syracuse - no fewer than seven thousand (VII.87). These are enormous numbers indeed, but they are simply dwarfed by the Trojan War. It is difficult to say with any

Marshalling these arguments against Homer can only provide a victory by default since Homer never really appears on the field of battle. Thucydides knows this. We must wonder then why he pretends that the unstated number of one hundred and two thousand men is so slight. [41] Of course, he manages to cut it in half to a "measly" fifty one thousand men. But if Troy could hold out against such a siege for a decade with little or no mutiny, then something other than lack of money and men must account for the duration of the war. Moreover, it strains the bounds of common sense to think that one hundred thousand Greeks would *embark* on a such a lengthy and dangerous journey, let alone spill their blood on distant shores for ten years, if they were moved by fear alone. If we take Thucydides at his word, then we must believe that fifty one thousand men - out of the immediate reach of the Greek army[42] - so feared the power of Agamemnon that they chose to cultivate barbarian soil for a decade, hundreds of nautical miles from their own farms, in order to feed a fighting force that for ten years got no farther than the

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precision how many men were involved throughout the entire Peloponnesian war. But it is perhaps even more difficult to say that one hundred thousand men were "not many" in comparison to the Peloponnesian War; it would require nearly ten Sicilian expeditions, the single greatest expedition of the war, just to equal the *Greek* expedition to Troy. Put differently, he could not say that this was "the greatest action that happened in this war, and as it seems to me, of all of those things of the Greeks that we know of by hearsay" (VII.87) if numbers or loss of materiel alone were his criteria. On the level of destruction alone, the Athenian defeat at Sicily does not compare to the complete reduction of Troy. The importance of the Sicilian defeat lies in it being a *Greek*, and specifically an *Athenian*, disaster.

[41] One might object that Thucydides' criticism of Homer is serious, that the problem is not so much the number of men, as he admits at I.11, but rather the lack of wealth that kept the Greeks from fighting with all of their strength. For such a position one should see Kallet-Marx's *Money, Expense and Naval Power* (1993). But if the issue concerns a full fighting force, then it seems there are two greater rivals than the Trojan War: the Persian war, which he dismisses in two lines (I.23) and Pericles' reduction of Samos, which he mentions in passing at I.115-117. The Persian War pitted the fabulously wealthy Persian king against the combined wealth of the leading Greek states. If the relationship between wealth and fighting strength were really on his mind, one might think he would discuss the relative weakness of the parties here. According to Herodotus (VI.83) the Persian army numbered nearly 5.3 million. According to Plutarch's *Pericles*, what took Agamemnon's massive Greek force to do in ten years to a lesser barbarian force, Pericles' smaller Greek contingent did in nine months to a great Greek city. Plutarch reports that Pericles himself thought his success rivaled Agamemnon's (*Pericles* 28). By abstracting from this siege, by not even mentioning it as a rival, Thucydides implies that he is concerned with something unique to the Trojan War. One must also remember that the greatness of the Sicilian expedition did not consist so much in the number of men and resources sent as in the catastrophic loss of life (VII.85). Cf. "greatness" at I.23.

[42] Thucydides notes they farmed the Chersonnese (11).

beachhead at Ilium. Either Thucydides thinks the early Greeks were as slavish as the dumbest farm animals or he deliberately abstracts from those high-minded concerns that would lead men voluntarily to make such sacrifices.

The real authority or power of the Homeric tradition rests on the belief that it reveals the truth about the power of the gods, their interest in the affairs of men, and their efforts to uphold and enforce divine justice among men. And if the *Iliad* presents an accurate portrayal of men, then the Greeks' decade-long siege of Troy reveals the extent to which men are willing to sacrifice themselves in order to uphold their divinely sanctioned oaths, or to protect their family name, or to avenge the loss of their beloved. It reveals the power of the individual's concern for honor and the depth of one's desire to win immortal glory for oneself and one's posterity through attention to the demands of piety, or custom, or love, demands that come at the expense of mere self-interest. To surpass Homer's *Iliad*, Thucydides' *History* must reveal more fully the truth about such demands. His work must reflect the truth about the gods, their interest in the affairs of men and their desire and power to uphold the laws of justice. It must present a more accurate account of the individual's concern for honor and the desire to overcome mortality through the glorious defense of divine justice, or family honor, or friendship, or love. In short, it must reveal the truth about the status of these high-minded concerns and the limits they impose on the base pursuit of self-interest.[43] The greatness of the *History* cannot be reduced to the number of men, the length of the conflict, and the wealth involved.

[43] Rawlings (1981, 43) argues that Thucydides intends to surpass the poets and Homer in particular by writing not one single war, but two ten year wars separated by the peace of Nicias. Thucydides' war is thus twice as great as Homer's *Iliad*.

While (or because) Thucydides' account purchases a "victory" over Homer at the price of its credibility, it points to the real difficulty facing any refutation of the poet. Thucydides' narrow focus on wealth, navies, and the apparent dominance of men's lower passions chastens our confidence in these methods to reveal the truth about the past. His use of these criteria manages to point us to a deeper and more substantive disagreement with Homer than we find on the surface. The uncharacteristic and shallow debunking of Homer – and especially his loud silence about the gods - compels us to raise the question of the gods and the status of divine right. It compels us to inquire into *Thucydides'* understanding of men's beliefs about the gods and men's hopes for themselves.

We turned to the archaeology and the Trojan War to understand how Thucydides' view of "greatness" changed. Thucydides indirectly identifies the true greatness of Homer's *Iliad*, a greatness that any genuine confrontation with the poet must address, with the belief that it reveals the truth about a rightful limit on men's affairs. But the truth about a legitimate limit on the conduct of men requires a more penetrating analysis than Thucydides' brief comments about the Trojan War. How are we even to approach the question of a rightful limit on men's conduct when it can encompass demands placed on men by family, custom, honor, nobility, piety – to say nothing of the laws of their city? Thucydides' comments about Mycenaea in this context refine our approach by narrowing our focus to politics alone, and to the power of a regime specifically. Moreover, he connects the power of a regime with the question of right in a way that forces us to understand power *in terms* of right.

B. Transforming the Question of the War's Greatness: Political Right and Political Power

1. Mycenaea: Political Power as Political Right

Mycenaea was the seat of political power in Greece before it was even known as Greece. It was brought to power by Agamemnon, a descendant of Pelops, and was the city most responsible for uniting the "Greeks" in the war against Troy. Based on the criteria that Thucydides seems to employ throughout the archaeology one might be led to conclude that Mycenaea as it currently stands possessed power beneath its fame.[44] But drawing inferences about the past in light of the present *as it is understood by these criteria* is problematic. The truth about the past, like that about the power of Mycenaea, cannot be accessed in this way. But in elaborating on how to understand the truth about Mycenaean power Thucydides points us to the source of Spartan power. He makes the fame of Mycenaea's power analogous to Sparta's reputation for power, a reputation that

[44] Romilly claims that Thucydides shares a similar view of Athenian greatness with that of Isocrates (1963, 248). I would merely point to Isocrates' focus on Athens's buildings (which she notes) and Thucydides' rejection of such criteria. For those who understand Thucydides' measure for greatness to consist in the number of men, the wealth of the combatants and the resources at their disposal, as well as the length of the fighting one should see: Finley (1942, 83-93, 293; and 1940, 135, 140-4); Rawlings (1981, 12; for a change in tone see his comments about the 'quality of the *ergon*" ibid. 56); Immerwahr (1973, 18-9) understands power to consist in something concrete, like troops, as well as in something intangible, like gravity; Cogan (1981) understands the "First Phase of the war" in purely material terms (127-43) as does Saxonhouse (1978, 474, 480). Grene (1965, 28,48,54-5, 57) understands it in terms of material and psychological resources. Curiously enough, Grene notes that the great days of "honor" are reserved for Periclean Athens, but this is merely the result of a typical historical process (ibid. 57). Hornblower understands the archaeology to emphasize the importance of progress (1986, 188). Gribble understands Book I leading up to I.23.6 and following to detail the principle of power politics (1998, 57). Hunter (1982) seems to equivocate on what exactly constitutes power in the archaeology (ibid 17-49), but whatever it is, she is sure that it is quantitative (ibid. 47). Lisa Kallet-Marx (1993) emphasizes "the importance of money and its relationship to the fleet and naval empire immediately in the beginning of his History" since it would seem "patent that they are vital to his perception of historical development of power or *dunamis*" (ibid. 3). To my mind Forde's comparison of wealthy, naval, imperial Athens to wealthy, naval, and non-imperial Corinth (1989, 22) is sufficient to cast doubt on Kallet-Marx's thesis. For Forde the archaeology sketches the growth of Athenian power via the growth of Athenian daring out of eros. Orwin (1994, 30-1) contends that the progress of the archaeology is a progress in terms of right within cities. Euben argues that Athens's power stems from her "democratic ethos" as emerged from her naval victory at Salamis (1986, 360). See also Galpin (1983-84). Pouncey (1980, 11) claims that fear, power, wealth, security and foresight "amount to categories of the historian's thought and act as unifying principles of his history" (ibid. 46; see also 55 in this context). Connor understands the archaeology to "analyze forces that have long operated in Greek history and that are still likely to be evident in the great war....It is an anatomy of power based on a view of man's nature" (1984, 26). While this appears similar to my thesis, Connor focuses on self-interest and the

he identifies later with being ruled by good laws, a constant form of regime, and freedom from tyranny (I.18). One cannot hope to understand the truth about Mycenaea's ancient power by looking at her current ruins, just as one could not appreciate the power of Sparta by looking at her modest buildings.[45] Spartan power consists in the goodness of her laws, the toughness of her army and the willingness of her soldiers to sacrifice themselves for the regime.

The connection between the truth about Mycenaea's famed power and the reputed justice of Spartan rule receives support from the unseemly story behind Agamemnon's rise to power. As Thucydides reminds us, Agamemnon inherited the government from his father Atreus, an exiled murderer (a fratricide no less) who "inherited" the government from his slain maternal nephew, Eurystheus. Thucydides slips in here that when Eurystheus did not return from his expedition into Attica, Atreus also obtained "*whatever else* Eurystheus ruled [*kai hosone Eurystheus erke*], for himself" (9, emphasis and brackets mine). This subtle addition could merely mean something as mundane as extra dominions. But it could also mean something seamier, like his nephew's personal possessions or his estates – to say nothing of even more sordid considerations. Whatever Atreus did take, there is a clear difference between what Eurystheus entrusted (*epitrepsanto*) to him when he departed for his expedition and what Atreus took (*paralabein*) for himself when his nephew did not return.[46] And while it is true that the Mycenaeans consented to his rule,[47] they did so because they feared their neighbors and

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desire for profit and thus fails to grasp the emergence of "extraordinary politics" (see also his understanding of Minos as the prototype of Aegean imperialism, ibid, 24).

[45] Hornblower takes this treatment of Mycenaea's buildings as a sign that Thucydides did "not have much of aesthetic sense" (1986, 93).

[46] For a similar reading, see Orwin (1989, 348).

[47] Being a "maternal uncle," Atreus was not a member of Eurystheus' line. Eurystheus was not a Pelopide. Atreus' rule could not have had the immediate legitimacy of an heir, as Agamemnon's inheritance from

because they thought Atreus himself was powerful. This opinion of Atreus' power was no doubt enhanced by Atreus' "flattery" of the common people (11).

This story ties Mycenaea to Sparta, in the first place, on the grounds of kinship: the Spartans (as Peloponnesians) trace their ancestry to Pelops, and must therefore trace their ancestry through Agamemnon and Atreus. Mycenaea's famed power (and the truth about that power) therefore constitutes part of Sparta's reputation for justice (and the truth about it). More importantly, the story about Agamemnon and Atreus substantively links the truth about a city's power to its reputation for good government by raising the question of the foundations or origins of a regime's power. The truth about Sparta's justice depends on how the Pelopides acquired rule.[48] The questionable justice of a regime's origins cannot be dismissed on the basis of an appeal to the just record of a current regime. No decent person would think that a thousand years of just rule by the Third Reich would wipe away the stains of the Holocaust. And if the just maintenance of power could justify the seamy acquisition of rule, then the overthrow of any decent regime could be justified after the fact.[49] Additionally, the justice with which the original acquisition of power must conform must itself be permanent or at least humanly

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Atreus does. This introduces a line of thinking that must ultimately raise the question of the origins of all political rule. How does the whole arrangement get started in the first place? From where does any founding authority get its legitimacy?

[48] Cf. how the demos' (mis)interpretation of the tyrannicides justifies the reigning democratic regime. It enshrines and thus justifies its origins in the noble devotion to freedom.

[49] For those who doubt the importance of origins to the legitimacy of future political authority, one should consider the extent to which many first year political science students are more than happy to remind their professors that the American founders had slaves. Such a point is almost always raised in the effort to revise the view of America as the bastion of human rights, a revision that comes at the expense of understanding America as a country worthy of devotion. While such information about the founders requires previous education, the *connections* such students make between this factual information and their judgments about the American regime occur almost spontaneously. Their youthful objections tacitly grant the need to consider the character of the founding when evaluating the character of contemporary laws. The story of Atreus appeals to this natural impulse. The historian Collingwood (1946) would object insofar as the question of foundations gets understood as the foundation of all things, or the "beginning of things" (15ff). Such beginnings are the realm of myth, not history.

permanent. This "permanent" justice must exert its authority universally; it must apply to all men. If it is not permanent or if it does not apply to all men, then a regime's claim on the conduct of its citizens, and thus its power to exact their voluntary devotion, opens itself up to the charges that it is based on particular and contingent foundations. It opens itself up to the charges that its demands are culturally or socially relative, and thus arbitrary. As such the regime's legitimacy is at risk and its ability to have men voluntarily fight and die for it – its very power - is at risk. By linking the question of Mycenaea's power to Sparta's reputation for good government in this subtle way, Thucydides points to the link between a regime's power and the goodness of its laws, its stability and its preservation of freedom; Thucydides connects political power and political right.[50]

If we are to believe Thucydides here, then Sparta, the original home of the common good and the defender of Greek liberty, derives her power from the accidental and contingent accession of an exiled and fratricidal barbarian to the Mycenaean throne, an accession that derives its legitimacy from the fear and vanity of the people. Because the justice of the Pelopides' rise to power is questionable at best, then Spartan power should be also be questionable. But even if we accept Thucydides' account of the not-so-clearly-just foundations of Peloponnesian authority, we cannot accept the consequence that Sparta as we find her in the *History* is not powerful. She rules over two-thirds of the Peloponnesus. Because of her reputation for military prowess most Greeks predicted a quick Spartan victory over Athens. And while it took her 27 years, Sparta did win the war. Doesn't this speak against understanding political power in terms of political right?

[50] For similar, albeit more general conclusions, see Forde's comments about ethical advances (1992, 380, 387 and 390) and Orwin (1994, 30-1) cited above.

This objection is reinforced by the fact that Thucydides never speaks of *political* power or *political* right, let alone directly equating them. Moreover, traditionally – and as the comments about Sparta at I.18 indicate – justice is understood in terms of fairness. It is understood in terms of principled self-restraint that individual citizens must exercise on behalf of the common good. Considerations of power, on the other hand, are traditionally understood in terms of self-aggrandizement. The prudential observance of "power politics" does not recognize the good of others as a sufficient restraint on the pursuit of one's interests. Far from being identifiable, political right and political power seem to be polar opposites: principle versus prudence, self-restraint versus self-interest. As puzzling as the connection between political right and political power may initially seem, it must seem even more puzzling in the wake of the Pelopides' questionable justice and Sparta's unquestionable power.

While the basis of Thucydides' identification of political power with political right must remain unclear for now, some preliminary considerations enhance its plausibility. In the *Iliad*, Agamemnon's power rests on his ability to lead a mighty Greek contingent to war on a distant shore. His ability to lead men to war follows from the just authority of his rule and the divinely sanctioned oaths which men voluntarily swore. Similarly Sparta's power to command men to risk their lives must be backed by right. At the least it must be backed by the Spartiates' genuine belief that they are acting in accordance with what is right and that such action is good, despite the fact that it involves self-sacrifice. Put differently, the plausibility of the connection between justice and power hinges on the belief that just action is not merely slavish action on the behalf of others. While Spartan military power might be predicated on the possession of a slave

population (i.e., the Helots), the service of the Spartan military on behalf of Sparta cannot be identified with the service of their slaves; it must be understood as distinct from and superior to them. For justice to be power then action in accordance with justice and the voluntary sacrifice of self-interest it entails must be sensible for the doer. It must somehow be good for the just man himself. A re-reading of Thucydides' criticisms of Homer and the Trojan War confirms this.

Thucydides' account of the Pelopides' rise in power, a rise that occurs independent of any principled limit on self-aggrandizement, supplies the first step in establishing the weakness of the Greek powers in the Trojan War. The powers involved in the Trojan War were inferior to the power of Athens and Sparta, first, because they did not conduct domestic and international affairs in accordance with any principled limit on the pursuit of self-interest. Second, to the extent that any of the Greek forces serving at Troy *did* serve the good of another, then they did so slavishly. And no sensible person thinks that slavish action on the behalf of others is good for the slave. Because Thucydides thinks his work rivals Homer's, he must think that his work reveals this connection between just action and sensible action more completely than Homer's does. In other words, Thucydides' objection to Homer is the polarization of self-interest and self-sacrifice that Homeric poetry effects.[51] A more "realistic" or less magnified account of political power must account for the belief that the self-sacrifice required by just action is good for the one who sacrifices. How the sacrifice of one's interests can serve one's

[51] This is another way of rephrasing the poets' delightfulness discussed above (I.C.1 and 2). The magnifying poetry of Homer – which magnifies "one's own" – serves to separate further self-sacrifice from self-interest. This might be one way to connect Homeric poetry to the pre-Socratic, sophistic conventionalism of Thucydides' contemporaries.

advantage, and thus serve as a power, remains unclear. Unraveling this interpretation of justice as power lies at the heart of this study of Thucydides' intent.

To return to the archaeology, the investigation into the origins of a regime's power (e.g., Mycenaea's), which is linked to the question of its justice (e.g., Sparta's), is raised in the shadow of Thucydides' overall debunking of Homer. As noted, this attack brought attention to his loud silence on the Homeric emphasis on the gods. Connecting political power with political right in the context of this "loud silence" forces us to sharpen the question being raised. Is the link between political justice (understood in terms of a legitimate limit on self-interest) and political power (which is a means to goods) supplied by the gods, as the works of the poets would have us believe? Do the gods reward selfless devotion to divine justice and do they protect those who are righteous and vanquish those who are wicked? Or is the goodness of political justice vouchsafed by nature or by human agreement or by convention? By sharpening the question this way, Thucydides manages to *broaden* the question about a particular regime's origin to the more abstract question about the origins of political power simply. The truth about the origins of political power simply offers insight into the truth about the political power of all contemporary regimes. Thus the attempt to uncover the truth about Spartan political power not only requires that one uncover the truth about how they acquired power, or how their ancestors Agamemnon, Atreus and Pelops came to power. It requires one to understand the origins of political power as such.

The question of Thucydides' intent, which translated into the question of the war's greatness, became the question of the status of a legitimate limit on the conduct of men. That question now becomes the question of the origins of political power. Because

the question of political power's origins, taken in context, is linked to the question of the gods, the attempt to uncover the truth about a particular regime requires knowing the truth about the gods and the first things. But Thucydides clearly states that we cannot possess certain truth about the ancient past (I.1.2).[52] We do not possess direct access to the origins of political power as such, just as we do not possess direct access to the gods. The closest Thucydides comes to presenting an analysis of the origins of political life simply can be found in the archaeology and this discussion is, at best, hypothetical. How then can we uncover the truth about the political power of contemporary regimes (power understood in terms of their connection to justice) if we only have access to the present? *This is the problem that political history, as Thucydides conceives it, must solve – to uncover the truth about the ancient origins of right without direct access to those ancient origins.* The example of Mycenaea refines our sense of the criteria necessary to measure the truth about the present and the past. It should also refine our approach to Thucydides' intent and his conception of political history.

2. Mycenaea: Hearsay vs. Seeing For One's Self

As I noted at the beginning of the previous section, Thucydides criticizes using "outward appearance" (such as focusing on wealth or number of soldiers) to measure the power of Mycenaea under Agamemnon. Because he links political power with political right, he implies that one cannot rely on such criteria to measure a regime's stability, justice or devotion to freedom. A new kind of criteria is needed for measuring the power of a regime understood as political right; new criteria are needed to access the truth about the origins of political power. Speaking about the "kind of criteria" to judge the present

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[52] See Strauss, (1964, 182, fn. 149).

ceases to sound strange if we recall that Thucydides himself did not rely on eye-witness reports from others to judge the present war. Partiality and bad memory can distort what one sees. Revealing the truth about the Peloponnesian war therefore depends on appropriate access to the present as much as it depends on appropriate access to the past.

Thucydides' reference to the sanctification of Delos confirms this (I.8). When the Athenians hallowed Delos by removing all of the buried dead from the island, they found ancient Carians buried with their armor. Thucydides uses this to attest to the viciousness, violence and insecurity of early man's condition, evidence that allows one to reject the poetic tradition's teaching that the farther back one goes, the closer one approaches the Golden Age of heroes, demi-gods and gods. Under the poetic view, every new generation is one more step removed from the first things, from the gods, and thus one step further from the dignity belonging to such divine things; human history is marked by a slow and steady decline. If the "burial evidence" represents the proper means for accessing the past, then it should raise a question about the integrity of divine right and the commands following therefrom. It should support the impious view that progress, not decline, marks the march of human history. But the Athenians who dug up these corpses came to no such conclusions themselves. The evidence they uncovered certainly did not lead them to abandon their pious task. Nor did it temper their zealous fulfillment of their religious duty.[53] Such evidence seen in the clear light of day is insufficient by itself to refute the poetic tradition's claim to possess privileged access to the ancient past.[54] In this light, one

[53] As it turns out, this sanctification of Delos represents an increase in zeal about pious duties. Compare I.8 with III.104. See Strauss (1964, 235-6).

[54] From the perspective of those who take moral virtue seriously, men's well-documented immorality does not disprove the existence of some moral limit on the conduct of men. It just proves that most men are immoral. The moral shortcomings of most men are in perfect keeping with belief in a universal, rightful limit on men's conduct. They even serve to enhance the value of moral excellence. It should be strange

should recall my earlier comments about Thucydides' statements on method: facts or deeds taken by themselves do not disclose their own importance. This kind of evidence needs interpretation, an interpretation that derives from something other than the evidence presented here. To put it differently, the archaeological evidence Thucydides adduces here can only serve as confirmation of an argument *already made.* As I stated, the archaeology does not present such a firm argument. From where then, if not this archaeological evidence, does this argument come?

Because even eye-witness testimony is suspect, the alternatives embodied by the poets and Thucydides cannot be framed as a choice between trust, or relying on hearsay and relying on seeing for one's self.[55] Thucydides' work comes down to us - as he knew it would - as a record of past events. Because we must take Thucydides' word that what happened did in fact happen as he relates it then the *History* rests as much on hearsay for us as the works of the poets and prose-writers. The difference between Thucydides and the poets must therefore be construed in terms of the *kinds* of "hearsay" employed or the wisdom informing their accounts. The upshot of this *need* for new criteria to judge the truth about the past and the present is that the wisdom of the Homeric tradition remains – for the time being – unrefuted. [56]

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then to use as evidence for the total absence of some legitimate moral limit the very thing that enhances its value.

[55] See Gribble (1998, 44). The criticism of these criteria also serve as a warning to the reader on Thucydides' part to avoid drawing premature conclusions about the power of those things we do not experience for ourselves. It teaches us how to read Thucydides himself: just as we should not judge the power of a regime by outward appearances, so too should we not judge Thucydides' view of the gods by their apparent absence and his view of justice by its apparent weakness.

[56] In his "Contest" (1989), Orwin seems to understand the archaeology to represent Thucydides' genuine (if not fully argued) perspective. But it is one thing to say that the example of Mycenaea points to the need to begin from what one can see for one's self (or from a "kind" of hearsay). It is another to say that the example of Mycenaea reveals the Peloponnesian War to surpass the Trojan War. The former merely begins to establish the grounds of the contest – hearsay vs. seeing for one's self. The turn to philosophy that Orwin finds intimated in the example of Mycenaea (and thus philosophy's superiority over the wisdom of the poetic tradition) requires greater proof than this. Orwin's reading leads us to the conclusion that philosophy

If the truth about the origins of political power possesses lessons about a contemporary regime's political power, then the truth about a regime's political power should also reveal something about the truth of political power's origins. But if it is the case that power is only properly understood in terms of right, then it is with an analysis of right or of justice that we must begin. But justice comes to sight first for men in the laws of their community and in the justifications made by political men defending the goodness of those laws and the actions they command and forbid. Those speeches and actions that are genuinely just are the product of the possession or knowledge of the just standard. As such, the truth of one's claims to possess or know that legitimate limit on men's conduct depends on possessing and knowing that limit in fact. Analysis of one's speeches and actions should reveal something about the justice animating them: the product should speak to the character of what produced it. Theoretically speaking one should be able to draw legitimate conclusions about the source of political authority if one examines the conduct of both regimes and their citizens as well as their justifications of such conduct. One should be able to uncover the origins and nature of political power if one examines both what men say and what men do with respect to political right. Thucydides' approach to what men say and do indicates how political history will attempt to solve the problem it faces.

It would seem we are now in a position to turn to Part III – to connect Thucydides' methods with respect to what men said and did to his identification of

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is necessary, and because necessary it is possible. On the whole, I think the example of Mycenaea only shows that it is necessary to raise certain questions, one of which is "How can one access the clear truth about the past without if one can't rely on such criteria?" Is something like philosophy possible? If anything, the example of Mycenaea suggests that the contest with Homer is to follow, in the pages of the *History*. The archaeology as "vindication" of Thucydides' methods is the conclusion Orwin's analysis leads us to draw. Under my reading, Thucydides' method aims at vindicating the archaeology, not the other way around. Orwin's notes 14 and 17 on 361(1989) minimize this difference, though they do not eliminate it.

political power with political right. But the effort to make this connection will be greatly facilitated if we first possess a clearer understanding of Thucydides' own view of the origins and nature of political power. While Thucydides does not provide a definitive analysis of the origins of political power in the archaeology, he does provide a sketch of its genesis out of the human concern for goods.

3. The Emergence of Political Right: The Greek Invention of Politics

3.a. the transformation of human common life

Originally individuals were compelled by natural scarcity to compete over the richest soils (I.2). This competition inhibited the cultivation of the good soil and thus inhibited the emergence of settled living. Communal life became possible when certain strong individuals, through the greedy pursuit of their own interests, created an excess nature herself did not provide. Compelled by their poverty, the weaker individuals sought the protection and resources the strong made available; they placed themselves under the rule of the strong. Nowhere in the early part of the archaeology does Thucydides state that the strong actively sought dominion over the weak.[57] At the most, they provided sustenance for the weak. Moreover, in these early times there were no Greeks, and thus no barbarians as distinct from Greeks (I.3).[58] With the development of navies and the safety of the seas, settlements along the coasts grew in riches and, becoming "addicted to

[57] The possible exception here is Thucydides' first mention of Minos. But in his first appearance, Minos does not come to sight as someone interested in ruling over others. Rather he comes to sight as someone interested in the possession of certain goods for himself and his family. Thus he expels the Carians from the Cyclades, he does not rule over them (I.4) Cf. the mention of Minos at I.8. For a different account of the importance of Minos, Atreus and Pelops, see Kallet-Marx (1993, 24-30). Pouncey's treatment of the archaeology emphasizes the power of states at the expense of individuals like Minos, Atreus, Pelops, and Agamemnon (1980, 10); as noted Connor understands Minos to represent a prototype of Athenian naval imperialsim (1984, 24). See also Forde's treatment of individuals (1989, 28ff).

[58] The origins of the name "Greeks" or "Hellenes" supports this assessment of the earliest times. Hellen was called in by the weaker cities for his aid. He did not invade or actively seek dominion (I.3). Contrast this with the introduction of Pelops into Greece and the development of the Pelopides' power (I.9). See Hornblower (1991, 18) on the human origin of "names."

their riches," grew more attached to settled life. Cities were founded. Weaker cities now desirous for gain "underwent servitude" to the strong and the strong began to subject the weaker through their wealth (I.8). As the power of Greek cities improved through the enlargement of revenues and the establishment of colonies, they turned to the improvement of navies which in turn increased both their revenues and their dominion over others (I.12-13, 15). The restraints on a city's revenues and its dominion over others were eventually removed (I.16-18).

This reading of the archaeology suggests that political laws and political justice do not emerge naturally or spontaneously. They arise out of the need of the weak and the forcefulness of the strong. This means that political power, understood as attention to the common good, has as its pre-conditions man's natural greediness and the scarcity of goods needed for survival. Political justice becomes the product of human agreement or force and fraud. As such, political right does not arise in accordance with human nature. Without any divine or natural rightful limit on the pursuit of self-interest, cities, as well as individuals, will always attempt to secure greater strength and thus greater domination over the weak. Such conclusions are compatible with the understanding of "Thucydides the conventionalist," "Thucydides the pre-Socratic," or "Thucydides the sophist." But these are the conclusions we draw if we employ Thucydides' pre-war criteria for measuring greatness, criteria that focus on material and technological progress and that presuppos the strict distinction between self-interest and service to the common good. Thucydides' comments about his *History* and the war's surpassing greatness, coupled with his treatment of Homer and Mycenaea, reveal that he does not clearly adopt these criteria. If these are not so obviously his criteria, then one must be open to reconsidering

his position on the existence of a legitimate limit on human conduct and whether its origin is divine or natural.

Upon further reflection, what first seems to be a natural trajectory in the archaeology -- from primitive dominion over weak individuals to colonization and quasi-imperial rule over cities -- comes to represent the result of a fundamental change in political conduct. The love of conquest and domination seems to replace piracy and robbery. The strong now seek dominion over others, not merely the satisfaction of their desires for gain. The weak now enter into servitude and no longer merely seek sustenance. Greekness as distinct from barbarism begins to emerge. What happened to bring about such changes? Why did individuals and cities become addicted to riches? Perhaps more importantly, why did the need for more translate in some cases into the desire to rule over others and in other cases into the willingness to enter into servitude?

One might be tempted to think that the desire for life's necessities, once satisfied, merely translated into the desire for gain. But if this were true, then the desire for gain could just as easily find its satisfaction in non-imperialistic piracy, where one could take the goods one wanted without needing to rule over others. Of course, to guarantee the possession of certain goods one might try maintain possession of territory. But even this does not require rule over others, as Thucydides' comments about early settlements (I.2) and Minos (I.8) indicate. If, however, the pursuit of empire is merely the natural extension of a city's concern for its self-preservation, such that it can only preserve itself through dominion over others, then imperial expansion could be excused in the same way self-defense can be excused. Perhaps this is an equation that the surface of the archaeology invites us to make. But this equation is not so evident. After all, constant

dominion over others is not clearly or immediately necessary for survival. Why would men solely concerned with self-interest risk (and in many cases lose) their lives for something not clearly necessary?[59] It seems a change occurred to transform their desires. It is not the concern for gain or excess that is novel but rather the interest in conquest or dominion. Thucydides seems to point to such a transformation in his first attempt at distinguishing Greeks from barbarians.

The transformation referred to is first foreshadowed (or at any rate is preceded) by Thucydides' comment that piracy was a matter of reputation and glory (*kleos*) for those who performed their piracy nobly (*kalos,* I.5).[60] What constitutes noble piracy is unclear. Perhaps it involves the expulsion of "malefactors." Or perhaps it requires that one share one's largesse with the needy. It may even concern how one treats one's victims. In any case, men began to distinguish the practice of piracy in terms of how it was performed as opposed to the booty itsecured. By introducing this distinction, men introduced a good apart from mere booty – reputation among others. To receive this good then, one had to

[59] For a quasi-historical account of this change in psychology, one should see Diodotus's speech in the Mytilenean debate at III 42-8. Pouncey recognizes the transformation and charts a six step break down of the "*arche*," but according to him the changes in Greek life are not essential transformations (1980, 52-3); the basic tendency for Pouncey is towards aggression (ibid., 43). Hunter (1982, 22) glosses right over these sections and as a result is led to conclude that power for Thucydides must be quantitative.

[60] This is the adverbial form of *kalos, -on* and can be rendered as "well," "rightly," "nobly," and "beautifully" depending on the context. Because *kalos* here describes the first limit imposed on the pursuit of self-interest and is associated with the limit defining Greek politics, a discussion of its renderings and uses in Book I is necessary. According to the LSJ, *kalos* and its cognates can serve four different parts of speech: adjective, degree of comparison (which uses the *kalli-* stem typically reserved for the comparative and superlative forms), adverb (typically using the omega in place of the omicron usually found in adverbs) and quantity (which employs a rare accent marks on the alpha and is typically used in Epic poetry). Following normal Greek practice, it can also serve as a noun. Thucydides uses *kalos* and its cognates 98 times in the *History* and 12 times in Book I. In six of the 12 cases, *kalos* and its cognates are used to refer either to praise or to a rightful limit by which one could judge (and thus praise or blame) one's policy, practice or conduct (I.5.2, 28.4, 38.5, 81.5, 84.3 and 124.1). In this context, *kalos* and cognates are properly rendered as "noble," "nobly," "honorable," or "honor." In five cases, it is used to indicate something that is advantageous or beneficial or convenient (I.33.1, 36.2, 44.3, 120.5 and 129.3). At I.93.3, it is used to indicate the beauty of the Peiraeus. I defend this rendering in my discussion of Themistocles below (chapter 4.III.B.2.a).

observe some kind of limit in the pursuit of one's self-interest. A more complete picture of the emergence of this "limit" is offered in the discussion of Greek dress that follows.

3. b. the practice of nude wrestling and the emergence of the common good

Thucydides takes up the discussion of changes in Greek dress as evidence of the common practice of robbery among the ancient Greeks. Over time the Greeks as a whole set aside the wearing of iron, and the Athenians in particular pursued a more luxurious manner of living, setting it aside only recently. It was in Sparta however, where the great among the citizens first *chose* to observe an equality of appearance among the many, adopting the more modest style of dress that came late to Athens. A sense of some legitimate restraint on the outward pursuit of one's individual good – independent of compulsion or necessity - emerged in Spartan politics first. But the pursuit of or concern for the individual good did not merely disappear.

Directly following the emergence of this concern with the common good, Thucydides notes that the Spartans also originated the practice of wrestling in the nude and anointing their naked bodies with oils. One cannot ask without smiling "just what does nude wrestling have to do with the common good?!" By having one follow the other Thucydides invites his reader to uncover how one of his more frivolous and seemingly irrelevant asides bears on one of his most explicit and most important political notes. In particular, one has to wonder if the conduct of the great among the Spartans and the conduct of those who aspire to be an Olympic champion can be reconciled. Can one be understood as a different form of the other?

The connection becomes clearer if one clarifies the differences. Those who dominate in politics freely choose to conceal outward appearances of their superiority. Those who aspire to dominate physically, on the other hand, choose to reveal themselves when competing. Because the grapplers also choose to anoint their bodies beforehand, the decision to exercise naked cannot merely be attributed to a technical choice, a decision made to facilitate their efforts by liberating their range of motion. Thucydides also presents this practice without reference to the prizes and honors that attend victory. He thus distinguishes the practice of the Greeks from that of the barbarians who cover themselves in their competition for prizes. For the Greeks, the competition itself becomes the end. Moreover by discarding their clothes, the Spartan wrestlers discard conventional covers and restraints. They assume for themselves an independence from convention and thus stake out a kind of non-conventional, or natural, self-sufficiency. Revealing one's self does not therefore appear as a mere means to the goods victory affords.[61]

If displaying one's self is not a means to the goods victory affords, then perhaps it is an integral part of competition itself. Of course, in this case one would still compete to win, to dominate, and thus to enjoy the goods that such domination brings. But the concern for how one competes (clothed or unclothed) mediates the concern for victory and its spoils. For the barbaric Asians, on the other hand, being victorious means getting a hold of the prizes offered. Possessing them is a sign that one has won, that one was superior in the contest, and thus an indication that one was in fact worthier of the goods at stake. But by placing a limit on the concern for mere victory, the Greeks subject victory and its spoils to considerations about the manner in which they were secured. As such

[61] My analysis here is greatly indebted to the discussions of this passage by Clifford Orwin (1994, 31especially) and Steve Forde (1989, 48 especially). Hornblower (1991, 26) connects the changes in dress

conquest or victory is not the first indication of one's superiority, or one's worthiness to possess such goods. The contest's outcome (victory or defeat) *confirms* about the contestants what the audience can see with their "own two eyes." Exercising naked would seem to amount to the combatants' claims to the goods of victory, claims made in light of considerations of one's natural worthiness.

This practice manages to transform the goods for which one competes. The possession of goods no longer determines one's superiority, or one's worthiness to possess them.[62] One no longer deduces the worth of one's character from the goods they possess on account of their victory. Rather, the possession of goods itself is determined by prior considerations of superiority or worthiness. But this transformation in the nature of the goods (as confirming, not establishing) suggests that the nature of the contest has been altered. By asserting claims to goods in light of one's worth, the Greeks, or Spartans, transform considerations of mere worth into considerations of deserving. Before and in the example of the barbarians one was superior because one possessed goods. Now, in the example of the Greeks, one deserves to possess goods because one is superior. One can now be entitled to goods.

How does one reconcile this practice with what those in power do, namely concealing their appearance of greatness? They too are involved in a contest. If Thucydides' archaeology teaches us anything it is that the mere possession of power or territory is no indication that one will continue to hold it. In the continuing contest to hold on to their power, the great in Sparta voluntarily limit the open exercise of their power by

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to political changes in the respective regimes.

[62] The question becomes what makes one superior then, if not the possession of these goods? Grene (1965, 30, and 61-3) characterizes the Greek understanding of superiority solely in terms of rule and goods

concealing the appearance of their greatness. Like the Spartan grapplers, they eschew or temper the concern for the material goods that follow from rule (or victory) in favor of considerations regarding *how* they rule. And like the Olympic combatants, they aim to establish their superiority in terms of self-sufficiency. In this case, they reveal their self-sufficiency by voluntarily foregoing the goods (such as lavish attire) rule affords. One might even say that they do the wrestlers one better, since such restraint on their part reveals the superiority of their characters, not their bodies. Being less subject to the vagaries of natural chance and accident, one's character is both more constant and more truly one's own than one's body. Deserving to rule thus stems from the worth of one's character, not from physical strength or force. Observance of the common good seems to be both a means to legitimate rule and an essential part of the rule itself.

3.c. from I.6 to I.18

This analysis still has to be squared with the fact that in the chapters following Thucydides details the pursuit of dominion and conquest on the part of cities and individuals. He does not detail the growing attention of cities and individuals to the legitimate limit on the pursuit of self-interests. Doesn't this speak against the reading of the previous section? If not, doesn't it at least speak against their importance to the archaeology? The section on dominion that follows both confirms the interpretation presented and highlights this section's importance to the archaeology as a whole.

Part of the teaching of this section consists in the insight that once men and communities gain enough goods to liberate them from the daily concern for survival, they begin to understand the possession of certain goods to reflect on men's characters, on the

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possessed. He thus attributes a barbaric Calliclean view to the Athenians and the Spartans. Clearly I disagree.

worthiness to possess these goods. This is an important development and emerges most clearly in the example of public sport and in Asian boxing in particular. One could always obtain goods via piracy. But in the case of piracy or robbery, no one would necessarily know *who* performed the robbery. One could only know that the goods were gone. Public sport, as a contest over superfluous goods, introduces a good in addition to those prizes that attend successful robbery. Combatants do not merely try to possess goods (as in robbery), but seek what the possession of those goods entails – the public recognition of one's superiority. The pursuit of political dominion over others – the treatment of which follows this chapter -- extends to public life the "logic" behind barbarian sport – the recognition *by* others of one's superiority *over* others. This is reinforced by the fact that the cities Thucydides treats in the following chapters are concerned with rule simply, not the *way* in which one rules.

The Greek contribution discussed here *depends* on understanding goods as a sign of one's worth. Associating one's superior worth with the possession of goods thus appears as much Greek as barbarian. What is specifically Greek is the notion that one's superior nature makes one worthy to possess the goods, or that goods are attendant on and thus subject to considerations of one's worthiness. This effectively turns the initial understanding on its head. The *Greek* contribution then is the notion that a prior and genuine limit on the pursuit of goods (e.g., victory or rule and the things that come from them) exists and should be observed in the name of pursuing those very goods.[63] Thus observing this limit provides one with a claim to those goods. The Spartan concern for the common good, emerging as it does out of the Spartan practice of exercising nude,

represents the public flowering of those seeds initially found in noble piracy (I.5). Thucydides thus seems to indicate that political power understood as political right (that legitimate limit on the pursuit of individual self-interest) has its source in human nature, or in human nature's dispositions towards certain goods. Understood in this way, Spartan political observance of the common good seems to represent political rule in agreement with human nature.

By crediting the Greeks with discovering the common good, Thucydides credits the Greeks, and Sparta and Athens in particular, with inventing *politics* itself. But "Greekness" does not necessarily dictate a specific form of government, like democracy or oligarchy. To be a genuinely political regime, the ruling powers must observe voluntarily a limit on their self-aggrandizement in order to demonstrate their superior self-sufficiency. That other Hellenic cities mentioned in the archaeology (like Corinth) pursue dominion apart from any concern with the common good merely attests to their insufficient Greekness. Thus the barbarians – Persians, Medes, Egyptians, Arabians, Italians, and Sicilians – as well as other Hellenic peoples – Corinthians, Samians, Corcyreans, and Argives – are all insufficiently political.

Because the Greek contribution responsible for transforming non-political life into political life consists in observing a limit on the pursuit of goods as a means to goods, then the Greek contribution is predicated on the *awareness* of a limit prior to such pursuits. Awareness of what they expect for themselves from the exercise of self-restraint

[63] White, like so many other commentators on Thucydides, argues that according to the Athenians justice only comes into play between parties of equal power (1984, 70). The Athenians themselves say as much throughout the work. But this facile conclusion rests on a misreading of the archaeology.

or self-sacrifice supplies the precondition for distinguishing Greeks from barbarians.[64] If both Greeks and barbarians initially understand the possession of certain goods to indicate one's superiority and pursue them in order to establish that superiority, then one has to wonder what was responsible for the Greek awareness that led them to exercise self-restraint voluntarily. Does the Greek "transformation" represent a more complete development of that understanding shared by Greeks and barbarians, or is it an aberration of that understanding? Is their awareness really a misperception? Moreover, if that understanding (of the relationship between goods and character) shared by barbarians and Greeks alike dictates the specifically Greek understanding of political power (eschewing goods to lay a claim to goods), then one must wonder if that understanding itself is natural.

To pursue this question one must ask which cities or which regimes genuinely observe limits on the pursuit of conquest dominion in the name of conquest and dominion.[65] What contemporary regime most genuinely embodies an attachment to the common good? Thucydides explicitly states that Sparta was the first to observe the common good, that its regime was the oldest, most stable, and most freed from tyranny (I.19). It would seem then that Sparta offers the regime most in accordance with the human concern for goods that gave rise to right. But unlike Athens, Sparta, according to Thucydides, has been longest troubled by domestic uprising, presumably from her

[64] Forde, in a similar vein, claims that the "development of the political form in Greece culminated in the discovery of humanity, or of the beauty of unadorned humanity, which opened the way for the cultivation of humanity as one of the specific undertakings of Greek civilization. As Thucydides adumbrates it, the Greek ideal, as a human and political ideal, combines with this undertaking a genuine devotion to some notion of modesty or restraint" (1989, 175). Forde's terse, but pregnant, comment encapsulates the thrust of my argument without spelling it out or situating it within the broader context framed by Thucydides' concern with overcoming those obstacles facing the clear truth.

[65] One should note that this does not rule out the possibility that rulers, like Spartan-oligarchs, could observe moderate political rule.

massive Helot population. Moreover, if Spartan power over the Peloponnesus derives any of its authority from its august heritage, then the stories of Agamemnon, Atreus and Pelops recast this authority in a less than reputable light.[66] By raising these questions about Sparta, Thucydides forces us to take seriously his treatment of both Athens and Sparta. Of course, we must wonder if his narrow focus on the Greeks in general and on Sparta and Athens in particular, doesn't undermine his claim to present universal lessons. Doesn't this *focus* on what is exceptional, or particular, belie his *concern* with what is universal? This is no different than wondering how his single work about a single war can reveal universal lessons.

III. The Unity of the Archaeology

A. Thucydides' Journey

If the preceding argument regarding the emergence of political right is correct, we are forced to wonder how the archaeology unites three seemingly disparate elements. The first, and most superficial element, is the overwhelming emphasis on number of men and material and technological progress. These criteria, which are advanced as legitimate measures of political greatness from the very first sentence, fail to take seriously the greatness embodied in the poetic tradition. At the least, they fail to take the poetic tradition on its own terms. The second element is an obvious opposition to the poetic tradition, an opposition that cannot merely be reduced to the problematic criteria employed by Thucydides' pre-war perspective. After all, the problem of lack of verifiability would seem to apply to both the poets and what I have been calling the "Greek Enlightenment" perspective. It applies to the latter because Thucydides never

[66] A similarity seems to exist between the stories of Atreus and Pelops – their motives and how they came to power - and the Asian practice of physical competition. The connection is reinforced by the fact that

presents an argument for the legitimacy of material and technological progress as measures of political greatness. Because the grounds of Thucydides' opposition to the poets (the standard from which his objections to them receive their authority) have yet to be revealed, the authority of the poetic tradition remains essentially intact. Finally, Thucydides presents a sketch of the emergence of political justice out of the human concern for certain goods that does not rely on the measures of material and technological progress, a sketch I take to represent Thucydides' most serious judgment.

To sort out these elements, one must recall the *History's* opening sentence, where the author identifies himself (in the third person) before the war as having expectations about the war's greatness over all past wars, an expectation of greatness measured in terms of material provisions and numbers of men. The second sentence however, presented in the first person, stated that the war *was* certainly the greatest motion among all the Greeks, greater than all things in the past concerning war *or otherwise*. The suggestion behind this "small" change seems to be that Thucydides, upon entering the war, adopted that perspective which appears to dominate the pages of the archaeology, a perspective associated with the Greek Enlightenment. During the war, however, it seems Thucydides' perspective changed. If one follows my reading of the archaeology, then the perspective he adopted understands political right to have its origins in the workings of human nature (and not divine dispensation), and specifically in the human understanding of what the possession of certain goods mean. This change may have been partly effected by Thucydides' reconsideration of the wisdom embodied in the poetic tradition. It may also have been effected by his pre-war perspective's inability to address sufficiently the poetic tradition's wisdom, an inability to take seriously the claims of divine inspiration.

Pelops himself came out of Asia.

The archaeology leaves the reader with the war's greatness consisting in the fact that the war between Athens and Sparta will reveal the truth about contemporary regimes' claims to observe the common good. By doing so, the *History* will reveal the truth about the origins of political power and the ancient past simply. Thucydides' choice to present his archaeology in this way not only allows us to see the contours of the path he traveled, but may also guide us in our own journey towards wisdom, a journey that will take the rest of the *History*.

Thucydides' archaeology charts a course regarding the human origins of justice, a course between the poetic tradition, that holds justice's origin to be divine, and the Greek enlightenment position, that holds justice's origin to be conventional or the result of force and fraud.[67] The perspective of the mature Thucydides is therefore free of poetic nostalgia for the Golden Age of gods, demi-gods, and heroes just as it is free of the Enlightenment desire to leave the misery and backwardness of the past far behind. Because his account in the archaeology is an account of the past of which we have no direct experience, then the course he navigates here must remain hypothetical. If his presentation of politics in the *History* is correct, then this is what the past must look like, this is what the true origins of political justice must be. To vindicate his account then, to illustrate the greatness of his war, Thucydides must employ that 'speech' that distinguishes him from the poets and prose writers.

As we undertake the Thucydidean "Odyssey" that the opening sentences of the *History* bids, we must keep in mind the strikingly personal dimension of Thucydides'

[67] For an analysis of the unified structure of the archaeology, one should see Connor's analysis of the archaeology's ring-composition (1984, 30-1, fn. 29; one should also see the works cited there on the subject of Thucydides' famed use of "ring-composition"). See also Hornblower's notes on I.8.2 (1991, 30). On

work. Despite the overwhelming and unrelenting focus on practical political affairs, there exists the occasional reminder through interjections on Thucydides' part that behind this massive and impersonal treatment of politics there lurks the quiet and nearly inaudible question of the author's personal transformation.[68] It is precisely with these interjections that Thucydides recalls us from our absorption with the text and detachment from the author back to the question of Thucydides. At such times, we should reflect on how the context of the intervention enhances our appreciation of this personal question.[69] By forcing us to recall Thucydides and his personal change, these interventions also force us to recall ourselves. They serve to remind us of those individual concerns which brought us to the *History* in the first place, concerns which Thucydides addresses in the very opening of the *History* and which his account of the war attempts to engage throughout.[70]

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further ring composition techniques in Thucydides, see Connor's several Appendices (1984) as well as Gribble (1998).

[68] Pouncey notes this transformation and it forms the centerpiece of his work. But for Pouncey, the impersonal treatment of politics represents a cold scientific tone that was enhanced by his exile (1980, 6). Connor argues that Thucydides writes his work in order to form the reader (1984, 11-12), to create him as it were, through "progressions or narrative chains – series of episodes or speeches each of which resembles the other...The author needs to say little or nothing in his own voice; the reader is there, witnessing the unfolding of events, listening to the analyses offered by the speakers, participating as a contemporary might" (ibid. 233). The result is that "the reader is in part the product of the text itself" (ibid. 232). Forde notes "Thucydides is notoriously self-effacing in his book, and if to one way of thinking he is the real hero of it, he seems to do everything to prevent himself from becoming its subject" (1989, 175). See also Adam Parry (1973). He notes that "Thucydides' *History*...is an intensely personal and tragic work. A careful reader feels this from the very first sentence....its intensity of feeling everywhere reminds us of Thucydides' personal involvement" (47). See also Strauss (1964, 162).

[69] Gribble (1998) provides a sensitive treatment of how Thucydides' explicit interventions help structure the narrative and further the aims in his work. As Gribble notes, Thucydides' interventions in the first person frequently serve to draw the reader out of the narrative to a different time, to an "extra-narrative perspective" (1998, 51). By joining the narrator and reader in a point in time outside that of the story, Gribble contends that Thucydides deliberately emphasizes "the distance to the events described...[which] is itself a powerful generator of pathos" (ibid. 51, brackets mine). But such interventions are constructed so as to "emerge imperceptibly" so that "authorial judgment intrusively imposed on the text is avoided" (ibid 59). While I do not think Thucydides intends to impose any judgments on his readers, those who are careful will find his interventions jarring. See Adam Parry's comments cited in the previous footnote.

[70] It is perhaps by appealing to our own concerns that Thucydides actually comes closest to the view or purpose of history as espoused by Collingwood. According to Collingwood, history is for self-knowledge; to know what it is to be "human" and to be a particular human (1946, 10). Strangely, however, Collingwood separates man's knowledge of man (the proper function of history) from man's knowledge of

It is precisely because these interjections are rare that Thucydides' *refusal* to deviate from his focus on practical political events can come to light for us. For in light of these interventions we can see that Thucydides, if he so chose, could have deviated from his focus in order to present explicit teachings on politics. That he chooses not to do so is cause for wonder. It is what drives our effort to understand Thucydides' intent. But what is the connection between Thucydides' methods and his intent?

B. The Vitality and Relevance of Thucydides' Speech: Connecting Method with Content

Part of Thucydides' opposition to the poets and prose-writers consists in his insight into how contemporary regimes' devotion to the common good sheds light on political power's origins (and on the character of the ancient past). The other part of his opposition consists in the manner in which he both accesses and reveals this insight. The character of the former insight calls for the specific methods he employs. The question becomes how Thucydides' "speech" which serves as a commentary on the distinction between what men say and do, bears on contemporary regimes' claims to observe the common good, and thus the origins of political power. One can address this question if one recalls briefly the implications of Thucydides' treatment of the distinction between speech and deed for the distinction between universals and particulars.

According to my treatment in Part I, section C.2, Thucydides' "speech" provides a commentary on the limits of what universals and particulars can *be*. Because Thucydides' "speech" encompasses both the speeches and deeds of the *History's* actors, it cannot be understood with reference to the criteria defining the distinction between

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the gods (the purpose of theology?) as if one could possess knowledge of "man" without knowledge of that world of which humans are a part (ibid. 5,12).

speech and deed. If his speech cannot be so understood, then the universal lessons his particular work will reveal cannot be understood with reference to the criteria that keep universals and particulars distinct. Because Thucydides' speech points to the questionable distinction between universals and particulars and because particular things are what they are insofar as they belong to some universal category, then Thucydides' extremely subtle commentary on speech and deed points to the limits facing what universals and particulars can *be*. When first introduced, these abstract conclusions appeared somewhat empty and out-of-place in a work devoted to practical political affairs of a single war. The discussion of the archaeology, which charts Thucydides' journey in his understanding of political power and political right, establishes the political relevance of this abstract insight regarding the character of "universals" and "particulars."

The archaeology suggests that the greatness of the war ultimately consists in the fact that the conflict between the two poles of Greek justice and Greek power reveals the human origins of political power. Consequently, the surpassing greatness of Thucydides' work consists in his ability to shed light on these human origins by focusing on regimes' claims – or the claims made by the regimes' statesmen and citizens - to possess or to know this legitimate limit. Because Thucydides' speech aims at reflecting the human origins of political power then it must clarify the character of that universal class or category "political justice," a class that defines politics and can exist only in speech. His speech serves as a commentary on the extent to which one can speak of a distinct category of political justice, a category free from the variability of particular just deeds. By the variability of particular just deeds, I mean that flexibility in circumstances and individual perspective that makes a deed just in one case, but unjust in another. By

commenting on universals in this way, Thucydides' speech, which joins his content with his methods, promises to pull back the veil that covers not only the truth about those high-minded notions capable of exacting selfless devotion but which also keeps from view the truth about the ancient past, and thus the divine things and the first things.

In this light the abstract questions concerning speech and deed raised above take on a new vitality and urgency. If the variability of particular deeds speaks against the integrity of the universal class "justice," then one has to begin to wonder if any regime can genuinely claim to possess or observe or know such a standard. But it is the legitimate possession or knowledge of such a standard by which a regime's claims to its citizens' obedience, devotion, and sacrifice stands or falls. If regimes do not and cannot possess or know such a standard then on what basis can men legitimately prefer the good of their regime over their own good? Once this question has been raised, then the ability of the regime to send men to risk their lives on behalf of the common good (its power) comes into question. And if Thucydides identifies political power with *just* or decent political rule, then Thucydides' insight about the universal class of justice should also bear on the character of politics, or the extent to which one can speak of a class of political things. And this forces us to ask if one can still speak, as we did with respect to the Spartan discovery of the common, of politics' agreement with human nature. Perhaps most importantly, if all this about universals and particulars is true, then one must wonder whether the lessons of the *History* can still claim universal legitimacy.

I am strengthened in my inclination to read the archaeology and the statements on method as I do by considering Thucydides' "new introduction" to the war itself - his statement on the "cause" (or the ground or origin) of this surpassingly great war at I.23.

According to Thucydides here, the war's greatness no longer consists in numbers and provisions. It consists in the range and depth of suffering caused by both human and non-human means. He introduces the non-human disasters by noting that up until now they existed only through fame but were rarely confirmed. In this war, such catastrophes were "made not unbelievable" (*ouk apista kateste*, I.23.3). That is, their occurrence during the war confirms that the things reported *could* have happened, but just not as they were reported to have happened. These disasters show themselves to be in need of an interpretation more adequate than those supplied by the poets and prose writers' reports -- perhaps one that shows such disasters not to be the punishments of the gods (cf. Herodotus' *Histories* VI.98; Edmunds 1975, 172).[71] Thucydides' "speech," presented in the preceding chapter (I.22), may supply this more adequate interpretation. This does not mean Thucydides denies the existence of justice. But his treatment of speech and deed, when joined with the content of the archaeology, leads to the *suggestion* that no universal justice exists distinct from the deeds that constitute it. To the extent that there is a class of justice, then it is affected by the variability of those deeds that are just "in this case," but unjust "in that case." Under this reading, the character of justice as somehow both universal and particular speaks to the specifically human character of its origin.

[71] Edmunds also presents a different account of these disasters. He contends that sufferings belong to the realm of the contingent (and thus non-human) disasters (1975, 152-3). This reading follows from his interpretation of Thucydides' "programmatic and methodological statements" which show that Thucydides "thought of himself as distinguishing that which came about by chance and that which was orderly and reasonable" (ibid. 147). While I disagree with Edmunds, our theses are - in a certain respect - not that far apart. Connor notes that the divine connotations of Thucydides' "*heloimodes nosos*" refer to the "apocalyptic plague" at Athens (or that it was "more than a normal human sickness"; 1984, 31, fn. 30). See Strauss' reference to the "*daimonic*" in Pericles' final speech as way of categorizing such disasters without labeling them either natural or supernatural (1974, 1).

Thucydides' insight into the war's greatness also dictates that he adopt the methods he does.[72] If the class justice is affected by the variability of its particular members such that there are no universals as such as distinct from particulars, then there may be no greater way to reveal the character of this insight than to adopt Thucydides' unique methods. It is perhaps with a view to capturing this insight, that he employs *ta deonta* in his treatment of both the speeches and the deeds. To capture the differences more starkly or more explicitly may play into the fallacy that universals exist untainted by the blemishes of particulars; an explicit treatment of this insight may make this insight less visible. Perhaps his interest in revealing this insight accounts for the strikingly impersonal character of Thucydides' self-revelation.

Of course, all of this must remain pure speculation. Thucydides, after all, has yet to undertake the investigation into the character of political right and political power. There is as of yet no basis to draw any firm connection between his study of political right and his methods. At this point we are left to ask what constitutes the legitimate basis for the connection between his treatment of speech and deed with his substantive criticism of the divine basis of political right. What is the connection between the blurring of universal and particular that his method effects and the grounds for his rejection of political right's divine authority that his work reveals?

In order to show that his conception of political history can indeed solve the problem facing it through a focus on contemporary regimes' justifications of their rule, one must undertake two investigations. First, what is the basis of the necessary connection between the truth about the origins of political power and the ancient past?

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[72] For a slightly different reading, see Connor (1984, 27-9). Connor's argument requires Thucydides to have adopted his methods independent of the war he related. Contrast this with what Connor says about the

What is it about the answer to the narrow question about political power that casts such broad light? Thucydides' understanding of the unique character of this insight supplies the basis for his confidence in his work's permanent utility, and the war's ability to establish its own greatness. Defending his focus on political power and a particular event is the work of chapter 5. The second investigation, which concerns what Greek regime provides the most serious claim to political power (i.e., to possess or know that genuine limit upon which it can base its demands for devotion, obedience and self-sacrifice), helps us complete the first. For only after seeing how the truth of a particular regime sheds universal light on political power will we be prepared to see how the particular truth about political power constitutes the sufficient condition for revealing the universal truth about the ancient past. Thus only after our study in chapter 4 of Thucydides' treatment of Athens's understanding of justice as power will we be in a position to appreciate Thucydides' decision to reveal universal truths through an elaborate treatment of Athenian imperialism.

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way Thcuydides ends the work (1984, 236).

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Thucydides' Solution to the Problem of Political History

To understand what it means to say that Thucydides offers a political teaching about politics one must explain what is meant by a "political" teaching. While the last chapter attempted to clarify both the unique character of his manner of procedure and what is at stake in his proceeding as he did, it did not make clear what is *political* about his manner of procedure. To say it is *about* politics or *about* a surpassingly great political event is insufficient. This merely begs the question. Only after we have some sense of Thucydides' teaching on politics can we attempt to explain why his manner of procedure is best understood as a political manner. Once we have done this, we will begin to see the need to connect his political manner of procedure and his teaching on politics to the conditions necessary for a genuine engagement with and study of political life. But the step we must take now is to introduce Thucydides' teaching on politics.

The last chapter identified Thucydides' political history as an effort to come to the truth about the ancient past, and in particular the truth about the origins and nature of political right, without direct access to the ancient past or to the origin or cause of right. He attempts to overcome this lack of direct access by presenting the speeches and deeds of political actors. His presentation blurs the boundary between speech and deed in a way that compels us to seek the connection between this manner of procedure and his interest in establishing the human origin of political right. Why should his interest in revealing the human origin of political right necessitate this manner of procedure? To establish his account of right's human origin – and thus the surpassing greatness of the war he relates

and his methods for relating it - Thucydides turns to the causes of the war. This chapter argues that his treatment of the causes of the war, and chapters 24-97 especially, is guided by his insights into the human basis of political right. It also argues that this treatment is composed in such a way as to reveal the reasons for concluding that human neediness and the concomitant concern for power generates political right. We will thus be more prepared at the close of this chapter than we were at the close of the last to conclude that Thucydides' methods serve an intentional pedagogical purpose.

To draw these conclusions this chapter proceeds in three parts. The first part lays out the thematic and textual justifications for treating Thucydides' analysis of the causes of the war (23-118) as a treatment of the origins of law, or political right, simply. It places special emphasis on his statement of intent for exploring the war's causes. This step also places special emphasis on his distinction between *aitiai* and *prophasis*. Thucydides' distinction here and the structure of his sentence at I.23.6 further justifies the effort to understand the nature of political power by beginning from what men say about justice and injustice, and especially by beginning from how what men take to be justice issues in what they take to be injustice.

The second part directly addresses Thucydides' "identification" of justice with power by looking at the first two expressions of what justice *is*. Through the speeches of the Corcyreans and the Corinthians, he frames the question of justice as power as an either-or: either justice is expedience or justice is fairness. The "either-or" of the Corinthians and the Corcyreans makes possible an explicit investigation of that polarization Thucydides criticized in Homer and the Trojan War. The weakness of the Trojan War as Homer treated it lay in the fact that the Greeks who fought either did so

out of a concern for mere gain or out the slavish service of others. The superiority of Thucydides' work thus consists in his treating both the concern for gain and the service to others in terms of their relationship to right. When one reads the surrounding narrative in light of the speeches of Corcyra and Corinth, one finds a connection between the two expressions of justice and what those expressions mean for the possession of goods. To understand the relationship between justice and the possession of goods, we must address those questions posed by the link between Olympic contestants and Sparta's discovery of the common. Does the concern for the validation of one's superiority through the possession of goods find satisfaction in the sacrifice of goods that the demonstration of one's superiority entails? Does the fulfillment of the law through fairness and devotion to the common good, as the Corinthians express it, satisfy the original concern for the confirmation of our virtue that generated the law, as the Corcyreans express it? By presenting the problem of justice as power as an either-or and by showing how this new formulation bears on the possession of goods, this second part sets the stage for an examination of the envoys' speech at Sparta and a resolution of these two seemingly contradictory understandings of justice as power.

The third part requires two sections. The first involves a detailed discussion of the envoys' speech at Sparta. The treatment of this speech first establishes the importance of nobility to their understanding of their superior worth: their nobility serves as the basis of their claim to possess empire justly. Because serious problems confront the candid, explicit, and outright defense of this claim the envoys must make an argument from justice. Insofar as justice is the means to preserving their imperial title, a title of which their nobility makes them worthy, then justice is *the power* to obtain those goods that

make one self-sufficient and which confirm one's superior sufficiency and nobility. But justice also involves sacrificing those very goods that are good to possess. This argument from justice encounters the very difficulties charted in the speeches of the Corcyreans and Corinthians because justice, taking its cues from the concern with noble self-sufficiency, merely makes explicit what nobility promises.

To establish that the envoys' openness to the noble belongs to human nature it is necessary to determine what within humans makes them open to what nobility promises. The second part of this third step turns to a discussion of Thucydides' presentation of Themistocles' political vision as the root of Athens's understanding of justice as power. It concludes that the Athenians' understanding of justice as power follows from their "Themistoclean" openness to the union between beauty and advantage, an openness that follows from their exposure to need and danger and from their awareness of that exposure. This union between beauty and advantage, or rather beauty's promise of profitability, is predicated on the power of beauty to silence or numb almost completely the awareness of the profound neediness confronting the human condition. The hopefulness to overcome this recognized neediness, fueled as it is by what beauty or nobility promises, leads men to seek to eliminate that neediness that defines the human condition and thereby obtain a wholeness or self-sufficiency that would transform who (or what) they are. The problematic conclusion that to become whole, or wholly self-sufficient, one must abandon one's self or forget one's self reflects the problematic character of political right and suggests the human basis of such problems. These observations about Athens are reinforced by a comparison with Corcyra and Corinth.

I. The Causes of the War as a Commentary on the Origins of Law

A. From the Archaeology to the Causes of the War: the Treaty and the Question of Origins

Thucydides' interest in the causes of the war and his focus on the violation of the treaty in Book I - and for that matter his entire focus on an international conflict - follows thematically from the emergence of justice charted in the archaeology. The preceding chapter attempted to show how, according to the archaeology, a legitimate limit on the individual's pursuit of his own self-interests emerged out of the desire to possess the goods of rule (or competition) in accordance with one's natural worth. Working from the insight that possession of good things *confirms* one's worthiness to possess them (as opposed to establishing their worth), the Spartans and later the Athenians seemed to conclude that possession of goods signaled what was *already* there. Thus considerations of worthiness began to precede the contests. To make one's worthiness evident, one revealed his nature. In Olympic competition, this meant exercising nude and discarding conventional covers. In political competition, this meant establishing a conventional equality through one's dress. By establishing independence from the goods victory affords, the Spartan rulers voluntarily eschewed the freedom and power (afforded by their offices) to display gaudily their rule over others. In other words, the Spartan great sought to reveal more effectively their natural superiority by revealing their natural self-sufficiency.

The outward or public "assertion" of one's superiority, of one's self-sufficiency, does not simply precede the contest over political rule. This public political "assertion" aims at replacing the political contests. Political claims regarding one's natural worth

replace the means to victory employed in Olympic contests and in contests over rule (strength, speed, wit or military force and political strategy). By revealing one's natural superiority to all those with eyes to see, one in effect decides the contest. After all, in the clear light of an opponent's superiority, how could one still justly claim the goods of victory? It would be like a baseball team claiming to deserve the World Series' trophy after losing Game 7. Finally, because the manner in which one competes cannot be reduced (or sacrificed to) the concern for victory alone, observing limits in political competition becomes an essential part of the victory itself. It is not merely a means to victory and victory's goods.

The Greek concern for the common good emerges from the barbaric and selfish concern for domination, aggrandizement and confirmation of one's superiority. Greek domestic law, which commands its subjects to look to the good of their fellow citizens (or at least to restrain one's pursuit of self-interest on their behalf), thus comes to sight as the political product of this concern. In Sparta and Athens, devotion to the rule of law and voluntary subjection to its dictates became the manner by which one revealed a superior character. One reveals the superiority of one's character through one's self-sufficiency, through one's freedom from depending on goods. Because one's posture towards the law exhibits one's character, outward and visible obedience to the law amounts to the public assertion of a citizen's superior nature. Public devotion to the common good thus constitutes one's legitimate claim to possess the goods that belong to a superior, self-sufficient nature.

Nothing within the preceding considerations about the individual's concern to possess goods in accordance with one's merit suggests that service to the common good

should stop at the walls of one's city, or the borders of one's region. Why not extend one's devotion to the "common good" of a group of people to the good of all human beings? The individual's concern for goods that led to domestic law should, it would seem, initiate a trajectory whose conclusion is the global rule of cosmopolitan law. Taken to its logical extreme the concern for goods that results in domestic law points to a universal government to which all men are subject; [1] the roots of domestic law are also the roots of international or cosmopolitan government. A study of international law and the conflicts over it should therefore reveal something about the origins of domestic law (and the conflicts it faces).[2] Such logic, however, tends to be at odds with reality.

In ancient Greece, there existed no world government united by a single treaty or set of laws analogous to the laws that bind citizens to one another. Moreover, citizens are devoted to the laws of their own city, not the laws of neighboring cities. In times of war, this devotion comes at the expense of the lives, liberties and property of neighboring citizens. Cities also generally do not recognize as binding the claims other cities might

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[1] One obstacle to such a world treaty worth noting is that treaties between the Greeks are made possible in part by their shared belief in the Greek deities that will enforce the law. A truly cosmopolitan human community united by a common good depends in part on 1.) the existence of a good that is truly common that is governed by laws 2.) that are enforced by a single deity or set of deities. Because all men on earth would be subject to the authority of a single law, one would need an impartial, other-worldly executor to enforce that law. Obedience to this executor is possible only if men share belief in the same god or set of gods.

[2] Forde notes this relationship between international and domestic politics. He writes, "For Thucydides, the Peloponnesian war is uniquely worthy of attention in part because, more sharply than any other war, it exposed the grave ambiguities that attend the character and force of *justice in relations between states*...Thus one of Thucydides' great themes, one that the Peloponnesian war uniquely lends itself to, is the adequacy of moral categories and qualities such as justice, upon which the conventional understanding is built...This "enlightenment," for Thucydides' protagonists and readers alike, is not confined to the sphere of international politics and war: it extends also to the world of *domestic politics*" (1989, 5-6, italics mine). For a similar position, one should also see *Justice Among Nations*, the Introduction (1999).White doesn't see this limitlessness as part of the rationale of or logic behind "justice" and the culture of justification that defines Greek common life. It is rather the function of their ambition (1984, 71). Saxonhouse characterizes domestic-international politics in terms of the strict distinction between convention (*nomos*) and nature (*phusis*) (1978). Failure to keep these two distinct results in Athens's defeat. De Ste. Croix contends that Thucydides did not think there was anything like an international law

make on their conduct, and thus do not restrain voluntarily the pursuit of their interests purely out of consideration for the welfare of other cities. Of course, cities make treaties with one another in order to protect each other's interests. But it is the essence of treaties to align with one party against another party, or to align with a group of cities that share common interests against another group of cities with opposite interests. The Athenians belonged to the Delian league, the Spartans led the Peloponnesian Confederacy, and both allied with each other in the past against the Persian threat. That such treaties and alliances are also made for limited times, to be renewed at a later date if the parties so choose, testifies to the very weakness of the right they embody. Such an option tacitly grants that the common ground that originally made the treaty possible can shift. The very existence of this option concedes the unreasonableness of expecting cities to pledge eternal obedience to agreements that may outlive their usefulness. That adherence to such limited treaties must also be guaranteed by oaths to the gods further testifies to the temptations expedience poses to the stability of international law. As such, the individual's concern with personal superiority and private goods that results in domestic law tends to stop at the city walls.

As chapter three's discussion of the Trojan war and Agamemnon anticipated, domestic law cannot concede the power of expedience or the changeability of the common good that unites citizens without putting the very existence of the city at risk. Because obedience to a city's laws requires one to reject such flexibility and limitations, the authority of a city's commands must derive from the most authoritative things. As such, one must understand domestic law to serve universals. Because it must serve

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approximating that law of domestic politics (1972, 20; see 26 for a view similar to that of Saxonhouse). One should also see his attempt to paraphrase Thucydides' political teaching on 22 of the same work.

universals, then it must claim to possess a permanently binding power. The limits to treaties therefore speak against their relevance to a study of domestic law and the origins of political right. But if this is so, then what becomes of the logic behind the origins of domestic law, a logic that seemed to necessitate the connection between domestic politics and international affairs? Or if the *logic* connecting international and domestic law is sound, then perhaps the *sketch* of domestic law's origins needs to be reconsidered. But if one appreciates Sparta and Athens's postures towards the 30-year treaty and international law, then one need not abandon either the sketch of the origins of domestic law or the logic connecting domestic law to the 30-year treaty.[3]

In Sparta and Athens, one finds two cities that regularly recognize legitimate limits on their cities' conduct. As members of their own confederacies both Athens and Sparta observe restraints on their self-aggrandizement. The Athenian envoys at Sparta cite their city's practice of treating their empire's confederates – parties that are manifestly subject to Athenian power – with considerable legal equity (77). By not resorting to rule through outright force (something they do at the expense of their interests) they implicitly acknowledge a limit to their city's conduct. Sparta also does not appear to pursue her self-interests openly. Not immediately threatened by recent Athenian involvement at Epidamnus and Potidaea, Sparta nevertheless declared war against Athens (87, 125). She puts the safety of her regime at risk (see Archidamus' speech at 81.6) at the discretion and on behalf of her Peloponnesian confederates (see Sthenelaidas at I.86). That Sparta doesn't merely put her regime in immediate danger in order to reap long term

[3] Kagan (1969, 174) argues that Athens accepted the status quo as enshrined in the Thirty Year Treaty. Romilly (1963, 102), sees no connection between domestic and foreign policy. For a view contrary to that of Romilly, see Forde (1992, 388; 1986, 433). For the "terms" of the treaty as we know it, see de Ste. Croix's Appendix on the 30-year treaty (1972, 293).

benefits can be seen from the Spartan king Archidamus' counsel to the Spartans: Sparta should seek arbitration. The Athenian envoys have offered to pursue such arbitration (as does Pericles) and as the king states "and to one who offers himself [to judgment], it is not lawful to invade beforehand as one who has committed an injustice" (85). If Sparta undertakes a long and dangerous war, it is because right demands it.

Because each city looks to observe or uphold the 30-year treaty when they decide to act in the international arena, they tacitly grant that the treaty preserves this common Greek cause. For instance, Athens tailored her alliance with Corcyra to go no farther than what they thought the treaty permitted.[4] She sought to keep her empire within the legal bounds of the 30-year treaty and thereby avoid a larger Greek war (44). And in Book I the envoys (78 end) counsel the Spartans and Pericles (140.2) counsels the Athenians to pursue arbitration to resolve disputes with each other's confederates. Moreover, when the envoys defend their empire they do so on the grounds that during the last Persian invasion Athens, by risking the future of her city and the lives of her citizens, saved Greece from the tyranny of the Great King (73). As the reward for her mindfulness of the Hellenic cause and the equitable administration of her subjects, Athens holds her present dominion, something that the 30-year treaty protects. Because the envoys think their city's law-abidingness secures for her those goods that confirm her nobility, then the 30-year treaty represents an international version of those domestic means by which she confirms her superiority. To the extent the treaty represents the international version of

[4] Kagan argues that the Athenians are more interested in fear and interest than right and legality (1969, 229).

domestic law,[5] the 30-year treaty inherits the authoritativeness and universalism inherent in domestic law.

Sparta understands her war against Athens as a war of Greek liberation (for all of Greece as opposed to their confederates alone; see the Spartan demands at I.139). To uphold the treaty's decrees, Sparta must tear down Athenian power (118.2), something to be performed at great risk to the Spartans and whose benefits extend beyond the freedom and safety of Sparta and her allies. In doing so, Sparta lives up to her reputation as the guardian of Greek liberty (see the Corinthians' speeches at 69.1 and at 122.2-3), a reputation won when her forebears removed Athenian tyrants from power (18.1). And as the previously cited passages from the Corinthians' second and third speeches indicate, Sparta (or the Peloponnesians) identifies her virtuous character *in terms* of her (or their) preservation of Greek liberty – something they understand the treaty to preserve. Defending the treaty could not reveal or confirm their good nature if the treaty (and the Greek freedom it preserves) didn't merit good or brave sacrifice.

In both cases, Athens and Sparta understand their authority as the leading Greek states to stem from their previous devotion to the Greek cause. Both also seem to understand the treaty to embody and preserve that notion of justice that made such former devotion possible. But is there really such a thing as a "Greek cause" to which the citizens of Athens and Sparta can be devoted - and not just devoted as particular citizens of a particular community at a particular time - but as men of the human community? Does the 30-year treaty between two *Greek* powers represent a particular peak of human

[5] It also deserves noting that the crisis between Corcyra and Corinth over Epidamnus that leads to Athenian involvement, and thus Corinthian claims of Athenian injustice – claims which result in the Spartan declaration of war - was itself instigated by the dissolution of the common bonds of domestic society. The

development that commands the allegiance of all men? A definitive answer is not possible here. One would, however, have a hard time imagining Pericles or Archidamus or Stethenelaidas claiming either that no fundamental difference exists between Greek law and Persian law[6] or that the belief in the fundamental superiority of Greek political life to Persian political life is merely the product of one's culture, or one's time, or accident.

Of course, the treaty the Greeks observe as legitimate is a treaty only the Greeks observe. It does not extend to all men in general and it does not extend to the Persians in particular. The extension of Greek law to non-Greeks is prohibited in the first place by the fact that the Greeks and the barbarians share neither gods (who would enforce the law) nor interests (that would make such a treaty possible). But as we saw above, nothing within the logic behind domestic law suggests that the concern for the common that sprung from Greek soil *should* stop at the Hellespont. Doesn't the problem posed by the exclusion of the Persians, or the problem posed by "barbarians" or by "non-Greeks" or by "the other" merely raise once again the limitation of resorting to treaties and international affairs when trying to understand the domestic origins of political right? Under ordinary circumstances this exclusion of the barbarians would constitute an unremarkable feature belonging to all treaties. But when viewed in the light of the universal authority and power that the treaty seems to enjoy among the Greeks – among men of different blood lines, cities and leagues - such a limitation becomes worthy of wonder: why does the

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questionable power of a legitimate, *domestic* limit on the conduct of men supplies the original conditions for this surpassingly great *international* war to take place.

[6] Or for that matter one should consider how these men view the differences between Athenian law and Spartan law. Cf. Archidamus' comments at I.84-5 and the ephor's comments at I.86 with Pericles' comparison of the two regimes at I.141-4, and II.36 especially.

universalism of the treaty stop with the Greeks? And why doesn't such a limitation speak against its universalism?

I contend that this particular limitation to the universalism inherent in the treaty and the Greekness it preserves plays an important role in understanding the nature of political right, and thus Thucydides' conception of what is political. I will explore how the limit to the extension of Greek law reveals the importance of the Greek conception of justice (as political power) to Thucydides' intent when I address the themes of treason, impiety, and tyranny in chapter 5. What is clear at this point is that the question of the existence of a "Greek cause" is clearly on the table in a discussion of the 30-year treaty and the conflict between Athens and Sparta. And the question of the "Greek cause" is THE political question with which Thucydides is concerned. It is the question regarding the existence and character of a legitimate limit on the conduct of men and cities that cannot be reduced to one's own time or to the particular customs and laws of one's own community. It is the question of the universal character of justice. Thucydides' concerns about the natural or divine origins of justice, having only barely emerged in the archaeology, are thus promised a fuller and more elaborate treatment in his discussion of the causes of the war.[7] But we arrive at this conclusion about Thucydides' interest in origins largely from thematic considerations. How can one confidently conclude on the basis of his work not only that the question of "origins" (and all that this entails) is on his mind, but that it *drives* Thucydides' analysis of the war's cause in Book I?

[7] My appreciation of this connection between the archaeology is not appreciated by all scholars of Thucydides. At most, they understand Thucydides' archaeology to introduce the work's themes of power, self-interest, fear and so on. Most readings by classicists and historians understand the Pentecontaetia to pick up where the archaeology left off (See Finley 1940, 168). This seems a misreading of the last few chapters of the archaeology. Connor, whose reading of Thucydides is, of all non-Straussian readings, perhaps most sympathetic to my own, sees a disjuncture in the move from the archaeology to present

B. Thucydides' Interest in Origins

To strengthen the thematic connection between the archaeology and Thucydides' treatment of causes we must turn to the statement of intent that introduces his treatment of the war's cause. At first blush, turning to this statement seems to be a non-starter. Is it not the case that all historians write history to explain why things happened as they did? Doesn't this task define what it means to "do history"? But the question posed is only a non-starter if we begin by assuming that all historians are historians in the modern scientific sense. As we have seen in chapter three, there is no reason to assume that Thucydides is such a historian. There is even less reason to assume that he follows the footsteps of the "father of history," Herodotus. Herodotus relates the cause of the animosity between the Greeks and Persians as part of his broader task - preserving their many wonderful deeds for posterity so that time may not draw out the color of such deeds (I.1). This purpose is strikingly different from Thucydides' concern with the permanent *utility* of his work.[8]

Thucydides' turn to the causes of the war becomes a matter of interest when one recalls that his intent in writing the war followed from the war's surpassing greatness. It did not follow from the war's surpassingly great *causes*. Interest in something great need not, by itself, mandate an interest in what caused it. Moreover, as I have noted elsewhere, Thucydides did not begin writing the war with a study of the war's causes. He indicates

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affairs (1984, 32); For those readings that are closer to my own, see Orwin (1989), Forde (1989) and Strauss (1964).

[8] *History*, trans. David Grene. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987. One should compare Herodotus's interest to Thucydides' interest in permanent utility and Pericles' interest in eternal monuments. Herodotus's interest seems to be more in line with Pericles' than with Thucydides'. Perhaps Thucydides' assessment of Pericles and Pericles' understanding of eternal monuments (as well as that understanding of what is noble that belies it) can be applied to his assessment of that "prose-writer" Herodotus. It may be that according to Thucydides, Herodotus's interest in preserving deeds for the

that he returned to the question of "cause" after considerable experience of the war (if not after the whole war), and thus after considerable work on his *History*. The question regarding Thucydides' interest in "cause" therefore shows itself to be one worth raising: why does he *return* to the question of causes after his experience of the war and why does he treat this question in such an unscientific and elaborate fashion? If Thucydides' understanding of the war's greatness changed as he experienced the war, as I argued earlier, then how does this change bear on his interest in causes?

1. *Prophasis* and the Secondary Literature

When Thucydides turns to the reasons for the dissolution of the treaty, and thus the war that followed, he refers to those charges and disagreements most apparent in speech and the truest allegation or reason given. Most commentators who treat the issue of the war's origins (or from where the war "grew up")[9] touch on Thucydides' interest in relating the causes of the war. But most, if not all, understand his interest in causes in light of their interpretation of his comments about the truest cause (*prophasis*). If they understand prophasis to mean cause in the scientific sense, then Thucydides' intent in turning to the question of cause is understood to be scientific. He treats the causes of war because he wants to explain why this war started (and perhaps what will cause other wars to start). This Thucydides, the scientific historian, may want to reveal causes to show future politicians how to avoid war as much as he may want to show them that sometime wars are unavoidable. His being a scientific historian need not dictate a concern with practical political applications of his insight. But whether he is concerned with practical

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memory of others is fueled by an understanding of what is noble. On the comparison between the historians here see Hornblower (1991, 33-4)

applications, or interested in moderating the expectations of ambitious political men, one thing is clear: the alleged causes – because they are less true - remain subordinate to the true cause. They are therefore not as important as the truest cause.

This position, however, fails to account for the primary and extensive emphasis Thucydides places on the allegations leveled against Athens. It also fails to account for the placement of the true "scientific"[10] account of the war's cause in the Pentecontaetia, wedged as it is between two treatments of mere allegations and pretenses. From the scientific perspective, such ordering and emphasis must be embarrassing. It would certainly be out of character for a father of scientific history.

There are those, on the other hand, who understand and render *prophasis* as a mere pretext, or an alleged cause as distinguished from the truest reason or truest cause. Thucydides turns to reasons given because, as a mere chronicler of events, it is sufficient to describe the conditions from which an event is said to have happened. This position equivocates on the question of true reason. It is not his purpose to determine which given explanation is truer. In this way, Thucydides reminds of Herodotus, who set down his own *History* so the many, wonderful deeds of the Greeks and barbarians would not be forgotten. [11] But this equivocation seems incongruous with Thucydides' judgment regarding the surpassing greatness of this *Greek* war. It also fails to explain his exclusive

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[9] I employ "origins" here and throughout because Thucydides' interest those reasons given for the war's start follow from his interest in "from whence" or "from what grounds" (*ex pote hotou*) so great a war arose. This is discussed in point 2 below.

[10] For the scientific and medical uses of prophasis (as exciting cause) see Kirkwood's discussion of the Hippocratic corpus (1952, 41-47).

[11] Unlike Thucydides, Herodotus makes no pretenses to scientific exactness in judging various accounts. He seems to welcome all comers, presenting those accounts he considers good on an equal footing with those accounts he considers bad, or about which he has no opinion. But we can say this precisely because Herodotus judges accounts. He also tells us when he *refrains* from presenting stories he deems inappropriate or useless. He thus excludes accounts on the basis of his judgment. It is not clear then that even the characterization of Herodotus as "mere chronicler" is correct. Herodotus does judge, but on what basis?

focus on moral questions, as opposed to economic questions (like the importance of the Megarean decree). Why, if all explanations are equivocal, should Thucydides focus on one kind of explanations at the expense of other kinds? Some try to get around this difficulty by claiming that he seeks to reveal "his truth" which is a subjective truth. [12] He avoids justifying his exclusive focus merely because it is his. But most of those who present this explanation fail to uphold Thucydides' own assessment that his work would be universally useful. [13]

Finally, there are those who understand *prophasis* to mean truest reason given of all reasons given, or the sufficient justification for the action taken (i.e. – a *casus belli*). According to these scholars, chief among them Clifford Orwin, a *prophasis* supplies the legitimate basis for one to level *aitiai* at another party. [14] Orwin bases his reading here on the more common, forensic use of the term. He derives support for his "forensic" reading not only from Thucydides' use of prophasis throughout Book I (and the *History*), but from the work's overwhelming focus on legal and moral matters. Those who read *prophasis* in this way therefore do not draw such a severe distinction between the reasons alleged and the truest reason given, for the cause of the war.[15] Both are reasons given. As

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[12] See again Rawlings (1981, 272).

[13] Again, the most powerful defense of this view is that of J. Peter Euben (1986 and 1990). Thucydides' work is permanently useful because it reveals the meaninglessness of all human speech. I contend that for Thucydides, speech, while not able to capture absolute meaning, points to the truth about the character of political life through its very problematic character. For a similar take on Thucydides intent, see J.B. White (1984, 69). I note my differences with White's short, but dense, reading of Thucydides below and throughout.

[14] One should consult Orwin's helpful elaboration of the "Pearson school of thought" on *prophasis* and *aitiai* (1994, 36-7). Orwin's analysis of prophasis is consistent with that of R. Sealey (1957). Sealey offers a detailed treatment of the many uses and meanings of *prophasis* and spells out with great clarity how, in the context, it must be understood to cover more than its scientific meanings and its use as "pretext." Of especial help is Sealey's discussion of the forensic uses of *prophasis*.

[15] Romilly preserves this distinction as can be seen in her discussion of the subject (1963, 22) as does Edmunds in his discussion of *aitiai* and *prophasis* (1975 173). See also Jaeger on Thucydides' scientific use of *prophasis* (1907, 393) following Thucydides' "profession" as a scientist (ibid, 400); see also Finley (1942, 68-9) and C.N. Cochrane (1929, 17); Rood, following Dover, calls the distinction into question

such, they argue that Thucydides sees a link between the questions of justice, as raised by the *aitiai*, and necessity, as pointed to by the truest *prophasis*.[16] Thucydides leaves it to the reader to sort out the questions regarding necessity and right, regarding what constitutes a violation of the treaty and thus what extenuates and what condemns. Thucydides' interest in causes reveals a primary concern on his part with moral matters.

These scholars never ask why his interest in moral matters constitutes his primary concern. Why must one begin with speeches about justice to get to that truth that makes his work permanently useful? [17] How do the questions about right and necessity bear on the theoretical questions raised by the archaeology, especially those questions regarding how one can access the truth about the ancient past? One must answer these questions to complete one's understanding of Thucydides' intent.

2. Textual Considerations: The Long Shadow of the Need to Know

While most commentators focus on the use of *prophasis* as a guide to Thucydides' intention, he addresses the question of his intent directly. He states, "As to why they broke the thirty year treaty, the charges I have set down first and the disagreements, so that no one should have to inquire from what ground so great a war

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(1998, 209, see also his points about the Corcyrean affair in this context that echo my own, 213). Cogan also sees an overlap between the *aitiai* and the *prophasis* (1981, 18, as well as 136-8) as does Kirkwood (1952, 60). See also de Ste. Croix (1972, 53ff).

[16] Kirkwood's rendering of *prophasis* as "motive" does not preserve this link. Kirkwood (1952, 52-8) bases this rendering on his attempt to reconcile Thucydides' use of *prophasis* at I.23 (the truest motive), I.118 (a pretext), and I.146 (the motives for going to war). But it seems that one can still understand Thucydides' reference to the events of Book I as causes of the war (146) – which would cover both earlier uses of *prophasis* - while still preserving the distinction between truest justification (23) and pretext (118) that the earlier uses imply.

[17] See Orwin (1989), Strauss (1964). Orwin never sufficiently establishes this "turn" to moral matters, or why they present the necessary and limiting starting point. While the relationship between justice and necessity might illumine everything that follows and precedes the first set of speeches, it is not on Thucydides' lips from the start. He does not begin this way. The study of justice is therefore subordinate to the task set out by the archaeology. One is left to ask "why turn to justice?"

among the Greeks arose" (I.23.5).[18] Most commentators do not give any weight to – *or even address* - the last clause of his statement. This is surprising since this clause reveals more about Thucydides than it reveals about the reasons for the war. Failure to treat this explicit statement of intent is even more surprising when one considers that Thucydides rarely makes such explicit comments, that of his explicit statements he devotes so few to the question of his intent, and that this comment comes at the heart of his discussion regarding the alleged and truest causes of the war. It thus appears central to his introduction of the cause of the war - of what is widely considered one of the most important statements of Book I and of the *History* as a whole.

Thucydides' statement of his intent in turning to the causes of the war suggests that he anticipated a need within the reader at this early point in his *History*. At first glance it seems he anticipates that his readers will inquire into the grounds of this conflict among the Greeks. The need he foresees concerns the particular character of this war, of what belongs to *this* war as a *Greek* war, and not war as it may happen at any time and any place. Nor does his remark suggest that the grounds for conflict can be eradicated or avoided either by prudential statesmanship or by philosophic foresight. In fact, there is little in these remarks to suggest that Thucydides, in turning to the war's causes, has practical political applications in mind. To make the case for his concern with practical political applications here one would need to import statements that the author himself never makes. As far as his comments here are concerned then, Thucydides seems interested in nothing more than addressing an intellectual need or curiosity that exists

[18] "*dioti d' elusan, tas aitias prouygrapsa proton kai tas diaphoras, tou me tina zetesai pote ex hotou tosoutos polemos tois 'Ellesi kateste*" (I.23.5). The "*pote ex hotou*," here rendered "from what ground" or "whence," can also be rendered as "cause." This is not equivalent to *prophasis* in the sentence immediately

independently of practical political concerns. Somehow, knowledge of the grounds of this conflict is important simply for the sake of knowing.

To be clear, Thucydides distinguishes here between the question of origins or grounds and the question of causes. One might understand the difference between *pote ex hotou* (origins or grounds referred to at I.23.5) and *prophasis* (cause, referred to at 23.6) by noting that the moral overtones that characterize Thucydides' concern with cause do not characterize his concern with origins. One could thus phrase the distinction between the two by finding the *cause* of the war in Athens's violation of the treaty while locating its *origins* or *grounds* in human nature, or in certain longings, and so on. In this light, the treatment of the *aitiai* and the *prophasis* that follows in the text falls under Thucydides' interest in "origins."[19] Thucydides may be interested in the truest *prophasis* of the war only insofar as it bears on the facts about origins. What is it, then, about this war among the Greeks that will lead future non-Greek readers to inquire into the origins of this particular conflict? And why is it important that Thucydides rectify this need to know? Why is it so important that no man have the need to seek out the grounds of this war? These last two questions cannot be answered until we conclude our investigation of the causes of the war, an investigation that will take us to the end of Book I and thus the close of chapter 6. We must therefore remain mindful that everything that follows in this study of Thucydides' cannot be fully understood until we have answered them.

Thucydides has already pointed us to what is specifically Greek as distinct from barbarian: it was among the Greeks that justice first found a home – among the Spartans

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following whose meaning can include "justification" and possesses a connection to the *aitiai*. The issue here is the origin or source of this conflict.

[19] For such a reading, see Strauss (1964, 181, fn. 48) and compare with his comments about "the quest for the truth" (ibid. 143).

first and longest, and later, among the Athenians. But immediately preceding his comments on the causes of the war, Thucydides presents his third formal statement on the war's greatness (23.3). This war will surpass all prior wars (and will serve as the standard for all future wars?) because of the length and amount of suffering inflicted upon men by men as well as by super-human disasters. Its "greatness" consists in the wholesale slaughter of men, women and children, the reduction and dissolution of cities, sedition and civil war, as well as earthquakes, eclipses, plagues, and famines. The question that must be percolating in his readers' minds which he seems to anticipate here is, "If Sparta and Athens represent the birthplace and cradle of justice, then how could such an intense and savage war break out between them and last as long as it did?!" How is it possible that what allows the conditions for justice to emerge can also give birth to the greatest lawlessness? Perhaps a little less obtrusive, but equally as curious, is Thucydides' unexplained introduction of super-human disasters. How do these bear on the question about the source of justice and injustice? By pointing to these questions as he does, Thucydides makes the reader more aware that he or she has this question in mind. His intervention here brings to the fore what may at this point be only some dim awareness within his audience. At the very beginning of Thucydides' treatment of the war, one must confront more consciously what he hopes to learn from a treatment of justice and injustice.

Under such a reading, the treatment of causes that follows should provide some indication as to how such a murderous and fratricidal war can occur between two cities whose distinctively Greek character consists in the first genuine articulation of justice. Of course, the war between Athens and Sparta may be due the fact that their articulations of

justice fall short of the true standard of justice. Maybe they don't successfully invent politics. But I think it is more accurate to say that from Thucydides' perspective, the war between Sparta and Athens exhibits tensions within every genuine understanding of justice. To the extent that he identifies, however subtly, political power with political right, then the war between Athens and Sparta will reveal tensions within politics itself. Thus the war may show how the attempt to secure what is just – e.g., upholding the treaty -- can itself violate what justice commands. His treatment of "causes" therefore promises to reveal the grounds and source of these limits, limits that affect politics as it may arise in its genuine form at other times and other places. [20]

Both thematic and textual considerations lead to the same conclusion: Thucydides' treatment of the treaty and the causes of the war serve as a commentary on the origins of justice and injustice. If his concern with causes (and the mutual origin of justice and injustice) requires a focus that will reveal these origins most clearly, then the violation of the 30-year treaty and the ensuing conflict between the two representatives of Greek justice offers the most visible canvas for his purpose. The textual comments just discussed refine the thematic approach, giving it a specific form and angle. If the actors of the *History* understand justice to issue in injustice, then Thucydides may possess some of that evidence necessary for confidence in his refutation of the poets and the permanent utility of his work. But why does the problematic character of justice offer the necessary evidence for the human origins of political right? Why can one conclude on the basis of this insight about the contradictory character of justice that the legitimate limits men take justice to impose are neither divine nor natural in origin? I shall discuss this after a treatment of the envoys' speech at Sparta (conclusion of Part III, section A below).

[20] This proposition, at any rate, is more in line with his claims for the permanent utility of his work.

Thucydides' artistry means that he does not give equal weight to all of the speeches and deeds he presents; some speeches and deeds are more important than others. Thus some supply the touchstones for others. As we will see, the speeches of the Athenians in general and the envoys in Book I are critical to understanding Thucydides' intent. They frequently supply touchstones for his understanding of political right. But the focus on the speeches of the Athenians will only be sufficient for his broader interest in political right if one can show that their particular understandings reflect or embody what ultimately belongs to all understandings of justice. What is necessary to establish this link between Athens and the human community as a whole?

Thucydides begins to show the basis for this link in his statements about the war's causes, a statement that immediately follows his comments about his interest in the origins of the war. He also shows how interest in the origins of justice and injustice bears on the question with which we began, of identifying justice with political power. As we will see in Part III, an appropriate understanding of the human concern for power, something that for Thucydides seems undeniably universal, supplies the link between Athens's exceptionalism and his work's permanent utility.

C. *Thucydides' Statement on the Causes of the War: the "aitiai" and the "prophasis"*

Thucydides begins his treatment of the war's causes by speaking of the cause that was most true, but least apparent in speech (23.6) and those causes that were alleged, but most apparent in speech. According to those allegations that were most voiced (and presumably least true), the war was caused by Athens's violation of the 30-year treaty and Sparta's attempt to enforce the just observance of that treaty. According to what was

most true but least apparent in speech (and thus not completely absent from speech), the growth of Athens's empire and the fear it inspired in Sparta forced them to resort to war. It appears that necessity, not injustice, brought on the greatest motion among the Greeks; speeches about justice and injustice are set against the deeds of Athens's growing political power.

But just as we saw Thucydides blur the distinction between speech and deed, his distinction between the alleged causes and the truest cause may also not be so clear. One can begin to see a kinship between the *aitiai* and *prophasis* on merely linguistic grounds, as Orwin's treatment of the two words suggest (1994, 38-9). Just charges would be groundless without a justification – in this case a justification based on the power of necessity. As the grounds for the charge leveled, the *prophasis* cannot be radically distinct from the *aitiai*. Understood this way, the *prophasis* supplies the body or force behind the *aitiai*.

Thucydides' very statement adds to the sense of this overlap. He does not make clear that the war was the necessary product of the growth of Athens's empire, Sparta's fear of that empire, or both. If one concludes that the growth of Athens's empire alone "compelled" the war, there is still the question of whether she violated the treaty. Athens's growth may not have violated the treaty, but by expanding as she did she may have forced Sparta (through fear of that growth) to break the treaty. But does fear constitute extenuating circumstances when it comes to breaking the law? Even if Sparta was compelled to resort to war by the fear of the growth of Athens's power, she may

have been wrong (or at least guilty in the eyes of the treaty) for capitulating to that fear.[21] If fear does not extenuate blame here then the reverse must be true too. Sparta could not legitimately excuse the *failure* to enforce justice on the grounds that she was afraid of what such enforcement might cost her. Justice may lay a claim on our actions in all circumstances, even when the odds are against realizing what is just. One must therefore consider that if Athens's growth did violate the treaty, Sparta may have been compelled by her devotion to justice (or her fear of not upholding justice) to resort to arms.

If one concludes on the basis of Thucydides' comments here that Athens violated the terms of the treaty through the growth of her empire, one must still ask if she was responsible for the growth leading to that violation. Her growth may have made the war necessary, but was her growth necessary? If her growth was necessary, then can one still hold her accountable for violating the treaty? Again, the question that his ambiguous introduction invites us to ask is whether necessity, or what we perceive to be necessary, constitutes an extenuating circumstance in breaking the law. If it does, then does it do so in all cases, or in only some cases? If it does so in some cases, then which ones, and how do we know which cases those are? On the other hand, if justice legitimately demands our obedience even in circumstances where the success of effecting what is just is "against all odds," then one must consider the possibility that justice may not be good for us. Such considerations force us to wonder for what, if anything, is justice good? But perhaps more importantly for our present purposes, Thucydides' formulation here compels us to consider the possibility of an overlap between justice and necessity.

[21] For de Ste. Croix, there is little room for discussion here. In Thucydides' eyes and as is apparent from his statement on causes Sparta clearly violated the treaty (1972, 59-63). Lionel Pearson (1952) on the other hand contends that Thucydides is not even interested in the question of praise and blame.

The sense of this overlap gets reinforced by Thucydides' procedure in the remainder of Book I. He begins with the alleged causes (24-87), which centers around the speeches of the Corcyreans, Corinthians, Athenians and Spartans. This is followed by his treatment of the truest cause (88-118) which is related entirely in narrative form. He then returns to the alleged causes (119-146) and thus to speeches by the Corinthians and Pericles. One must ask why he treats the alleged causes at all. If the narrative about political power reveal the truest causes, then why bother with speeches about justice and injustice? While the 30-year treaty was broken in deed, not speech, and while Athens's power did not grow in word alone, Thucydides focuses first on the causes that were publicly alleged, if least true (24-87). Only later does he offer, through an apparent digression, a treatment of those deeds that constitute the truest cause (88-118). If Thucydides were merely concerned with the truest cause (or if speeches were of only secondary importance), then one would expect him to turn first to the deeds he treats in the Pentecontaetia.

Thucydides' arrangement suggests that both the allegations and the truest cause are somehow important. This overlap between the truest cause and alleged causes becomes most visible in the debates over Athens's involvement at Epidamnus (I.45-55) and Potidaea (I.56-67) – the most recent signs of Athens's growing power. After all, isn't Athenian involvement in these two cities, on which the Corinthians' allegations of injustice are based, properly understood as part and parcel of her imperial expansion? By getting involved in the conflict over Epidamnus, she adds a new and powerful member (Corcyra) to her list of "confederates." By restoring Epidamnus to Corcyra, Athens secures for herself and her new league member the benefits this coastal city offers.

What's more, she does so at the expense of Corinth, a member of the Peloponnesian league who recently controlled this city. Her imperial power seems to encroach on the legitimate territories of the Peloponnesians. In light of such overlap and Thucydides' order in Book I[22] we can now establish the following pairs – speech: justice and injustice and deed: political power. Or speech is to deed as justice and injustice is to political power. The fate of one should therefore shed light on the fate of the other.

Athens's defense of Epidamnus led to her conflict with Corinth over Potidaea. The question becomes whether Athenian conduct at Epidamnus and Potidaea (and by implication, the growth of her empire) is rightly understood as a violation of the treaty. It is certainly perceived as a violation by the Peloponnesian confederates. This perception leads to their declaration of war. Perhaps then the alleged causes regarding Athenian injustice are as true as the "compulsion" that Thucydides calls most true. Perhaps one cannot draw such a clear distinction between those reasons that were most publicly voiced (but apparently least true) and the truest reason, though least apparent in speech. But if this is the case, then one must wonder why Thucydides insists on the distinction between the *aitiai* and the *prophasis*.

The questions raised above about necessity are directly linked to the issue of Athens's power: the need to resort to arms follows from the expansion of Athenian imperial power. Thucydides may insist on the distinction between the charges about Athenian injustice and the truest justification regarding Athenian power - even as his

[22] Thucydides' treatment of the war's causes reinforces our sense of speech's "priority." See Cogan (1981, 129-30, 135-7) and Orwin (1994, 44). Sealey, in his discussion of the causes of the war and his treatment of prophasis, establishes a similar connection between the alleged causes and the truest causes (1957, 8-11). One should also see his comments as to how Thucydides' use of the aorist "*anagkasai*" (compelled) in context implies a concern with both the gradual growth of Athens's empire and a discrete exciting act in causing the war (ibid. 9). On the use of *ananke* and its cognates in Thucydides' work, one should see Martin Ostwald (1988).

arrangement blurs it - on the grounds that only through an investigation of what men allege regarding justice and injustice can one come to the truth about the character of political power. By insisting on a distinction he will collapse, Thucydides forces us to reconsider the place of what men say about justice in understanding the truest causes of the war; he forces us to seek the connection between articulations about justice and the truth about power. By framing this introductory statement as he does, Thucydides places the questions of necessity and power - and Athens's power in particular - at the heart of his interest in how justice can issue in injustice. The implication that stems from this seems to be that power, or the drive or concern for power, somehow supplies the cause of a justice that issues in injustice. By studying articulations of justice and injustice, we can perhaps begin to access such a cause or such a ground.

This of course would mean that the problems facing such articulations serve as the first and necessary cause for this political lesson (about their relationship) to come into sight. If the concern for power generates a contradictory understanding of justice, an appreciation of which allows us in turn access to such a ground, then this concern for power would seem to supply the ultimate or formal cause of its being known. And it may be the interest in making available this knowledge about power and the concern for power that fuels Thucydides' interest in causes. But why should this knowledge be so important as to elicit 122 chapters on pre-war events? Since Thucydides' decision to write an extensive and elaborate treatment of causes has been connected to his mature or post-war perspective, and since his post-war perspective has been connected to his decision to write his *History* as he did, one must wonder how his insight into the concern for power as the ultimate and formal cause of its being known (as strange as this sounds)

is connected to his intent? Once again, we must read all that follows in the shadow of this question.

II. The Problem of Political Right as Political Power

Thucydides' treatment of the causes of the war between Athens and Sparta, which immediately follows the archaeology, begins his investigation into political power and political right. It thus represents his response to the question raised by the archaeology. One can only access the text of this response by approaching the character of the deeds in the light of what men say about justice and injustice. One must begin from what political actors say, especially from their identification of political power with justice. This is not to say that Thucydides' narrative of the deeds in Book I does not bear on the question of justice as political power. Chapters 24-118 in particular raise and address important questions about justice as power. They compel one to ask who rightfully possesses (and should continue to possess) Epidamnus (24-5); who can legitimately declare victory, and thus gather one's dead and hold the field of victory (54)?; and, perhaps most famously, who unjustly violated the treaty, and thus deserves punishment (24-88).

But the lessons taught by the narrative are by no means explicit. The narrative teaches only through the selection, arrangement and emphasis of the deeds it relates; through the successes and failures of the *History's* actors, Thucydides instructs us about the virtues and vices those actors embodied (in the case of Book I see chapters 126-138: Cylon, Pausanias and Themistocles). But narrative as such cannot expressly identify political power with justice. The archaeology, a narrative of the most ancient deeds, reflects this kind of silent expression. The archaeology points to the identification of justice with power only through the careful arrangement of its themes and the subtle

changes involving those themes – i.e., through what it didn't relate as much as through what it did relate.

The speeches in contrast, can and do address most conspicuously the issue of justice as political power. Only in a speech can one find an explicit articulation of what constitutes justice or what constitutes political power, or for that matter how justice can be understood as a power.[23] Therefore, the only reliable starting point for the investigation into justice as political power is what political actors say. This is one of the reasons why Thucydides' account of the most ancient deeds must remain hypothetical. With the exception of Homeric poetry, the archaeology lacks speeches about ancient deeds. As an "archaeology" it lacks that contemporary hearsay, that contemporary justification of a particular regime, so necessary for uncovering the truth about the ancient past. Of course, the most complete justification for beginning with speeches about justice and injustice will have to wait until after the fact – that is, until after a treatment of them has shown what they can reveal. Nevertheless, it is with considerable confidence that we can begin by looking to speeches.

A. Corcyra and Corinth at Athens: Justice as Expediency and Justice as Fairness

The first set of speeches in the *History*, made by ambassadors from Corcyra and Corinth well before the outbreak of hostilities, takes place in front the Athenian assembly (I.32-36; 37-43). The issue before the assembly is whether Athens should aid Corcyra's defense of Epidamnus against Corinth. Epidamnus is a harbor city initially founded by Corcyra. A city great in size and wealth, Epidamnus was attacked by neighboring barbarians, the Taulantii (24.4). This attack however had been precipitated by internal

[23] For a parallel argument regarding the importance of the speeches, albeit with a different angle, see Cogan (1981, 122-3).

conflict in Epidamnus. The demos had expelled the city's nobility, who in turn sought help from the barbarians. The conflict between Corcyra and Corinth over Epidamnus began when the Epidamnian demos sought necessary protection from her mother city, Corcyra. Receiving no help from her, the demos, now suffering expulsion itself, turned over the city to Corinth (Corcyra's mother city, and the birthplace of the captain of the founding party – Phalius; 24.2) in accordance with the "command" from the Delphic oracle (25.1-2).[24] In response to the demos' plea, Corinth besieged the city, exiled the nobles and barbarians, and established a garrison there for future Corinthian colonists (26.1; see also 27.1).[25] Urged on by the exiled nobles, Corcyra responded. In the initial engagement, Corcyra besieged the city and expelled the garrison Corinth had established. After Corcyra's efforts at arbitration and veiled threats failed (28) to resolve the conflict, Corcyra defeated the Corinthian navy in a second engagement (29). To revenge herself, Corinth sought assistance from the leading member of the Peloponnesian confederacy, Sparta. To offset such an advantage, Corcyra turned to Athens for help. In order to counter the Corcyreans' efforts, the Corinthians also sent a delegation to Athens.

As members of the Peloponnesian confederacy, the Corinthians are party to the 30-year treaty, the treaty that keeps the peace between Sparta and her confederates and Athens and her confederates. Corcyra, however, belongs to no alliance. In seeking Athenian aid, Corcyra seeks the protection afforded by the treaty to its members; she seeks to become subject to that law which governs the peaceful relations between the two

[24] The particular circumstances concerning the conflict over Epidamnus are by no means trivial. Serious consideration of these circumstances points to and refines what is at issue in this conflict, namely the basis of rightful authority, or justice as power (i.e. - what is the rightful basis for possessing goods, like Epidamnus?).

[25] De Ste. Croix takes such conduct as evidence of Corinth's extremely aggressive position (1972, 67). This seems to discount the fact that the Corinthians did not get involved until after they were invited and

poles of Greek political power.[26] To make their case for Athens's assistance (and thus for the extension of the treaty's protection), the Corcyreans identify justice with expediency. This is the keynote of their speech and can be found in their opening statements. [27] They claim that it is just for those who possess no prior claim on one's conduct to demonstrate the benefits of assisting the Corcyreans (I.32.1). If this is true, then it is unjust, in the absence of prior favor or claim to assistance, to ask Athens to look to the good of Corcyra *without* considering the advantages such assistance offers them. One might think then that the calculus of self-interest could be trumped by prior claims on one's conduct, like those one finds in a treaty or an alliance. This conclusion, however, runs contrary to the thrust of their speech as a whole.

According to the thrust of the Corcyreans' speech, if justice is good for the just man, then justice should allow him to secure what is expedient. Justice understood as expediency means doing what is reasonable, or what is good for you. Thus, if law-abidingness is just and if the treaty permits an alliance with Corcyra, then doing what is just will secure good things for Athens: the gratitude of the Corcyreans, the honor of defending the injured, the strength of Corcyra's great navy (32, 33) and a harbor for shipping routes to Sicily (36). But if the treaty is just and it commands Athens to refuse Corcyra's request, then justice would dictate that Athens stand idly by while her enemies

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(apparently) had divine sanction on their side. See de Ste. Croix (1972, 68-70) for an account of the conflict as a whole.

[26] White (1984, 63ff) makes a similar argument but from the perspective of a community of discourse constituted by linguistic meanings. Notions of justice are constitutive of this community and they in turn dictate membership in alliances. The crucial issue to White, however, is not so much justice as justifiability (ibid 66-7). This seems to me to trivialize the Athenians' concern with justice.

[27] Cogan (1981, 10) understands the Corcyrean speech to be all about the Corinthians as enemies of Athens. The Corinthians' speech establishes an ultimatum (ibid. 10) and the debate as a whole clarifies the parameters by which Athens voluntarily assumed a hostile stance towards Corinth and thus put into motion "the *first unequivocally hostile act* between participants in the war" (ibid. 17). Cogan's argument however is insufficiently sensitive to Thucydides' remarks about the first clear violation of the treaty (the Theban

expand their power at her expense. Justice as law-abidingness would dictate that she watch while those who would be friends suffer needlessly (34). Such commands would be unreasonable (*deivov*) because they are inexpedient. Laws that make such commands do not deserve obedience. The Corcyreans thus advise that those who still fear that a Corcyrean alliance will violate the treaty and bring on the war should set aside considerations of what the 30-year treaty commands (I.36). War is coming any way. It is expedient and therefore just (if not lawful) to secure all possible benefits in advance. In this way, doing what is just is the power to secure what is genuinely advantageous for one.[28]

In their speech to the Athenians, the Corinthians also indicate that they understand justice to be a power. Contrary to the Corcyreans, they understand justice to be doing what is fair, to refrain from grabbing more than one's share of goods, regardless of expediency. But how can the decision to refrain from grabbing goods be a power? Isn't it more sensibly understood as a lack of power? The Corinthians claim that should Athens (unfairly) break the treaty between herself and Corinth by allying with Corcyra, she will establish a practice of receiving each other's revolted confederates, a practice that is bound to harm Athens's empire (I.40). And if Athens should now return Corinth's prior favor regarding Samos (I.40.5, 41.2) – an Athenian confederate - as is only fair, and not interfere with her confederates then Athens will remove Corinth's hostility concerning

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invasion of Plataea). De Ste. Croix seems to rebut Cogan by noting four important aspects surrounding the conflict that remove blame from Athens (1972, 73-8).

[28] As we will see, the Corcyreans oscillate between being bound to act by what appears good (which exonerates all short-sighted actions; I.32.5) and being bound to act by knowledge of what is genuinely good (which does not excuse short-sighted actions). This possesses important consequences for their understanding of justice as expedient. In other words, even the Corcyreans are somehow compelled to articulate a notion of justice that imposes a limit on the pursuit of one's interests. See I.35.3 –*deivov* and 35.4 – *aitiai*, and *ou dikaiov* for a sense of the limits to the pursuit of self-interest. It also raises a question

the Megarean decree (I.42). By refusing alliance with Corcyra, Athens may defuse the current hostilities that make war appear inevitable. Thus the Corinthians argue that doing no injustice to "equals is a more secure power than...that excess [of which] men provide for themselves and hold through danger" (I.42 end, brackets mine). After all "advantage mostly follows upon that action in which there is the least wrong" (I.42).

As these statements suggest, justice as fairness does not redound to one's immediate benefit. If it did, Corinth would not need to remind Athens of her former favor regarding Samos; her sacrifice would have been its own reward. Moreover, foregoing one's own good now for the good of others offers no guarantee of future reciprocation. At most it only offers the promise of future benefits; the power of justice so conceived is only as strong as the power of that promise.[29] Thus Corinth's former restraint regarding Samos is only good for Corinth now (it was not clearly good for her then)[30] if Athens chooses to observe the principle of fairness. Finally, according to the Corinthians' statements, the benefits promised by justice are not the possession of new goods, but the security of goods already possessed. Athens's incentive for abiding by the 30-year treaty is to keep what she already possesses. It is worth noting here that Corinth might be able to identify justice as fairness with what is expedient for Athens if they can show that Athenian fairness to Corinth now will prevent the war. But this would require conciliating the Spartans to Athens, something the Corinthians cannot guarantee. In fact, such an uneven transaction (fairness to Corinth in return for Spartan good will) seems

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about the compulsory power of the apparent good. See Orwin (1994, 41), but compare with his comments about the "bunting on the masts of their powerful fleet" (ibid. 39).

[29] To clarify the differences between these two speeches, one should recall the implications of the Corcyreans' opening statement (I.32.1).

[30] This might explain the Corinthians' "mostly" (*malista*) when referring to the profitability that comes from not doing wrong. As their own experience can attest, sometimes breaking the law can be good for you.

contrary to the very principle of fairness that the Corinthians trumpet since those who receive the good (Corinthians) are not those who will return the favor (Spartans).

By presenting these articulations of political power in the first two speeches of the work, Thucydides introduces the question of justice as political power as an "either-or" matter: either justice secures what is expedient for one or justice requires one to look to the good of others, regardless of expediency. This either-or presentation is not just left to the reader to decide leisurely on his own with little at stake. The question is put to the Athenians to decide now and with a great deal on the line. But even at this early point, one must wonder why Thucydides chooses to introduce this question as an either-or. Can't justice be good for the just man without sacrificing the concern with the good of others, a concern that seems integral to justice?[31] After all, while the Corinthian argument of justice as fairness is consistent with justice as it is traditionally understood (refraining from pursuing one's self-interests), the Corcyreans' concern that justice be expedient resonates with the need for justice to be sensible. Or at least, it resonates with the need for justice – as a virtue - not to be the virtue of fools or slaves. If the Corcyreans are right and war is coming, then Athens would be foolish to look to the good of Corinth, their soon-to-be adversary, at her own expense. And it would be indecent, to say the least, to identify justice with foolishness. One might also wonder, though, if it isn't precisely in times of great risk (if not only in such times), when one's interests are not secure, that looking to the good of others takes on its greatest value. Looking to the good of others only when one is safe and secure is the mark of the mean and ungenerous soul. It is not

[31] Bruell argues that the heart of this consideration regarding the goodness of justice and thus the priority of the good is addressed by Thucydides in the Melian dialogue (1981, 27; 1974, 16). While I do not disagree with his reading of the Melian dialogue I do think that the question of the goodness of justice and the

the mark of the just man. We are thus led to ask which articulation of justice as power (or some semblance thereof) is the genuine articulation. Or might a way exist whereby one can reconcile these two seemingly opposed, but yet seemingly necessary, understandings?[32] This is a difficult question. But Thucydides does not cut us adrift without any direction. He assists us in coming to an answer by allowing us first to judge Athens's response for ourselves.

B. The Speeches in Light of the Narrative

What's at stake in this the debate over justice as power gets deepened when one considers the circumstances of the two combatants. Corcyra is a wealthy island city, known equally well for her powerful navy and her policy of isolationism. A city long used to observing no limit on her own conduct (other than what her pleasure may dictate and her power may afford), Corcyra comes to Athens seeking membership in the quintessentially Greek community. A weaker city seeking the protection from the stronger, Corcyra resembles those individuals in the archaeology who underwent servitude to the stronger. But which individuals?

One should recall that the emergence of the concern for the common (noted at I.6) changed the old dynamics between successful pirates and the weak they assisted. Its emergence ushered in the epoch of rulers and ruled, of those who dominate and those who are dominated. In the 5th Century B.C. Greek world the concern for the common finds its greatest public manifestation in the 30-year treaty. By submitting to the authority of the treaty, the Corcyreans, unlike the weak and needy who received sustenance (and

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priority of the concern with the good is raised earlier than that, as my emphasis on Book I attests. The question for this study then becomes "what role does the Melian dialogue play?"

thus mere life) from scraps of pirate booty, volunteer to risk danger at the discretion of Athens in the coming war. They offer to undergo "servitude" or to become part of Athens's dominion; they will surrender their independent judgment to the decrees of the treaty, decrees that have the force of law. Because this entails entering into new dangers willingly, the Corcyreans distinguish themselves from those earlier, weak individuals who underwent subjection out of necessity. Moreover, they do so not out of a concern for self-preservation or protection, but out of a concern to retain dominion over a wealthy colony, to whose fate up until now they had been utterly indifferent. The Corcyrean articulation of justice as power here should therefore shed light on the transformation of communal life sketched in the archaeology. Because the Corcyreans come to Athens in particular, where the concern for the common finds its specific embodiment in the rule of law (both domestic and international), their speech should shed light on why individuals voluntarily subject themselves to the rule of law.

Corcyra's conduct here is analogous to that of those Olympic combatants who submit to the "law of competition" in order to establish their superior character, or to that of the Spartan great who serve the common good to reveal their superior self-sufficiency - or even to that of those noble pirates who observed limits in their pillaging. In submitting voluntarily to the treaty's decrees and undergoing risks at Athens's discretion, Corcyra seems to strive to reveal her own independence from need. She liberates herself from the press of necessity and the enslavement to the base concerns for mere life: the concern with law-abidingness supersedes these low concerns. Paradoxically the turn to the law requires one to submit voluntarily to its decrees as a way of establishing one's

[32] White contends that while the speakers attempt to harmonize justice and expedience (1984, 65), the general trend of the *History* is to show how justice and self-interest are at odds. This tension proves crucial

self-sufficiency and independence. The voluntary adoption of restraints or moderation seems the clearest manifestation of one's freedom. And just as the prizes awarded the Olympic victors and the offices granted to the Spartan great confirm their superior status, the continued rule over Epidamnus – a good secured in effect by Athenian assistance, itself afforded by the 30-year treaty – confirms Corcyra's own goodness. Corcyra voluntarily risks new dangers and submits to the discretion of Athens to cling to those goods that she thinks she possesses as a matter of right. Three points from the narrative will suffice to show that Corcyra makes this connection between the goods she possesses and her worth.

First, Corcyra charges Corinth with committing an injustice against her (34). Corcyra could not make this claim seriously unless she understood herself to have a legitimate, prior claim to Epidamnus.[33] She certainly doesn't seem so brazen as to think that her recent show of naval force invests her possession of Epidamnus with legitimacy; she doesn't equate might with right. Corcyra's move from the power of the apparent good (which exonerates her earlier mistakes; 32) to the power of what is genuinely good (which legitimately obligates Athens to pursue her genuine good; 35) implies belief in a rightful restraint on one's self-interest. The restraint imposed by her concern with what is genuinely good serves to modify the previously unrestrained exercise of her power. By laying siege to Epidamnus and establishing a garrison there, Corinth attempts to take what belongs to Corcyra as a matter of right.

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for the world of discourse and meaning Thucydides' work seeks to preserve (ibid, 90).

[33] These speeches are as complicated and as rich as any speeches in Thucydides. To understand that Corcyra makes this claim to legitimate possession of Epidamnus seriously, one should undertake a through investigation of the rhetorical nuances facing Corcyra. One could also see I.37 where the Corinthians indicate that from their perspective, the Corcyreans do make a charge of injustice.

Were Cocryra's possessions the reward for just conduct the rightful possession of them would depend on her continued justice. Through the unjust neglect of her possessions, such as Epidmanus, she would lose her rightful claim to them. This is a claim the Corinthians make (38.5). But, if Corcyra understands the possession of good things to signify the existence of a good character, then she can treat or mistreat her possessions as she pleases. Because they confirm her goodness – as opposed to rewarding her goodness – the fate of these goods (whether they prosper or deteriorate) has little bearing on her character so long as they continue to be hers. Moreover, it is not her good use of Epidamnus that made her worthy of the colony, but her superior character that allowed her to found such a prosperous colony.[34] Corinth, by interfering with her possession, attempts to remove those signs that show to all those with eyes to see Corcyra's surpassing worth. They attempt to bring into doubt her superior character. This might explain Corcyra's willingness to ignore the plight of her colony until after Corinth gets involved.

This interpretation of Corcyra's disposition is reinforced by what Thucydides tells us regarding the Corinthians' decision to assist Epidamnus' demos. Corinth agreed to accept the demos' "offer" of the city partly because of her hatred for the Corcyreans. Corcyra, it seems, being as wealthy and as prepared for war as any of the Greeks, understands her good fortune to signify her superior character (25.3-4; see also 38.5). It thereby liberates her from the customary deference owed to her mother city either at public ceremonies or at sacrifices begun by Corinthians (25). Finally, Thucydides confirms this impression of the Corcyreans when he refers to the origin of their navy

[34] For the speech that articulates how the rewards for justice are contingent upon continued justice see Sthenelaidas at I.86.

(25.4). To inherit the glory won by the previous inhabitants of her island (the Phaeces), Corcyra built a great navy. The lesson they learn from her island's past is that to be worthy of the acclaim afforded the Phaeces, she must possess a powerful navy. Glory (see *kleos* at I.5 again) – that public recognition of one's superiority - follows from the possession of those goods that enhance her power, that make her self-sufficient.[35] It seems then that Corcyra, moved by a deep concern to make manifest her own goodness, seeks to possess certain goods. This goodness, so confirmed, liberates her from the need for any ally and justifies her general disdain for any limit on her interests, customary or otherwise. This understanding of goodness in terms of goods possessed may constitute the deepest connection between justice and expediency in the Corcyreans' speech; it is just to do what allows you to secure and protect those things that confirm your goodness.

The fact remains, however, that Corcyra must seek assistance from Athens. This suggests that Corcyra is not self-sufficient. (In her case, it would seem that not even islands are "islands.") It would seem she has not reflected on what she thinks the possession of good things mean for her character, or on what constitutes true self-sufficiency. Indeed, it seems she hasn't even reflected on the glory she seeks, since at the heart of glorious action is the recognition and observation of a limit to one's interests. (Again, the glory afforded early pirates was due as much to their self-restraint as to the goods they stole.) And even though Corcyra seeks to submit to the law and thus to Athens's discretion, she does so clearly out of a concern to retain those goods whose possession signifies her worth, not because devotion to the law reveals her liberation from such goods. When we return to her speech at the close of this chapter we will see what prevents such reflection.

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[35] Contrast with Kallet-Marx's claim (1993, 72).

Corinth, in contrast, is no stranger to the limits imposed on self-interest by alliances and treaties. She is like those citizens long subject to the laws of a mother city. She may therefore offer a more experienced, if not more authoritative, perspective on the character of the law, as well as the limits to the laws' application to "non-citizens." If the law secures the common good, and Thucydides identifies the common good with the emergence of political power, then the Corinthians' speech may offer an insider's view of what is genuinely political. If Corcyra reveals why individuals subject themselves to the law, then Corinth may reveal how individuals, once subject to the law, come to view it.

Perhaps most importantly, Corinth's concern with fairness indicates a change from a concern with the confirmation of one's virtue to a concern with the mere possession of one's own goods. If Corcyra does in fact understand the confirmation of her goodness to follow from her possession of what (she thinks) is genuinely good for her, then she identifies what is rightfully hers, or what should be hers (such as Epidamnus) in terms of what is genuinely good. Corinth, on the other hand, seems primarily concerned with the continued possession of those goods that are hers as opposed to those things that may be good for her. Thus, her restraint with respect to Samos is praiseworthy precisely because interfering with Athenian confederates would be good for Corinth. By observing the law, she refrains from grabbing certain goods. While such interference may have served Corinth's interests, Samos "belonged" to Athens. It was Athens's confederate by law. Thus law, in the form of the 30-year treaty, protects what is one's own regardless of its advantageousness.[36] If Corinth understands, as

[36] I.e. – whether it is genuinely good for one to possess or not. Conversely, the law protects one's possessions whether or not it is good for others to refrain from grabbing them. By this account, while freedom and empire, may be genuine goods, it is nevertheless not lawful for Samos to revolt. She was a confederate of Athens by law.

Corcyra seems to, the possession of goods to indicate her goodness, then she must identify what is genuinely good in terms of what happens to be hers as a matter of law.

The narrative reinforces this point. Like Corcyra now, Corinth was once known for her fabulous wealth and maritime power (I.13.4-5). At the time of these hostilities however, she is a second rate power in her own league (to land power Sparta). She ranks no higher than third in Greek naval affairs, with her former colony surpassing her in wealth and naval power. In light of such demotion it is not difficult to see how Corinth could understand justice to consist in refraining from grabbing more than one's share of goods. Corinth could thus interpret the loss of her great wealth, navy and reputation as the result of her just law-abidingness, of not taking more than her fair share. Because not taking more than one's share is just, the law in turn bestows legitimacy on the share she does possess. This understanding would seem to explain Corinth's view of the current state of affairs. After all, wasn't it, as Corinth claims, Corcyra's great injustices that allowed her to acquire all of the goods she currently possesses? Wouldn't attention to justice have required her to be more modest, more honest, more deferential and thus less prosperous? As the Corinthians assert, it is Corcyra's base desire for gain and her cowardly fear of being caught red-handed that keeps her from entering into alliances and treaties with other Greek cities. It is repeated injustice that lies at the heart of Corcyra's rising power and which stains her ill-gotten goods. And it is steadfast lawfulness that accounts for Corinth's position and invests her modest possession of them with right.

In Corinth's speech, the Corcyrean perspective gets turned on its head. In the case of Corcyra, the law protects what belongs to one as a matter of right. The law and lawfulness are therefore subject to prior considerations of right (and advantageousness).

In the case of Corinth, however, the law *determines* what belongs to one as a matter of right. Considerations of right (and advantageousness?)[37] are subject to law. The question now becomes "If determinations of right follow from the law, then from where, if not from right, does law get its legitimate authority?" On what basis can the law grant Corinth what is lawfully hers?

If Corcyra and Corinth represent pre-law and post-law perspectives, respectively, then perhaps their debate shows how what begins as a concern with one's goodness gets transformed into a concern with what is merely one's own. And perhaps it is subjection to the common good as represented in obedience to the law that effects this change. These two speeches may thus offer insight into the psychological motivations behind the emergence and exercise of the Greek invention of politics. When we possess a fuller understanding of the relationship between speech and deed, we will see that this debate reflects how those initial concerns for goods that generate the law can get transformed through subjection to the law. We will thus be in a better position to judge whether the law does in fact offer the best or most natural response to these concerns.

At this point, what should be clear is that the speeches of Corcyra and Corinth, along with the surrounding narrative, lead us to see law as either subject to considerations of right (in the service of confirming virtue) or right as subject to considerations of law (in the service of protecting what is one's own). But again, is such an all-or-nothing proposition satisfactory? The Corcyreans, for instance, want what is genuinely good, or advantageous, for themselves and not what merely appears good. They do not seem to recognize the value of fairness, or of an external standard that calls for their selfless

[37] Corinth's qualification of the usefulness of justice – *malista* (mostly) – at 42.2 suggests that utility, and thus considerations of advantage are not always subject to considerations of justice.

devotion. According to the Corcyreans, their initial mistake merely consists in mistaking which goods were genuinely good. It is not clear whether they avoid making this mistake again by turning to Athens for help. (Is it really good for them to retain possession of Epidamnus? Or do they want it just because it was their own?)

In seeking to confirm one's goodness, however, one must abide by a standard that measures all men. One must seek a measure of one's goodness that transcends or cannot be reduced to the mere particularity of one's city, one's tribe, one's ancestors or one's gods. To the extent that one's city, tribe, ancestors or gods embody or generate that universal standard, then they must do so because that standard applies to all men as men; they must do so insofar as such standards and such sources relinquish the special status of "one's own." The Corinthians, who make an explicit appeal to the external limit or standard of fairness, can believe that their fairness is sensible only if they believe that the justice governing the treaty is more than the product of one's time or place. It cannot be relevant here and now only to those who consented to obey the treaty. And yet, in light of all of this, it seems that it is the very concern with their own – that by meeting these standards the Corinthians, and all that they possess, will be seen as good - that fuels their concern with law-abidingness and their devotion to the good of others. The tension between the concern for their "own" that the law preserves and the universal character that the law must possess receives a fuller treatment in my analysis of their third speech (chapter 5 below).

The question we posed prior to this turn to the deeds was how Athens responds to the either-or presented by Corcyra and Corinth. Perhaps in this turn to the narrative of the deeds we have gone too far afield. But perhaps the Athenian response to this political

conflict points to a way in which the law, as the fulfillment of our concerns for both possessing genuine goods and for our goodness, can be restored. Perhaps Athens as one of the first homes of justice can resolve this conflict in a way that unites one's self-concern with concerns for what is genuinely good independent of considerations for one's own.[38] Perhaps understanding the Athenian response to this dilemma will highlight the character of justice as power and the character of Thucydides' *History*. Let us therefore return to the question posed. Where does Athens stand on the "either-or" question put to them by Corcyra and Corinth?

C. Athens's Answer: The Importance of the Envoys' Speech at Sparta

After the two speeches Athens decided to form a defensive alliance with Corcyra (I.44). One might reasonably think that Athens's decision to side with Corcyra against Corinth implies agreement with Corcyra's formulation of political power against Corinth's formulation. Athens's actions make a statement about where she stands with respect to justice and political power. Ultimately, her decision to side with Corcyra leads to her conflicts with Corinth over Epidamnus first (I.49) and over Potidaea later (56-67). These conflicts in turn precipitate the Spartan declaration of war (see 87 for the decision that the peace was broken; see 125 for the formal declaration). One might therefore be inclined to conclude that Athens's agreement with Corcyra's formulation of power leads to the violation of the treaty and thus causes the war. Athens's "statement" issues in the deeds of the war, itself the product of Sparta's declaration.

Because this "agreement" leads to a violation of the treaty (in the eyes of the Spartans) then that agreement would appear to be unjust. Corcyra's particular

[38] For a similar reading of the importance of the envoys' speech, albeit from a different perspective, see White (1984, 69).

identification of political power with justice must therefore deviate from the true character of justice as power. It certainly deviates from the more traditional understanding of justice as the good of others. But it is not clear that Athens simply subscribes to Corcyra's articulation of political power. After all, the Athenian assembly initially seemed evenly divided between the two sides, approving no more of Corcyra's speech than Corinth's. And though she decided to ally with Corcyra (in part for the advantages of shipping routes to Sicily; 44.3), her alliance was limited to a defensive one (44.2), a decision born out of respect for law-abidingness. Thus what constitutes Athens's understanding of justice remains to be seen.[39] Of course, if Athens bears responsibility for the war, if she is in fact guilty of injustice and of destroying the birthplace and cradle of the common good, then her understanding of justice as power must be defective.

To see if Athens agrees with Corcyra or with Corinth, one must look beyond her decision regarding Epidamnus. To gain a more reliable assessment of Athens's understanding of justice as political power, one must broaden the inquiry into her character; one must look into the origins and growth of her power. Thucydides broadens this inquiry for us. The Spartan declaration of war and the charge of Athenian injustice force one to raise the question about the justice of Athens's empire.[40] This seems to explain why, following that declaration (88), Thucydides turns to his treatment of the birth and growth of Athens's power (the Pentecontaetia: 88-118). The first glimpse one

[39] Kagan understands the two assemblies to constitute an effort to protect Pericles from being blamed for the start of the war (1969, 236-7). This reading is part and parcel of Kagan's larger understanding of Pericles as uninterested in Western expansion (see ibid 80-5, 235). I disagree. Similarly Connor doesn't note the difference between the two decisions or the possibility that considerations of justice entered into either of their votes (1984, 35, 39). Cogan notes this but understands the two assemblies to stem from a compromise between the "doves" and the "hawks" in Athens (1981, 14-5). See Orwin (1994, 41).
[40] Of course, even if Athens agrees with Corcyra, does it necessarily follow from the Corinthian understanding of justice, presumably shared by the Spartans, that Athens's imperial power should be pulled down?

gets of the Athenian understanding of justice, however, comes in the envoys' speech at Sparta (I.73-8) just before the declaration and before the Pentecontaetia. In fact, in view of Stethenalaidas' speech at I. 86, their speech may be understood as the effective cause of the Spartan declaration. This speech should therefore offer a critical guide to the Athenian understanding of justice as power.

But as we will see, the envoys never explicitly identify justice with power. Moreover, the envoys' account of Athens's justice is by no means clear. They at once display irreverence towards the traditional authority behind law and custom and a deep concern to deflect blame. They try to establish the universal power of necessity (that the strong always rule the weaker) and their exceptional ability to defy necessity (that the strong observe equality with the weaker; see I.75 in particular). These apparent inconsistencies suggest that the envoys' speech cannot be the true – or at any rate the complete - account of Athens's justice. On both counts then (the placement of the speech and its incomplete character), we need access to Thucydides' treatment of the deeds surrounding the growth of Athens's empire.

To call further attention to the Athenians' problematic understanding of justice as political power, Thucydides precedes the envoys' speech by stating that in speaking to the assembly the envoys desired to reveal the power of their city (I.72.1). But the envoys themselves fail to mention this intent. It is strange that Thucydides, in a rare authorial intervention, should make what appears to be a rather sizable blunder. Why not include this in the envoys' speech? Perhaps Thucydides understands the envoys better than they do. Maybe their speech isn't really about justice after all, but about power. Maybe all considerations of justice are mere guises for realpolitik and Thucydides' intervention is to

suggest to us that the envoys' justification of their empire is just a moral smoke screen. It is also possible that the envoys understand their efforts to be aimed at revealing their power, but for obvious rhetorical reasons cannot state such intentions openly. One could also explain this intervention as Strauss (1964) does – that only a city with such power would state such a defense as candidly as the envoys do. Only the biggest and baddest bully on the block can freely make such statements regarding his worth and expect to get away with it. Finally, it may be that the justification of their empire is itself a power. By showing their superior justice, they show their superior power. Not might makes right, but right makes might explains the candor of their speech.

While there is something to recommend each of these explanations, the last one, for reasons we shall see below, offers the most comprehensive account. As it stands now, this account recommends itself because it appears most congruent with the theme of justice as power that seems to tie Book I together thematically. Nevertheless, at this early stage of the investigation one must wonder what, exactly, accounts for the gap between Thucydides' candid comments about power and the envoys' justification of Athens's rule.[41] To bridge the gap between Thucydides' comments about the envoys' intentions and the thrust of the envoys' speech, we must know the truth about Athens's power and for this we must depend – again - on Thucydides' account of the origins and growth of Athenian power.

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[41] Numerous interpretations of the apparent gap between Thucydides' comments and the envoys' comments exist. See Strauss (1989, 96; 1964, 170-2) and Orwin (1986, 74; 1994, 45 and 50) and Bolotin (1986) following that of Strauss. Orwin (1986, 80) comes closest to articulating my position of right makes might. Romilly's focus on dating the piece leads her to miss the crucial differences (1963, 268-72); Hornblower also fails to note the difference (1991, 117); A.E. Raubitscheck (1973) notes the apparent differences (34) but he tries to explain away these differences (48) and thus identifies Thucydides with the envoys (33). Forde minimizes the difference between what Thucydides notes and the envoys note (1989, 21, fn. 8); Gomme avoids this difficulty by arguing that there were no envoys (1937, 158). For a broader statement on narrator interventions, see Gribble's work (1998, especially 59).

Thucydides' authorial intervention here and the envoys' apparent silence raise the question about justice as political power in a way that refines our investigation into justice as power. How can the envoys' candid justification of their empire also be understood as revealing their power? By refining it as he does, Thucydides sets up the envoys' speech at Sparta as the watershed moment in Book I. The question about justice as political power that the speeches of the Corcyreans and Corinthians put to the Athenians, the question raised by the archaeology in connection with the effort to disclose the truth about the ancient past, appears to find an answer in Thucydides' treatment of the envoys' speech at Sparta.[42] If we can understand how what the envoys consider a justification, Thucydides considers a show of power, then we might be able to approach his speech more fruitfully.

Because the questions surrounding Athens's imperial power take on their most specific form in light of Thucydides' treatment of the envoys' speech, one must read the Pentecontaetia in light of this treatment and the gap at that treatment's core. Because Thucydides compels the reader to approach the narrative of the Pentecontaetia in light of the speech of the envoys, a full understanding of his treatment of this speech should also clarify the relationship between speeches and deeds. Through his ordering, his explicit comments and his loud silences, Thucydides reinforces the connection between his work's political insights and the methods employed to reveal them. Understanding the connection between the speech of the envoys and the narrative of the Pentecontaetia should bring to light the essential character of Thucydides' conception of political

[42] The speeches of Corcyra and Corinth are riddled with inconsistencies. One might conclude on this basis alone that Thucydides has established the need to turn to the envoys' speech. But the envoys' speech itself is inconsistent. The most important difference between the first two (or three) speeches and the envoys'

history. The moral-legal drama represented in the contest between Corcyra and Corinth now takes on the character of a mystery – not merely of the envoys' intent, or of the Athenians' understanding of justice, but of Thucydides himself.

III. Thucydides, the Envoys at Sparta and Themistocles

A. The Envoys' Speech at Sparta – the Watershed Moment in Book I

The envoys' speech follows the allegations leveled against Athens by Sparta's confederates. The allegations of Athenian injustice stemmed from Athenian "interference" at Epidamnus and the consequent conflict with Corinth. After their speech to the Athenian assembly wherein they secured Athens's "defensive" assistance, the Corcyreans repulsed the Corinthian contingent from Epidamnus and reestablished the nobles. Angered at what she took to be Athens's clear violation of the 30-year treaty (on the grounds that Athens interfered with Corinth's confederates and that she entered into an alliance that would necessarily lead to war with the Peloponnesian confederacy), Corinth attempted to provoke a revolt in Potidaea. Potidaea was originally founded by Corinthians, but was currently subject to Athens. The result again was an Athenian military response the outcome of which was that the Peloponnesian forces were compelled to withdraw and Potidaea was forced to raze its protective walls (60-66). Having suffered these two setbacks and still indignant over Athens's continued interference with Megara, and her Megarean decree especially, [43] Corinth and other

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speech is not the presence of inconsistencies, but the different reasons for the inconsistencies in each of the speakers.

[43] The Megarean decree prohibited land-locked Megara, currently a Corinthian confederate, from all ports and markets controlled by Athens. Since Athens is the preeminent maritime power, this meant a massive embargo on virtually all commercial goods. The Athenian law served to starve Megareans. This decree was designed as a punishment for Megara's treachery to Athens. By switching her allegiance to the Peloponnesian confederacy from Athens years earlier (114; see also 108), Megara removed from Athens's control a mountain pass that provided a short-cut into and out of Attica and the Peloponnesus (107); she

Peloponnesian confederates urged Sparta to declare war against Athens (67.3-5). The Corinthians claimed that Athens's recent conduct infringed upon the Peloponnesians' legitimate sphere of influence. Athens harmed Sparta's confederates. She broke the treaty. War must be waged.

A group of Athenians in Sparta on "other business" heard of the outcry against their city and were granted permission by the Spartans to address their assembly. Thucydides tells us that the envoys addressed the assembly, not as adequate judges of Athenian injustice, but rather in the hopes of persuading the Spartans not to decide the matter suddenly, and to take more time to consider (72.1). Moreover, war was not yet inevitable. The envoys therefore sought to deter Spartan aggression by revealing the power of their city – reminding the old and teaching the young about Athenian mettle (72.2). The envoys, however, never mention this last point as their intent.[44]

The envoys "respond" to the allegations leveled against Athens in four stages.[45] In the first they try to establish the nobility of their actions fifty years earlier at Salamis,

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thus made possible future Peloponnesian invasions of Attica. On the Megarean decree as the cause of the war see my footnote on it in chapter 3.

[44] In commenting on their intention to relate their actions at Salamis, the envoys state that "when we did these things, we risked danger for some benefit, which as you shared in some portion of that deed, then we shall not be deprived of all of the reputation, if that be some benefit. And we shall recite such deeds not for the sake of deprecation but rather for a sign and an explanation as to what sort of city ours is ... [which] you will be factiously opposed to in the contest" (73, brackets mine). One might reasonably argue that no difference exists between Thucydides' comments and the envoys' statements. But the envoys don't present a laundry list of Athenian military power. Instead, they recount the daring and intelligence Athens displayed in a single battle over 50 years earlier. This would be like the United States trying to bully North Korea in terms of our success against the Germans at Normandy. It is hardly relevant. Upon their retelling, the envoys conclude that Athens is not worthy of the envy of the Greeks for their previous courage and intelligence or for their current empire (75.1). They do not conclude that they have shown Athens's power. Thus while they openly doubt the benefits such a retelling offers, the course of their story and the conclusion they draw suggests they *do* expect a benefit from the telling of their story. By justifying their current dominion in terms of Athens's past actions, they seek to preserve their empire. But how can this justification be considered revealing Athenian power, and how can it serve to incline the Spartans to quietness rather than war? We are thus left with the same question that was raised by considering the envoys' speech in light of Thucydides' authorial intervention.

[45] "Respond" is a bit overstated; Romilly correctly notes that the envoys' speech takes little note of what was said by the Corinthians. She contends this speech is used to speak to the future reader of the *History*

actions that make Athens worthy of her current imperial dominion. They are thus not worthy of the current charges against them. Moreover, the envoys claim, Athens cannot be blamed for holding their imperial dominion since they are merely obeying the law of the stronger that commands them to rule the weaker. But even though she bows to the law of the stronger, the envoys claim that Athens's administration of her empire deserves praise because she observes more equality in her rule, and thus more self-restraint, than the law of the stronger commands. The envoys then close by appealing to the oaths both they and the Spartans swore when they formed the treaty, oaths that require the two parties to seek resolutions through arbitration and not force. Because the envoys' speech possesses special importance for understanding the relationship between justice as political power, we need to attend to each of the stages with care. We must also attend to how each stage relates to the others and to their importance to the speech as a whole.[46]

1. Athenian Nobility at Salamis

In the first part of their speech,[47] the envoys attempt to establish their worthiness to rule the empire they possess. Refusing to consider low self-interest during the last Persian invasion, the Athenians abandoned their city and, so they argue, risked its good to

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(1963, 243). Cogan (1981, 24-7) argues that the Athenians try to rebut the Corinthians' assessment of them as an aggressive, relentless imperial power. Thus they base their arguments on necessity and not on their unique nature. This seems a serious misreading of their speech.

[46] For an analysis of the envoys' speech that also treats the unresolved tensions within their understanding of justice, one should see Orwin (1986) as well as Bolotin (1986).

[47] Euben contends that the battle of Salamis "made it possible for the Athenians to think theoretically, and necessary to do so when confronting the crises that victory helped foster. The daring at Salamis foreshadows and forms the Athenian daring Thucydides describes and that describes his History. This same daring is preface, problem, and inspiration for Socrates and political philosophy" (1986, 361). Euben and I both see a connection between the advent of certain political conditions and political philosophy. We disagree as to the kind of political conditions necessary and as to the kind of relationship between politics and the theorizing to which it gives rise. Euben's emphasis on Salamis stems from his insensitivity to the important elements of "Greek power" sketched in the archaeology and which thus precede the Persian invasion. On the importance of Athenian democracy to the growth of Athenian imperialism, see Galpin (1983-84, 102, 109. See also Finley (1940, 160). I think the roots of Athenian imperialism go far deeper than their regime.

beat back the Persians. In delivering a decisive blow, they also managed to save all of Greece from Persian tyranny (1.73 –4). While Athens's actions may not have been the product of conscious devotion to Greece, one cannot separate the gift that her actions, singularly and freely undertaken, bestowed on all of Greece. So while the envoys note that at Marathon (the first Persian invasion) the Athenians "alone braved the first danger against the barbarian" (I.73), it was at Salamis (second Persian invasion) that they revealed their greatest merit. In the decisive victory over the Persians Athens supplied over two thirds of the 400 ships, the ablest commander in Themistocles and "the most untiring zealousness" (74). The circumstances surrounding this battle highlight her superior character. The envoys state

> And we displayed a zeal much greater in daring in this, seeing that no one assisted us over land and the others up to ourselves had been enslaved, we thought it fit - having deserted our city and destroyed our property – not to forsake the common cause of the remaining allies nor to be useless to them by deserting, but rather to embark in our ships and risk the danger (74).

Two points need to be kept in mind here: the common benefit of their actions[48] and the claim that such actions were freely undertaken. Mindful of the common cause of Greece, the Athenians sacrificed their own city, sent their wives and children into hiding and staked everything on a daring and desperate battle at sea. Unlike Athens, Sparta still had her home to defend and even then she lagged in providing assistance to Athens. When Sparta did help, it was "from cities inhabited and in order to possess them henceforward, and when [they] feared the greater danger for themselves and not for us" (74, brackets mine). The envoys further establish the freely chosen character of the risks Athens undertook at Salamis. They claim that instead of running such risks, they could have "first joined with the Persians, fearing, just as others did, for [their] land, or later, if

as having been ruined, [they could have] not dared to embark in our ships" (74, brackets mine). According to the envoys, Athens's superior character as reflected in her favorable comparison with Sparta, consists in her freedom from necessity or compulsion, and her actions on behalf of the common cause of Greece make this freedom manifest.

The uniqueness of Athens's defense here cannot be overstated.[49] In their opening salvo, the envoys justify Athenian empire by refusing to identify justice either with expediency or with looking to the good of others. They insist on joining the two. The envoys' understanding of Athens's magnificent deed at Salamis thus seems to avoid the problems facing the either-or formulations of justice as power put forward by the Corcyreans and Corinthians. Athens can understand the risk of her interests – the destruction of her families, the desertion of her autochthonous gods, the loss of her men and the annihilation of Athens herself – *as her good* because such risks disclose her self-sufficient character. Consequently, the Athenians' daring and desperate move to "become seamen" (I.18, 93.3) and save their city and all Greek cities follows from what can only be called an overflowing of Athenian character, an excess of the Athenian community's very self. The risks she freely undertook were entirely due to and a confirmation of her supremely generous character.

In showing what kind of protagonist Athens is likely to prove, the envoys make a case for Athenian self-sufficiency, a self-sufficiency demonstrated by freely imposing

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[48] Euben also notes this (1986, 374).

[49] Some may wish to understate it by pointing to the envoys' more moderate comments about how there is no need for them to retell the story of Salamis, which everyone clearly knows, or about how they possess their empire "not without reason" (*oute apeikotos*; 73). Such statements, taken in context, merely bring out the uniqueness of their opening. After all, they *do* tell the story that doesn't need to be told. And in light of their arguments about their contribution to the Greek cause (ships, daring and intelligence) "not without reason" appears to be just the slightest bow to polite modesty. Romilly, contrary to most scholars, thinks that what the envoys do is "express perfectly proper pride in a thoroughly respectable manner" (1963, 249; see also 254-7).

limits on her self-interest. So while Athens's actions at Salamis may have been just (they were clearly not unjust) they are more accurately understood as noble (or beautiful).[50] It was such voluntary observance of a limit to self-interest - a practice described as noble or nobly performed (I.5) - that won glory for the earliest pirates, that promised the superior nature of Olympic combatants and that confirmed the Spartan great's worthiness to rule. Through a similar selflessness the Athenians offer for their fellow Greeks proof to support the hope that men can in fact transcend their attachment to bodily and other external goods; men can assume the freedom that befits the dignity belonging to man as man. At Salamis Athens revealed her noble self-sufficiency for all to see.

In the initial case for Athenian nobility, might the envoys also make a case for Athenian power? If they do and if the envoys' assessment of Athenian conduct is correct, then Athens may have been the first, and perhaps only, *city* to devote herself to the good of other cities and to understand such devotion as her good. It remains to be seen how the sacrifice or even risk of one's good – of *everything* one has or one is – can be good for one.

As far as rewards for such nobility go, the envoys refrain from claiming that their previous actions *entitled* them to an empire. The envoys do begin their speech by claiming that they do not deserve the envy of Sparta's confederates. They deserve or are worthy of their reputation (*axia logou*). But this only indicates that they think their enemies *should* acknowledge and respect their superior worthiness (73, 75). Worthiness

[50] As noted in chapter 3, the Greek word for "noble" (*kalos*) can also be the same word for "beautiful." In this chapter I will try to show how the generosity born from self-sufficiency can be understood as noble or beautiful. I will also try to show how the concern for self-sufficiency – and the preconditions for that concern – make the Athenians open to understanding things as noble or beautiful, and because noble or beautiful, also good. This move from noble or beautiful to good *because* noble or beautiful may explain how one can understand justice as a power. To appreciate the power of this analogy, we need to understand the relationship between nobility and justice.

need not translate directly into the possession of a right that others should observe. Reputation or honor from others is thus the only way the Athenians can see that their superior character has been revealed to the eyes of others. This reinforces the sense that the envoys do not understand their city's acts in terms of mere self-preservation or base profiteering. But isn't this honor or respect best revealed by concession, by granting that the Athenians possess what they possess because their superior worth gives them a right to it? And isn't such concession what the envoys' seek here? If they are going to make a case for their superior worth so boldly, then why not take the extra step and explicitly claim to deserve empire? Perhaps the envoys' concern with their nobility prevents them from engaging in base declamations for rewards. Such claims would implicitly detract from the goodness presumed to be inherent in noble conduct. So long as they are concerned with the noble, any concern the envoys may have that Athens's surpassing nobility be rewarded must remain an unexpressed hope.[51]

If the envoys thought that the argument from nobility was sufficient, if they were fully confident in their hope of "noble rewards," then they would not need to defend Athenian imperialism, since in establishing Athens's superior character they would also effectively deflect any charges of injustice. If Athens is noble, she cannot be unjust. Moreover, the envoys explicitly state that they do not recognize the Spartans as legitimate judges in this case (73). Thus they do not need to take up the charges against them. Of course, the apparent failure to present in the opening of their speech a defense based on their justice could be explained by the rhetorical difficulties facing such an effort. After all, the envoys cannot deny that Athens recently fought with Sparta's confederates, a conflict that would seem to constitute a clear violation of the treaty. The envoys also

[51] See also Orwin (1986, 75).

come before an old rival who, surrounded by all of her aggrieved confederates, currently contemplates war against their city. To start by denying the alleged injustice would come off as the insincere ploy of spin-doctors.

As it turns out, however, the envoys *do* ultimately defend Athens's empire. At the end of their speech the Athenians express anger with their subjects' failure to appreciate the decency with which they treat them (77 end).[52] This latter statement suggests the envoys themselves think that what Athens possesses, she possesses as a matter of right. In fact, in the last two chapters, the tone of the envoys' speech changes dramatically. Far from a picture of noble self-sufficiency, the envoys invoke right, first as a negative defense of their imperial acquistions (we cannot be justly blamed) and then as a positive defense of their imperial administration (we deserve praise).[53] By the end of the envoys' speech, considerations of justice, as distinct from nobility, take the stage.

According to Thucydides' earlier treatment of the emergence of the concern for the common, observing limits cannot be reduced to a concern for goods themselves (since observing such a limit might come at the expense of those goods pursued). Because "noble piracy," naked wrestling, and devotion to the good of others reveal one's self-sufficiency, then such practices must be considered good themselves. (It would be indecent to say that devotion to the good of others is bad for one.) But if Athens's noble actions at Salamis make her good and reveal her superior character, why do the envoys feel the need to make an additional argument from justice? This is not yet clear. What is clear is that one cannot mistake Athens's extra-legal equity towards her subjects for the

[52] Grene (1965, 60) notes the bitterness of the envoys' comparison of current Athenian rule with the prospects of Spartan domination (77.6).
[53] On these "two" steps, see Orwin (1986, 77).

noble splendor of her actions at Salamis. One must wonder whether their move from worthiness to deserving indicates an unwarranted step in their argument.

To explain this movement from nobility to justice in the envoys' speech, one should recall that part of the effort to establish Athens's superior character rests on her conduct on behalf of Greek freedom. But Athens's reward (the open acceptance and legitimization of her rule over other Greeks) for her mindfulness of the Greek cause deprives the Greeks of the freedom Athens won for them. If she establishes her noble character (which must also be just) by preserving Greek liberty, then in removing that freedom Athens risks injustice. She thus risks foregoing her nobility. Her service to the Greek cause makes her worthy of a reward (rule over Greece) the possession of which will make her appear unjust.[54] It seems the only way to remain worthy of rule is to refrain from possessing that of which she is worthy. To preserve her noble self-sufficiency, Athens must sacrifice the goods that belong to superior, self-sufficient natures. The envoys must sever the connection between one's worth and the goods that signify that worth.

As should be clear from their speech, the Athenians – insofar as they intend to defend both their rule and their claim to superior worthiness– are unwilling to abandon this connection. To do so one would need to give up the belief that those who perform noble acts possess good things on account of that nobility. They would thus need to give up the belief that such noble acts both establish and reveal one's self-sufficiency. As I

[54] Galpin (1983-84) contends that the Athenian demos was "able to reconcile imperialism with domestic democratic values" (108; i.e. – resolve the tension between her ruling others abroad while promoting their freedom at home). Galpin's claim that freedom for the Greeks was a "concept limited to the political community of the *polis* rather than being extended into a 'national' Greek community" (108), belies the envoys' concern with the virtue of having liberated Greece from the Persian threat. It also flies in the face of the apparent logical connection between domestic and international politics discussed in Part I, *section A* of this chapter.

will show, to preserve their noble status in the eyes of their fellow Greeks *and* to maintain the goods that confirm such nobility, they need to provide an argument that follows from justice more than from nobility. This becomes crucial because the justice called for takes its cues from the strengths and weaknesses of the noble that ushered it in.

2. The Problems Facing Athenian Justice

The envoys begin their defense of Athenian empire by claiming Athens was compelled to acquire her empire. Sparta, after all, refused to continue the war against the Persian. Furthermore, Athens's allies asked her to take leadership of the league to protect Greece from the Persian threat. Had she refused their request, she may have risked an incomplete victory, or worse, another invasion. The envoys then state the motives behind the acquisition of the empire: "On account of the thing itself [i.e., their rule under the circumstances], we were forced at first to bring the rule to this point, chiefly out of fear, then for honor and finally for profit" (75.3, brackets mine). Thus they claim that they did nothing spectacular when they assumed dominion over the other Greeks. They merely followed compulsion (be it of fear, interest, or honor) and that law of nature which dictates "that the weaker by the stronger be kept down" (76.2). Once in possession of empire, they could no longer let it go since to do so might be dangerous and, as they make clear, "there is no reproach for anyone who orders their advantages well while under dangers of the greatest sort" (75.5).

The envoys invoke here a natural limit on the conduct of men, a limit that all men can see for themselves. As such, men should be able to judge for themselves whether adherence to this limit is good for them or not. To support this defense, the envoys note how the Spartans settled the Peloponnesus to their own benefit and how they would have

acted were they in Athens's position (76 beginning). The envoys thus concede that in acquiring and maintaining their empire, they succumbed to "three of the greatest things – honor, fear and profit" (76). In this case the envoys change the order of the motives, now granting pride of place to honor. Such a change implies that they consider honor as strong a motive – and therefore as exculpatory – as fear and profit. By tacitly granting the compulsory power of honor, the envoys undermine the basis of the exceptional nature they just established (*freely* choosing to abandon their homes to protect Greece).

This "change" however is only an apparent deviation from the earlier position. The envoys' previous comments about Athens's decision to desert their city and wage a last-ditch battle at sea prepared the ground-work for this more explicit substitution. In their earlier comments, the envoys only mentioned desertion and dispersion as alternatives to facing the Persians. They did not mention surrender. They could not have surrendered because the compulsion of honor made them unable to become slaves to the Persians as others did, or basely cling to their property as Sparta did.[55] And in the end, neither desertion nor dispersion were viable alternatives. The only honorable option was to fight.

Of course, if the desire for honor or gain is as exculpatory as fear, then any action done out of fear as well as out of a love of honor or of gain becomes blameless.[56] If such compulsions deprive all actions of their freedom, then no praiseworthy actions exist, no matter how noble or exalted. While their defense doesn't undermine their worthy

[55] Forde notes that the Athenians' surrender of their city also meant surrendering – at least temporarily – the city's gods as well, the gods of the hearth. One could thus explain in terms of surpassing piety the failure or refusal of other cities to abandon their city as the Athenians did. Piety, not cowardice or baseness, explains their submission to the barbarian (1986, 437). For the difficulties confronting this view of piety, see chapter 5, Part II. section b.1 below.

character (their superiority, after all, could be given by nature), it does mean that their worth doesn't translate into a *right* to empire. Their subjection to compulsion eliminates the freedom necessary for such deserving. This means that the natural limit the envoys appeal to here in order to defend their empire is fundamentally different than that limit whose voluntary observation reveals one's superior worth. Why?

The limit invoked here more closely resembles the limits imposed by health: if you adhere to what good health requires, then you'll be healthy, otherwise you'll fall ill. Observing this limit is its own reward (for the strong and weak alike). Observing it does not supply one with a rightful claim to other goods. But without this "rightful claim to other goods," the envoys possess no grounds on which to expect anyone else to observe or respect such worthiness.[57] Why should a city like Corinth, who now accuses Athens of injustice, willingly forego her pursuit of great goods merely because Athens happens to be worthier? If Athens's worthiness consists merely in her strength, as this defense would have it, then Corinth's efforts, *if she is weaker*, are bound to fail and Corinth will have to suffer the consequences accordingly. So long as Corinth remains weaker, then her lawlessness will be its own punishment. But if Corinth is confident in her power, why should she – or Sparta for that matter - restrain herself?

In spite of their articulation of this limit, the envoys do argue that the Spartans should exercise restraint and that their own confederates should not complain so bitterly about Athenian rule. Why? It seems unlikely that they are not convinced of their superior

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[56] See Bruell (1974, 13). Bruell's essay notes many of the difficulties discussed here confronting the envoys' effort to supply a consistent argument. He does not however tie such difficulties to their concern for nobility nor does he address the relationship between nobility and justice.

[57] Bruell, ibid. 16: "Such interest, or the good, is a kind of necessity...[and there are no] irremovable barriers between the good and our desire to have it...These then are the ineradicable roots of the 'necessity' for those who can to do wrong, although...we no longer speak of the necessity to do wrong" (brackets mine).

maritime and economic power. Rather, it seems their previous argument (on the basis of nobility) did not entirely convince them that their pursuit of empire is blameless. And perhaps their appeal to the "law of nature" fails to persuade them because they also wish to preserve their noble superiority.

The envoys try to get around the problem the previous argument poses to their "nobility" in the second stage of their turn to right. In this "stage" Athens not only is not unjust for possessing empire, but she possesses her empire justly. The envoys claim that while self-aggrandizing rule is compulsory for those who are powerful, the Athenians resist this compulsion more than most. Thus "[t]hose are worthy of praise who, in accordance with human nature desires to rule over others, are more just than befits their own power" (76.3).[58] But if they can resist the compulsion to rule without regard for justice, then how compulsory is such rule? And if it is compulsory how can they be moderate in a way that deserves commendation? The envoys want to have it both ways.

It appears that the compulsory and thus exculpatory power of self-interest necessary to free the envoys from blame and the freedom from compulsion necessary to make their just rule praiseworthy makes impossible a coherent synthesis of their two "arguments" from right. As a consequence, the effort to secure the goods that confirm Athens's noble superiority must ultimately rely on the supra-natural for support. For only something supra-natural could make some act be at once compulsory and free from compulsion. This also means such an authority must be supra-rational since it is impossible to know that something is at once "A" and "not-A." While it may in fact be both, one cannot claim to know it as such. It violates the law of non-contradiction: it is to know it neither as "A" nor "not-A," which is to say that one does not know it at all. And

if something cannot be known, then one cannot claim to know it is natural. To do so without a rational basis, or without rational demonstration, is equivalent to claiming that it is due to chance, or to the divine, or to little green men who speak to you in your dreams. It is to know it is natural just because you say so.

If the envoys are not to rely on the supra-natural for support, if they are to rely on the "law of nature" that governs both men and gods, then once again they must forego the freedom upon which Athens's superior merit rests. But this means that if the envoys *are* to establish their city's noble superiority then they must abandon the hopes of doing so rationally. They must invoke a supra-natural and supra-rational authority and abandon the candor they employ here.

Clearly, the envoys remain unaware of the implications of their own argument. Their candor, which is unmistakable,[59] indicates an interest to reveal and thus to demonstrate. If their efforts are as inconsistent as they appear, and if they were aware of such inconsistencies, then why would they want to reveal them? One must wonder then what prevents them from seeing that their argument, when applied consistently, makes their defense of Greece no more praiseworthy than the Spartan failure to defend Greece. What prevents them from seeing that the Samians (or the Thasians or the Naxians) are no less blameworthy for revolting from Athens than the Athenians are for pursuing empire? One might claim that the envoys are aware of the implications of their thesis, consistently applied, but that such inconsistencies are merely the product of their rhetoric and not a sign of their convictions. But if the envoys' speech is a rhetorical defense aimed at

[58] I render the *kata* as "befits" here since in the passage it takes the accusative in comparison.
[59] De Ste. Croix explains the envoys' candor in terms of what they "would have expressed if they had expressed *with perfect frankness* the sentiments which the historian attributes to them" (1972, 7).

cooling Spartan tempers (the only sensible reason for rhetoric here), [60] then the defense is a colossal failure. Sparta votes decisively to declare war against Athens. The size of this failure is inconsistent with the envoys' tremendous facility as speakers. Were the envoys to supply a rhetorical defense, then appealing to the more conventional notion of justice held by the Spartan's would have been the order of the day.

One *can* find an example of such rhetoric at the close of their speech, where they call attention to the treaty they made, the oaths that bind men to such treaties, and the gods who are the guarantors of such oaths (78.3-4).[61] That they close with this suggests that such a defense was available to them. That they proceed otherwise for the majority of the speech suggests they do so not out of ignorance of the leading alternative. Calling their defense rhetorical not only ignores the overall thrust of their speech, but it also ignores the envoys' genuine concern for justly possessing their empire. To begin to understand the source of their inconsistencies as well as their lack of clear-sightedness regarding such inconsistencies, one needs to consider the relationship between justice and necessity or compulsion in the envoys' speech.

In political life, at least as the envoys would have it, noble self-sufficiency is embodied first and foremost in the freedom of a city. This freedom allows the city in turn to pursue those goods that keep her free from need, a condition that in turn confirms her superior status.[62] Her freedom from necessity allowed Athens to risk voluntarily her own interests in defense of the Greek cause and it was this freedom from need (or self-sufficiency) that revealed her superior worthiness to rule. Because a self-sufficient

[60] Gomme argues that the envoys intend to provoke both Sthenelaidas and the Spartans (1937, 186) as does Sealey (1952, 10-11).
[61] See also Orwin (1986, 79).
[62] Galpin notes the connection between ruling others and one's superior freedom (1983-84, 102 and 109).

condition is free from bad things like neediness then one can reasonably understand such a condition to be good for us. As a good itself and a means to other goods, political freedom (or political self-sufficiency) resembles the ambiguous quality of noble piracy and naked wrestling discussed earlier. If freedom is an integral part of one's noble superiority, then surrendering one's city to one's enemy means conceding to the superiority of the foe. This seems to be one of the reasons why the Athenians could not surrender to the Persians or lose their city to the barbarians without at least putting up a good fight. One finds a similar appeal in the Corinthian's second speech to the Spartans (their third in Book I; I.122). As we will see, the problem with the Corinthians' appeal there is their inability to establish a basis for the Peloponnesians' superiority outside of what was unique and particular to the Peloponnesus.

To remain free and thus retain those goods that confirm her superior character, Athens must establish her superiority to all those with eyes to see. This means that she had to fight the Persians in accordance with a principle larger than any concern with her own city, or with what is particular to Athens or Attica. In order to demonstrate her superiority over the barbarians, Athens had to defeat the Persians *on behalf of Greece.* This means that the superiority of Greekness to barbarism must itself rest on some natural basis; its superiority cannot rest on contingent foundations. So while both Athens and Sparta may succumb to compulsion, Athens's compulsions seem qualitatively different from those compulsions that governed the Spartans during the Persian invasion. The qualitative difference consists in the fact that Athens refuses to identify her good with what is her own. She understands what rightfully belongs to her in terms of what she thinks is genuinely good for her even as it means risking what happens to be "her own"

(be it her wives, children, the lives of her men, or even the city itself). According to the envoys here and the Corinthians' speech at I.122, Sparta understands her good in terms of what is hers. (The importance of this qualitative difference to Thucydides' *History* will be spelled out in chapter 5.)

These considerations connect the concern for one's goodness, understood in terms of noble self-sufficiency, to necessity, specifically to the need to be self-sufficient.[63] If one is good, then one is free from bad things like need. One is also free from depending on chance for one's goodness and thus free from depending on others for survival; goodness thus implies completeness, wholeness or self-sufficiency. These considerations about the necessity of being good recall the compulsory power of the concern for the good in the Corcyreans' speech. And they recall the Corcyreans' understanding of their own in terms of what they thought was good for them, suggesting an affinity between the envoys' perspective on justice here and that of the first speech of the work.

This, however, merely returns us to a problem raised earlier. Athens cannot rationally defend the superiority of Greekness to barbarism by appealing to the fact that Athens just so happens to be a leading Greek city. She must be able to justify rationally her superior status and the superior status of Greece; since the need for noble self-sufficiency requires disclosure and in light of nature's apparent reluctance to make such nobility self-evident one must have recourse to manifest confirmation through speech. One must supply a rational demonstration. But as we have seen, in order to supply the justification they need, the envoys must invoke a supra-natural authority to reconcile the

[63] In his Funeral Oration, Pericles urges Athenians to judge "happiness to be freedom and freedom to be courage, and do not suffer the dangers of war" (II.43). Insofar as freedom is a precondition of happiness and happiness is in one's interests, one can plausibly argue that freedom is a necessity and thus so too is the

conflicting elements of their understanding- an authority that must remain unintelligible by way of candid speech. If, in trying to supply a candid defense of something that doesn't admit of a rational demonstration, the envoys are merely conceding to the burdens imposed by the fullness of Athenian character, then perhaps that fullness makes impossible demands on those who are most alive to and most concerned with their superior worth. Perhaps the inability to apply their thesis consistently reveals something about this need for noble self-sufficiency – the heart of Greekness – that issues in or calls forth political justice.

3. The Transformative Power of Justice

3. a. from nobility to political right

As we saw, the defense of Athens's noble superiority on its own seemed perfectly consistent. Athens's superior nobility made her worthy of superior goods. So long as the envoys didn't engage in the ignoble clamoring for rewards, so long as they could rest reasonably confident in the hopes that Athens's noble superiority would be recognized by others, then they did not need to make the questionable and problematic arguments that they did make. Perhaps the argument from superior worth was insufficient because it failed to provide an exclusive basis for possessing those goods that confirm one's superior worth. As we have seen, a mother city like Corinth can be mistreated by her former colonies. "Superior" cities like Corcyra can lose their possessions to second-rate powers like Corinth. Inferior confederates can revolt from their noble Athenian master. Their ingratitude can cause the rest of Greece, whom Athens served and saved, to question her superiority and to try and remove the goods that belong to such a self-

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courage required to face the Persians. Compare this with Aristotle's discussion in the *Ethics* of happiness as a condition of permanent self-sufficiency (1097a15-1098b6).

sufficient nature. In short, the goods that should belong to otherwise self-sufficient natures are not granted spontaneously by nature nor is their future surety guaranteed. [64]

The argument from justice offers Athens (and as we will see Corcyra and Corinth) a basis from which they can lay exclusive claim to their goods and expect others to respect those claims without resorting to force.[65] Justice supplies this basis (i.e., the exclusive claim to goods) because it clarifies or makes explicit what the experience of noble self-sufficiency merely leaves as a "promise." The traditional notion of justice as the good of others preserves or reflects that generosity of self that is the hallmark of noble actions. And the notion of distributive justice, of the distribution of goods in accordance with individual merit, secures for superior natures the goods that belonged to them on account of their generous sacrifice,[66] goods to which they are now, according to justice, *entitled*. The "reward," or distributive, aspect of justice secures the goodness of the devotion promised in nobility. Conduct that must be refused to the noble on the grounds of nobility (the demand for rewards) can now be granted legitimately to justice.

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[64] One should recall my earlier analogy to the World Series. If the full disclosure one's superior character did reveal one's superiority to all those with eyes to see, then one's opponents would have to defer to such obvious greatness. Failure to do so would be like claiming the trophy after losing the contest and that would not be sensible. But experience shows that athletes *do* make such claims after losing games, even when there are no grounds to blame the officials. Some athletes feel they that they – or their teams - are still better (or worthier) than their opponents and that such superiority should have translated into victory. These athletes feel this way because they still had to play the game, because the question of superiority still needed to be decided – *and they lost*. Full disclosure of one's presumed superior worthiness, it seems, does not suffice to replace the contest itself. No natural or spontaneous support exists for the connection they make between their superior worth and the outcomes like victory and goods that come from victory like World Series bonuses and lucrative endorsements. On the connection between worthiness and empire in the envoys' speech, see Orwin (1994, 56).

[65] This recalls the Spartan great's observance of equity with the many, a move designed in part to stabilize an unstable situation (6). If the question of superiority must be resolved by force, then that would mean that "might makes right" – an equation made by barbarians (and by many scholarly treatments of the Athenians in Thucydides' work. The list is too lengthy to include in a note). But this is not an equation the Athenians make, not even at Melos. The Athenians' indirect comparison with Sparta at V.107 suggests that justice and honor require one to risk one's interests – a limitation not found in the equation of might with right.

[66] Justice secures the spoils of victory belonging to superior natures. For example, it is the concern with justice that ensures that the right inscriptions are on the Great King's tripode (132). Thus the Spartans

Justice so conceived serves as a corrective to nature's apparent refusal to grant to the noble what belongs to them on account of their selflessness. And it does so on the basis of an explicit transaction: for my devotion to X (the common good), I get Y (distributive justice). Justice provides a dose of realism to the (apparently) naïve hopes at the heart of our concern for noble self-sufficiency. Thus the 30-year treaty, which is the product of what men take to be just, can be understood by the Athenians as a corrective to nature's apparent refusal to grant to superior natures the goods that belong to them. It stands as the rightful guardian of what the Athenians "won" through their actions in the Persian war; it legitimizes their imperial dominion. But by explicitly introducing considerations of right and deserving, doesn't the argument from justice threaten to transform and distort its original noble point of departure? Won't what begins as an unexpressed hope for the free reward for a gift freely given, become, under the terms of justice, something of an economic and legal transaction whereby the strong legitimize their concern for gain at the expense of the weak? Justice appears to crystallize the fissure between the good of others and one's own good that the luster of nobility appears to gloss.

3.b. Law as an unfulfilled promise and its consequent distortion of the noble

That such a distortion occurs becomes clearer if one observes that justice is an unnecessary virtue among both friends and lovers. In such relationships, a generosity exists, a *noblesse oblige* of the heart similar to that inspired by the sight of noble deeds, that eschews all considerations of justice. This is partly because considerations of

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erased the paean to Pausanias he inscribed and replaced it with the names of the Greek cities who fought in the war.

deserving are too technical, or too calculating to do "justice" to the willingness to devote one's self to a friend or a beloved. Friendship and love present themselves as goods so obviously common to both friends and lovers that the demands of justice are unnecessary. Through our friendship towards another or our love of the beloved, we hope to win a friend or a lover, and to be befriended or loved (and thus happy) in return. To demand that another owed you the gift of friendship or love would be absurd. A good so given would destroy the nature of the good longed for.

Justice may begin to assert itself more naturally in these cases when the love goes unrequited or the friendship withers. Thus it is the unfulfilled promise of love that inspires that *cri d'coeur* "Why don't you love me?" And it is justice, in the wake of one's grief over the loss of such a good as love, that inspires the jilted lover to lay a claim on other goods so selflessly shared in sunnier days. The good the relationship promised did not materialize. The goods sacrificed need to be replaced. Justice helps rectify this imbalance, and fuels the angry demand "I want my records back!" To secure what was promised, justice must distort the original promise of a genuinely common good. It must concede that the goods promised are not obviously common.

Admittedly, the comparison to love and friendship seems out of place when discussing a work devoted to such a violent war. But is it so unreasonable, in light of the preceding analysis,to understand the speech of the envoys to follow a similar pattern or to understand them as animated by similar hopes and passions?[67] Wouldn't such a

[67] To see the reasonableness of this analogy, one should consider Pericles' call to the Athenians to become lovers (*erastai*) of – presumably - the city of Athens, in his Funeral Oration (II.43). Pericles' ambiguous statement leaves open the possibility that he calls them to love Athenian *power*. According to Pericles it is such love that allows the Athenians to make the greatest possible sacrifices and which, when channeled into patriotism, makes even violent death at the hands of another "unfelt" (II.43). Within the context of Book I one should consider how the Athenians respond to the envy and hatred the Corinthians have for them (the Athenian response to Spartan insults – 103 – excepted) and the ingratitude of their confederates. They are

psychology explain their insistence on telling a story that doesn't need retelling? Doesn't it explain their anger at having their worthy reputation challenged? Of course, part of the difficulty with this analogy comes from the fact that the goods of politics do not seem so obviously common as to make the demands of justice unnecessary. This seems particularly acute in the case of international relations. Even though the envoys claim that Athenian rule is better for their confederates than Persian despotism or Spartan hegemony (making Athenian empire a good for both Athens and those they rule), cities tend not to respect voluntarily the claims made by superior natures to possess certain goods. For while Athens may offer the most profound articulation of her nobility and a sense of deserving, what she expresses belongs to all communities as *political* communities.

All genuine political regimes understand their authority to stem from the possession and application of that legitimate limit on self-interests - what constitutes the authority of their authoritative partnership. They will therefore understand the preservation of and devotion to that limit to serve as the basis for their own superior nature. Even cities that are insufficiently Greek will still view dominion as a sign of their superiority. They are thus unlikely to bow to the claims to superiority made by Athens. Those who possess the selfless nobility characteristic of superior natures will therefore require assistance in securing the goods necessary to realize the self-sufficiency that nobility promised. Justice offers this assistance.

In the case of justice as I have treated it, however, the assistance provided forces one into an unsatisfying choice of "either-or." To pursue distributive justice (as in the pursuit of empire), or to pursue what is expedient (as in the maintenance of empire) one

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remarkably free from a corresponding hatred or envy of their adversaries. What else could afford them immunity from the stings of such arrows – both literally and figuratively - if not a feeling of wholeness and

must sacrifice justice as the good of others (as in the freedom of Greek confederates). Again, to back off from the connection between distributive justice and justice as the common good is to retreat from the sense that noble sacrifice, like the devotion of friendship and love, is good for one, and good because it is useful for producing our happiness. And wouldn't such a retreat be ignoble? But yet, isn't this what the common good of Greece demands?

The envoys try to walk this difficult line when they attempt to re-ground the basis for their praiseworthy nature at I.77. The envoys claim to treat their subjects with more justice than they need to – thus making them worthy of praise. But yet they also expect their subjects to understand that they are not Athens's equals. As Machiavelli notes in *The Prince* (chapter 15), there can be no equality between he who is armed and he who is not. Athens is armed. Her subjects are not. This "second effort" to establish Athens's praiseworthy nature is different from the first effort because the envoys must now do so in terms of right. Because they do so in terms of right, the basis of their superiority is altered. Athens deserves praise not because of her surpassing nobility. Athens deserves praise now because she voluntarily maintains a status of equality under the law. To emphasize the difference, in the first part of their speech the law, insofar as it was just, was to *respect* what their noble self-sufficiency won for them. In this the third part of their speech, their praiseworthiness follows from their respect for the law and law-abidingness. The law now *authorizes* their praiseworthy conduct.

If, as we saw in Part I, *section A*, the trajectory that begins in domestic politics finds its conclusion in international affairs, then we should be able to draw conclusions about domestic politics from our study of international affairs. If this connection is sound,

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freedom from evils that love or something like love supplies?

then one must conclude that just as an individual city's sense of its superiority can lead it to seek imperial dominion, so too will an individual citizen's sense of his surpassing worth lead him to seek domestic imperialism, or tyranny. The questionable character of the common good within the city – and not just among cities - becomes an express theme for Thucydides in his treatment of the relationship between Athens and her leading statesmen. In Book I this theme is played out in the fates of Cylon (126) and Themistocles (138).[68] While I will take up this treatment in more detail in chapter 5, a few comments on the two require mention here.

A former Olympic champion, the Athenian noble Cylon attempted to seize for himself the government of Athens during the Olympic holidays. His coup failed and his fellow conspirators were slaughtered (Cylon and his brother escaped). Thucydides points out that Cylon attempted the coup in light of his Olympic victory. If Cylon's victory represents his superior nature, then his victory serves as a sign to him of his worthiness to rule Athens, as his claim on the seat of power. And just as those early Olympic wrestlers revealed themselves in part to reveal their natural superiority, Cylon it seems aspired to dominate Athens openly to reveal his surpassing worth. Clearly, the Athenian people (or the *archons* at any rate) did not understand his rule to be good for them. In order for Cylon to have ruled in Athens he would have had either to kill all those who stood in his way or to reconsider the basis on which he governed. Since killing the very people he wants to reveal his surpassing worth to is counter-productive, the conditions for his participation in Athenian politics require his willingness to share rule. He would have

[68] For some of the problems confronting Pericles' rule see II.21, II.59, II.65 (the beginning especially); see the envy and hatred towards Pericles Sparta tried to inspire in the Athenians at I.127 and II.13; see Alcibiades' exile at VI.53 and the domestic treachery against him.

therefore had to forfeit the very reason he sought rule in the first place – to establish his surpassing greatness.

Themistocles, perhaps the greatest Athenian statesmen, and certainly the one who receives the highest praise from Thucydides himself (138), was exiled and sentenced to death by the Athenian people. The demos suspected him of conspiring with the Persians in order to rule Athens himself. According to Thucydides, such suspicions had little basis in fact. Nevertheless, it can be said that the Athenian people learned its "Cylonian lesson": the concerns outstanding men have for the rewards of their surpassing worth can pose dangers to the freedom of the city.[69] But in the case of Themistocles, Athens owed her freedom as well her eventual naval and political power to the intelligence and daring of this statesman. To reward his worthiness with the rule he deserves, Athens would have presumably had to surrender the freedom he helped them win and which constitutes his chief glory. And for Themistocles to remain in power in Athens he would have had to demonstrate to the demos that he did not intend to rule over them as a tyrant. He would have had to adopt the appearance of being an equal to demos, or even the servant of the demos. This would require him to abandon his concern for distributive justice since he must forego the goods that justly reward his superior worthiness. And this means abandoning the very concern for establishing and *revealing* his superior self-sufficiency that animated his original service to the Athenian cause. In the end, Thucydides leaves to Pericles - not Themistocles [70] - the example of the superior individual who is willing *and*

[69] See also Harmodious and Aristogeiton. On the relationship between Athenian power and tyranny see Grene (1965, 31, 33).

[70] That this is a choice on Thucydides' part can be seen by a brief reference to Plutarch's *Themistocles*. Through his political maneuverings Themistocles arranged it so that he was able to get the Athenian demos to clamor for the development of the Peiraeus against Themistocles' public objections, even though the fortification of the Peiraeus was originally Themistocles' private desire. Themistocles thus shows himself sufficiently sensitive to the power of the demos (and sufficiently unconcerned with his own credit) that he

able to present himself as an equal to the Athenian people and thus least threatening of domestic tyranny.

If the rewards for Themistocles' superior worth destroy the very good he fought to secure, then one has to wonder how good such rewards are. And if Athens's gratitude for Themistocles saving their city from the Persian threat consists in exile and death, then one must wonder how good such devotion is. On the other hand, if Athens is to allow Themistocles justly to govern without ruling alone, and if Themistocles is justly to serve Athens without taking her freedom, then each must transform their understanding of the other. The problem facing Themistocles and Athens then is the same problem confronting Athens and the rest of Greece, a problem that the envoys fail to resolve but which their speech puts into greater relief. Far from reconciling the "either-or" presented by the Corcyreans and Corinthians, the envoys' speech seems to point to the "noble" source of such formulations. It shows why such contradictory formulations are the necessary product of the Greek conception of politics.

In light of this we should reconsider what it means to say that the 30-year treaty and the justice of which it is a product can be understood as a corrective to nature's apparent refusal to grant to superior natures the goods that belong to them. After all, if the preceding is correct, then why would a city like Athens, one clearly infused with a sense of her own surpassing worth, sign treaties that limit her imperial sway? Athens was induced to sign this treaty, as she was induced to sign other treaties with Sparta (see 112 and 115) because not all conflicts end in Athenian victories or with her opponents' outright recognition of Athens's superiority. The very signing of a treaty is an implicit

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is able to get the people to take responsibility for his political vision. Romilly (1965, 119, 232-5) understands Themistocles to be a prototype of Pericles. She thus misses Themistocles' questionable fit

recognition by all signatories that nature does not spontaneously support the connection between one's presumed nobility and those goods that belong to superior natures. So while distributive justice can lead one to try to secure one's "rightful" goods, the establishment of the common good (in the form of the 30-year treaty) amounts to a legal concession both to the scarcity of desired goods and the failure of nature to make one's superiority manifest to all those with eyes to see.

Of course, such a legal concession could only be binding if it was based on what is right. Otherwise all treaties and all laws would be merely conventional. Obedience to them would be sensible only so long as obedience remained advantageous. And breaking oaths to such treaties in order to advance one's interests, while illegal, would not necessarily be unjust. In order to preserve the peace that this legal concession secures, one must understand it to invest one's possession of goods (at the time of the treaty) with right. To do so, the law must compel all those subject to it to understand themselves as equals under the law. It must force all parties to the treaty to transform their understandings of themselves as "superior" to other parties into understanding themselves as equals in subordination to the law – a status of equality that is itself now rightful. Thus justice not only transforms into explicit demands the original unexpressed hopes one had regarding the spontaneous reward of one's superior worth. It also transforms the original understanding one has about one's self.

Thus once Themistocles understood his service to Athens as the means to demonstrating his superior worth he could no longer understand himself as merely subject to Athenian law. The law serves as the means by which he legitimizes his dominion over Athens, confirming his superiority. Under such an arrangement the law -

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within Athenian democracy (see 231).

in the sense of a legitimate restraint on the individual's pursuit of goods in the name of the good of others – no longer exists. How could it if the result of law-abidingness was to be Themistocles ruling Athens alone and ungoverned? In order to preserve law as the guardian of the common good, the law must effectively transform Themistocles' concerns for his superior worth. The law must transform the original concern with virtue that led one to seek those goods that confirm one's worth, into a concern with fairness and equality, into an interest in preserving the goods one possesses simply because they are one's own. The law (and the 30-year treaty) that is the product of this understanding of justice represents the political manifestation of both the human interpretation of what noble self-sufficiency promises and the human response to the natural shortcomings of that promise.

3.c. the new and questionable basis of right's evolution: the authority behind "one's own"

If treaties are concessions to the natural shortcomings of what nobility seemed to promise, then on what basis can the law invest one's possessions with right? On what basis can they it legitimately alter the concerns for genuine goods that generated it? As we have just seen, treaties and laws cannot always do so on the basis of one's virtue. This leads to the individual city and citizen to aspire to rule over – and not serve – others. As we saw above (as in the case of Corinth discussed in chapter 4. Part I. *A* and *B*), one's holdings at the time one signs a treaty are invested with right because they are one's own, because one happens to be holding them at that time. This means then that the defense of the common good must resort to the authority of "one's own." As we have seen, since the special importance of one's own must be taken on hearsay or trust, then such authority

provides little room for rational justification. Moreover, this means that one's virtue, insofar as it depends on devotion to the common good, must also be understood as devotion to one's own and this seems antithetical to the self-sacrifice at the heart of virtuous conduct.

In light of this, how can "one's own" be considered a rightful and exclusive claim to goods? Why should Athens stay out of Corcyra and Epidamnus simply because Corcyra (and, by extension, Epidamnus) was Corinth's own colony? It would seem that only some supra-natural power could serve as the original author of the legitimacy of "one's own." One cannot resort to universal and natural standards to find the authority legitimizing "one's own." As universal and natural, these standards would detract from the particular importance of one's own. Where then, if not the divine, is one to turn? Indeed, it seems one must turn to the divine if one is to establish this response to nature's stinginess (i.e., the treaty) as rightful. For only a supra-natural power could straighten what nature herself allows to warp. If this is the case, then the law and the justice behind it come to sight as supra-natural correctives to nature. But if they intend to correct nature on behalf of what nobility promised, then does this mean that all law and all political justice must depend on a supra-natural power? Must all law, all justice, all politics – insofar as it is defined by a concern for noble self-sufficiency - be essentially religious?[71] Does the Greek conception of politics whisper a silent and pious prayer in its heart? At the least, it implies that political power must invoke a supra-natural power to effect the corrections to nature demanded by the envoys' contradictory understanding of justice.

3.d. Concluding the envoys' speech: an objection and questions

[71] This would explain the connection between Corinth's view of justice, her claim to Epidamnus, her understanding of the treaty and the Delphic oracle. This is explored below.

Based on these observations concerning the envoys' speech, it would seem that it is the noble, or at least the Athenians' interpretation of their concern for noble self-sufficiency and their response to the shortcomings of its promise, that generates a justice that issues in injustice. The concern for noble self-sufficiency generates or issues in an argument from justice because the connection between (apparently) superior natures and the goods that belong to them is not supported by nature. Justice thus *serves* the necessity of our concern for our goodness. The fact that justice follows so closely from an almost imperceptible shortcoming of the noble seems to allow the envoys to think of justice at different times as 1) distinctly the good of others, 2) distinctly the means to one's own good, and 3) their good insofar as they risk their interests for the interests of others. Justice can only be all of these things at once only if it is not too detached from the promises of noble self-sufficiency. Or to say the same thing, justice can only be all of these things only insofar as it is not too detached from the hopes and promises of noble selflessness. The promises of the noble and its subsequent ability to gloss over the distinct concerns for goods and for sacrifice of those goods makes these contradictory expressions of justice possible. The apparent intransigence of the envoys' attachment to this understanding of noble self-sufficiency would seem to explain why they persist in holding so many conflicting opinions about what constitutes political right.[72]

For the most complete understanding of this speech, we must recall Thucydides' authorial intervention prior to this speech. We must therefore return to the question of justice as power. If the human concern for power (as a means to goods) is at the root of such concerns (as Part II. *Section C* intimated), how does this concern relate to the concern for noble self-sufficiency? Might our concern for such nobility be *the* political

[72] On the "unresolved tensions" in the envoys' speech, see also Orwin (1994), 53.

embodiment of our concern for power? Perhaps the envoys, in understanding Athens's defense of Greece as noble, understand nobility to provide protection from the vagaries of political life. Perhaps they see the performance of noble actions as the means to goods that confirm our goodness and such goodness as a surety for one's fate - offering those who are good protection from evils. But if justice is the power that serves the necessity to be good (understood as noble self-sufficiency) and if justice aims to secure what nature denies to the noble, then one has to wonder how nobility and justice as the envoys conceive them can be natural.

As should be clear, my discussion of the envoys' speech is based - and thus hinges - on their concern for noble self-sufficiency.[73] The first and perhaps most sensible objection to my approach and the conclusions it draws is that the envoys themselves never mention this concern explicitly. Of course, their concern with honor throughout suggests that it is just such a concern with nobility that motivates them. To meet this objection further, I endeavored to show how their surpassing worthiness was connected to a form of selflessness, itself predicated on a fullness of character and thus a form of self-sufficiency. I tried to connect this selflessness to the limits that the Spartan great and Olympic wrestlers voluntarily imposed on themselves in order to show their surpassing worth. Because the observance of such limits, as an indication of one's self-sufficiency, was connected to the earliest forms of noble piracy, I was able to draw a parallel between the envoys' articulation of their freely chosen selflessness and this noble practice.

This parallel, however, is only thematic. Since I contend that this speech represents the watershed moment in Book I, and since the envoys don't mention "the

noble" or "nobility" in their speech, it belongs to me to provide a more solid basis for the place of the noble in their understanding. If Thucydides intends us to make such connections, then he must offer a more concrete textual basis for the connection between nobility and power at the heart of my interpretation of this speech.

Our effort to discover this connection is assisted in the first place by our recalling the earlier observations about Thucydides' authorial intervention and the incomplete and problematic character of the envoys' speech. The envoys' speech is important only insofar as it offers the first articulation of Athenian justice as power and insofar as that articulation defends the growth of Athenian power. But because their account is clearly not sufficient on its own, we must turn to Thucydides' narrative account of the empire's origins in the Pentecontaetia. If Thucydides' account in the Pentecontaetia must be accepted as the true account, and if the watershed moment of Book I does in fact indicate that Athenian articulations of justice owe their problematic nature to some understanding of the noble, then we should find somewhere within Thucydides' narrative account of the origins of Athens's empire and power some evidence linking the noble or nobility to the concern for power. This suggestion finds further reinforcement from the connection between speech and deed and justice and power treated in Part I, *section C*.

To respond to the previous objection then, we must turn to the narrative of the deeds to confirm the connection between nobility and power that the envoys' problematic speech suggests. But in making this response and this turn we must also recall an important question: Why are contradictory articulations of justice so important as to provide the first step in establishing the human origins of political power and thus

[73] By drawing this conclusion and tying it to certain human needs, B.1 and B.2 below, I think that this reading shows any attempt to tie Athens's power to her democratic constitution or "ethos" (a la Euben

political right? Thucydides' effort to come to grips with this current war's surpassing greatness required him to reject the claims to greatness made on behalf of all past wars. The need to reject the greatness of past wars and the authority of poetic perspective upholding that greatness pointed Thucydides to the need for an investigation of greatness based on a kind of "hearsay" – namely contemporary justifications of regimes' legitimate authority. But what kind of evidence is provided by thinking through justifications such as those in the envoys' speech that allows him to declare victory (a declaration implicit in his statement about the *History's* permanent utility and the war's greatness) in his contest with those who claimed to possess, or otherwise relied upon, privileged access to the ancient past?

It seems that if a speaker presents contradictory expressions of what is just, such that what the speaker says is just is also, according to the same speaker, in some way unjust, then one can conclude that the justice understood to embody a legitimate limit on the conduct of men possesses a human, not divine, origin. After all, it would be the height of impiety to claim that justice, as a gift from the gods, also produces injustice, a crime against the gods. Such a claim would imply that the gods are indecent, or foolish, or both. If such problematic articulations are not to be the product of the gods, then decency itself requires that they must be traced to human error. Thucydides' presentation of the envoys' speech, the watershed moment of Book I, as a deeply flawed and contradictory understanding of justice as power, may therefore allow him to conclude that super-human catastrophes (a la I.23) are not divine retribution for violations of what men understand justice to be. The observation that Thucydides includes eclipses in his list of natural disasters reinforces this. Eclipses on their own do nothing to harm the affairs of men. The

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1986; Galpin 1983-84) to be incomplete at best and shallow at worst.

"punitive power" of eclipses rests entirely on men's belief that eclipses portend divine wrath to come. It deserves noting that the eclipses Thucydides records in his *History* are not followed by anything resembling a "punishment."[74]

The conclusion that men's notions of what is just are contradictory doesn't rule out the possibility of gods that are indifferent or even hostile to our notions of what is just. It also doesn't rule out the possibility of just gods who reveal supra-rational commands. But if it doesn't rule out the possibility of divine commands that are either detached from right or that are in accordance with right but cannot be known to us as such, then Thucydides forces the reader to ask whether one can accept that what is just can also be what is unjust. That is, Thucydides' carefully crafted picture of politics forces the reader to wonder if he can voluntarily surrender both his need to know what justice is and his concern that justice be good for him. Through the envoys' speech, Thucydides seems to educate the reader's expectations about justice and injustice, expectations that he excited in his turn to the causes of the war. I will treat this matter more thoroughly in the next chapter. For now it is worth noting that all of these considerations about contradictions are important only insofar as the contradictions of the particular speaker are somehow exceptional, such that by focusing on a single speaker or particular group of speakers, one can draw universally applicable conclusions from their contradictions. Thus, the importance of turning to the narrative to confirm something we learn in the speeches (B.1. below), and in the envoys' speech in particular, requires us to establish Athenian exceptionalism (B.2. below).

B. Themistocles and Athens - Athenian Power and Athenian Exceptionalism

[74] One should see the eclipses at II.28, IV.52 and VII.50 (a lunar eclipse). The solar eclipses are provided with an "account" regarding their natural occurrence.

1. Themistocles' Political Vision: Beauty and Advantage

By turning to a discussion of the empire's origins and growth *after* the congress at Sparta, Thucydides lets the reader see how the envoys' justification of Athenian rule reflects the character of the power that produced it. The truth about the deeds lies behind the truth about the speeches. But instead of discussing the Athenian victory over the Persians, as one might expect, Thucydides turns first to the career and political vision of Themistocles (I.90-3).[75] Themistocles was the leading Athenian statesman at the time of the second Persian invasion and the man most responsible for the Greek victory, building the walls around Athens and the walls around the Peiraeus, and finally the Athenian devotion to naval supremacy.[76] The birth and growth of the Athenian empire, of Athenian power – and thus the envoys' justifications of Athenian rule – must be understood as the product of his political vision. That is, we can better understand how what the envoys consider to be a justification Thucydides considers to be a power by attending carefully to his discussion of Themistocles.

Themistocles' view of Athens's power rests on his understanding of the harmony between the good of Athens and the good of Greece. According to Themistocles, the common cause of Greece benefits from Athens's new-found power (her new naval strength and her confidence in her own daring), which was itself partly the result of Athens's service to the common cause of the Greek cities (I.91). In his speech before the Spartans after the Persian war, Themistocles justifies his decision to build walls around

[75] On the excursuses regarding Themistocles and Pausanias here, see Finley (1942, 137-9).
[76] For one of the earlier accounts of the connection between Themistocles' naval policy and Periclean imperialism, see H.D. Westlake (1955, 60). Curiously enough Westlake sees virtually no thematic the connection between the excursus on Themistocles and the excursus on Athenian imperialism (64). The differences between the two sections are to be understood in terms of a lack of historical information on the early years of the period covered (55).

Athens.[77] He states that "the city of Athens was already walled, and sufficiently for the defense of those within" and therefore the Spartans should now recognize Athenians as

> men who can discern exactly the welfare of both themselves and the common of Greece. For when it seemed best to them to abandon their city and embark on the ships, they dared to do so, he said, without the judgments of them, and as far as they [the Athenians] would deliberate with them [the Spartans] they would make clear that they were second to none in judgment. So that now it seems best to have walls for their city and to do so will be more profitable both for their own citizens and for all of the confederates (91.4-7, brackets mine).

The unity between the good of Greece and the good of Athens that Themistocles expresses (that Athens be walled) is the same unity inspiring the envoys' claim that Athens's selfless service to the cause of Greek freedom made her worthy of her empire: in the pursuit of her good, and at great risk to herself, she secured the welfare of Greece. Thus according to Themistocles, Athens's ability to secure the good of Greece entitles her to a special status and power among all other Greeks (again that Athens be walled). This congruence of interests between Athens and the confederates is the same congruence informing the envoys' claim that Athens's "just" administration of her rule supplies her with a legitimate and exclusive claim to that rule. Because Athens is more just than she needs to be, her "confederates" benefit from Athenian rule more than they would benefit from Spartan or barbarian rule. Since either Sparta or the Persians would have filled any power-vacuum created by Athens's withdrawal, it is in the interest of the confederates to grant Athens a wide imperial berth, just as it was in the best interests for all that Athens be walled. Because of Themistocles' role in saving Athens and in founding her empire, one can reasonably connect the envoys' harmonization of the good of Greece and Athenian worth to Themistocles' decision to wall Athens. A study of Themistocles'

[77] For an historical account of Themistocles' role in the enmity between Athens and Sparta, see Kagan (1969, 59). See also Plutarch's *Themistocles*. For Themistocles as the embodiment of Athens see Connor

political vision therefore promises to help uncover the root of the Athenian concern for noble self-sufficiency.

To understand the connection between Themistocles' political vision and the envoys' concern for noble self-sufficiency we need to appreciate Themistocles' own understanding of what contributes to Athens's self-sufficiency. Thucydides seems to offer us access to such understanding when he writes of Themistocles' approach to fortifying the Peiraeus. According to Thucydides, Themistocles decided to fortify the Peiraeus because it was "both beautiful [*kalon*], in that it had three natural havens, and that being now seamen it would very much conduce to the enlargement of their power [*dunamis*]" (93, brackets mine). In order to appreciate fully Thucydides' pivotal comments about Themistocles, we must keep in mind the critical importance of the sea and thus the Peiraeus to Athens. The city of Athens, situated in the rocky and infertile region of Attica, is located miles inland. She thus lacked the natural goods afforded to other regions. To complicate nature's stinginess, Athens, on account of the freedom and protection afforded by her laws, early on became an enormously populated city (I.2). Her natural shortcomings and her conventional virtues combined to put the very city at risk of over-population and starvation.

The sea, however, offered Athens the greatest means to securing the material resources necessary to maintain her populous city. It also provided her with the routes for colonization, thereby relieving her of the burdens her expanding citizenry imposed. And it was the port of the Peiraeus that gave Athens her main access to the sea. It thus supplied her with the means to her sustenance and comfort. But more than that, the Peiraeus is the heart of Athens's naval power, which is the core of her imperial strength.

(1984, 45).

The Peiraeus thus supplied the means to her imperial dominance, her self-sufficiency and her glory.

As Thucydides' comments make clear, Themistocles' choice of the Peiraeus as the seat of her military and economic dominance was not merely a strategic one and thus not merely viewed from the perspective of advantage. Themistocles' decision to fortify the Peiraeus is the product of his sensitivity to the union of beauty[78] and the advantageous or profitable. At first blush, Themistocles seems to consider its beauty as distinct from its profitability. But while stated as distinct considerations, it is precisely what makes the Peiraeus beautiful (three natural havens) that makes it so conducive to Athenian naval power. After all, the Athenians do not need to build ports elsewhere. Nature has herself

[78] Form as well as context indicates that *kalon* here serves an adjectival function. When it serves as an adjective, *kalos* can be rendered in different ways depending on whether it applies to an object's outward form, the use of an object, one's moral attributes, or ironic praise. Form and use only apply here. In the case of an object's form it can be rendered as "fair" or "beautiful." In the case of an object's use it can be rendered as "good" or "advantageous" or "useful." (In the context of Book I, *kalos* and its cognates can also be rendered as "noble" and "honorable." But to render *kalon* as noble here would be a stretch.) In the other two places where *kalos* describes a natural location (the proximity of Epidamnus's harbor to the sailing routes to Sicily; I.36.2, 44.3), it is best rendered as "convenient" or "advantageous." Given its similar function here, one might be tempted to render *kalon* the same way. But in this case, Thucydides introduces the usefulness of the harbor as distinct from what makes it *kalon*. Thus, one might better understand *kalon* here simply in terms of outward form. And yet the three havens that make up the Peiraeus's outward form are the very same things that make it useful for the Athenian seamen. For this very reason one should guard against understanding *kalon* solely in terms of form (since that would ignore the overlap) or solely in terms of usefulness (since that would be redundant). Rendering it as "beautiful" allows one to cover the form of the Peiraeus (as in "her hair is beautiful") and its use (as in "ain't that powerful V-6 engine a beaut'?!") without sacrificing either meaning to the other. Such a rendering also captures the ambiguity already present in *kalos's* use at I.36.2 and 44.3 ("Epidamnus has a harbor that facilitates sailing to Sicily? Beautiful") and reflected in its other uses in Book I (see the note on *kalos* in chapter 3).

My rendering of *kalon* as "beautiful" here receives support from David Grene's edition of the Thomas Hobbes translation of Thucydides. Hobbes's translation of Thucydides' Greek is traditionally recognized as the most literal English translation and he renders the word as beautiful. Grene, who shows himself unafraid of correcting what he considers to be some of Hobbes's errors, does not correct Hobbes on this matter. For a different rendering one should see Richard Crawley's Penguin translation ("the *fineness* of a locality that has three natural havens"). Crawley's rendering here is loose to say the least. Nevertheless, "fineness" closely approximates "beautiful" in the breadth of its meaning.

fulfilled this need through the nearby Peiraeus. All the Athenians need to do is protect this naturally beautiful gift.[79]

Thucydides connects Themistocles' openness to beauty to his concern for power (understood as the means of protection) when he elaborates on his attachment to both the navy and the Peiraeus. According to Thucydides, Themistocles initially viewed the naturally beautiful haven of the Peiraeus in defensive terms. It offered Athens the greatest protection from the dangers posed by another Persian invasion, since it was by the sea that the forces of the barbarians possessed the greatest access to Athens. Themistocles was "chiefly devoted" to the sea out of his fear of the Persian threat (93.7).

But Themistocles does not merely conceive of the beauty of the Peiraeus in terms of its natural advantageousness *as a port*. He also conceives of its fittingness in terms of his understanding of the nature of the Athenians: [80] because the Athenians are now seamen (or "have become nautical" *nautikous gegnemenous*; 93.3) it is only fitting that they possess such a port since it will increase their power as a naval people. It is not clear if Themistocles ever wonders if the increase of one's power is in fact a good thing. Is power to be acquired at all costs and to an unlimited extent? Or can one's drive for power be satiated? Whatever the case may be, Thucydides' excursus on Themistocles suggests that beauty, like nobility, emerges as something that enhances power or which rectifies neediness or contributes to self-sufficiency, and which does so in terms of our particular natures and particular needs. That it emerges in response to the particular needs facing

[79] Might this constitute the basis for a thematic connection between fortification of the beautiful and advantageous Peiraeus and the efforts of justice to secure what belongs to the noble, as we saw in the envoys' speech? In this case, justice is to the noble as fortifications are to the beautiful Peiraeus.
[80] Thucydides notes that at the battle of Salamis, the Athenians became sea-men (*nautikoi egenonto*; I.18.2;). Forde (1989, 20, 22-3) points out the importance of this statement, taken literally, for the Athenian nature. Hornblower notes it, but misses its significance (1991, 54); Connor (1984, 25) comes close to noting what this means for their natures.

our particular natures, can be seen by considering that a port like the Peiraeus would not have had the same allure to Themistocles, it would not have appeared as beneficial to him, had he ruled Megara or Thebes or Sparta instead of Athens. Moreover, if its beauty consists partly in its advantageousness, then what makes it advantageous must be rooted in the Athenians' particular circumstances, in this case their vulnerability to the Persian threat and their newly emergent nautical natures.

Thucydides' treatment of Themistocles' reasoning here allows us to confirm our earlier expectations about the source of the problems confronting the envoys' speech at Sparta. The conclusion he invites us to draw is that part of beauty's allure consists in its ability to satisfy the needs of our particular natures. In the Peiraeus's beauty, specifically in its supplying three natural harbors for the seafaring people the Athenians have become, Themistocles found protection from Persian threat. To use the images of the context, beauty promises a safe port – literally and figuratively – from the storms of political life. Thucydides' narrative on Themistocles grounds confidence in the suggestion made at the end of section *A* above: the envoys understand their nobility to be a power that will protect themselves in particular from a world beset with evils.

-- But what allows us to draw a link between the use of beauty here and the concern for nobility implicit in the envoys' speech? The fact that *kalos* can mean beautiful, beneficial, or noble depending on the context is hardly sufficient for establishing this link. Of course, the fact that a word used by Thucydides to describe the first limit on the unfettered pursuit of goods (I.5) also occurs at the very heart of his account of the origins of Athens's empire (I.93) is noteworthy. But far from relying on the mere occurrence of some word, the importance of this section and *kalon's* place in

this section can be derived from more authoritative considerations. As we saw earlier, the themes raised in the archaeology forced us to turn to the speeches of the Corcyreans and Corinthians for an articulation of justice as power. And the difficulties besetting these speeches (the either-or of justice) led us to the envoys' speech for a solution. But the envoys' speech and our treatment of that speech merely raised more questions about the Athenians' understanding of justice, nobility and their relationship to power. To resolve these questions, we turned to the narrative account of the origins of Athens's empire, an account that begins with Themistocles' decision to wall Athens and fortify the Peiraeus. Both the themes of Book I and Thucydides' treatment of those themes lead us to Themistocles' fortification of Athens and the Peiraeus for a more complete resolution of the difficulties facing the articulation of justice as power. The fact the Thucydides, in this section, touches on Themistocles' openness to the beautiful and its promise of advantageousness allows us to confirm our earlier "perhapses" regarding the envoys' speech and to demonstrate the unity of Book I's teaching on political power. --

To protect herself from the Persian threat, Athens not only needs to defend but to enlarge her power (as the envoys claim at 75-6). It is a short step from granting one protection from dangers so that one can keep what one possesses (what confirms one's goodness), to granting one a legitimate claim to possess new goods that belong to superior natures (what is owed to one on account of that goodness). As we have seen, the security of Athenian rule and the preservation of Athenian freedom depend on the subjugation of those around her. It is not difficult to imagine how what begins as a moderate and defensively-minded goal can become an immoderate and offensively oriented expansion. Thucydides' narrative of deeds during the fifty years prior to the

Peloponnesian war, the Pentecontaetia, confirms this movement. Before turning to the Pentecontaetia, we must discuss the extent to which Themistocles' sensitivity to the beautiful defines Athens itself.

2. The Themistoclean Character of Athens

2. a. The Basis of Athenian Exceptionalism

In the archaeology, Thucydides draws a connection between the universal concern for protection, fear of danger and sense of vulnerability and the concomitant concern for power. He also points to Athens's seminal role in the development of the concern for power. Athens offered the first home to peace and stability in ancient Hellas. Settled on rocky and infertile soil, Athens experienced from her inception mother nature's stinginess (I.2.5). And while this natural poverty exposed her to the harsh conditions of the natural world, it also left her free from the threat of constant invasions by other people. But Athens was not entirely spared the taste of defeat. The city was made populous – literally – by losers. It was inhabited by those individuals from other cities who were strong (*dunotatoi*) but not quite strong enough to stay within or on top of their political communities (I.2.6). Athens is thus not only settled by second-raters, but by "out of town" second-raters. But while her citizens lack a natural kinship in blood, Athenian citizenship may rest on a more permanent natural foundation: the community's very existence is defined by that natural poverty and vulnerability to other men that is the hall-mark of all human life. The city of Athens is the beacon of our natural vulnerability. It is the shared concern for genuine goods to meet human needs -- and not the accident of kinship -- that unites the original Athenians [81] and is the true basis for human community.

[81] It is just this concern for goods that bases the reasonableness of the Corcyreans' request for Athenian aid.

It is precisely poverty and exposure to need, as well as awareness of poverty and neediness, that gave rise to a city devoted to the freedom of its citizens and their protection by its laws.[82] Again, when Thucydides points to the emergence of the common good, he seems to attribute its first development to Sparta and suggest it arose in Athens only later (I.6). But just prior to that discussion, he makes what would seem to be an otherwise off-hand comment about fashion in Athens. According to him, the ancient Athenians, growing into a more luxurious way of life, discarded the convention of wearing golden-grasshoppers in their hair (I.6.3), a convention that honored their autochthonous gods.[83] By abandoning this convention as they freed themselves from poverty, the wealthy Athenians revealed a deep-seated concern for independence; they yearned to be free of their bond to the land, a bond that both their poverty and their autochthonous gods imposed on them. And the Athenians began to sever such a bond long before they ever deposed their tyrants or abandoned their city and "became seamen" (18.1, 93.3). A moment's reflection on this section suggests that the abandonment of such practices is part and parcel of the Athenians' desire to be liberated from the limitations imposed on us by our physical natures. Thus as much as the examples of Olympic combatants and the Spartan great, this example of the Athenians' concern for their outward form illustrates a concern for a singular independence from need and thus from depending on others.

By presenting this discussion just prior to his crucial discussion of the common good's emergence, Thucydides leads us to consider the link between the Athenians'

[82] Romilly claims that "Athenian imperialism was born of a simple struggle for life and it remained marked by this origin even in its later development" (1963, 71). This understanding on the whole is too limiting.

concern for physical or bodily independence and devotion to the common good. As such, these brief considerations about the Athenians' exposure to need – and bodily need in particular - allow us to tie together some of the themes regarding justice and nobility discussed throughout chapter 4. By doing so, we will be able to bring the problematic character of Athenian imperialism and its origin into sharper focus.

To state the issue pointedly, the Athenians, in turning to the common good and away from their autochthonous gods, reveal the depth of their concern for power. For they reveal not only the depths of their constant hopefulness to be fully independent of bodily need, but also their hopes for justice to realize such independence. But this seems problematic. For if the Athenians are concerned with the possession of goods to satisfy their bodily needs, then they should pursue imperial power ruthlessly much as the earliest pirates chased booty. But they don't. As the envoys' claim, the Athenians voluntarily impose limits on the selfish pursuit of their own interests. What explains this?

The early Athenians' heightened awareness of their vulnerability and exposure to need seems to have impressed upon them the fact that no amount of goods could ever free them from the threat of evils. Such awareness was initially facilitated by Attica's naturally poor soil and by the nearly constant danger of starvation. It was heightened, paradoxically, by the fact that some of those who originally settled the city were no weaklings themselves. They too originally possessed power, but not power *enough* (as noted, of those thrown out of their original cities they were most powerful; *dunatotatoi* I.2.) These early leading Athenians may thus have been keenly aware that one can *always* use more power when it comes to acquiring external goods.

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[83] See Hornblower (1991, 26-7) on the connection between wearing "golden grasshoppers" and autochthony. Forde notes that the Athenians' new-found confidence based on the liberation of their purely

The apparent solution to both the problem of their neediness and the problem posed by the need for limitless power seems to emerge in the devotion to the common good. By pursuing imperial goods in accordance with a legitimate limit on her interests, Athens – like the Olympic wrestlers discussed in chapter 3 – could perform an "end run" around the need to acquire a never-ending supply of external goods. For by voluntarily imposing a limit on her pursuit of self-interest, she could reveal her independence from external goods and thus demonstrate her self-sufficiency. Since goodness is characterized by the absence of evils (like need), then devotion to the common good, as a way of transcending one's need, became a means to establishing one's own goodness. But how does "the establishment of one's goodness" get around the problem posed by one's most fundamental bodily need - one's mortality? One must consider the common good's emergence in its immediate context; one must take up again Thucydides' comments about Olympic contestants (I.6).

According to Thucydides' treatment, the Athenians and Spartans demonstrated their natural superiority in Olympic contests by discarding their conventional coverings. They thus revealed their reproductive organs in the effort to become Olympic victors (I.6).[84] By uncovering the natural evidence of their physical mortality and displaying themselves for all to see, these Olympic contestants countenanced their fundamentally needy nature in the very act of demonstrating their natural superiority. In fact, the very acknowledgement of such need and the consequent indifference to or acceptance of it

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human power possessed a tinge of impiety (1989, 23, 25).

[84] Hornblower notes Thucydides' reluctance to address explicitly the exposure of their genitalia (1991, 28). While Thucydides doesn't address the issue directly, the passage in question abounds with references to nudity and nods to what gets "covered." Thus *egumnothesan* and *gumnazesthai* (exercise naked), *apoduntes* (stripped naked), *diezomenoi* (wearing underwear) and *diazomata* (underwear). Perhaps most interesting is the reference to *aidoia* (genitals), which, a few accent marks aside, is the same word for what is regarded with reverence or what is venerable. It can also be translated as one who is reverent or shamefaced.

seems partly to constitute the superiority they wish to confirm in winning an Olympic contest. After all, what constitutes a greater sign of one's superior self-sufficiency than the manly acceptance of and indifference to those bodily needs that seem shameful or terrifying to the rest of us?[85]

One has to wonder though how the manly acceptance of and indifference to what seems shameful and terrifying to the rest of us manages to address the concern with our greatest vulnerability. As the treatment of the envoys' speech suggested and as the treatment of Themistocles confirmed, the sense of exercising self-restraint in the face of one's overwhelming neediness rests on the profitability promised by what is noble or beautiful. This promise is predicated on the power of both the noble and the beautiful to silence or numb almost completely the awareness of the profound neediness characterizing the human condition. Thus Themistocles' openness to the beauty of the Peiraeus was predicated on his fear of a third Persian invasion. And the Olympic wrestlers did not disrobe just for the sake of disrobing. They did so in order to compete, to win and thus to grab those rewards that come from victory. In their very effort to reveal their independence from external goods, they also demonstrate their dependence on them.

But as we saw earlier (chapter 3.II.3), the Greek practice of wrestling naked introduced a good different from the material rewards involved in barbarian contests:

[85] A similar line of thinking seems to explain the envoys' willingness to state publicly their "thesis" on men, states and gods (that the strong will always rule the weaker) with such shocking candor. Freed from the conventional restraints imposed by modesty, they appear both to state and to embrace the harsh truth about human life with an unflinching boldness. But what is perhaps most bold about their speech is not the articulation of this thesis before an enemy currently contemplating war (no small feat itself!). What seems most "manly" is the application of this thesis to themselves. They seem to accept almost casually the consequence that just as they rule others now, so too will they one day be ruled by someone stronger – without any moral grounds on which to expect either men or the gods to protect them.

public recognition. The self-disclosure of wrestling naked is thus more accurately understood as a public claim to the public recognition of one's superiority. And what could be more deserving of recognition than the restrained pursuit of external goods in the very face of one's overwhelming physical neediness? In other words, public recognition of one's natural superiority recommends itself as the means by which one can come to terms with the physical limitations, like mortality, imposed on us by nature. Glory, as it originally attended that self-limiting pursuit of booty as practiced by the earliest pirates (I.5), comes to sight as the solution to the problem posed by our deepest physical needs.

When one considers the envoys' speech in light of this insight, one can see their candid justification of Athenian empire to be an effort to come to terms with their extreme neediness through the public recognition of deeds that have heretofore been described as noble. The envoys do not merely seek to persuade their enemies to allow Athens to keep her empire at any cost. They try to do so on the grounds of her superior nobility since it is through acknowledgment of such superiority that one can come to terms with the most extreme limits nature imposes on men. Again, Themistocles' openness to the beautiful gives us an example of what the best Athenians (among whom the envoys must be counted) could hope for from the noble or beautiful. His example thus gives us the clearest case in Book I of what one could hope for *by becoming* beautiful or noble. And as we have learned, the extravagant hope of coming to terms with one's physical needs through noble deeds must be served by the belief in justice that helps secure the rewards due to such conduct. If the aim is permanent freedom from need, then justice, if it is to be good, must also be permanent. At the heart of Greek political

aspirations must be the belief in a universal category of justice that will exist always. This last point requires elaboration.

By adhering to what nobility demands, one becomes noble one's self and thus worthy of those goods that confirm one's freedom from the evils that plague human beings. But because humans are so needy, their concern for nobility requires justice to secure the goods that are to attend the noble. The concern for justice, however, and the good things it helps secure can only be fulfilled when neediness is eliminated or when one possesses in sufficient amounts the goods that one thinks he needs. If one seeks to overcome one's physical limitations through noble deeds, then justice can serve its function when it helps one possess that freedom from need that only an immortal could possess. This is true of political communities as much as it is of individual citizens. In the case of the worthy citizen, justice so understood would mean helping him achieve apotheosis through ever-remembered glory, if not through actual immortality. In the case of the worthy city, justice so understood would mean helping it found and secure a global and deathless empire.

The preceding reflections suggest that if justice is to secure forever the goods that satisfy our seemingly endless needs, then justice must be a good whose goodness is coeval with the neediness that defines the human condition. But this raises a real problem. For if justice should in fact provide the satisfaction for which the Athenians hope, then justice would secure those goods that belong to superior natures only by completely transforming those natures – permanently replacing their neediness with wholeness (see Part III *A*.3.b). This of course means that such a nature, once successfully transformed, would no longer need justice. Successful justice would lead to the

disappearance of justice. Moreover, if justice was no longer necessary or possible, then it would no longer be good. As noted, the goodness of justice depends on the existence of a certain shortcoming in the noble (or in nature's support of the noble) that justice could satisfy (see III.*A*.3.b). Of course, it is a question whether citizens or cities, subject as they are to the dangerous turns of chance and to the viciousness of others, could ever possess an amount of goods sufficient to satisfy such needs. As Thucydides' archaeology and his treatment of the ancient Athenians suggests, need is a permanent factor of human life.

But if *that* is true, then it would seem that the eternal justice which those individual longings behind Athenian empire point to and seemingly require cannot itself be eternal. Or put differently, the only way justice can be permanent and eternal (or fully good for those whose concerns for wholeness or self-sufficiency are riding on it) is if it will never fully satisfy the shortcomings that draw it out of the noble in the first place. On this basis we are led to draw the contorted conclusion that the longing for natural self-sufficiency at the heart of Greekness finds its satisfaction in constant neediness by means of ā good whose goodness must be questionable. (Compare such problems with the contradictions between distributive justice and justice as the common good in III.*A*.3a.) Such a good cannot be the fulfillment of our natures. We are compelled to seek a more adequate solution to the problem generated by the concern for wholeness.

Earlier I tried to show how the envoys' conception of justice invoked a supra-natural power to effect the corrections to nature demanded by their contradictory notions of justice (III.*A*.3.b). One might be able to avoid the problems such contradictions pose for men and their understanding of the divine if one could supply a rational defense of the naturalness of Greece or of Greekness. We are now in a better position to conclude that

such a defense is not likely to succeed. Insofar as the Athenians embody Greekness, then Greekness tends towards a universal and deathless empire. But the achievement of such universal rule seems to require a self-forgetfulness on the part of the global rulers because it requires them to forget their limitations. Seen in this light, Greekness is untrue to the original concerns that generated it; it leads one to try to abandon the concerns for one's own good in favor of a good that belongs to someone or something that is not human and thus whose goodness is questionable for us. In short, the full flowering of Greekness seems to lead to a political community that would truncate the search for goods that satisfy our particular human natures. Such a community would truncate the search for genuinely *human* goods because it would undermine our awareness of those things that we genuinely need.

Themistocles' sensitivity to beauty's promise of advantageousness grounds this form of Greekness. To be specific, the preceding discussion of need, the concern for one's own advantage and devotion to the common good helps explain how the envoys can understand Athens's heroic actions at Salamis to reflect her superior nobility and her superior nobility to reflect her superior power. It shows how they can understand the noble sacrifices they make to be at once distinctly a good in itself and a means to other goods. But in light of the preceding discussion, it seems that Themistocles is sensitive to things that do not fit together. The problematic nature of such a "fit" becomes most evident in the numerous problems facing the envoys' speech at Sparta. Such observations thus lead us to raise a question about the integrity of a union between beauty and advantage. At the least they lead us to be skeptical that things are advantageous *because* they are beautiful. As the preceding observations suggested, the goods promised by

beauty are not obtainable and thus not genuinely good. Insofar as Themistocles remains sensitive to the union of the beautiful and advantageous that leads to or promotes the kind of political regime that promotes an insufficient awareness of what we need (like the Athenian empire), then it is reasonable to suspect that he himself will not be sufficiently aware of what he genuinely needs.

2. b. Athens and Corcyra

The preceding reflections on Athenian exceptionalism are confirmed by a comparison of Athens with Corcyra and Corinth in Book I. The difference between Athens, on the one hand, and cities like Corcyra, Corinth and even Sparta, on the other, consists in Athens's sensitivity to the noble and thus in her citizens' ability to devote themselves to the good of others. Corcyra, like Athens, understands her goods to signify and confirm her superior character. But she does not sufficiently reflect on what that confirmation implies (that she was already good, and thus must have already measured up to external standards of goodness). And this lack of awareness stems in part from her own good fortune. Corcyra, unlike Athens, enjoys an unbroken history of success and wealth. She was founded by one of the wealthiest Greek cities. Her island comes with a reputation of naval success, a reputation inherited by its current inhabitants. Corcyra herself has grown rich and powerful. Her location affords her a freedom from the threats of hostile neighbors. And she has founded her own prosperous colony. In the wake of such good fortune, Corcyra seems inexperienced in need, of threats posed by fellow men, and of extreme vulnerability. Her good fortune thus closes her off from experiencing the liberation from need and protection from violence promised by the noble. Being so closed off, Corcyra seems incapable of recognizing that external standard that makes devotion,

and thus the disclosure of her goodness, possible. Corcyra seems to think that the good fortune she possesses, she possesses as a matter of course – perhaps because something in the universe cares for her. It is then the exposure to need and the heightened awareness of one's vulnerability that helps one recognize what is implied in the *confirmation* of one's superior character.

Corcyra's unreflective acceptance of her good fortune explains in part why she devotes so little effort to establishing her noble or superior character in her speech. This relative silence is highlighted when one observes the flow of her speech as a whole. Athens should aid Corcyra now because: 1) Corcyra is blameless for her previous policy of pursuing what seemed good to her since everyone is compelled to pursue what appears good (I.32-3), 2) Corinth is unjust in trying to take her colony (34) and 3) Athens would be blameworthy for not helping Corcyra, since aiding Corcyra is in her genuine interests, and we are obliged to secure those interests (35-6). That she turns to justice (in the central part of her speech) to rectify an injury suggests that she thinks she possesses an exclusive right to Epidamnus. The *need* to turn to justice to protect the goods that belong to her superior nature (a connection indicated in the narrative) resembles the envoys' need to turn to justice in her speech. There exists no natural or spontaneous support for what belongs to superior natures.

But the fact that Corcyra makes this turn without any discussion or hint of her superior nobility pinpoints the difference between her and Athens. She seems blissfully unaware of the noble or the importance of *noblesse oblige* to her superior status. Thus she remains unaware of those shortcomings in the noble that make justice necessary, as well as how the noble lends justice its distinctive character. This ignorance seems to explain

how she can begin by pardoning her own ignorance of what is genuinely good while, in the end, holding Athens accountable for observing her true interests. Put differently, this ignorance leaves her ill equipped to justify why Athens should risk her interests and the lives of her sailors to assist Corcyra. After all, the potential benefits of Corcyra's navy, even if granted when needed, will be of no use to those Athenian sailors who must spill their blood now. Corcyra must therefore establish that she is worthy of such risks. This means she must forego the defense afforded by the compulsory power of the apparent good. Ultimately Corcyra's failure to appreciate the distinctive character of the selfless generosity at the heart of noble conduct makes her unaware of the self-restraint that justice requires. And this makes her a weak ally for Athens in the war, and may ultimately account for the civil war that initiated the Peloponnesian war (I.24) and the civil war that destroyed her city (III.80-5).

2.c. Athens and Corinth

Corinth, on the other hand, seems remarkably attuned to Athens's selflessness and thus the capacity of Athenian citizens to devote themselves to their city's cause. In fact her speech prior to the envoys' speech at Sparta (I. 68-71) is usually read as the quintessential guide to understanding both the Spartan and Athenian characters. Such a reading is sensible. The Corinthians' speech does offer such insight.[86] But their speech says as much about the Corinthians as it does about the Spartans or Athenians. In fact, most who read this speech merely as a "guide" to understanding Sparta and Athens fail to note two important aspects of the speech. In the first place, the Corinthians do not condemn the Athenian character in the same way a communist might condemn

capitalism, or the way a Christian might condemn the rich man's addiction to wealth – namely that it's bad for the capitalist or the wealthy man himself! In fact, they don't condemn Athenian imperialism at all. There is no attack on the grounds of morality, principle or even "ideology" here. On the contrary, the Corinthians appear half-envious of the Athenians. Thus when the Corinthians advise the Spartans that a city's virtue depends on the vice of its neighbors (I.71.1-3), they tacitly grant the legitimacy of the defense the envoys later present for Athenian empire.[87] To note just one difference between the Corinthians' speech and (its suitability for) their Spartan audience, it is the Spartan ephor Sthenelaidas (I.86) who makes the moral criticism of Athenian imperialism strangely absent from the Corinthians' speech.

To the extent that Corinthians blame anyone, they blame Sparta for the growth of Athens's empire and the sufferings she inflicted on the Peloponnesian confederates. In the wake of their enumeration of Athenian abuses, they state, "And of this *you* are yourselves guilty... *you* [Spartans] rob the freedom not only of those who have been enslaved by them, but you rob the freedom of your confederates too" (69.1, emphasis and brackets mine). As the Corinthians state it, if you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem. But they go even further. Justice is entirely, or only, the preserve of those who are part of the solution: "For not he who enslaves, but he who has the power to stop it but allows it, most truly does [injustice]" (69.1, brackets mine).[88] Apparently, vice and

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[86] Kagan argues that the Corinthians' assessment of the two parties is enormously exaggerated (1969, 290). Similarly Cogan (1981) argues that the Corinthians' picture of Athens is pointed and insubstantial (23), neither true nor persuasive (22).

[87] See the argument ending "there is no reproach for anyone who arranges well their advantages while under dangers of the greatest sort" I.75.

[88] See also 69.3: if Athens thinks they can get away with it, they will – and it's your fault (not theirs) for letting them get away with it! And 71.5: "in order that you should not ...direct us and others to some other league through a lack of heart [a thinly veiled threat to join forces with barbarians]. In doing so we would do nothing unjust, neither to the gods by whom we swear oaths nor to the men who perceive those oaths.

lawlessness are facts of life. Men are not responsible for being bad, but for being good. Thus the Corinthians also tacitly grant legitimacy to the Athenian defense that they can't be blamed for pursuing empire though they can be praised for exercising their rule more moderately than others (76-77).

As we have seen, this view of justice is problematic. To be consistent, either the freedom necessary for praise and blame must exist or compulsion must govern men's conduct, making moral accountability untenable. The Corinthians seem reluctant to embrace either of these alternatives because their devotion to justice and, in particular, the goodness of law-abidingness, depends almost entirely on their belief that forces exist that are willing and able to uphold justice, thereby ensuring the goodness of obeying the law.[89] And their belief in such forces, as is clear from this speech, is wavering. To restate, the goodness of justice and the badness of injustice, for the Corinthians, depend on what comes from them, on their consequences. It is just such a view of goods that informs "fairness" in the first place. And it is just such a view that allows the Corinthians to direct their anger at Sparta and not Athens. After all, who wouldn't want empire? To the extent that the Corinthians object to Athenian imperialism, it seems that they do so because *they* aren't the ones who get to pursue empire.[90]

To clarify the difference between the Corinthians and the envoys one should consider that while neither consistently maintain their arguments about moral responsibility, the envoys fail to do so precisely because they believe that the risk of their interests constitutes their good. The envoys articulate inconsistent notions of justice

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For they do not break the treaty who, from being left alone, send unto to others, but rather they who do not assist those with whom they have made sworn treaties" (brackets mine).

[89] Compare the comments at 69.1, 69.3, 71.5 (already cited) with the grave consequences of Spartan laxity at 69 end, 71 end.

precisely because they are infused with an appreciation for noble deeds; they are filled with the hope that their risks freely undertaken will be duly recognized. The Corinthians, incontrast, as we saw in their first speech (I.37-43), embody the concerns of fair or law-abiding men. If they really supported the law as just and justice as good, one would expect them in their second speech to make arguments supporting the goodness of justice and the badness of injustice (recall the *malista* (42.2) in their first speech). Their failure to criticize imperialism as unjust in that second speech, given before an audience most receptive to such criticism, suggests that they secretly suspect imperialism to be good. Their hostility towards the lawless (i.e., imperialists) would appear to stem from their own lack of power and courage to defy the law and take what they want. Having once held quasi-imperial power over commercial traffic in Hellas, Corinth must now watch as Athens denies her own confederates access to Athenian markets. From her perspective, unless she is willing to forego a concern for justice, then the law, originally devised to protect what belonged to one as a matter of right, must now bestow legitimacy and thus goodness on what happens to be one's own. Accordingly, those concerned with their superior virtue should remain satisfied with this legal dispensation of right and goodness, thereby granting to those weaker the status of "equals." Athens should therefore repeal the Megarean decree and stay away from Corcyra.

Corinth's apparent envy suggests they aren't satisfied with law-bred goodness (nor with their defense of it). Their appreciation of the law as fairness and their suspicion of the goodness of fairness impedes a genuine appreciation of Athenian daring and selflessness. It prevents Corinth from understanding how Athens's *nearly* relentless

[90] To reinforce this notion one should compare the Corinthians' analysis of the Athenian character here with Pericles' comments about hatred and envy of the great at II.64.3-5.

pursuit of goods is fueled by her devotion to justice. Corinth's dutiful subjection to the law corrupts her view of what made lawfulness (from the perspective of virtue) desirable and necessary; it corrupts her view of what makes genuine devotion to the law possible – the belief that the sacrifice or the risk of one's good is itself one's own good. This seems to explain why the Corinthians characterize Athenian daring entirely in terms of "grabbing more goods." Thus they are impressed that the Athenians don't think of their bodies as their own and only think of their minds as their own only insofar as their minds serve the city (70.6). While such sacrifices impress them, they do so precisely because, in their formulation, the individual's concern for his own good gets reduced entirely to the good of the city. He identifies everything he is with the good of others. The Corinthian formulation of sacrifice abstracts from the consideration that devotion to the city is also the particular good of the Athenian citizen *as a particular individual* (the good of a Socrates, or of a Pericles, or of an Alcibiades). This abstraction allows them to avoid discussing that end on behalf of which the Athenians make such sacrifices and which promises to reward such sacrifices, namely the surpassing nobility of the city of Athens.

To the extent that there is any criticism of Athens in their speech, that (unwitting) criticism consists in the picture of Athens frenetically chasing one good after the other. As the Corinthians paint it, Athens engages in a restless and seemingly joyless pursuit of goods that ends only in death. And it is precisely this focus on the getting of more goods that belies Corinth's dissatisfaction with her own fairness and her grudging admiration of Athens; they too want more and they cannot (or are unwilling to) get it. Thus their critical picture of Athens also serves as an unintentional criticism of what the Corinthians admire. By pointing to the gap between the goodness of fairness and the restraint from

grabbing goods that defines it, the Corinthians' second speech compels us to seek a bridge across that gap. It thus prepares for the envoys' speech that follows.

3. The Introduction to Thucydides' Teaching on Politics Concluded

In the wake of this discussion of Athenian exceptionalism, we need to recall Thucydides' authorial intervention just prior to the envoys' speech that set up this watershed moment in Book I. We are now in a position to conclude that Thucydides' statement about the envoys' intent (that in speaking to the Spartan assembly they sought to reveal the power of their city) provides the most complete and most penetrating assessment of the justification of their empire that follows. According to Thucydides' intervention and his treatment of Themistocles, the envoys, by revealing through speech their nobility and their justice, hope to reveal their invincibility to any dangers the Spartans may wish to throw their way. Their noble character will protect them from a world beset with evils. As I have tried to show, this understanding of justice as power is problematic. What does this mean for Thucydides' teaching on politics?

The archaeology identified political power with the practice of the voluntary observation of a rightful limit on an individual's self-interests. Because the Spartans and Greeks originated this practice, they were credited with the invention of politics rightly understood. But according to my treatment of Themistocles above, the voluntary observation of a limit on one's interests is predicated on the promise of beauty and nobility to satisfy needs that cannot be satisfied, not at least if the goodness of nobility and justice is to be maintained. One might think on the basis of this that politics for Thucydides is the futile attempt to make fit what cannot be made to fit. But such an understanding fails to do justice to what makes the Greek invention of politics distinct

from the despotic or tyrannical rule exercised by those insufficiently Greek. After all, the ruthless or unrestrained pursuit of goods is itself motivated by a desire to overcome one's neediness through the confirmation of one's goodness, a confirmation based on the possession of goods as opposed to eschewing such goods. Thus it too seeks to flee what cannot be fled.

What distinguishes Greekness from barbarian, and thus what defines politics, is the fundamental awareness of man's neediness and the effort to overcome that neediness through the voluntary observance of certain limits. What makes politics "politics" is the fact that it is a response to something rational within human beings, specifically the rational awareness of our radical neediness and vulnerability. It is just such awareness that makes one open to the power and promises of beauty and nobility. Even the effort to perform an "end run" around the endless need for external goods through demonstrating one's manifest self-sufficiency is itself something of a rational response to a fundamental human problem.[91] It eliminates the absurd need for unlimited power to obtain external goods, a pursuit that is characteristically barbarian. That the solution offered by politics to this rational awareness results in a kind of self-forgetfulness points to the shortcomings of politics and compels us to seek a truer or more complete response to this rational awareness. It is perhaps this very rational awareness that Thucydides seeks to engage in his treatment of the war's causes. Perhaps it was just such an engagement that was promised to us in his stated intent to satisfy our need to know how such a war could arise among the Greeks, to know what could lead the two poles of Greekness to wage war

[91] Forde also notes the presence of this "rational awareness." He writes, "[T]he Greeks became conscious to an unprecedented degree of the problems that Thucydides has made his theme. The Peloponnesian war was in this sense the most self-conscious war, one in which at least some of the combatants were forced, or

against each other. Such an intent amounts to his effort to satisfy our need to know what supplies the grounds for a justice that also issues in injustice.

We are able to draw these conclusions regarding Thucydides' teaching on politics (and can possess confidence in such findings) precisely because we attended carefully to his manner of procedure in Book I. Thucydides introduces his teaching on politics by re-raising the question of justice and necessity in the context of the relation between the speeches about justice and injustice (the alleged causes) and the narrative about Athens's imperial power (the truest cause). Thus, picking up from where the archaeology left off, the first speeches of the work introduced the inquiry into justice as power by framing the issue as an either-or. The deeds surrounding the speeches refine and confirm the importance of the questions about justice as power raised by these speeches. Because these speeches and the deeds surrounding them fail to supply a satisfactory account of justice as power, we had to turn to the envoys' speech and Thucydides' authorial intervention preceding that speech.

The study of the envoys' speech showed that they considered their justification of empire to serve as the power needed to secure the goods belonging to and confirming their noble character. But precisely because the envoys' account was so incomplete and so problematic, we were compelled to seek further confirmation of the source of the envoys' understanding of their power. By turning to the deeds of the Pentecontaetia after the speeches at Sparta, Thucydides fulfills the "promise" made by the opening sentences of this section; the narrative confirms the formal ground of the envoys' contradictory understanding of justice as power. The substantive implication of this attention to

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enabled, to move beyond the conventional, patriotic, or moralistic understanding of justice" (1989, 5). See also 25 on the intellectual basis of their transformation of courage into daring.

Thucydides' method is that the human concern to address one's most fundamental and physical needs, that aspect of human existence that makes us open to the noble and the beautiful, supplies the ultimate or formal grounds of the political and moral categories that define Greek life. And it is the awareness of one's neediness and mortality that is the point of origin for a justice that issues in injustice. Because we needed to turn to the Pentecontaetia in order to bridge the gap between the envoys' justification and Thucydides' intervening comments about power, one can plausibly conclude that his narrative refines and confirms[92] the lessons learned from the speeches. It also helps the reader complete his journey towards understanding Thucydides' speech and thus his intent.

[92] Bruell notes that "Thucydides' narrative confirms and expands on Perikles' self-assessment" (1981, 24) in his speeches and the narrative "is designed and arranged to cast further light on the issues raised and explored in the speeches" (ibid. 26). In his typically terse style, Bruell refrains from elaborating on the dynamics behind Thucydides' treatment of speech and deed.

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POLITICAL HISTORY AND THE STUDY OF POLITICS
BOOK I OF THUCYDIDES' HISTORY OF THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR

Volume II

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Thucydides' Defense of His Solution

The last chapter introduced Thucydides' teaching on politics. It concluded that, according to Thucydides, the rational awareness of the profound need that opens one to the noble and the beautiful – the need from which the contradictory understandings of justice derive -- constitutes the heart of politics. If this is true, then in what sense is Thucydides' manner of procedure itself *political*? And how does an understanding of the political character of his procedure lead us to a better understanding of his intent? To address these questions it might help to recall that the last chapter also concluded that Thucydides' narrative serves as a bridge between the speeches of the *History's* actors and his own speech. To flesh out the character of this narrative "bridge" and its relationship to Thucydides' political manner of procedure, this chapter proceeds in two parts.

The first presents an account of Thucydides' narrative in the Pentecontaetia. This narrative of particular deeds charts the ambiguity of the moral and political categories reflected in the problems marking the speeches treated in chapter 4. The political picture painted by the narrative thus captures the problems concerning the existence of distinct and unblemished wholes that we encountered in the treatment of Athenian exceptionalism. Because the narrative serves as confirmation of the lessons learned from the speeches of the *History's* actors, it constitutes a necessary part of Thucydides' speech. But why should we accept the Pentecontaetia as the true account and thus the *confirmation* of the truth of the previous lesson? Why should this account of the deeds that took place before the war supply a sufficient basis for rejecting the possibility of the

divine basis of political right *and* the possibility of an intelligible and natural whole that could support universal categories? Finally, if Thucydides' speech enables us to conclude that there is no divine or natural basis[1] for some universal moral limit on an individual's self-interest, then why should the reader still care about politics?

Thucydides' "response" to these questions, as I show in the second part of the chapter, proceeds in two steps. Through the drama of the *History*, Thucydides leads the reader to subject theological considerations to considerations of political right and thus to considerations of political power. By doing this, he can subject the reader's approach to the theological question to his reflections on the character of justice, that is, to his reflections on the means by which he can overcome his most fundamental neediness. In this way, Thucydides supplies the basis for the position that as the fixed and stable character of justice "goes" so too go the fixed and stable categories of the moral and political world. He thus supplies us with confidence in his approach to the problem of political history (chapter 4) and the picture of the Pentecontaetia (drawn in this chapter). To this end, Thucydides situates the discussion of sacral law within a larger debate over why citizens should be willing to risk the greatest dangers for their cities or for their allies. His treatment of the speech of the Corinthians and the speech of Pericles, following the considerations raised by the Pentecontaetia, returns the individual to the vital drama of politics and forces him to address his concerns within the context of this drama.

But the importance of politics is not simply derivative from and thus secondary to the reader's concern to overcome his neediness. In the second step of his response - the

[1] For the rejection of the natural basis see the close of III.B.2.a and for the rejection of the divine basis see III.A.3.

treatment of Cylon, Pausanias and Themistocles - Thucydides establishes the importance of certain political conditions for the individual's attempt to know that the goods he seeks to overcome his neediness are in fact genuine goods. He does this by establishing the importance of both a political regime's claim to one's obedience and its justification of the goodness of that obedience in terms of what is good for man as man, in terms that defy reduction to "one's own." Thus, the fates of Pausanias and Themistocles, read in light of the "Cylonian question," indicate the advantage of living under a regime like Periclean Athens. This regime offers the most powerful way for the individual to raise and engage the question of what is genuinely good for him. But to what end does the individual seek such goods? After all, the thrust of the fourth chapter, as well as the Pentecontaetia, suggests that it is impossible to overcome one's fundamental neediness. This study as a whole will end with a consideration of this most important question.

I. The Pentecontaetia and Thucydides' Narrative

Perhaps the easiest way to begin to understand Thucydides' speech as *political* is to recall that Athenian exceptionalism consisted in a particular city and its citizens aspiring to overcome their radical neediness by becoming self-sufficient. By endeavoring to become as complete as possible, the Athenians aspired to embody what was universal. But the fundamental character of political life is one of uncertainty, danger and vulnerability. What a political community perceives to be by nature fitting for itself (what is necessary for it to become self-sufficient) is not granted spontaneously and its future "delivery" is not guaranteed by nature. One must therefore establish through speech the justice of possessing those goods one perceives to be fitting for one's self. Speech then -- or at least the political speeches of the *History's* political actors -- serves the concern to

possess those goods that indicate one's superior worth. It is the means by which one can make one's superiority manifest, thereby persuading others to forego voluntarily any conflicting claim to such goods. Political speech therefore aims to preclude the use of violence as the means to securing what belongs to one as a matter of right or as a matter of nobility. Insofar as it serves justice, then the political speeches of the *History's* actors also serve to correct nature's apparent inability to make one's worthiness spontaneously evident. Political speech is thus enlisted on behalf of "the noble" as part of man's attempt to remedy to nature's apparent shortcomings; speech is a means to becoming complete, and thus approximating the "universal." But if Thucydides' speech consists in some combination of the speeches of the *History's* actors and his own narrative of the deeds, then how are we to understand the narrative?

In turning to Thucydides' narrative about the particular deeds that occurred before the war, we need to consider how his version of those deeds - which must be accepted as the true account - compares with both the envoys' understanding and the Themistoclean vision of the beautiful and advantageous which is the root of that understanding. If there are differences between the kind of world implicitly hoped for by Themistocles in his concern for protection and in his sensitivity to the beauty of what is naturally fitting, and the world as drawn by Thucydides' narrative, then how do these differences bear on the naturalness of the concern for right? Thus in turning to the Pentecontaetia we are not only seeking confirmation on Thucydides' part about the problems concerning strict and distinct moral categories that we found in the speeches. Through a careful analysis of the Pentecontaetia[2] we will also refine our effort to come to a more consistent and reliable

[2] On the composition of this narrative "digression" one should see Romilly (1963) who contends that it was constructed at a later time than the rest of the work (19). It thus should provide a guide to the rest of the

understanding of the concern for right, a concern that was first made explicit in the speeches. This is perhaps initially the best way to characterize the narrative as a bridge to Thucydides' speech.

A. The Pentecontaetia: The Ambiguity of Moral Categories

The Pentecontaetia is traditionally understood to consist of two parts. The first (from 89-96) is usually interpreted as treating the Athenian and Spartan characters as embodied in Themistocles and Pausanias, as well as the origins of Athens's leadership of the Delian league. It thus treats the origins of Athens's hegemonic sway over her confederates. In the second part (from 97-118), Thucydides is understood to narrate Athens's transformation from a hegemonic power at the head of the Delian league into an imperial power subjecting all league members to her rule. After all, he states that his intent in such a recollection is to show how Athens's relationship to her allies changed over time (97, beginning).

But the distinctness of this division seems more the function of Thucydides' narrative intervention and criticism of Hellanicus at 97 than of what he himself thought. Of course, it is no accident that we tend to understand the intervention at I.97 to mark a clear break. After all, it does appear to split up two separate subjects. But Thucydides' statements just prior to this "dividing" chapter give us pause. In the chapter directly

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work (58). But she also contends that it is possible to imagine the book without it or for the Pentecontaetia to have been written another way (35); Finley understands the Pentecontaetia to serve as a continuation of the archaeology (1942, 137, 79) as does Kallet-Marx (1993, 57-67); Rawlings (1981, 99-100, 253) contends that the digressions of Book I and VI "were designed to provide an historical model for a crucial issue on which those wars would turn"; Rood disagrees (1998, 207) on the basis of difference in length and extent. He also contends that the Pentecontaetia's function is to serve "as an explanation of Sparta's decision to make war and to the perceptions which explain that decision..." (226, see also 218-9); Connor contends that the Pentecontaetia corroborates the claims made at the first Spartan assembly about Spartan and Athenian character and behavior (1984, 42-4). See also Orwin (1994, 50-3). For accounts of the historical and chronological inaccuracies Thucydides commits in the Pentecontaetia, see H.D. Westlake (1955); P.K. Walker (1957); R.K. Unz (1986). Each author explains Thucydides' methods in this

preceding the "break," Thucydides notes that Athens's ostensible motives in collecting tribute and establishing a treasury at Delos (to repair injuries suffered while prosecuting the Persian war) covered over more unseemly desires for aggrandizement (96). The Athenians announce that they want more money and ships from the confederates so that they can ravage the Kings' territories, thereby compensating for the money and ships they lost in their confederates' defense; their request serves as part of the effort to recover war reparations. But their "ostensible motives" are more reasonably understood as intentional pretexts. [3] The original collection of tribute and ships from their confederates is, it seems, designed to extend their own power and control over their confederates. The Athenians do not merely want their goods replaced. They want goods in addition to those they lost.[4]

Thucydides notes in the sequel that Athens originally treated her confederates with equity, allowing them to live according to their own laws and enjoy equal status in common counsel. Through both war and the administration of the affairs of Greece, the

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"unfinished" digression in terms of his interest in elaborating on the growth of Athenian power and the causes of the war; Thucydides' methods serve a literary and not a strictly historical purpose.

[3] The Greek sentence in question is "*proschema gar en amunesthai hone epathon deountas ten basileos choran*" (96.1). The word that casts dispersion on their motives is *proschema*, which can be rendered as "plea," "pretence," or "ostensible cause." The sense that the Athenians wanted to disguise their efforts is reinforced by the original meaning of *proschema* as "that which comes before" and thus its primary use as "screen" or "cloak." In this rendering of *proschema*, I follow the work of both Gomme and Crawley and differ from the translation of Warner. Warner translates *proschema* as "the point being," which suggests that war reparations are the real incentive behind the collection of tribute. There is, however, no support within the LSJ for such a reading.

[4] To abide by the laws of the league, Athens must remain content with her own possessions. The difficulties facing such law-abidingness reflect the tension between what fairness and law abidingness offer one and what distributive justice offers one as discussed in my treatment of Athens, Corinth and Corcyra at 4.III.B.2.b-c. As further evidence that Athens may have more in mind than just recovery of her costs, one should consider Gomme's comments on the Treasury of the Delian League. "Note (1) that it is a purely Athenian office, from the beginning; it is not elected by the *xunodos* of the allies, though the *tameion* is at Delos; the auditors of the accounts were also Athenian magistrates... and (2) that they are called 'Treasurers of the Greeks', not any section of the Greeks, because the League is an organization directed against Persia rather than because it is supposed already or hoped in the future to represent all Greece" (1945, 272-3). By consolidating the powers to tax, hold and audit all of the League's finances into a single, non-representative office run by Athens alone, Athens creates a monopoly on the confederates' financial fates that would make Enron officials blush. This is hardly equitable and speaks against understanding the League, as originally founded, as a league of independent states; it speaks against the fairness referred to in

Athenians transformed this equitable relationship into one of dominion. But such a transformation cannot be distinguished from their original hegemony since it is predicated on the existence of motives at the very origins of Athens's hegemonic rule (and highlighted at the very beginning of Thucydides' treatment of that hegemony). And at the end of this intervention, Thucydides states that the following chapters "carry with them a demonstration of how the Athenian empire grew up [*kateste*]" (97.2, brackets mine). Such a statement (that the empire grew and not originated) implies that to Thucydides' mind Athens already possessed an empire, *before* the events narrated after the dividing chapter of I.97. If the chapters before 97 do deal solely with Athenian hegemony and the chapters following 97 solely with Athenian empire, then one might reasonably expect Thucydides at some point after 97 to treat explicitly the origin of the empire.[5] He does not. He treats the wars and administration of affairs whereby Athens secures her dominion over her confederates. And the seeds of that dominion were in place at the very creation of the Delian League as discussed at I.96. One may reasonably conclude from both Thucydides' comments prior to the "division" and his manner of procedure following that division that Thucydides believed Athens intended to extend and consolidate her power *before* beginning her aggressive expansion.

This line of thinking is reinforced, and the distinctness of this "division" at 97 further obscured, by the substance of the Pentecontaetia itself. Following Thucydides' intervention he relates battles conducted by Cimon, Athens's leading political moderate. Some of these battles, like that at Eion (98), were chiefly conducted to secure Greece

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the sequel (97.1). For additional historical accounts of Athens's hegemony and the transformation of the Delian League, see Kagan (1969, 42-3).

[5] One commentator notes that if the section from 97-118 were in fact intended to lay bare the truest causes of the war, then that intention "would have borne being restated" (Strauss 1964, 181). The absence of such

from future Persian threats. They were thus defensive and could not easily be construed as imperial advancements. But other battles also conducted by the moderate Cimon, like the *resumption* of hostilities with Cyprus (112),[6] seem to represent the fruits of Athens's previous involvement in Egypt – a campaign that was far from moderate or defensive (this despite the fact that Athens fought against the Persians there). Indeed, Athens's extensive and costly military engagement in Egypt represents the most unnecessary, most aggressive and most imperialistic of her endeavors during this period.

Oddly enough, it was Athens's original "chance" involvement in Cyprus that made her engagement in Egypt possible (104). Of course, one has to wonder how a city presumably devoted to the defense of Greece just *happens* (*etukon*) to find itself heavily invested (with 200 galleys) in a war with Cyprus. Thucydides never tells us. It may be that Athens means to finish what Pausanias had begun years earlier (94-5). But what is perhaps more important is that the "chance opportunity" this engagement affords (i.e., involvement in Egypt) is all that is required to transform a city like Athens, inspired as she is by the concern for noble self-sufficiency, from an apparently moderate and defensive power into a relentlessly imperial regime. And the apparently unnecessary invasion of Cyprus may indicate Athens was already trending in this direction – was a restless imperial nature lying dormant, waiting for the first opportunity to interfere with those outside her sphere of influence. Whatever the case may be regarding her first invasion of Cyprus, Athens's second invasion (again with 200 galleys) is clearly not defensive since it is preceded by the campaign in Egypt.

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a statement, according to Strauss, suggests that Thucydides was already well into a treatment on the truest cause – in the preceding narrative (88-96) and perhaps even in the section on the speeches (24-88).

The legitimacy of Athenian involvement in Egypt appears tenuous at best. She was invited by Inarus, a *Libyan* king, to free *Egypt* from Persian rule (104). Inarus, like the Athenians he calls in, is not so much concerned with the freedom of Egyptians as he is concerned with the extension of his own rule. The fact that Athens, following her first failed engagement in Egypt, tried to restore Orestes, the exiled king of Thessaly (111) reinforces the sense that Athenian imperialism (itself borne out of a desire for freedom and sovereignty) conflicts with what appears to be the legitimate sovereignty of other states. After all, there were many Egyptians who refused Inarus' call to revolt (104 beginning). And the Thessalians apparently no longer wanted Orestes as their ruler (111 beginning). That something belongs to another or a sphere of influence is another's own – even a concern with self-determination – is not sufficient to restrain Athenian conduct and curb its imperial tendencies. If we can draw a link between Athens's empire and her concern for her worth, then respecting what happens to be another's own (even their autonomy) conflicts with Athens's own considerations of her worth. It is perhaps then a "fitting" conclusion to Athens's involvement in Cyprus that the more traditional and moderate Cimon[7] died during Athens's last campaign there (112), a campaign which saw her get involved in Egypt *again*. This unfolding of events represents the clearest sign of how Athens's political moderation leads to political immoderation. But this seems to suggest that no effective restraint or no genuine limit imposed by moderation on Athenian conduct exists.

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[6] For a helpful discussion of Cimon's involvement in Cyprus see Unz (1986, 77). Unz's treatment of the chronological inaccuracies surrounding Cimon's engagement in Cyprus and Thucydides' deviation from such concerns serves to strengthen my argument regarding the thematic flow of the digression as a whole.
[7] For evidence of Cimon's pro-Spartan leanings see Kagan (1969, 60-1, 65); see also Plutarch's treatment of Cimon chapters, 15-18. Unz provides a helpful discussion of how Cimon's moderate, pro-Spartan stance effected his role in developing military policy in an Athens influenced by pro-democratic factions headed

Without due reflection on the importance of Cyprus, one might be led to conclude that Athens was drawn imperceptibly, through the dirty dealings of her confederates (e.g., Naxos and Thasos) and the betrayal of untrustworthy allies (e.g., Megara), to transform a league of free and equal members into a dominion ruled by her alone.[8] But as we have seen, such a reading abstracts from what is unique to Athens. It suggests that any city in Athens's place would be transformed from hegemon to imperial oppressor. Athens's Cyprian introduction into the Egyptian theater therefore suggests the proper reading of her gradual increase of control over revolted confederates (from Naxos 98; to Thasos100-1; to Euboea 114; and finally to Samos 115) and the growth of her enmity with Sparta.[9]

The circumstances surrounding the revolt of Thasos offer an excellent illustration of how Athens's necessary efforts to preserve the confederacy in the face of future Persian threats could seamlessly lead to increased military action abroad. At a time when Athens was still heavily engaged with the Persians, her confederate Thasos revolted. Athens attempted to quell the revolt (100). Consequently Thasos requested Spartan assistance. Sparta's promised aid was delayed by an earthquake and a subsequent Helot revolt (101). This led the Spartans to invite Athens to help, help the Spartans ultimately spurned (102). This insult to Athens (102) led to her alliance with Sparta's neighbor Argos (102 end) and provided the incentive for her interference with Megara (103). These conflicts provided the groundwork for Athens's later incursions into Spartan territory and her additional interference with Spartan satellites. The involvement with

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by Ephialtes and Pericles (1986, 76-7). Grene (1965, 45) notes that it was under Cimon's leadership that Athens "made the first definite annexations" to her empire.

[8] For such a defense, see the envoys' comments at I.75 end as well as their comparison with Sparta at 76.1, 77.6. To see the difficulties it poses for their understanding of Athenian worthiness, see my treatment of that speech.

[9] On the Athenian response to revolts and the transformation of the alliance into empire see Bruell (1981, 26).

Megara also was the source of Corinth's hostility towards Athens (103), one of the necessary conditions for the current war.

By themselves, these events could just as easily be read as accidental, as something that could happen to any city concerned merely with self-defense, as much as they could be read as evidence of Athens's inevitably imperial nature. What tips the scales in the favor of the latter reading is her involvement in Egypt and the death of Cimon. Thus in the case of Athens, chance offers the opportunity for her devotion to the noble to unfold - to transform herself from the just and noble guardian of Greece to an unjust and ignoble despot oppressing otherwise free and equal states. This conclusion supports the lessons learned from both the envoys' speech and the treatment of Themistocles, both of which suggest that a strict distinction between *justifiable* hegemony and *illegitimate* empire does not belong to Athens's understanding of the noble. As the line between the just and the unjust begins to blur, the existence of any divine or natural limit on the pursuit of one's self-interest seems to fade.

Thucydides' reference to Hellanicus at I.97 serves to highlight his manner of procedure in the Pentecontaetia. According to Gomme, Thucydides writes the Pentecontaetia partly to correct the chronological errors committed by Hellanicus in his *Atthis* (*Commentary*, 280). While this makes sense of what Thucydides *says*, it doesn't account for what Thucydides *does*. Thucydides' reference, coming as it does in the middle of a major digression (his first of two such digressions in Book I alone) cuts against his proclaimed interest in exact chronologies. [10] (One should also consider his

[10] Rood understands the criticism of Hellanicus' dating to be serious (1998, 236, fn. 42) and explains the difference between the two sections by claiming the first stresses the role of leaders and the second half stresses a collective role (1998, 230-1); see also Kallet-Marx (1993, 48, 59). On Thucydides' "inexact" chronology, see Hunter (1982, 44).

inexact chronological references at 113.1, 114.1, and 118.1 - and these just in the Pentecontaetia alone.) If we are not to assume artlessness on Thucydides' part here, then his stated intention to correct Hellanicus's errors, usually taken as a sign of Thucydides' interest in scientific history, serves as a rejection of scientific history.[11] The blurring of this distinction calls further attention to the blurring of the distinction between the birth of Athens's rule (which appears legitimate) and the continued growth of Athens's empire (which appears illegitimate). It does so by insisting on a distinction or shift in Thucydides' focus that does not exist in Thucydides' treatment. This "blurring" might explain how Athens can defend as just the very same actions that lead Sparta and her allies to cry foul without forcing the reader to claim that either side is insincere.

Such blurring suggests that the war takes place between cities which occupy two poles of a moral spectrum between which there is no unbridgeable gap, only the indiscernible shades of moral legitimacy. The existence of such imperceptible gradations speaks against the existence of distinct and universal moral categories, e.g., justice as such or injustice as such. The narrative's blurring of what appear in the speeches of political actors as fixed and distinct moral categories constitutes part of Thucydides' rejection of "scientific history" that his misplaced (or well-placed) reference to Hellanicus implies. Scientific history, or history as Hellanicus seems to have understood or endeavored to practice, seems to preserve such distinctions. Like the speeches about justice (see chapter 4, and the introduction to Part I above), the chronological approach to history (see chapter 2) corrupts or distorts what it seeks to preserve. Thucydides may

[11] See Strauss (1989, 78; 1964, 142). Commenting on this passage Bury notes that "Thucydides gives no absolute dates and very few chronological indications of any kind. It looks at first sight as if Hellanicus might have retorted on Thucydides that *he* had a curious notion of chronological precision" (1909, 105, emphasis mine).

have been compelled to employ his unique methods for relating the speeches and deeds in order to capture and reflect what scientific history corrupts and obscures.

If the narrative constitutes an important element of Thucydides' speech and if his speech is to surpass that of the poets and prose-writers in revealing the truth about the most ancient things, then how does all of this bear on Thucydides' approach to the question of the gods? One must consider the treatment of natural disasters in this section in light of his statement about the war's greatness and the sufferings inflicted by non-human disasters at I.23. The earthquake at Ithome (101) and the drought and famine at Cyprus (112) are interpreted differently by the Spartans and Athenians. Thucydides offers no direct comment on either interpretation. In their disastrous defeat in Egypt, the Athenians see the sea turned into land by the Persian general Megabazus (Megabazus drains the water away from the island where the Athenians docked, beaching their ships; 109). It is this "supernatural" turn of events that makes escape impossible. In the case of the Spartans, the earthquake at Ithome (110) led to a Helot revolt that lasted a decade. What appears to the Spartans to be the anger of the gods - a supernatural phenomenon inducing a lengthy and costly slave revolt - appears to Athens, in the case of her crushing military defeat, as the product of a wealthy, patient, and clever adversary. Perhaps such an experience, coupled with their desire for independence (see my discussion of "golden grasshoppers" (I.6.3) in 4.III.B.2.a), makes the Athenians more willing than the Spartans to consider that disasters - like *droughts* and famine - can be explained by something other than the vindictive character of the gods.[12] The blurring of moral categories on

[12] For a similar reading one should see Strauss (1974, 3 and 12 on "Thucydides' theology"). On the importance of "experience" see Strauss (ibid. 3). On a more general note, Strauss supplies in this essay a sustained treatment of the contributions that the speeches, reports of speeches and narrative make with

Thucydides' part suggests that he endorses the Athenians' view of the "supernatural." The question is whether he also endorses the conditions necessary to support the Athenians' desire for independence.[13]

Thucydides' treatment of the deeds, viewed in light of the problems revealed by reflection on the political speeches, offers us a picture of the world that is messy, not clear and distinct. It is a picture of a world that defies distinct or explicit treatments. His treatment of deeds throughout Book I reflects and confirms that he believes there is a broad spectrum of moral legitimacy. Such a spectrum seems out of line with the world implicitly hoped for by Themistocles and the envoys in their openness to the beautiful and the noble, a world that would support distinct and universal wholes. As such, his implicit questioning of the fixed or stable moral categories employed in the speeches allows us to adjust our "vision" so that we can see more clearly the picture of the world drawn in the narrative.

But what about other political categories that follow from the existence of some divine or natural restraint on the self-interested pursuit of goods? What happens to notions like friend or ally (someone who shares and helps defend that limit) and foe (someone who opposes and seeks to destroy that limit), or Greek (a regime that possesses such a limit) and barbarian (a regime that does not possess such a limit), or peace (where men voluntarily submit to such limits) and war (where men refuse to recognize the authority of or obey the demands issuing from such a limit), or victory (which makes one's superiority manifest) and defeat (which makes one's inferiority manifest)?

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respect to the question of the gods. For a different appreciation of the Egyptian disaster, see Kagan (1969, 191).

[13] For the "conditions necessary to support the Athenians' desire for independence" one should see my conclusion of chapter 4.III.B.2.a and b.

B. The Pentecontaetia and Book I: The Ambiguity of Political Categories

In the speeches before the Athenian assembly, Corinth frames Athens's potential alliance with Corcyra in terms of a violation of the 30-year treaty. Athens responds by forming only a defensive alliance. During the naval conflict off Sybota, Athens is compelled (49, end) by the blows suffered by the Corcyreans to engage the Corinthians. Thucydides refrains from stating that such a necessity constituted a violation of the treaty (see 56.1 "*es to polemein*"). Indeed, it is not even clear to the combatants. The day following their first engagement, the Corinthians and Athenians position themselves for additional hostilities. Thucydides tells us that the Corinthians thought the peace had been broken on account of their fight the previous day. The Corinthians, however, refused to engage the Athenians because they had received reinforcements and presumed the Athenians, since the peace was broken, would attack them. But even so, the Corinthians send to the Athenians men "without heralds" (53.1).[14] According to Greek military practice, the use of heralds indicates recognition and admission of open warfare (see I.146, II.1). This action suggests the Corinthians aren't completely certain the treaty had been broken. Or at least, it suggests that they don't want to admit to such open warfare. Thus while their speech to the Athenians is loud on Athenian injustice and the breaking of the peace, it also serves to bait the Athenians into a clearer violation of the treaty.[15] By not using heralds, the Corinthians can avoid the stain that comes from engaging in acts reserved for open warfare, while at the same time offering Athens an opportunity to commit an overt act against the law. In other words, the speech itself serves as a tacit

[14] See Rawlings's arguments on the use of heralds as a sign of open warfare (1981, 24, 27, 28, 29, 35).
[15] Compare, "Men of Athens, you do unjustly to begin the war and violate the articles" with, "if therefore you be resolved to hinder our going against Corcyra or whatsoever place else we please, *dissolve the peace*, and laying hands upon us first that are here, use us as enemies" (53, emphasis mine).

admission that Athens's defensive alliance and the hostilities that followed from such an alliance did not constitute a clear violation of the treaty.

Athens refuses to engage Corinth and denies the alleged injustice. Indeed, Corinth's "baiting" was possible precisely because the Athenians themselves sought to bait the Corinthians (52) into further hostilities. Thus, on both sides, the violation of the treaty and the breaking of the peace remain in question. In fact, the battle they waged captured this ambiguity insomuch as it was a fight at *sea* that assumed the character of a *land* battle (49). And the blurring effects of war can be so extreme that at times men can no longer distinguish friend from enemy (50). Even things like victory in battle, which one would hope to be decisive and clear since decisive victory (or defeat) means an end to hostilities, can be ambiguous ("By such judgments as follows, each side laid a claim to victory..."; "Thus each claimed victory"; 54.2). This becomes even more important when one considers that a decisive victory allows one to stay on the field of battle. This in turn allows one to collect the dead and discharge faithfully one's duties to the gods.

On these grounds, one could say Corinth had the victory, since Corinth recovered more dead (those Corcyra recovered, she recovered by chance). But what is victory if one fails to execute one's mission, as the Corinthians had failed (55; Corcyra keeps Epidmanus)? Moreover, the fact that one can collect more dead than one's opponent may merely be due to the fact that there are more of your dead to recover – i.e., the enemy killed more of yours than you did of his. And as Thucydides tells us, Corinth was able to collect as many of the dead as she did precisely because one of her wings had been routed and the Athenians had left the field of battle to give hot pursuit. This "victory" is thus predicated on a terrible blow to Corinth's naval interests. Consequently, the fulfillment of

her pious duties is made possible by great personal suffering. This is another way of phrasing the tension, discussed at length below, between the demands of piety (divine justice) and the demands of political necessity.

The ambiguous character of categories like "ally" or "enemy," "friend" or "foe" and again "just act" and "unjust act" is further reflected in the easy change of alliances recorded throughout Book I. Thus one sees Perdiccas, king of Macedonia, change his alliance from Athens to Sparta, a change itself precipitated by Athenian treachery to Perdiccas. This treachery of Athens was based on Perdiccas' brother's attempted coup (57; see 61 and 62). One should also note Megara's changes of alliance from Corinth to Athens (103; a move based on a conflict with Corinth over territory) and from Athens back to Corinth (114). Corinth herself threatens the Spartans that she will seek help from the traditional enemy of the Greeks (the Persians; 71 end), should the Spartans not come to her aid against Athens. Even Sparta, the first home of "Greekness," is not immune to such changes. During her siege of the Helots at Ithome, Sparta called for Athens's assistance in assaulting the walls of the town. But no sooner had the Athenian force arrived than the Spartans dismissed them, fearing they (whom "they esteemed a foreign race of men") might conspire with the besieged Helots against the Spartans (102).[16] Indeed, in their war against their fellow Greeks, this "liberator of Greece" demonstrates a willingness to seek the aid of the despised Persians (82). And of course, one must not forget the change from Athenian hegemony, which protected the confederates, into Athenian empire, which oppressed the confederates (for the power of necessity here see I.76-7).

These changes, it seems, are possible precisely because of the indistinct character of the common moral-political categories, a character rooted in the tension within the notion of justice as power discussed earlier. But such "changes" are not exclusive to international affairs. One will find similar tension and thus similar ambiguities within the city itself, especially in the relationship between cities and their statesmen (i.e. –"hero" or "traitor"). To this end, one should consider the circumstances surrounding the treason and death of the Spartan king Pausanias (95; 128-134).[17] One should also consider the Athenian demos' death sentence against Themistocles for suspected "Medizing" (135) and Themistocles' *subsequent* alliance with the Persian King (136-8).[18] There is also the effort by some Athenian citizens (perhaps members of the aristocracy or oligarchy interested in moderating Athens's imperialism and her militarism abroad) to invite the Spartan military into the city to overthrow Athenian democracy and demolish the long walls (107).[19] Finally, there are the tryannicides Harmodius and Aristogeiton (20)[20] and the Athenians' pollution of the temple of Athena (126).[21] Such changes in loyalty or devotion from ally to enemy, from friend to foe, from obedient citizens and faithful

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[16] De Ste. Croix notes that Thucydides' explanation of the Spartans' rude dismissal was "credible." But credible does not mean justifiable. De Ste. Croix seems to miss the incredible affront such a dismissal constitutes and how that must have poisoned Athenian-Spartan relations (1972, 179).

[17] Despite irrefutable evidence of his manifest guilt, the Spartiates delay the prosecution of Pausanias simply because he is a fellow Spartan and a King at that. Out of a profound concern for "due process" they put Greece into grave danger

[18] As we will see, Themistocles was (at least on the charge of treason) worthy of the Athenians' trust. His eventual alliance with the Great King is thus born out of self-preservation. That the demos may have had other, more reasonable grounds to suspect Themistocles' motives see chapter 4.III.A.3.c.

[19] While such actions seem undeniably traitorous, one must not forget that it was Athenian imperialism - made possible by both the democracy and the long walls - that brought on the war. As such it led to the abandonment of the city's gods, the desecration of holy places, the ravages of the plague and civil war and the ultimate destruction of the city.

[20] Though the tyrannicides are remembered as liberators of Athens, one must keep in mind that their actions were motivated by personal jealousies and not public-spiritedness (VI.54-60). Moreover, as Thucydides tells us later, this attempted coup facilitated the first Persian invasion. Finally, Thucydides notes that the tyranny ruled with wisdom and virtue, exercising a harsh rule only after the attempted coup.

statesman to criminals and turncoat - and the reasons behind such changes - reinforce our sense of the difficulty of classifying any deed as just simply or unjust simply.

One might be tempted to conclude that these changes are due to political necessity or to the conventional character of alliances. But even seemingly natural distinctions between peoples and races are no more secure. For instance, the distinction between Greeks and barbarians did not emerge until long after the Hellenic cities increased in power (I.3). This suggests that the Greeks were originally barbarians and may become barbarians yet again. The Spartans themselves trace their ancestry to the barbarian Pelops who came out of Asia and settled in Greece (I.9). And while the Athenians are considered Ionian, they are – as noted - at bottom a mix of blood lines since they originally built their city with the refugees accepted from throughout Greece (I.2). One finds a similar mix in Epidamnus' founding. Epidamnus' mother-city was Corcyra, but her founding captain, Phalius, hailed from Corinth – a Doric race. Phalius, however was a Heraklid and as such was Ionian (I.24).

Such commingling of bloodlines gets mirrored in Book I by the changes in the names of races as well as by the expulsion of entire peoples and the re-establishment of cities. Thus the Hellenic peoples originally received their name from the interaction between Hellen, ruler of Phtiotis, and those cities that asked for his help (I.3). Likewise, the Peloponnesus received its name from its barbarian benefactor (I.9). Of course, not all names were freely adopted by the inhabitants of a region; some were forced on them.[22] Thus the slave population of the Spartans – the Helots – *mostly* descended from the

[21] This is discussed below. For now one should note that the pollution of Athena's temple was the unintended consequence of the Athenians' effort to preserve the freedom of a city devoted to that very goddess.

Messenians. Messene was an ancient Greek *polis* that had once been free.[23] Incredibly, the inhabitants of this Greek city had been long enslaved by the supposed defenders of Greek liberty. Moreover, while the Helots were all called Messenian (I.101), they were not in fact all Messenian. This further proves that Sparta's claims that her slave population was native to Sparta and a permanent part of the regime are false.

One sees similar changes in Greek cities following the Trojan war. The Boeotians, upon returning from Ilium, expelled the inhabitants of the region of Cadmeis and renamed it after themselves (I.12). Later, the Dorians and the Herklidae invaded the Peloponnesus in order to settle there (I.12). This suggests that the original Peloponnesians were not Dorian. Because the Spartans *are* Dorian they are not simply or purely Peloponnesian. Moreover, prior to the Peloponnesian war, the Athenians relocated to Naupactus those Helots who had rebelled from Sparta and were spared. The original inhabitants of this city – the Naupactians -- had already been expelled by Athens (I.103). Finally, the expulsion of the Epidamnian demos by the city's nobles and the expulsion of the Epidamnian nobles by the city's demos served as a catalyst for the entire war (I.24-26; also note Corinth's establishment of garrisons there). All of these examples show the instability of seeming biological distinctions, the conventionality of one's "name" and the weakness of those roots that bind a people to their land, to the gods of their hearths and to the graves of their ancestors. They suggest, in other words, the weakness of the bonds between any present generation and its ancestral origins. The traits that traditionally constitute a people's identity, signifying who and what they "are," are changeable.

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[22] One should consider in this context Thucydides' use of *eknikesai* (I.3.2) and *eknenikekota* (I.21.1) - both cognates of *eknikeo* (to win by force or gain the upper hand) - to refer to how names and myths became prevalent.

[23] For an interesting discussion of this see de Ste. Croix (1973, 180).

The foregoing evidence from the narrative of Book I parallels Thucydides' presentation of the indiscernible moral shades informing the creation of the 30-year treaty and guiding its execution; shades pointed to by the speeches and illustrated by the narrative. This evidence finds its fitting capstone at the close of Book I. When Thucydides concludes his introduction to the *History*, he writes, "For these things that have happened were but a confusion [or "violation," *xugkesis*] of the articles [of the 30-year treaty] and cause of the war" (I.146, last sentence of Book I, brackets mine). As noted, our initial access to the ambiguities discussed above and to what allows the articles of the treaty to get confused, follows from the problematic character of justice expressed in the speeches and the concern for noble self-sufficiency that animates the speakers.

But in light of all of this "confusion," what happens to a category like "rest," which is the fruit of peace and characterizes the stable rule of law and the presence of justice, and thus reflects Greekness itself? And what happens to a category like "motion," which is the product of war and characterizes the disruption of laws and the common good, and thus reflects the absence of Greekness? Such questions become increasingly relevant when one considers that rest and stability are necessary components of the ground of human knowledge. For if the Greekness that defines justice and politics should be susceptible of blurring, such that the categories it helps to define (like friend-enemy, victory-defeat, peace-war, rest-motion) are obscured, then one must wonder whether anything can be surely grounded. In light of the preceding observations, one might think that motion, not rest, was predominant and consequently that everything that is is either in, or capable of being in, flux. But if this were true one could not even speak of a category "motion." Indeed, if everything is in, or capable of being in, flux, then there

would seem to be no way one could know anything with certainty – including the insight that everything is in or capable of being in flux. What does all of this mean for Thucydides' speech?

If the attempt to secure the goods belonging to superior natures depends on the existence of justice that supports such an attempt, and if their understanding of justice depends upon or requires the existence of a justice which does not issue in injustice, or which is identified by an absence of any unjust stain or blemish, then the preceding observations speak against the existence of justice in political life. The justice defining the Greek conception of politics is incompatible with "the world" as reflected in Thucydides' treatment of the deeds.[24] As noted at the outset of Part I of this chapter, the effort to become self-sufficient or whole is served by the belief in justice, which is itself served by political speech. Perhaps the truth about the political effort to overcome one's neediness, an effort characterized as the attempt to make fit what cannot be made to fit,[25] is that there is a kind of hopeless tension between speech and deed, and thus a tension between universal and particular. Since Thucydides' speech is a combination of particular deeds and universalizing speeches, his manner of procedure appears political or a reflection of the effectual truth about the politics.

One must wonder, however, if Thucydides is content merely to represent faithfully this tension in his speech (as White argues; 1984, 88-9, 91). If he does merely represent this tension and if his treatment of speeches and deeds shows that moral and political categories are not so fixed or stable, then perhaps there is no fixed or stable

[24] Rood, from a purely historical perspective, comes to a similar conclusion: "Thucydides' narrative (as much as his speeches) suggests how conflicts of thought between or within men may point to the same underlying facts and impulses" (1998, 128). On a more general need to consider speeches and deeds together, see Hornblower (1986, 66).

category "human nature." In that case, there could be no natural longings to which there are natural solutions. Perhaps Thucydides intends to draw a picture of such a world in order to show us the limits of what we can hope for in or expect from it; the Pentecontaetia, by sketching the immovable backdrop against which the aims of the speeches are to be measured, sketches the limits for human hopefulness. [26]

But if this is true, then the reader concerned with satisfying certain needs of his own must wonder why he should remain concerned with politics in general and with Thucydides' work on politics in particular.[27] Indeed, if there is no fixed "human nature" and if the strivings of politics and political men are bound to be frustrated by the "walls of the world," as it were, then one must wonder how Thucydides could understand his work to be a useful possession for all time. One could try to explain the utility of Thucydides' work in terms of its usefulness for individuals throughout time: individual readers may discover the *History's* teaching and, having learned it, put the work aside for future readers to study. The *History* would still be of use to such an audience. But such a reading doesn't seem to do full justice to what Thucydides promises.

This becomes clearer by considering the problem from a different angle. If the experiences of the Athenians are part of the human experience, such that they reveal something substantive about human beings as such, then the preceding observations would seem to permit us to judge the human concern for right as a tragic concern. But

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[25] See chapter 4.III.B.2.

[26] Rood concludes that Thucydides' narrative "suggests that our desire to make the world meet our concerns is dangerous...As we tell stories about ourselves, we try to make the world meet our concerns; Thucydides' story helps us come to terms with the world's reluctance" (1998, 293). Commenting on the Funeral Oration Euben notes that, "Pericles asks his countrymen to imagine Athens as an island and to act in the world in terms of what they imagine...Of course, their imagining is grounded in fact, and so the world remains some check on conception" (1986, 375). See also White (1984, 78-9).

while political right may not be supported by nature, does the preceding allow us to conclude that there is *nothing* right by nature? If that is true, then it is at least a question whether future readers should concern themselves with Thucydides' work. After all, there would be no significant difference – or no significant way to distinguish - between a life enlightened by such an insight and a life unenlightened by such an insight. If we grant the tragedy of the concern for right by conceding the primacy of deeds to speeches, then both politics (as the effort to satisfy the concerns from which the belief in justice arises) and political science (as the study of that effort) are in danger of receding in importance. The hopes and needs that the reader sought to clarify by turning to Thucydides' *History* hang in the balance.

II. The Importance of Politics to Self Knowledge

A. Introduction to Politics and Science

In chapter 4, I argued that Athenian exceptionalism allows us to come to a deeper understanding of human nature because the Athenian concern for power is a universal human concern. But the truth about Athenian exceptionalism and all that it revealed is limited, one might say, to political affairs alone. At most the truth about Athens is the truth about politics. Someone could reasonably object here that politics and the concerns of politics surely are not the whole of human life. Thus to address the questions raised above at the end of Part I, Thucydides must establish that his exclusively political focus supplies the sufficient basis for drawing conclusions about the character of the ancient past. One has to establish that as Greekness and the justice defining it goes, so too goes the categories of victory-defeat, friend-enemy, war-peace and so on. Some preliminary

[27] At this point, one has to wonder whether we can still speak of a category like "nature" or "the natural" - or even human nature - when discussing Thucydides' most considered judgment. I will take up this

observations on the relationship between politics and science will prepare the reader for my treatment of chapters 119-146.

To the extent that Thucydides' presentation of Athens and Athenian exceptionalism provides him with the means for solving the problem of political history -- uncovering the truth about the first things and thus the gods -- then Thucydides' focus on politics must be sufficient for revealing the truth about the whole of human life. Indeed, Thucydides can only claim that the insights made possible by his *History* are universal insights if his understanding of this particular political event provides insight into the whole of which humans are a part. By "whole" or the "whole of which we are a part," I refer to the human things – or what exists by human agency or causation (like the walls leading to the Peiraeus, or the ships that use the harbor) – as well as to the things that exist independent of human agency. This would include the physical world (like the three havens that make up the Peiraeus) as well as the non-physical world (like the laws governing the material world and the laws that govern the affairs of men, cities and gods). The non-human things also include those that exist solely in speech, like the categories that distinguish members of one group from members of another (like "cat" from "dog," or "motion" from "rest," "war" from "peace," "justice" from "injustice"). While these things come to light through human speech, they do not owe their existence to human speech alone. Thucydides' claim for the permanent utility of his work therefore must include a claim to insight into the fundamental truth of all of these things, and thus the things that came before humans - the first things, the oldest things, or the original causes of all things, physical and non-physical.

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question explicitly in chapter 6.

To some extent, this implication about the *History's* permanent utility has already been drawn out by my treatment of the problems raised in the preceding discussion and in my treatment of the archaeology. [28] Nevertheless it might help to restate here the connection between the question of the gods, the question about knowledge or science, and Thucydides' unremitting political focus. Any study of the lessons of political life must be based on some prior knowledge or awareness of what politics is or what is political. To the extent that what "is," and thus knowledge of what "is," is fixed and stable, then knowledge of politics depends on whether gods capable of changing what "is" exist. Consequently, the existence of political things, and thus the possibility of knowing those things, seems to depend on the answer to the question about the existence of the gods. The questions about politics and the possibility of political science are secondary to theological considerations.

If gods capable of changing what "is" exist, then all knowledge depends on their whim, which is to say that knowledge as such doesn't exist. One cannot know what an apple is, if an apple can at once be an apple and something other than an apple, which is to say one cannot know what an apple "is" if a god exists who can make it be at once an apple and not an apple. If such gods do not exist, knowledge of what "is" still faces certain obstacles. The ability to know what "is" may also face limitations imposed by nature or by chance. The conclusions drawn in chapter 4 and Part I of this chapter – that one cannot obtain knowledge of distinct wholes – point in this very direction. But in this case, knowing that such limits exist itself constitutes some decisive knowledge about the whole of which we are a part. This is already an advance over being forced to rely on the

[28] I.e. - to know that this war is the greatest, one must know the truth of all prior wars and thus the truth of the claims made about them, which means knowing the truth about first things, etc.

inscrutable will of god for both our "knowledge" about the world and the guidance necessary to solve the political problems we face everyday.

As we have seen, however, Thucydides' insights are tied to his approach to speeches about justice and injustice. This approach, in turn, is tied to his interest in the cause of the war, an interest raised by the awareness that what generates justice also generates injustice. Thucydides' approach implies that the question of the gods and their role in human affairs depends on or is governed by considerations about what men say is just and unjust. It implies that the question of the gods can only be answered in light of the insight that the question of justice is the initial cause of the clear truth being known. In order to answer the question of the gods, one must first possess the insight that the question of justice is the initial cause of "wisdom." Questions about politics then are primary, not secondary.

This seems to introduce a paradox. A god's power to make an apple at once "an apple" and "not an apple" (invalidating knowledge of what "apple" is) would seem to enhance the god's power and thus his authority. But the power to make what is just unjust (invalidating the knowledge of what is just) seems to detract from the god's goodness. For if justice is properly understood as the means to secure the goods that will satisfy our concerns for self-sufficiency, then the god's ability to invalidate knowledge of what is just would seem to have adverse effects on our ability to satisfy our deepest concerns. One would not be remiss by raising a question as to the goodness of a deity whose power adversely affects men's efforts to secure the goods they need. Of course, merely raising this question does not rule out the possibility of such a deity. And while men's concern for self-sufficiency might be satisfied by a providential god acting in accordance with

what he wills, it is a question as to whether such a satisfaction would also address the concern to possess goods in accordance with what we think we are worthy of or what we deserve. Would goods so distributed address our concern to know that we are in fact worthy of such goods? This "question" may seem irrelevant at first. After all, if a providential god distributes those gifts that will in fact satisfy our deepest concerns, then who cares if one gets them because one deserves them? And who cares if one cannot independently verify that such goods are "good"?

But at least according to Thucydides' presentation in the *History* – a presentation we find in his original sketch of the human posture towards goods and their possession and this sketch's subsequent development -- it seems that an indispensable part of a good's "goodness" stems from the fact that its possessor is worthy of it. According to his treatment (as we saw in chapters 3 and 4), possession of a good was understood both to establish one's goodness and to confirm a goodness (i.e., self-sufficiency) already present in the possessor. What made a good "good" was that it could make its possessor good and, further, could make such goodness evident. If the good fails to establish or confirm the goodness of the possessor (if the possessor is "bad" and thus unworthy or undeserving of such a good), then it is a question if that "good" can still be good for that person. Or, put differently, failure to distribute goods in accordance with one's worth, such that "bad" people get good things, makes one wonder if such people really are "bad." That is, it raises the question as to whether one can in fact know if someone is good or bad. Perhaps they are indeed worthy of this good, but we lack adequate access to their virtues and/or the appropriate standards of worthiness. And if the current standards by which men measure worthiness and deserving are insufficient, then on what rational basis can

men determine that the goods granted are in fact good? Of course, a "good's" failure to make the possessor's goodness manifest must raise doubts about the goodness of that object. If men cannot determine the "goodness" of goods for themselves -- by their own unassisted human reason -- then how can they know if they themselves are ever good?

In the light of these questions, it seems clear that the concern to be good must have as its corollary the concern to know that one is in fact good. After all, what is the point of being good if one does not know that one is good? What is the point of trying to satisfy such concerns if one is constantly under the belief that those same concerns remain unsatisfied? Thus, if we are persuaded by Thucydides' sketch of the origins of the human concern for goods, then the "goodness" of a good granted in such a way (i.e., independent of considerations of worthiness and thus independent of the knowledge that it and its possessor are good) must be questioned.

All of this means, from the perspective of one concerned with possessing goods, that the ability to acknowledge the goodness of a god rests with the god's "ability" to preserve and uphold what men take to be just. The god must not violate the possibility of knowing what is just. This means that all conduct of a god, to the extent that such a divine being is understood to be good, must conform to considerations of justice. And this means that the god's power and thus any decision to change what is must be governed by considerations of what is just. Is it just to change an apple to not an apple, or to change Greek to barbarian, victory to defeat, peace to war, or friend to foe? To the extent that anything is what it is, it is that thing on account of the confining power of justice. It owes being what it is to the form of right that governs and limits the gods' unlimited power and thus his actions. And this means that if justice as such cannot be

known, a justice distinct from injustice, then we cannot be certain of the confining power of justice. As such, everything that right might preserve is no longer secured. We can therefore no longer know with certainty what anything "is." One might wonder, however, if this doesn't re-open the possibility of the gods. Or is the existence of the gods also tied to the fate of knowing what "is"? [29]

The preceding considerations do not show that Thucydides thought such an approach to the question of the gods or of the first things, could persuade pious, god-fearing men (or any sensible person), simply by pointing to a possible tension between a god's power and a god's justice. [30] Nor do I mean to suggest that such observations constitute a "refutation" of the existence of god. Indeed, the faithful may hear these arguments and -- still overcome by the fear and awe of an all-powerful god who will be merciful to whom he will be merciful and vengeful to whom he will be vengeful -- keep their heads bowed in pious reverence. I offer the preceding considerations only in the hope of clarifying in advance the peculiar character of Thucydides' approach to the question of first things.

As we have seen, Thucydides' approach to uncovering the truth about the first things is dictated by his interest in preserving the possibility of a genuine engagement

[29] If there is a connection between the question of the gods and the fate of the science of "what is," then there would seem to be a connection between the possibility of political science and the rejection of the science of "what is." This opens the way for the radical conclusion that the quest for wisdom about both men and politics requires that there be neither gods to change such wisdom on whim nor a permanent, fixed, eternal nature to support or make possible such wisdom. Such a conclusion should significantly revise our expectations of the wisdom we hope to obtain.

[30] One might object that Thucydides, by framing the issue as he does and by manipulating the reader's concerns, has "fiddled" with the question of the gods and the first things and has therefore obscured a full-confrontation with the question regarding the existence of the gods and the first things. I think such an objection is certainly sensible. But it may be that such an approach is the only way he thought he could present the matter that was consistent with our concern to know the goods we possess are genuine. The "other shoe" that we must wait to drop regards the status of such a concern. Are such concerns the most primary, fundamental, and authoritative guides to understanding the human condition? This will be addressed in chapter 6.

with and study of political life. To this end, he must be able to provide the grounds of knowledge on which the science of politics can rest. And it seems Thucydides is able to articulate these grounds by framing the question about the first things and the gods in a particular way. As the treatment of the archaeology tried to show and as the following on chapters 119-146 will argue, he engages the reader's concern to overcome his needs and become self-sufficient. The best way to do this is to show how theological considerations are subject to one's notions of justice. These notions of justice will be further subjected to the reader's concern to address his deepest needs and thus the inseparable concern to know that those needs have been addressed. Thucydides will thus manipulate the reader's posture towards the question in such a way that the reader will subject his own approach to the question of the gods to his considerations of what is just. In the wake of this very brief introduction to Thucydides' approach to the theological question, we can turn to chapters 119-146.

1. Chapters 119-146

That the answers to the theological question and the possibility of knowledge are subject to an investigation of justice as power is by no means self-evident. Moreover, the relationship between what the actors of the *History* understand justice to be and what they believe about the gods is addressed most completely in the rest of the *History*. Nevertheless, to be confident that Thucydides' focus on the particular Greek conception of justice offers us access to the "clear truth" about the ancient past, Thucydides must establish that certain articulations of justice represent the necessary condition for political science. And to do this he needs to establish that the religious convictions of the *History's* actors are in fact subject to what men think is just or unjust. We can begin to see

Thucydides' subjection of the theological question to the political horizon by investigating chapters 119-146. These chapters establish why his unremittingly political focus is sufficient for providing us access to the clear truth about the ancient past, which would include the truth about the first things and thus the gods.

We can study these chapters as a distinct part of Book I for the same reason we can approach chapters 1-23, or chapters 23-87, or 88-118, or even 23-118 as distinct units of Book I – they deal with a distinct subject matter. The first 23 chapters are set apart from the rest of Book I because they contain Thucydides' account of the most ancient times and his statements of method. Their subject matter does not deal with the war or its causes. Chapters 24-87 address the publicly alleged (though least true) causes of the war. Chapters 88-118 (the Pentecontaetia) expressly deal with the 50 years leading up to the war and thus the truest cause (though least apparent in speech). As far as chapters 23-118 are concerned, Thucydides' bookend references to the truest cause of the war (I.23 end and 118 end) serve as the first indication that one can treat these chapters as a unit. But more importantly, these chapters taken together help the reader sort out the ambiguity concerning the truest cause of the war introduced by Thucydides' statements at I.23.5-6. So while he treats the alleged causes at length (24-88), he does not treat them as mere allegations or pretenses. He gives them pride of place; they are of primary importance in understanding the war's truest cause. And, as we saw in chapter 4, Thucydides' turn to the Pentecontaetia, as a treatment of the truest cause, is meant to answer questions about political power raised in the earlier chapters on the alleged causes. Because the questions raised in 24-87 are answered in 88-118, it is reasonable to treat these sections together.

This means that the relationship between the true cause and alleged causes remains an open question until after chapter 118. [31]

From 119 through 146, the allegations of the Spartans and the counter-allegations of the Athenians are explicitly treated as secondary considerations. They are adduced by the Spartans to supply further public justification for their war; the decision to wage war and thus the decision regarding its justness have already been made (126.1, 127). They therefore cannot reasonably be construed as part of the treatment of the truest causes. Moreover, these chapters cover the alleged violations of sacral law. In light of Thucydides' explicit comments about the causes of the war and his treatment of those causes, it seems implausible that the violations of sacral law alone, should constitute sufficient grounds for war here.[32] They cannot be considered as such. What it means to treat Sparta's concerns with violations of sacral law as secondary, or as additional support for a matter whose justice has already been decided, remains to be seen.

This section (chapters 119-146) begins and ends with a speech. In between Thucydides discusses the fates of Cylon, Pausanias and Themistocles, a discussion introduced by accusations of violations of sacral law. At first glance, the theme of this "third" section of Book I appears to be the pollution of sacral law. But this impression is the result of Thucydides' digression (126-138). The distinctive character and importance

[31] After chapter 118, Thucydides confidently treats Spartan recourse to sacral law as *further* justification for going to war, as distinct from the truest cause. The only way he can do this without possessing direct or unimpeded access to their thoughts or motives is if he had already satisfied to his liking the question of true cause (versus the alleged causes). Such satisfaction must have occurred somewhere between I.23.6, where the question of causes is introduced, and the end of 118, where Thucydides no longer speaks of the truest cause.

[32] This is another way of considering how only through speeches about justice and injustice, and not considerations of piety and impiety, we can access the grounds of wisdom. On my treatment of "pretext" here see the distinction between "openly vowed causes" and those meant to "strengthen the openly avowed causes" in Strauss (1964, 180).

of this third section to Book I as a whole emerges more clearly if one begins by considering the speeches with which it begins and ends.

Consideration of the chronological sequence of the Peloponnesians' actions in Book I supports this approach. In their first speech at Sparta (68-71), the Corinthians urge the Spartans to declare war. The Spartans debate (79-87). As a result of this debate, they declare that the peace is broken and that the Athenians are guilty of breaking the treaty (88, 118). The Spartans then ask the Delphic oracle if they will have the better of it in the coming conflict. The god appears to endorse the justice of their cause and unambiguously sides with the Spartans (118). The Spartans call together all of their confederates for the official declaration of war (119). The Corinthians deliver their second speech before the Spartans, this time urging the prompt execution of the war (120-4). War is (finally) declared (125). The Spartans then level charges of violations of sacral law against the Athenians to justify their cause further and to create dissension within Athens (126-7). The Athenians respond with their own charges concerning <u>two</u> religious pollutions (128). The Spartans confront the Athenians with new demands – this time dropping the charges of impiety altogether (139). Pericles delivers his response to these demands to the Athenians (140-5). He counsels them to resist Sparta at all costs, to prepare for the inevitable war and in the meantime to resolve matters through arbitration in order to avoid violating the treaty. The demands made by Sparta that elicit Pericles' reply follow from the Corinthians' urging as much as they follow from the Spartan's concerns with sacral law. Pericles thus seems to respond to Corinth as much as he responds to Sparta. After Pericles' speech, Thucydides concludes Book I (146).

If one reads the Corinthians' third speech and Pericles' first speech together, one notices that they form a pair, each seems to respond to the other, point by point. [33] This is not to say that the Corinthians understood themselves to be speaking ultimately to Pericles, or that Pericles had a draft of the Corinthians' speech before him. Such factual considerations are beside the point. What is of interest is the basis of each speaker's respective position; what is of interest is the foundation of their point, counter-point. Looking at these chapters while abstracting from Thucydides' digressions, one notes a movement that is otherwise obscured by his interruption of Sparta's concerns with sacral law (or even by the Pentecontaetia). Corinth is aggressive, pleading, and quick to war. She cannot urge Sparta enough to take the war to Athens with due speed. Pericles remains cool, calm, defiant and resolved to stand fast. Athens will remain on an even keel. She will pursue arbitration and will confidently prepare for the coming war. Corinth wants to overtake Athens while Athens, a city of constant motion, remains unmoved. Corinth and Sparta (urged by Corinth) push. Periclean Athens does not budge.

It would be a mistake to conclude that this "third" section is about Athens and Sparta, or the Athenian character, as embodied in Themistocles, and the Spartan character, as embodied in Pausanias. The movement that characterizes this section (or which culminates in this section)[34] is between Corinth and Pericles (or Periclean Athens). Even after the Corinthians' speech, the Spartans seem as immobile as ever.[35] And despite

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[33] For understanding these speeches as a pair see Romilly's discussion (1963, 30). Hornblower notes that Pericles' speech speaks to the Corinthians' speech (1991, 119) as much as it speaks to Archidamus' speech (228). See also Connor (1984, 49 and fn. 58 especially (for Pericles and the Corinthians) and 50 (for Pericles and Archidamus)). See Cogan (1981, 33) and Dover (1973, 26).

[34] The hostility between Athens and Corinth is a long-standing one, at least from the side of Corinth. See I.104 end. See also de Ste. Croix (1973, Part VI.i-ii).

[35] De Ste. Croix (1972, 205-10) argues emphatically that Sparta, much like Corinth, is eager for the war and ready to fight. If this is true, then why does Corinth need to broach the subject to the Spartans and to egg them on even after they have declared war? And why does it take the Spartans so long to declare war after

all of their talk, by the end of Book I the Spartans have yet to invade Attica. If it is the case that the digression about three individuals bears on the movement presented in the two speeches, then it should bear on that movement as a movement from Corinth's position to Pericles' position.

The speeches of the Corinthians and Pericles, properly understood, represent two different attempts at grounding prudent political counsel. The second represents a more consistent or more plausible articulation of what the first one attempts. It shows what one must appeal to if one wants to justify rationally one's policies to one's audience. What then of the digression on sacral law? The digression explains why Pericles' position in the concluding speech is necessary, while expanding on what is at stake in the differences between the two speeches. Specifically, the digression establishes the importance of a particular type of political regime to the individual's concern to know that the goods one seeks through political life and which are the matter of political counsel are in fact good for one. By doing so it shows how theological considerations are necessarily drawn into the orbit of political considerations.

B. From the Corinthians' Third Speech to Pericles' First Speech

1. The Speech of the Corinthians (120-124)

Both the speech of the Corinthians to the Peloponnesians and the speech of Pericles to the Athenians attempt to explain why their side has reasons to be confident in victory in the coming conflict. Each speaker also seeks to temper in their respective audiences the hopes, fears and excessive pride that can arise during war, and that can be easily dashed by unforeseeable turns of events. The Corinthians urge the Spartans to

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they have declared the treaty a dead letter? And why do they proceed with such caution, searching for additional pretexts to justify their actions?

undertake a speedy invasion of Attica and to punish promptly Athenian injustice. They do so by trying to arouse fear in the Spartans. (Despite the Spartans' reputation for bravery, this attempt by Corinth isn't unreasonable. It was fear, after all, that compelled Sparta to declare war; I.23.6.) The Corinthian speakers, in the first place, emphasize that the Spartans (and the Peloponnesians generally) risk losing through their present ease, the very leisure their previous labor won for them. Thus they open by emphasizing the commodities and comforts the continental powers risk by not undertaking the war. They conclude this introduction by noting that "For he who hesitates on account of pleasure, if he should remain quiet, will most quickly lose the delight of that leisure on account of which he hesitated" (120). Later they state that "it is necessary to labor yet more for the future by coming to the aid of the present....and do not overthrow the custom, if you are now a little advanced in wealth and power (for it is not just that what was by poverty established should by abundance be destroyed" (123). Finally they conclude by stating "cast your votes for war, and do not fear the present danger but rather desire the peace which, from this war, will be long. For from war the peace will be made more secure, while not to make war out of leisure is not similarly to be without danger" (124).

To preserve the peace and to keep the commodities and leisure they currently enjoy, the confederates must willingly assume the dangerous task and voluntarily undergo the risks and sacrifices demanded by war. Of course, one might wonder if the Corinthians, judging from the passages cited, ever conceive of a time when a people can enjoy the leisure their labor produced. Or must they always remain moderate, hardened, and ever mindful of the pitfalls of ease and luxury? If so, then where is that leisure they

worked so hard to secure? Their efforts would seem pointless if they could never enjoy the fruits of their labor.

What is clear is that the Corinthians appeal to the Spartans' fear of losing what they fought so hard to win. Despite their emphasis on fear, the Corinthians are not simply pessimistic. Indeed, when compared to the speech of the Spartan king Archidamus delivered earlier in Book I, the Corinthians' speech appears remarkably optimistic. As they claim in closing, the Peloponnesians' prosecution of the war will be "good in every way" (124). But on what then do they base their optimism concerning the coming war? That is, how will they overcome the fear of losing through ease what they won through labor? Perhaps their optimism follows from the lure of the profit that such a war holds. After all, the Peloponnesian confederacy has more men (121.2) and they are all of one mind (121.2), whereas the Athenians rely on bitter confederates to contribute money and unreliable mercenaries to man their navy (121.3); the Peloponnesians can instigate revolutions within the Athenian empire; they can invade Attica (122.1); and they can rely on the fear of some and desire for profit of others to help them in their efforts (123.2).

But as the Corinthians note, war is a chancey business (122.1) and no amount of material resources can overcome chance. Indeed, it is precisely such resources that are most vulnerable to its vagaries. Storms wipe out navies, plagues devastate armies, unforeseen military disasters strain public funds, fear of Athens and indifference to Sparta prevent others from helping or revolting. Moreover, invasions of Attica can stretch an army too thin. And the very effectiveness of such a strategy itself depends on the failure of Athens's maritime prowess from which that city derives many of its goods. If the Peloponnesians are not to rely on chance, then perhaps they can rely on the over

zealousness of the Athenians. But the Corinthians warn that they should not count on the oversights of their enemy. After all, this amounts to contempt for the enemy and, as the Corinthians note, contempt leads to foolishness (as well as carelessness and cowardice) and foolishness to defeat (122.4).

Perhaps the Peloponnesians can rely on the Delphic oracle's prophecy that they should undertake the war because Athens unjustly broke the treaty and the god will be on their side whether called or not (123.1, see the original prophecy at 118). But here the Corinthians misinterpret the oracle, which only claims with certainty that the god will support the Spartans (not necessarily the Peloponnesians as a whole). Whether the Spartans will in fact win, or whether their cause is in fact just, the oracle does not say. It is thus entirely consistent with the oracle's prophecy that the god will be on the Spartans' side and yet the Spartan cause may be both unjust and defeated.[36]

It seems the Corinthians will have to rely on their wits to foresee events as much as possible, thereby anticipating the fluctuations of chance (120.5). But deliberation, which at first blush seems to be the means necessary to overcome ungrounded confidence or the vagaries of chance, will itself be insufficient. For not only does chance govern the course of events in war, but it is fear (*deos*), not ignorance or poorly devised plans, that causes one to fail in war (120.5). In fact, even now, the Corinthians call for hasty action – a speedy invasion of Attica and the relief of the siege at Potidaea (124). Sound deliberation, in contrast, takes time. Indeed, it would seem to require a great deal of time when one considers that it will be the Spartans, notoriously slow deliberators, who will

[36] The Delphic oracle informed the Spartans that if they should war with their strength (*kata kratos polemousi*; 118.3; note, this is not power, or *dunamis*) they would be victorious. In addition, the god would be on their side whether they invoked his authority or not. See the comma and "*kai*" at "*esesthai, kai autos*"; any way one construes the *kai* here, it still separates the two parts of the reported statement.

conduct such deliberation. It may be that the Corinthians hope to supply through their speech the counsel necessary to overcome the fear they excite. And this leads us to ask again, "On what do they base the soundness of their advice?" On what then can the Spartans and the Peloponnesians rely to preserve the ease they fought so hard to secure?

According to the Corinthians, what is most important for success of the Peloponnesian cause is the bravery or goodness (*agathon*) of the Peloponnesians' nature (121.4), a nature that allows them to stand fast in the face of uncertainties and to remain resolute in the face of danger. Not wisdom or foresight, but unwavering and unimpassioned courage will allow them to meet the curve balls that war will throw their way. It is the brave nature (*agathon phusei*; or good nature or good because brave), unique to the Peloponnesians, that provides the bedrock for their confidence in the coming war. It is this alone which the Peloponnesians possess and which the Athenians can never attain. But why should the Corinthians' appeal to this nature prove so compelling?

Even as the Corinthians try to ground their confederates' confidence, they again manipulate their audience's fear. They argue that if the Peloponnesians do not remain steadfast in the coming conflict, if they do not fix their courage to the sticking place, they will allow the Athenians to establish a tyranny over Greece. And this means that they will be forced to concede to Athens her superiority (122). After all, the Peloponnesians' good nature was established by their ancestors' past valor in defeating Persia and in deposing tyrants. Their present valor consists in preventing Athenian tyranny (122). Should they fail they will have to admit openly that they are inferior both to their enemies and to their ancestors. Instead of appealing to some external standard applicable to all men alike – to

inhabitants of Attica as well as to those living on the Peloponnesus - the Corinthians appeal to the special legacy established by their forefathers and passed down by blood; they appeal to what makes the Peloponnesians uniquely Peloponnesian. By not living up to that character dispensed to them by nature, they will fail to live up to their special legacy as the guardians of Greek freedom. They will have to concede that they are by nature inferior.

The threat posed by Athenian tyranny (which the Corinthians resort to twice, once in the central part of their speech and again in closing; 124) is a threat to the Peloponnesians' meritorious nature. This merit is what makes them, as the inhabitants of the Peloponnesus, who they are. This is why the Athenians can never attain such valor. As inhabitants of Attica and Ionians by blood, they can never assume that legacy of courage bestowed on all Peloponnesians. The threat of Athenian tyranny then is really a threat to the Peloponnesians' identification of goodness with what is their own. The persuasive power of the Corinthians' speech rests in its appeal to the Peloponnesians' fear (see *deinon toe akousai,* 122.2) of admitting that what is one's own is not good. Of course, one might wonder how one can judge the superior merit of the unique Peloponnesian nature when its goodness is utterly contingent, when its goodness consists in its being the special preserve of these Dorians. If one cannot judge this merit independently and see its grounds for one's self, then it seems less likely that the Corinthians' audience will be able to share enthusiastically in the their confidence and optimism. As Thucydides quietly notes, not all of the confederates assembled voted for war against Athens (see *to plethos* at 125.1).

1.a. Archidamus' Speech (80-85)

That an appeal to the identification of what is good with one's own would affect the Spartans especially can be seen in Book I from the speech of the Spartan king Archidamus. But Archidamus' speech also serves to distinguish the Corinthians from the Spartans. The differences between the two emerge in the first place in their views of the conflict. According to the Corinthians, war is inevitable and therefore necessary. Athens has broken the treaty, has attacked her interests in Corcyra, has openly fought with her over Epidamnus, and has besieged her former confederate in Potidaea. The treaty has thus been broken. War must be waged and waged quickly if the Peloponnesians are to uphold the treaty and their interests. Archidamus, possessing a reputation for wisdom and modesty (79), counsels caution not haste. This is partly because he is less certain than the Corinthians that right is on the side of Sparta and her confederates. The Athenians, after all, have offered arbitration to resolve the disputes (85). And while the Corinthians are sanguine about the probability of success, Archidamus is much more sober. He does not think the Athenians are likely to be vanquished after a single naval defeat or that the war will be a short one.

Archidamus is not a coward. Nor is he a simpleton. Indeed, at first blush, the speech of Archidamus seems a perfect example of how a statesman's political prudence can complement his concern with right. According to him, it is not enough to be in the right in order to undertake a war against Athens.[37] Sparta must also possess the means to prosecute the war successfully. How would it serve the cause of justice for the defenders of the treaty and the guarantors of men's oaths to the gods to pursue justice rashly,

[37] According to Sthenelaidas, it *is* enough to be in the right to wage war, even if one lacks the sufficient funds to prosecute the war effectively (86). Although, one must not conclude from this that the ephor argues solely from justice. He also appeals to expediency when he notes the need to preserve their allies whom Athens is currently injuring (86.3). See Orwin (1994, 58).

unprepared and outgunned, getting themselves killed in the process? Of course, mere possession of the necessary means to defeat Athens is not sufficient either. One also needs to have justice on one's side. It would be excessively Machiavellian for the Spartans to claim that might makes right. Thus, according to Archidamus, one must prepare for war all the while adducing the necessary justifications for waging the war on as legitimate a ground as possible. Only after it is established (though not necessarily by the Spartans) that right and good sense are on their side should the Spartans undertake the war. Such a marriage of principle and prudence seems quite sophisticated, even more so for a Spartan. Perhaps it is too sophisticated. Such sophistication may be a large reason why Archidamus' counsel is, for the most part, rejected.

Perhaps the most telling difference, however, between the appeals of the Spartan king and the Corinthian embassy can be located at the point at which the two appear most similar. The Corinthians base the good sense of their call for a speedy invasion of Attica on their assessment of the unique quality of the Peloponnesians' nature. The Peloponnesians' surpassing natures make the war right (since they must fight it to preserve their honor) and should supply the key to their success (since their bravery is best suited to overcome chance). In a similar fashion, Archidamus' audience can rest their confidence in the outcome of the war with Athens on the same basis that they can trust in the wisdom of his guidance (84). The Spartans' capacity to be both good warriors and good counselors follows from the orderliness (*eukosmon*) imposed upon them by the laws (84.3). But they do not know or see the wisdom of the laws for themselves. The Spartans' courageous spirit (*eupsuxia*) follows from a sense of shame that comes from a moderation instilled by the law, while their good judgment, far from making them able to

see for themselves, consists in surrendering independent thought to the law (they can never be wiser than the laws). The very inability of a Spartan citizen to justify the goodness of the laws for himself seems itself to be a mark of the superiority of Sparta's laws.

As far as Archidamus is concerned these laws deserve obedience because they improve decisively on nature, making the citizens subject to the necessities the laws impose the best (or best because strongest: *kratiston*; 84.4). The Spartan regime is the source of Spartan greatness. If they should now, as the Corinthians note, assume a leisurely manner, they will lose through ease or leisure what they won through labor. This means they will forego the means to their honor; they will forego their regime. Now the virtue of being best seems to consist in the ability of the Spartiates to obey what the law commands in war and in peace – to be both good counselors and good warriors. If we reflect on this, the circular nature of the Spartan understanding of their regime begins to come into focus. The regime's greatness consists in producing those who are the best. It does this so that such men can endure the harshest necessities. And they need to be able to endure these necessities – they need to be the best - so they can defend and uphold the regime. And the regime needs to be preserved because of its greatness: it produces men who are best, who can help defend and uphold the regime's greatness, and so on. (For a similar circularity, consider the Corinthians' call to remain ever vigilant, discussed above.)

Archidamus thus possesses no way - aside from the fact that these institutions are "their own" - to justify the superiority of Sparta's institutions. The standard to which he appeals in order to judge all men -- Spartans and Athenians alike -- depends decisively on

the assumption that the Spartan regime is best because it is Spartan. But this assumption appeals and applies to only Spartans. It is just such an appeal to the love of "their own" with which Archidamus closes his speech (85.1). But if his standard is peculiarly Spartan, how can one be sure that the policies he advocates are indeed sound, just or good?

To restate, according to Archidamus, the Spartan "nature" is not something that is given to them by nature. The Spartans' superior goodness is the product of laws and institutions that are given them by particular lawgivers (like Lycurgus). It goes without saying that the Spartans think that their contingent and particular institutions are the true institutions -- that they are the best institutions for any city to possess. As we have seen, the Spartans offer no basis for others to see or to judge the wisdom of their laws. This perhaps explains why, according to Thucydides, Archidamus possesses only a *reputation* for wisdom and not wisdom itself.[38] If Archidamus is wise, then his wisdom, by his own account, must be the product of the regime's education. Like all good Spartans, Archidamus must never question the laws or try to "see over" them (*uperopsias*; 84.3). Therefore, his wisdom, to the extent that it is wisdom, rests on the wisdom of the particular laws and institutions of Sparta. But the wisdom of those institutions rests on the belief that they are divinely inspired. Lycurgus, while in Crete, reportedly got them from

[38] Saxonhouse (1978, 465) takes Thucydides' qualified praise of Archidamus as unqualified. But Archidamus' wisdom appears even more questionable when one considers that it is the Spartan ephor, Sthenelaidas, who effectively manipulates the Spartans' sense of shame and valor of which Archidamus speaks. After the debate, the ephor puts the decision to war to a vote by voice. Though the original vote appeared in his favor, the ephor called for a visible separation of the "Ays" from the "Nays." The result was a much larger *visible* margin of victory for his counsel. This ploy eliminates any anonymity provided by the voice vote. The ephor thus strengthens his position by manipulating their shame. He not only forces the assembly to recognize the clear decision they made, but he also forces those who disagree with his counsel to make their disagreement *publicly manifest* and thus risk the stain of cowardice – a deadly sin in the Spartan regime. The result, it seems, was that some of those who disagreed by voice now visibly stood with Sthenelaidas (see *kai pollo pleious egenonto*; 87.3). Kagan (1969, 305) presents a similar explanation but does not account for the ephor's manipulation of shame. Cogan sees the vote as overwhelmingly against Archidamus and thus misses the difference between the two votes (1981, 21, 32).

Minos, who reportedly got them from Zeus.[39] But to possess wisdom, the Spartan king must be able to make his wisdom evident to others (contrast Archidamus' reputation with Thucydides' praise of Themistocles at 138.2; Themistocles can make his wisdom apparent: *phainesthai*). Otherwise his wisdom and the goodness of the practical counsel that follows from it can only be reputed.

While both Archidamus and the Corinthians try to solve the matter of prudential policy by invoking the authority of the particular, the latter's speech appeals to the goodness of the given Peloponnesian natures and not the contingent Spartan institutions. The Corinthians may be compelled to invoke the special nature of the Peloponnesians as Peloponnesians (and thus what belongs to Megareans as well as Spartans, Aeginetans as well as Corinthians) because they face an "international" audience. If they hope to be persuasive, they cannot appeal to the unique status of Spartan institutions or Corinthian institutions as the grounds for the confederacy's confidence in the coming war. They have to appeal to something that is common to all of the members of their audience.

Archidamus does not face this problem because all of the members of his audience are Spartans. Prior to his speech the Spartans sent out both the envoys and all the aggrieved confederates. He is therefore never compelled to justify the superiority of particular or contingent Spartan institutions before a non-Spartan and especially an Athenian audience. When the Spartans come before the Athenians they make demands (139); they do not seek to persuade. But by invoking nature, or what is common to them as Peloponnesians or Dorians by blood, the Corinthians point to a standard of human nature that should apply to all men.

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[39] It deserves noting that Thucydides never addresses Lycurgus' contributions to the Spartan regime. Thucydides ignores the story about the divinely inspired laws of Sparta. He only tells us about Minos the

One has to wonder then if the Corinthians can consistently exclude the Athenians on this basis. Can they consistently maintain the privileged status of the particular Peloponnesian character if they are going to do so in terms of nature? After all, the resort to nature would instead compel them to consider what is good or best for all men regardless of one's particular or contingent circumstances – apart from one's city, one's culture, one's family, or one's gods. It would also compel them to admit that the goodness of devotion to such a limit is accessible to all men (through reason or experience). Otherwise, one would have to again resort to "privileged access." Thus while the Peloponnesian way of life may be most conducive to securing what is best for men, this would not mean that an Athenian citizen – or even a barbarian subject of the Great King - if raised under the same conditions could not secure what is best for him as a human being. And yet this is a conclusion both the Corinthians and Archidamus reject.

2. Pericles' Speech (140-144)

Pericles' speech is preceded by a series of demands by the Spartans, all of which he defiantly rejects. The Spartans, in effect, command Athens to relieve the siege against Potidaea, lift the Megarean decree, and liberate their confederates (139). They call for nothing less than the dismantling of the Athenian empire and the retreat of Athens within her own walls. The power of Sparta's claims rests entirely on Sparta's authority as the guardians of Greek freedom, as defenders of the common good of all Greeks. What the Corinthians, and more particularly the Spartans, seem to accept as a matter of course, Pericles refuses to accept. Pericles' refusal and the soundness of his practical counsel to the Athenians is part and parcel of his concern to preserve Athenian independence. On

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imperialistic pirate, Pelops the barabrian, Atreus the fratricide and Agamemnon the warlord.

what does Pericles rest the goodness of his advice, on what does he rest the goodness of Athenian independence?

Pericles is not content to ground his advice on the Athenians' wealth (141.5; see also 142.1), on the disunity of their enemies (141.6), on the necessity of the war (144.3), on the defeat of regional enemies who seek to "enslave" them (140.2 –141.2), or even on the fact that the law is on their side (140.2; 144.2). At the close of his speech, Pericles appeals to the Athenians' love of honor. He states that "out of the greatest dangers, whether to cities or to private men, arise the greatest honors" (144 end). To win such honors, the Athenians need that judgment (*gnome*) and daring (*tolme*) that allowed their ancestors to resist the slavery of the Persian. The judgment and daring of their ancestors were the means to procure the ends of Athens's independence and empire. And can such goods possibly be questioned? Who, of those who experience them firsthand, could possibly doubt the goodness of freedom and empire?

If one conducts a point by point analysis of the Corinthians' third speech and Pericles' first speech, one will notice a point at which the parallelism falters in Pericles' speech. Pericles never appeals to the unique or contingent goodness of the Athenians' natures. Instead of resorting to anything particular or unique to them as Athenians, he exhorts the Athenians to find their confidence for the coming war in the self-sufficiency provided by their naval power (the "vessel" so to speak of Athenian daring and judgment).[40] It is on account of such power that they are currently liberated from

[40] Pericles never asserts that naval matters are the special or contingent preserve of Athenians. The Spartans could, with time, effort, and money, gain the requisite experience. That they won't is not due to their inferior natures, but rather to their particular political arrangements and attachment to the land. For Pericles, skill (*techne*) not the regime makes one steadfast. Consider the consequence of his statements from 142.4-9.

depending on their land or their houses.[41] Thus while these means should fill them with confidence in the coming war, the Athenians should be inspired to undertake the war by the freedom and self-sufficiency that their daring and judgment, chiefly manifested in their fleet, have won for them. The desirability of such ends grounds the goodness of Pericles' counsel. To restate, the goodness of Pericles' advice and the advantageousness of the ancestors' judgment and daring follows from the manifest or nearly manifest goodness of what the Athenians' ancestors handed down – an inheritance of liberty and self-determination. Far from relying on reputation, Pericles points to what men can see or experience for themselves as men (i.e., not as the particular inheritors of a special legacy or inhabitants of a special region).

If such inheritance is good, then its goodness is based on what is good for the Athenians as men. The political goods of freedom and self-sufficiency therefore seem to represent genuine human goods.[42] But this is saying nothing more than Pericles is aware of what is implied in the Greek invention of politics. The question becomes, however, whether the goodness of the Athenians' freedom and empire is so evident. After all these very goods lead them into war with Sparta. Is the goodness of Athenian freedom and empire so self-evident to his fellow Athenians that Pericles does not need to prove that it is worth dying to preserve them?

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[41] The force of Pericles' comments in this respect is striking. He states "if they advance into our land by foot, we shall sail into their land. And it will not be equal to advance into all of Attica as to invade a part of the Peloponnesus, for they do not possess other land to receive in turn without battle, but there is much land for us both in the islands and the continent. For the rule of the sea is a great thing"(143.4-5).

[42] It is worth noting that in his very exhortation to place their confidence in their sea-power, the means to their freedom, empire and self-sufficiency, Pericles notes he cannot persuade them to burn their fields or houses. This is partly due to the fact that they are not completely self-sufficient. After all, they still need their bodies, and bodies require food and shelter. And as we saw in chapter 4, it is precisely this lack of self-sufficiency that makes their navy so desirable in the first place. Consider also that in 143 Pericles also refers to their "confederates" as the source of their strength. Without dominion over them, Athens will lack the money, ships, ports and other resources their confederates make available.

Pericles' seemingly casual reliance on the self-evident goodness of preserving (not expanding) Athens's freedom and empire is worth exploring. In a statement at the close of their speech, the Corinthians state that the profit of the coming war would extend to cities and private individuals. In a parallel statement, Pericles notes that the dangers risked in the coming war are posed to cities or private individuals. This "or" in Pericles' statement suggests a sensitivity on his part to the gulf between the threats posed to a city and those posed to citizens. The death of a citizen (or the risk of his death) does not mean the death of a city, and may even be required for the city to survive.

With respect to honors, however, Pericles is less forthcoming; he says nothing about whether they can be enjoyed by cities as well as by individuals. Perhaps this is because we are more inclined to admit that dangers belong to individuals alone. But when it comes to the greatest benefits, like freedom and empire, we are more inclined to believe that these goods can be enjoyed by citizens as well as by the "city" -- by those who participated in the efforts to produce them (i.e., sailors and soldiers) as much by those who did not (women, children, the elderly). To address only the most obvious objection here, it might be the case that the honors won by a citizen through risking the greatest dangers on behalf of Athens do indeed bridge the chasm between private danger and public benefit. In fact, the self-evident goodness of the honor of dying for Athens, though a good bestowed posthumously, may be the very thing on which the goodness of Pericles' counsel here quietly relies. (Such quiet reliance at this point is understandable – no one has yet had to give his life, so why arouse men's fears by addressing this point now?) Pericles' "or" with respect to dangers, coupled with his ambiguity about honors, raises the question of the citizen's ability to identify his good with his city's good, or with

the common good. What the reader must wonder is whether the goodness of freedom and empire is really so self-evident as to relieve Pericles of the burden of establishing that they are in fact good, or that Athens is worthy of the individual citizen's sacrifice. The war will test Pericles' easy reliance soon enough.

These two speeches bookend the discussion of sacral law. Each speech presents a different basis for the soundness or goodness of the counsel offered to the audience. The Corinthians rest the soundness of their advice on the presumed goodness of the Peloponnesians' particular and contingent nature. But the Corinthian identification of what is good with their own seems problematic since it offers no basis independent of their natures to judge them as good. It asks us to trust that their guidance is wise. And yet the Corinthians do not rely on particularly Corinthian institutions. They must rely on what is common to Spartans as well as Corinthians, Aeginetans as well as Megareans. By granting this extension, they mitigate their emphasis on the contingent, effectively diluting the authority of the particular Peloponnesian nature their speech invoked. The Corinthians' speech offers an unsatisfying half-way house between the universal principle of nature and the contingent.

The Corinthians' speech takes on broader importance when one considers that, generally, one cannot defend rationally the superiority of a policy or proposed plan of action on the assumed superiority of what is one's own. Their speech suggests that any attempt to justify a course of action among a group of cities must justify such actions, at least partly, in terms of what is natural. And this difficulty of justifying international action by an appeal to purely contingent and particular principles might just as easily apply to a group of likeminded citizens. After all, even political actors before domestic

audiences abstract from what is particular to each of the citizens. They appeal to things the citizens share in common, like their citizenship. Such a common bond defies reduction to what makes each citizen a particular individual and even transcends such particularity. Thus the common bond of citizenship defies reduction to an individual's hair color or height and it transcends the bonds to one's particular family and friends. Perhaps then all attempts at genuine justification, at revealing the genuine wisdom or goodness of any policy under discussion - whether to domestic or foreign audiences - must ultimately base their arguments on something like nature. Because the Corinthians cannot, for obvious reasons, appeal to the particular greatness of Spartan (or Corinthian) institutions, the Corinthians, to be consistent, must move closer to Pericles' justification.[43] It is worth noting here, that Pericles, unlike the Corinthians, receives complete support from the Athenian assembly.

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[43] The circumstances surrounding the Epidamnian conflict that caused the war anticipate and prepare these conclusions regarding the priority of nature in our concern to supply a rightful claim to certain goods. Corinth's claim to Epidamnus follows from the fact that Epidamnus is as much hers as she is Corcyra's (25). Her claim to ownership follows from the fact that Epidamnus is a colony of Corcyra, itself a colony of Corinth, making the city a colony of Corinth once removed. This questionable basis (after all, we don't grant grandparents the same authority over their grandchildren that we grant parents over their children) gets reinforced by the claim that Epidamnus was founded by a Corinthian, Phalius (24). The authority of a founder over that which he founds (like a parent over its child) seems, as the Epidamnians interpret it, to be sanctioned by the divine authority of the Delphic oracle (25). The Corinthians thus possess a direct genetic link to Epidamnus. Corinth's claim to Epidamnus carries the weight of kinship sanctified by Apollo. Corcyra's claim, however, is informed by an understanding of human nature alone.

The basis of Corinth's legitimate claim to Epidamnus is rendered questionable by the fact that the oracle advises to turn over the city to Corinth only as their *leaders* (*hegemonas*) and not as their *founders* (*oikistais*) (I.25.1-2) as the demos had asked and as the demos interpreted it. (That the oracle uses *hegemonas* for "leaders," as opposed to *archai*, which can mean "rulers" as well as "beginnings" or "first things," reinforces the distinction between those who begin or found the city and those who happen to lead the city.) The oracle grants the city to Corinth without any explanation why it does so. The authority of Corinth over Epidamnus, according to the Delphic oracle (distinct from the demos' interpretation), stems from the oracle's say so, from its authority as an oracle. And what it can legitimately grant on the basis of its say-so, it can also legitimately withdraw on its say so. The same cannot be said of kinship. One's parents are always one's parents, no matter what an oracle says. The way the Epidamnians (mis)interpret the oracle's response suggests that they consider the authority of "natural founding" (like natural parentage) to possess greater legitimacy than the accident of leadership, than the contingency of what is merely given. The primacy the demos gives to "natural authority" is foreshadowed in its understanding of their city's founding. The importance of Phalius' Doric blood to Corinth's claim to Epidamnus is predicated entirely on the authority of natural or genetic lineage. Phalius, however, is the son of Heratoclidas, a member of the

Pericles resorts to the self-evident goodness of Athens's freedom and empire. Athenians are supposed to mold and direct their natures in order to secure these external goods. He asks them to place what is particular and individual in the service of what is universal and accessible to all men as men. And it seems he does so because he relies on each individual Athenian citizen to judge for himself that serving Athens's common good

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Heraklidae. The Heraklidae are offspring of Herakles (24) and are *not* Dorian. The Heraklidae originally hail from Attica (9) and are thus Ionian (if anything). However centuries of migration might have mixed Phalius' blood (see 12), his own "founding" stems from that region of Greece which is the birthplace of Athens. While divine sanction *may* exist for Corinth's claim to Epidamnus, justification on the basis of nature (on natural parentage) does not.

Despite their interests in justification, the Epidamnian demos acts no differently than the oracle acts. They *give* the city away. And the demos can do so for the same reason the oracle can– it just happens to have the power. As the god is stronger than the demos, so too did the demos happen to be stronger than the nobility and their barbarian allies. The fact that the demos and Corinth cannot rest their claims to the city on what is merely given (or on the contingent), belies a concern that they possess such a good in accordance with what right demands (as opposed to just strength). That they resort to the authority of Phalius and "founding" suggests that they are not only concerned with rightfully possessing the city, but they are concerned for their rightful claims to the city (and its necessary freedom) to possess some basis in nature.

This conclusion if correct is really no different than the Corcyreans' claim that to do what is just is to do what is expedient. As noted earlier, the Corcyrean defense of such a claim is rooted in their implicit recourse, found in the opening of their speech, to the compulsory power of the apparent good. (It is what excuses their previous policies and exonerates their ignorance.) Because it applies to all men, the compulsory power of the apparent good seems to reflect a law of human nature. Thus, both Corcyra and Corinth (and the Epidamnian demos) resort to the authority of nature. But Corinth, like the Epidamnian demos, seeks to identify what is naturally or genuinely good with what happens to be its own. The demos' very turn to natural parentage, or the authority of kinship, is itself based on the contingent: "Corinth deserves to be the rightful mother city because Phalius, who just happened to be the founding captain also just happened to be Corinthian." Without these "accidents" neither Corinth nor the demos could invoke the authority of genetic parentage. To claim that such accidents provide the natural basis for genuine goods would be to claim that what is natural is based on the contingent, which would be to say that the natural is itself the product of the contingent, and thus is not necessary. But this would be like saying that the natural basis of certain goods was not nature. Nature is defined by necessity, by the fact that some things are what they are and not something else. It is nature that makes some law necessarily just and not unjust, or that makes some condition war and not a condition of peace, or some city Greek and not barbarian and so on.

Corcyra's invocation of the compulsory power of the apparent good preserves this link between nature and necessity and it does so in terms of what belongs to all men. It thus avoids any reduction to what is contingent, or to what happens to be one's own, thus their request that Athens consider her *genuine* interests. It is only when they wish to right a wrong that they introduce the freedom necessary to blame the Corinthians for injury and the Athenians for failing to understand their genuine interests. As I tried to show in chapter 4, this turn to justice and injustice invites the supra-natural power of the divine in through the back door, undercutting the natural and universal basis of Corcyra's defense. But such an invitation is not required by the argument regarding the compulsory power of the apparent good. In fact, it is Corinth's argument, based as it is on the contingent, which seems to require nature – and thus necessity – to justify their claim to Epidamnus. In other words, the need to establish rationally that the goods in question legitimately belong to one by nature once again rears its head; the need to legitimize the particular and contingent forces the move towards nature and universality. By beginning and ending his treatment of the

is his good. But to do this requires self-knowledge, or knowledge of one's own particular nature in the light of the external standard of "human nature."[44] One would need to know that the goods of freedom and empire, goods enjoyed primarily by the "city" as a whole, are also in fact good for the individual citizens, not only for the citizens to enjoy, but to risk their own lives to secure. Because Pericles seems to take this knowledge for granted, his speech does not attempt to provide it. Thucydides, however, does not seem to take it for granted. The digression between these two speeches clarifies the reflections the individual citizen – in these cases, the most ambitious citizens – needs to undertake in order to acquire this knowledge.

C. Cylon, Pausanias and Themistocles (126-138)

Thucydides' digression on sacral law deals with the fate of three figures: Cylon, an Olympic champion and would-be tyrant of Athens; Pausanias, a member of the royal family, guardian of king Pleistarchus and convicted Medizer; and Themistocles, founder of Athens's empire and naval power. The digression is introduced by the Spartans' desire to establish greater legitimacy for their war against Athens. They demand that Athens banish those under the curse of Athena, which would mean the descendants of those who desecrated her temple.[45] This would include the family of Pericles, the leading Athenian citizen and principal adversary of Sparta (127). Sparta's demands appear primarily practical, not pious. The story of Cylon so introduced offers two sets of lessons. One

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war's causes this way, Thucydides unites his treatment of political right as political power with the priority of nature in our concern for goods.

[44] One could reasonably understand Pericles' speech here to constitute one more sign that the Athenians, contrary to the Spartans, view what is their own in terms of what is good and not the other way around. These speeches thus chart the emergence of considerations of nature in Periclean Athens (see the conclusion of this chapter). For a contrary view, one that presupposes the Athenian recognition and acceptance of nature, see Saxonhouse (1978, especially 464, 467). Because she presupposes that Thucydides accepted "[w]ithout question" (ibid,. 464, brackets mine) the Sophistic, conventionalist view of political life, she misses how nature and considerations of nature emerge out of certain "conventions."

follows from the pollution and the response to the pollution. The other follows from Cylon's actions.

1. Sparta and Impiety

The pollution in question was the result of Cylon the Athenian's attempt to seize the government of his native city. A member of the Athenian nobility, Cylon was a former Olympic champion and son-in-law to the tyrant of Megara. He tried to become tyrant of Athens on the festival of Zeus during the Olympic festivals by seizing the citadel of Athena. The Athenian people thwarted his efforts. They besieged him and his co-conspirators in the citadel. After a lengthy siege, Cylon and his brother escaped. Some of the conspirators who were left behind died of starvation, while the rest, upon the deception of the Athenians, were slaughtered at the altar of Athena. The slaughter of Cylon's fellow conspirators at this altar -and not Cylon's attempted coup - desecrated the temple and brought on the goddess' curse (see 126 end).

Sparta zealously tried to remove the curse by expelling those relatives of the guilty who were alive and exhuming the bodies of the dead who were related to the guilty (126 end). To understand the reasons for her zeal as well as its questionable character, one must put the attempted coup in perspective. Cylon, a hero of Athens, returned to his city to enslave his fellow citizens to his greatness. Not only does he do so during a religious festival, thus taking advantage of the city's attention to religious piety[46] and their devotion to gods, but he makes the citadel of Athena and the altar within the foothold for his tyranny. And in his very effort to dominate Athens he effectively invites foreign powers to "participate" in the city's rule. Could one imagine a greater betrayal of

[45] Rawlings (1981, 91) contends that the "digression" about the curse from Taenarum isn't a digression.

one's city or a greater abuse of the city's holy places? Could one imagine anyone more deserving of punishment? To aggravate matters, Cylon and his brother escape punishment (126.10). By leaving behind those whom he enlisted to suffer the consequences of his misdeeds, Cylon ducks and lets his friends take it in the face.

Faced with those who would try to enslave them, who would take advantage of their piety to do so, who would put the temples of the city's goddess in the service of their ambitions, and who would invite foreign powers into the city, the Athenian citizens are expected not to take adavantage of the opportunities available to them to punish such traitors. They are to exercise restraint because piety demands it. But how can such demands possibly be good for the city named after Athena? After all, had the Athenians obeyed such pious commands, the city devoted to the goddess may have just as easily become the instrument of base profiteering and glory seeking. And even if they could have expelled the conspirators, such "punishment" may only encourage future coup attempts by those who understand the good of ruling alone and unquestioned to outweigh the potential cost of exile.

Thucydides' reference to the Spartan example supports this reading. The Spartans lured the rebellious Helots out of the temple, where they were suppliants, and *then* slaughtered them (128). While perhaps consistent with piety, such conduct is particularly duplicitous. One would hardly want to govern society by such practices. One could imagine a third possibility: starve out the conspirators (as the Spartans did) and put them on trial. One would adhere to piety while at the same time serving the justice so necessary for civil society. Of course, such a procedure heightens the possibility that the

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[46] While the Olympic festivals were celebrated in the Peloponnesus, the festival was Panhellenic, and thus observed by good Greeks everywhere.

conspirators will dodge their "comeuppance." By delaying punishment and proceeding with a trial, one runs the risk that the conspirators will either escape from prison or, even worse, be declared innocent. Executing them on the spot is the surest way to preserve the common good. Thus the pious observance of sacral law in this case seems contrary to what is required to preserve the continued devotion to Athena. What's more, it seems particularly heartless to deny the city the means available to protect herself. Indeed, Cylon and his brother had already escaped. Shouldn't someone have to pay for this injustice? If Cylon can escape and the conspirators claim sanctuary at the altar of the goddess, then what can the city do to preserve itself? Doesn't piety allow room for people to uphold the common good?

Viewed from a purely practical perspective, it might be better to avoid tyranny today and risk divine retribution later. As Thucydides' narrative makes clear, religious pollutions were not always followed by disasters or punishments.[47] In fact if the goddess can require her city to stand by while the vicious can plunder it and take refuge in her holy places, then the basis of divine commands would appear to be inscrutable. And if this basis is inscrutable, then it seems at least a question whether the impious will suffer punishment at all for their transgressions of those commands. If pious obedience means allowing the impious to destroy the conditions necessary for piety, which seems quite unreasonable from the perspective of piety, can one reasonably expect to be punished for

[47] For the occurrence of those natural disasters unconnected to any punishment or retribution see the volcano at III.116; for eclipses see II.28, IV.52, and VII.50; for earthquakes see II.9, II.27, III.89 (in connection with tidal waves), IV.52 (in connection with an eclipse), V.45, VI.95, and VIII.6. For one presumed to be the result of divine punishment, see the earthquake discussed in connection with the Helot revolt at I.128, III.54 and IV.56. The first mention of it at I.101 suggests an alternative interpretation that casts doubt on the earthquake being understood as a punishment, especially if one compares what is said there with what is said at I.128. For another possible connection between super-human disasters and divine punishments, one should also consider the relationship between Pericles' policy of imperialism and the plague at Athens (II.49-54). But contrast Thucydides' comments about prophecies at II.54.

the impious effort to preserve the conditions for piety? Ascribing to the goddess the principle upon which just punishment rests runs contrary to the unprincipled manner or inaccessible principle that we ascribe to the goddess' issuance of commands.

To clarify, we certainly have some access to the principle behind just punishment: just punishment must at least follow a violation of the law. And this principle is general enough to apply as a universal rule. Knowledge of it does not depend on privileged access (like revelation) to some divine mysteries or sacred rites whose sense or goodness must be taken for granted. But while what triggers punishment is sensible enough, the reasons why one should obey this particular set of laws or that set of commands are far less clear. The authority of such divine laws is accessible only to those privileged enough to have been born in Athens, or to have been, as the Athenians are, privy to the goddess' commands. If this is the case, then there seems to be no good reason to think that the decision to punish (the trip wire triggering punishment) is any more reasonable than the commands the goddess expects men to uphold. If the basis of divine commands is contingent, then why should their enforcement be non-contingent? If the certainty of divine retribution is as questionable as it appears, then one has to wonder why Sparta exhibits such zeal in cleansing the alleged pollution.

Sparta's zeal may very well be the result of her sensitivity to the gods' apparent heartlessness. If the goddess's wrath can fall on those who merely sought to preserve the city devoted to her, then what is to prevent her from harming those who did nothing to cleanse the pollution? If those who, through the accident of kinship, descend from the accursed can carry the pollution with them, then the consequences of such pollution can certainly extend to other people, to other Greeks. This would explain Sparta's efforts to

expel both the living and the deceased kin of the accursed. Even the common good, it seems, can't outweigh the simple demands of piety (though it is strange to think that piety demands the disturbance of the dead). Of course, these explanations don't make the demands of piety, or Sparta's zealous efforts to fulfill them, any more reasonable.[48] But the demands of piety aren't entirely unreasonable either. The Greeks do not grant the authority of all gods and barbarian gods in particular. They thus do not grant as legitimate any charges of impiety that might come from foreign gods.[49]

In trying to cleanse the pollution, the Spartans apply to their fellow Greeks a principle of just punishment that applies to all men and which is accessible to men as men in the name of a Greek goddess whose sacred rites and temple have been given, in this case, to the Athenians to preserve. By doing so, the Spartans understand the universal (in this case, the principle of retributive punishment) to follow from the contingent (in this case, the transgression of a particular religious rite of a particular Greek goddess). Put differently, this universally intelligible principle of punishment only comes into play in the wake of the given rites of some particular goddess. Thus those who defended Athenian freedom would not have been cursed had they managed to kill Cylon and his men before they got to the citadel or after they left it. To the extent that the principle of retributive punishment is universally intelligible and thus independent of contingent circumstances (or contingently issued commands), then one might suppose this principle

[48] Part of Sparta's experience with the vindictiveness of the gods follows from their pollution of the temple of Poseidon (128). Unlike the Athenians, the Spartans actually managed to get the Helots *out of the temple* before they killed them. It was for such apparent treachery that the god sent a great earthquake to Sparta.

[49] One could say that the seemingly reckless distribution of punishments by the gods is actually a form of deterrence on their part: "See what happens when there is impiety?" This may certainly have been part of the Athenians' rationale for slaughtering the conspirators who were willing to surrender. But deterrence here was aimed at securing the common good of Athens. What would it mean to say that the gods seek to preserve their common good by punishing those who did not commit the impiety? Understood this way, the

to be natural. But if it is natural, does it make any sense to say that such a universal principle of punishment applies only under contingent conditions? To do so would be to say that it is at once natural and not natural. The naturalness of the principle behind punishment is at odds with the contingent basis of belief in particular divinities.

The Athenians, in contrast, seem to reverse this understanding. By slaughtering Cylon's co-conspirators as they do, the Athenians do not think that they are polluting the temple (otherwise they would not do so). Or if they think that they are polluting the temple, then they must think that such pollution is subject to other, higher or more urgent considerations. Specifically, they subject the exercise of piety to the preservation of the conditions necessary to exercise piety; they seek to preserve what the pious commands intend to perfect. This means they subject their belief in the goddess of their particular city and their understanding of her intervention in the affairs of Athenians to what is politically salutary: what is urgent sometimes supersedes what is "high." For pious devotion to be reasonable, it must be consistent with or at least must recognize the political priority of preserving the common good. Consequently, the reasonableness of pious devotion must stem from belief in its sense and goodness.

But if the decision to remain pious is subject to a particular city's concern for its own goodness, then the reasonableness of pious devotion must be rooted in that city's understanding of its own goodness. In the case under consideration, the reasonableness of pious devotion is rooted in the need to preserve the freedom of Athenians. The character of the particular (Athenian freedom) thus seems to prescribe the terms to, thereby limiting, what is universal (obedience to the goddess). But the real difference between

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good of the gods would certainly not constitute our good, at least not in any positive way. No common good would seem to exist between the two.

Sparta and Athens is that Athens is alive to the difference between what happens to be its own (her goddess's altars, rites, and mysteries) and what constitutes its particular good (freedom from tyranny). It is in light of the distinction between the contingent and the particular that Athens can sacrifice what happens to be her own, or what is contingent, in return for her particular good. Athens thus understands her particular good in terms of rules or "laws" concerning what is politically salutary and not in terms of what is contingent. Thus she understands what is salutary or sensible for cities in general to govern what is good for particular cities.

The preceding considerations clarify what is at stake in Pericles' easy reliance on the self-evident goodness of freedom and empire. This digression on sacral law appears to connect the demands of pious devotion to what is contingent and to connect political goods, like the freedom of a city, to what is natural and thus universal. And if genuine political counsel requires that one subordinate the contingent (what just happen to be one's own) to what is common, or universal,[50] then one must subject religious belief and the exercise of piety to considerations of what is naturally good. To the extent that Pericles' speech represents the logical or more consistent embodiment of what is required of political justifications, then genuine political justification requires that the goodness of pious devotion be subordinate to the demands of political justice. To the extent that such demands are rationally accessible to men as men, then one has to wonder if divine law as revealed law offers anything new to the study of politics. Is it in fact necessary? To state it simply, the preceding reflections point to the impiety behind Pericles' political

[50] One should recall here the conclusion drawn in my treatment of the envoys' speech. Athens, unlike Sparta, does not understand her particular good in terms of what is her own (as contingently given). In fact, she seems willing to risk what is her own to secure what constitutes her particular good.

justification, to the impiety behind the need to justify rationally the goodness of the policies under consideration.

In his treatment of the careers of Cylon, Pausanias and Themistocles, Thucydides deepens these reflections by connecting the authority of political considerations (to which the goodness of pious devotion is subject) to the individual's need to know. It is the need to know that political goods are in fact good for one that makes Pericles' political articulation so important. For only in light of Pericles' reliance on the belief in the goodness of freedom and empire can one undertake the reflections necessary to determine whether the political goods in question are in fact naturally good. In this way one can begin to connect the political horizon of the theological question to the individual's concern for genuine goods.

2. Cylon, Pausanias and Themistocles

Cylon, Pausanias, and Themistocles are political failures. Cylon attempted to seize the government of Athens for himself and was defeated by the Athenian people. Pausanias sought to rule over all of Greece by helping deliver Greece to the subjection of the Persian king. Having been convicted of Medizing, he was ultimately killed by the Spartans. Themistocles' political vision gave birth to Athens's naval power and thus her empire. But he was exiled by the demos upon suspicion of Medizing and ended his life in Persia. What is instructive about these three is why each failed. And Thucydides' manner of procedure here leads us to consider the fates of Pausanias and Themistocles in light of the failure of Cylon.[51]

[51] See Hornblower's treatment of "ring-composition" here, (1991, 200-5) as Thucydides' method of instruction. Rawlings understands Thucydides' digressions on Pausanias and Themistocles in light of his contention that Thucydides wanted to contrast their fates with those of Alcibiades and Lysander (1981, 94). Westlake, following Schwartz, argues that both excursuses on Themistocles and Pausanias (90-95 and 128-

This is not the only possible interpretation of Thucydides' procedure here. One could also read the digression on the three statesmen as a movement from a concern with piety and impiety to a concern with secular matters. Thus one begins with the Spartan reliance on oracles and moves to the religious pollutions of Cylon and Pausanias. The treason of Themistocles follows (unconnected to impiety) and the entire section ends with the speech of Pericles, itself dependent on the natural goodness of freedom and empire. While such a reading is perfectly consistent with the argument I present below, it proceeds by jumping over the substantive lessons of the digression, lessons which can be derived only by adopting a different approach to the section. One could also read the digression as a commentary on the Spartan and Athenian characters. This is the more widely accepted reading and for good reason. Because he has presented the reader with a careful study of the relations between Athens and Sparta and has brought the reader to the brink of war, the timing seems ideal for Thucydides now to offer a distilled treatment of the Spartan and Athenian manners. This characterization is artfully achieved by a focused treatment of the most famous representatives of the two cities. Again, this reading seems perfectly compatible with the reading I offer below. But those who adopt this interpretation tend to gloss over the distinctive differences between Pausanias and Themistocles when it comes to ruling. An approach that focuses on the different postures towards ruling that characterizes each figure promises to get to the heart of the digression. Thus Cylon aspires to domestic tyranny; Pausanias aims at rule over all of Greece; and Themistocles appears capable and willing of ruling imperial Athens in accordance with her democratic regime.

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38) are "essentially a unity" (1955, 61, see fn. 3). Proctor (1980, 194-5) contends that the digression here is barely relevant and a sign of the work's unfinished state.

This last reading seems to offer the best opportunity for situating the entire digression within its immediate context (the concerns for sacral law that introduced the section) and its broader context (the concern with revealing the clear truth about the first things). It does so because it invites us to consider - more directly than any other section of Book I – the questions surrounding the possibility of a single ruler whose manifest superiority allows him to rule over other men without law and without question. It thus allows the reader to take a closer look at the theological questions raised by Athenian imperialism and discussed above (Part II.A.). How? If we recall from the beginning of Part II.A (*Politics and Science*), Thucydides' approach to the question of the gods followed from his treatment of the human concern for goods. As we saw in chapter 3 (II.B.3.b), the distinctively Greek posture towards goods was characterized by the concern to possess them in accordance with one's worth. This "posture" emerged most clearly in Thucydides' treatment of political rule and the phenomena of "domination," and in particular in his treatment of the Spartan great (I.6). It is this posture that Thucydides elaborates, from the perspective of a single ruler, in chapters 126 through 138. While he doesn't psychoanalyze the characters of Cylon, Pausanias and Themistocles, his treatment of them invites us to reflect on the adequacy of their understanding of the goods of politics. That Thucydides does so is suggested to us in the first place by what he tells us about Cylon's past. The first thing he relates is that Cylon was an Olympic champion (126.1). By bringing this to our attention, he recalls those considerations discussed earlier about Olympic contestants and what they hoped to win in competing as they did.

As we will see, Cylon failed in his bid to rule Athens because he failed to understand politics properly. And he failed to understand politics properly because he did not sufficiently reflect on what he hoped his Olympic victory would win him. But Cylon's failure does not mean his death; he along with his brother managed to escape. Having failed as he did, does he let his political ambitions give way to the quieter pleasures of a private life? Or does he still understand political rule to offer the greatest reward for men of outstanding nobility? Thucydides does not tell us. We are invited to wonder whether his political failure leads him to a proper reconsideration of that understanding of politics that caused his defeat. It is in light of this question that we learn about Pausanias and Themistocles. Each seems to represent a different understanding of politics and the goodness of political rule.

2.a. Cylon (126)

Cylon attempted to seize the citadel of Athens on the festival of Zeus celebrated during the Peloponnesian holidays. According to Thucydides, Cylon based the date of the attempted coup on the Delphic oracle's prophecy that he should seize the citadel of Athens on the greatest festival day. Cylon presumed the greatest festival day to be the celebration of Zeus that takes place during the Olympic festivals. As Thucydides makes clear, he made this presumption in light of the fact that his own Olympic victory occurred during those holidays (see 126.4-6). Cylon apparently presumes a connection to exist between Zeus's greatest holiday, the Olympic games, and his own Olympic victory. By introducing Cylon's attempted coup as he does, Thucydides invites us to consider that Cylon's coup, far from being inspired by the god or the oracle's utterance, was instead fueled by the conviction of his superiority as revealed originally by his Olympic victory

(126.5).[52] After all, Cylon makes no effort to inquire into which festival of Zeus is greatest; *Zeus's* greatness is not on his mind. Thucydides thus quietly indicates that Cylon wants to dominate Athens openly to reveal his surpassing worth just as the Olympic wrestlers revealed themselves in part to reveal their natural superiority.

Our earlier consideration of the Olympians led us to conclude that such contestants understood their manner of competition and their victory to reveal their superior freedom from necessity and from dependence on external goods. It is just such a self-sufficiency that led the Spartan great to eschew those very goods in the name of the superiority whose confirmation initially followed from their possession. But as Thucydides' treatment of Cylon indicates, he wants to rule Athens alone and without limit. He did not see, as the Spartan great did, that to establish his true superiority he must establish his freedom from need. Nor did he see that this is best effected through service to others. Had he reflected on what he hoped to win by the possession of such a good as political rule, he might have seen that devotion to the common good and not tyranny best reveals one's self-sufficiency. Moderate service, and not immoderate rule, is the order of the day.

Thucydides' apparently off-hand inclusion of many of the details of the Cylonian affair reinforce this conclusion about Cylon. Thucydides tells us that Cylon's native Athens, in addition to the festival celebrated during the Peloponnesian holidays, also celebrates the Diasia. The Diasia was another festival of Zeus (independent of the Olympic festivals) that was also considered to be the greatest. While Thucydides is silent about which of the two festivals is in fact greatest, the Diasia (126.6) offers Cylon the

[52] Hornblower understands Thucydides to be critical of Cylon's belief in oracles (1991, 206). For an alternative account of the Cylonian affair ending with Cylon's murder Hornblower (ibid. 209) points to

best strategic chance for seizing the government. Thucydides notes that on this day most Athenians would be outside the city's walls and pre-occupied with the festival. They would thus not be able to respond as quickly to an attempted coup. Of course, a response by the people would be inevitable whether or not they are outside the walls of the city. But Thucydides tells us that in Cylon's case, the demos grew tired of the siege and handed its prosecution over to the current rulers of Athens, the *archons* (they were responsible for the pollution of the temple). It is thus unclear if the demos opposed his attempted coup enough to maintain effective resistance. And such resistance would have been even harder to effect had Cylon a tighter grip on the city, a grip that the Diasia afforded him. This reinforces the sense that his failure had more to do with Cylon's approach to rule than to any efforts to oppose him.

For Cylon to take advantage of the Diasia, he would have had to ask the oracle which religious festival was greatest. To do this he would have to be open to understanding his rule over Athens in purely strategic terms, terms that anyone with sufficient courage or backing could effect - whether they won an Olympic contest or not.[53] Cylon must therefore be willing to separate successful outcomes from considerations of merit or worthiness. Of course, this would mean that he would have to be open to understanding his Olympic victory independent of considerations of his own worthiness. He would have to be open to the possibility that he won by chance or on account of the inferiority of his opponents or the strength or talents arbitrarily assigned to

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Herodotus V.71.

[53] It is worth noting in this respect that Cylon's marriage to the daughter of the tyrant of Megara facilitated his own tyrannical aspirations (126.3). His father-in-law supplied those extra forces without which he could not have attempted such a coup (126.5). Without the forces to facilitate his political ambitions, Cylon would have needed to reconsider the relationship between his Olympic victory, the superiority it supposedly confirms and his open domination of Athens.

him by nature. Cylon does not consider this. Nor does he seem open to such reflection. Why not?

Thucydides tells us that the Diasia is celebrated outside the city and that most of those who live outside the city are poor. On account of their poverty, those of the poor outside the city who participate in the festival do so by sacrificing fake animals to the god (126.6).[54] It seems their poverty and neediness compel them at once to sacrifice to the god and to moderate their sacrifices; need both inspires and moderates their piety.[55] Thucydides thus distinguishes this festival of Zeus by the presence and participation of the poor. The wealthy Cylon, who belongs to the nobility (126.3), forgets about this festival. By not considering the Diasia in his political calculations, he does not think of the poor and the bodily needs that dog them. This failure to think of the Diasia, and his subsequent failure to confront the bodily needs that plague the poor, recalls his misinterpretation of the oracle. Insofar as he judges his Olympic victory to confirm his superior worth, and insofar as this judgment clouds his interpretation of the oracle's prophecy -- allowing him to interpret it much more narrowly than he should --, then Cylon does not see that his superiority is best revealed through political moderation. Because his misinterpretation of the oracle induces him to forget what is nearest to his city -- like the festivals in Attica -- then perhaps Cylon has not sufficiently reflected on what is nearest to him -- like his own neediness.

To take full advantage of the god's commands, he needs to liberate himself from his prejudices about his own worth. And this means that the soundness of Cylon's

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[54] According to the LSJ, the *thumata epichoria* – the sacrifices made by the poor -- when contrasted with *hepeiria*, as they are here, are best understood as bloodless sacrifices or sacrifices of "animals" fashioned out of cakes.

practical political counsel – when and where to seize the citadel, or even that he should seize the citadel – requires in the first place knowledge regarding what he needs and what is good for him. To act well, he first needs to be conscious of the fact that he understands the possession of certain goods to be due to and confirmation of his superior worth. He then needs to examine whether political rule does in fact provide the goods he seeks.

The possibility remains of course that upon such reflection, he may conclude that unfettered political domination is the most desirable goal. By questioning the link between his merit and the successful outcome of his efforts, Cylon may see an unbridgeable gap between one's worth and one's advantage. In light of such a gap, he may side with advantage and conclude that prudence is all one needs. Governed solely by considerations of self-interest, Cylon, or someone similarly liberated from a concern with noble superiority, need not recognize a legitimate limit in the pursuit of the goods they desire. The pursuit of their advantage may thus lead such a person to pursue rule well beyond Athens. It may also lead one away from politics, to the private effort to satisfy one's desires. The alternatives therefore seem clear: unfettered and immoderate pursuit of one's advantage and moderate political rule in accordance with one's superior worthiness. Thucydides' treatment of Cylon thus compels us to examine the status of a single ruler whose superiority is unquestioned in light of these alternatives. In the wake of this, we turn to the examples of Pausanias and Themistocles.

2.b. Pausanias (128-134)

According to Thucydides, Pausanias was one of the two most famous men of his day (138.6; Themistocles was the other). The basis of Pausanias's fame is considerable

[55] One might see here a similarity between this practice of sacrifice and the Athenian archons' decision to kill the conspirators where they were. In both cases, considerations of what is salutary govern the practice

and would be known to any Greek of Thucydides' time. Because he was the acting Spartan king and the royal leader of the most celebrated and powerful fighting force in Greece,[56] he was also the head of the Greek confederates during the second Persian invasion. As such, he led the confederacy against the Persian onslaught, smashing Xerxes' land advance at the battle of Plataea. As a result of such a defeat, the Persians had to gamble their entire venture in Greece on a single battle at sea where they were ultimately defeated by the Athenians. Pausanias thus stands out as one of the great heroes of Greek liberty.

As non-Greeks of a different time, we know of Pausanias's impressive human achievements from Herodotus (IX.10-85). Thucydides, however, almost completely ignores them (he refers to the victory at Byzantium (94) and the honor in which the Greeks originally held him for the victory at Plataea; see 130.1).[57] The two major digressions on Pausanias in Book I (94-95; 128-134) only detail his treachery to Sparta and Greece. Thus he tells us that Pausanias aspired to rule all of Greece himself (not just Sparta) (128.3) and that he sought Persian help to do so. If Pausanias was a hero of Greek liberty, what could lead him to become a turncoat? And why does Thucydides choose to emphasize his treason?

In the previous example, Cylon's betrayal of Athens was put into relief by studying it against the backdrop of his Olympic victory and his failure to understand what that victory meant for him. Thucydides prevents us from doing the same in the case of

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of piety.

[56] We know from Herodotus (IX.10-11) that while Pausanias was a member of the royal line, he was not actually king. He was rather the "guardian" of the king, Pleistarchus, son of the hero Leonidas, who was yet in his minority. While not technically king, Pausanias still exercised all of the powers belonging to such an office.

Pausanias because of his relative silence about the latter's successes. He does tell us that Pausanias understood himself to be responsible for defeating the Persians. And just as an Olympic champion, he understood the rewards of victory to be his (see the story of the tripode at 132.2). But because Thucydides mentions none of Pausanias's remarkable achievements, we are unable to judge if he deserved such credit. In fact, judging from Book I's emphasis, the individual most responsible for the ultimate defeat of the Persians, if there was one, was the Athenian Themistocles. Moreover, the fight against the Persians had yet to conclude when Pausanias began generously granting himself the spoils of victory. And even in his service to the cause of Greek freedom, he showed himself to have designs on tyranny (128.2-3; and see 128-134 in general). Thus not only did Pausanias take credit for the freedom that was won through the efforts of other Greeks, but he sought to undermine the freedom he claimed to preserve – even as the Greeks were still fighting to secure it! If Cylon's failure followed from a misinterpretation of his Olympic victory, then Thucydides' treatment of Pausanias suggests that he sees victories for himself that he did not win.

It is possible that Pausanias understands his superior worth to be indicated by the Persian King's decision to ally with him (129). Clearly the friendship of such a powerful ally must be a sign of one's own great power, itself a sign of one's surpassing nobility, and Thucydides suggests as much (130). But as he also makes clear, the Persian King's friendship is contingent upon Pausanias's success in delivering Greece to Persia. He is killed before he can effect this. Pausanias's Persian dress, his barbarian guard, the Persian manner of his table, the affected "airs" with which he carries himself (130) and his home

[57] The victory at Byzantium was minor when compared to the victory at Plataea. Moreover, as the text suggests and as the historical record confirms, Pausanias's activity at Byzantium had as much to do with

in Asia Minor (131.1), all assume the granting of gifts that have yet to be given on the basis of a goodness that Thucydides has yet to present.

Based on what Thucydides tells us (and doesn't tell us) about the career of this Spartan king, it appears that Pausanias's claim to superiority over the Greeks stems from little more than the fact that Pausanias is Pausanias. His tendency to translate past successes into future entitlements is made possible by an assessment of his superiority that is grounded solely on the fact that he is who he is. Not even the Spartan regime, the authority behind his exercise of kingly power (a power that is literally "on loan" to him), represents a legitimate authority concerning what constitutes right. Because he doesn't recognize the Spartan institutions to provide any external, rightful limit to his self-interest, Pausanias feels free to bribe the Spartan judges reviewing his case. Far from having any real authority to comment on his merit or character, the Spartan courts and their decrees can be bought (131 end). All of this means then that not merely what he possesses, but all he comes to possess, must be understood to be due to his goodness and his goodness to be due to what is contingent. He thus presents the starkest (and most nefarious) version of that identification of one's particular good with what happens to be one's own.

The result of this identification of what is good with what is one's own is that the devotion or selflessness associated with noble self-sufficiency becomes completely unnecessary. What need is there for sacrificing one's interests to right if every desire one has is perfectly consistent with what right demands? Because Pausanias appears to recognize no legitimate external limit on his self-interests, he appears liberated to pursue his advantage as something entirely congruent with right. As such, his example represents

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his intrigues with the Persians as it did with his service to Sparta and Greece.

the extreme radicalization of the Spartan elevation of the particular. Thus, while he may be one of the most famous men of Thucydides' day, his great fame as it emerges from the pages of the *History* owes itself more to his great betrayal of Sparta and Greece than to any actions done on their behalf.

Pausanias's apparent lack of selflessness not only explains his betrayal of Sparta and Greece to the Persian King. It also explains the Spartans' reluctance to prosecute him for Medizing even when they possess manifest evidence of his guilt. For while the Spartiates willingly run great risks to themselves (enduring Pausanias's instigation of the Helot revolt; 132.4)[58] and to the rest of Greece (consider Pausanias's tyranny over the allies and his Medizing) to avoid unjustly prosecuting Pausanias (132.5), they do so precisely because he is one of their own. The Spartans do not voluntarily limit their prosecution of Pausanias out of some concern with universal justice as contemporary politicians, out of respect for those rights protected by the Constitution, might limit the prosecution of Americans suspected of terrorism. Rather, the Spartiates find it unimaginable that one of their own could be so unjust, so disloyal and so dangerous that they drag their feet even after they hear him confess to wrong-doing. Their pious zeal discussed above is matched only by their zeal in certifying the guilt of Pausanias. In the cases of religious pollution and Pausanias, they show themselves willing to subject the common good to significant danger in order to preserve the integrity of what they believe is the particular and contingent good in each case (Greek gods; Spartan kings). Thus what appears to be moderation in the prosecution of Pausanias, what appears to be the

[58] Hornblower notes that this, not his Medizing, constituted Pausanias's real crime (1991, 219).

voluntary subjection to external limits on their own interest, is best understood as the zealous love of their own.[59]

Coming in the wake of Thucydides' picture of Cylon, Pausanias's attempt to rule over all of Greece represents the alternative to moderate political rule. But Pausanias does not seek rule over Greece purely out of considerations of advantage. He does so out of a concern with his own greatness. The particular difficulty facing the "Pausanian" alternative consists in the fact that he reduces his superiority to what is contingent (i.e., that Pausanias is Pausanias). This reduction makes it impossible for him to verify that what appears good for him is in fact good for him. To verify its goodness would require him to consult an external standard of what is genuinely good, a standard that is common to all men. If judging the goodness of rule independent of an external standard prevents one from knowing that rule is in fact good for one, then it becomes difficult to gauge whether rule serves one's advantage. And because Pausanias's identification of his superior worth in terms of his advantage obscures a clear view of what constitutes his advantage, it also frustrates his effort to take what is his due.

Because he cannot recognize the need for devotion to something outside himself, Pausanias cannot recognize the need for political service and thus the need for political moderation. This lack of reflection finds its practical and vital relevance in the fact that it prevents him from appreciating the danger his immoderation poses to his fellow Spartiates. It prevents him from appreciating the full extent to which the Spartans

[59] This seems to account for Archidamus' reputation for moderation as well. For while his advice appears remarkably temperate, it is born from the zealous attachment to Spartan institutions and the Spartan way. If Spartan moderation follows from an education in necessity, then they should recognize that sometimes necessity requires abandoning the principles animating the regime if only to preserve those very principles (see for instance Lincoln's defense of his suspension of Habeas Corpus, June 12th 1863 in Basler 2001, 699-708). This requires a flexibility that is absent in Archidamus' appraisal of the regime. Archidamus and those reared by the Spartan regime may thus be softer than is supposed.

themselves honored moderate political rule and thus could not be bought by his bribes. This lack of reflection on the importance of moderation, to both himself and others, contributes to his carelessness, which results in his death at the hands of his countrymen (134.3).

In the end, Pausanias can rest satisfied with his identification of his superior worthiness with his own because he is never compelled to question it. His personal wealth, his (almost unbelievable) good fortune, and the moderate prosecution of his case, all conspire to shield him from that need the awareness of which leads one to inquire about the connection between the goods one possesses and one's presumed worth. To force the issue, to bring this identification and its questionable character to the surface, one needs to be subject to an external standard that applies to all citizens. This means, as we will see, that one needs a political community that obligates its individual citizens to serve a common good whose goodness consists in something genuinely common to all men as men.

2.c. Themistocles (135-138)

If the example of Pausanias reflects the difficulty facing the unlimited pursuit of political rule, then it remains to consider the matter of moderate political rule. In the example that follows, Thucydides turns to Themistocles, the other most famous man of his time. Themistocles' fame consisted in his leading the Greek naval forces against the Persians at the battle of Salamis. Through the splendid victory achieved there, Themistocles helped route the Persian forces and secured liberty for all of Greece. Not only is he a hero of Greek freedom, but he is also the architect of one Greece's greatest powers: Themistocles fortified Athens and the Peiraeus and helped found the Athenian

empire. In light of what he tells us of Themistocles' successes, Thucydides' interest in his *downfall* forces us to seek a more nuanced understanding of the problems confronting the unquestioned predominance of a single ruler.

Themistocles' political career is a career in two Acts. In Act I, his role as founder and leader of the Athenian empire comes to the fore. As noted in chapter 4 (III.A.3.b), he seems content with his position in Athens. The preeminent statesman in the preeminent regime, Themistocles – unlike Cylon - never sought to overturn the city's democratic regime or to subvert its laws out of a desire to rule alone and unquestioned. And unlike Pausanias, Themistocles, despite his obvious concern with "fortress Athens" and the development of their navy, never appears to aspire to rule over all of Greece. For while he did give Athens its all-important "sea-legs," he did so out of a concern for the protection of Athens and not a conscious concern with empire. He thus represents the example of moderate political rule in accordance with noble superiority. Yet Themistocles is chased out of Athens. Why? The first clear answer is that the demos's suspicions and paranoia fueled a distrust that his rule could not withstand. For some reason the demos could not conceive how Themistocles could understand his greatness to be consistent with a moderate political rule. Thus the unquestioned predominance of a single ruler runs aground on the misgivings of those ruled by him.

For those readers concerned with noble superiority (the very readers the digression seems to address), the end of Themistocles' career must leave a bad taste in their mouths. He is forced out of Athens - on the barest of evidence against him - by his fellow Athenians, a people who owe their safety, their city, and their imperial power to his daring and foresight (see 73-74; also 93). He, of all three statesmen, shows himself

most worthy of political gratitude and perhaps even of political rule. And yet he is the one to suffer the most indignities. Cylon manages to escape punishment and Pausanias, if not for his incredible vanity and shortsightedness, could have escaped safely to Persia. This sense of patent injustice is aggravated by Thucydides' praise for his natural judgment and intelligence. Thucydides writes that

> Themistocles was a man who displayed the most certain strength of natural judgment and in this especially, more than any other, is he worthy to admire. For by his own natural intelligence, having learned nothing neither before nor after, he was, of those judgments made off-hand with the shortest deliberation, best and of those things that have yet to happen to the greatest extent of the future he was the best conjecturer. And that which he had in hand, he was such as to be able to explicate it, and of those things in which he was inexperienced, to judge them fittingly he did not dismiss them. Moreover, what was better or worse in uncertain circumstances, he most of all men foresaw. And to say it all, by the power of his natural judgment on the one hand, and by his quick wit,[60] on the other hand, this man was most able indeed to devise off-hand those things that were needful (138.3).

Themistocles resembles that best king discussed by Aristotle (*The Politics*, Book III.15-16) capable of leading his community towards what is most advantageous. Whereas laws are necessarily general, the single best ruler can determine what is best to do in each situation because he is able to account for the variables of each case. In the sequel, such a ruler is likened to a political doctor who can prescribe to his patients the best course of medical action. But as the sequel indicates, such a doctor will not always be trusted by his patients. His patients, unable to judge themselves of the soundness of his diagnosis and prescriptions, may fear that he will determine their treatment out of base motives (spite or favoritism or, from a concern for profit, the spite or favoritism of others). It seems it is just such self-love that corrupts the judgment of the Athenian demos. But as we see both from Themistocles' letters to the King (137.4) and from his

apparent refusal to help deliver Greece, tyranny was not on his mind. Themistocles was not unworthy of the Athenians' trust. Of course that he is in some ways responsible for the very community that drives him out raises a question as to the soundness of Themistocles' political vision. Perhaps the moderate political rule of a city infused with a sense of the noble (or a city so aware of its neediness and vulnerability; see 4.III.B.2.b) is not good for him or for men like him.

According to Aristotle's discussion, the very self-love afflicting patients can also cloud the doctor's treatment of his own ailments. It is awareness of this self-love, combined with an understanding of one's genuine interests, that leads the doctor to seek a cure from other doctors (his medical expertise allowing him to trust them). If a doctor isn't sufficiently aware of this self-love, the dangers it poses or his genuine interests, then he might not submit himself to another's treatment in time to be cured. This "insufficient awareness" seems to describe Cylon's and Pausanias's refusals to submit fully to the limits required by noble superiority. But can one say the same for Themistocles? It seems highly unlikely, given Thucydides' praise, that Themistocles lacked both the foresight to address the fears of the commons and the wherewithal to assuage them. And yet Themistocles cannot be entirely freed from blame for his downfall. To consider this, we turn to Act II of Themistocles' career.

Having ostracized Themistocles from Athens upon suspicion of Medizing, the Athenian demos, upon further hearsay by the Spartans, seek to put him on trial for his alleged betrayal (135). Themistocles, residing in Argos, flees from the Athenians. After navigating his way through the Peloponnesus and across the Mediterranean, he arrives in

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[60] The Greek here, *meletes brachuteti*, means literally "shortness of care, practice, or attention" and thus is the meaning behind the idiom of "short-study" or "quick wit."

Persia seeking the protection of the Great King. Finding sanctuary there, he thrives in Persia until the end of his life (138.4).

In light of Cylon, Pausanias and Act I of Themistocles' career, it seems that the unquestioned predominance of a single ruler is fraught with difficulties. The unlimited pursuit of political rule -- or rule independent of an external standard common to all men -- seems to make it impossible to determine if one in fact has secured one's advantage. Of course, political rule in accordance with an external standard seems to require that one voluntarily submit to the demands and limits imposed by that standard. And as noted, in Greek politics this means political moderation. But moderate political rule in accordance with one's superior nobility seems incomprehensible to the demos, making it impossible for one to govern them. Act II of Themistocles' career seems to suggest an alternative to the entire issue of a single ruler – the private life apart from politics. What would such a private life apart from Athenian politics look like? And does it represent a genuine alternative to the difficulties besetting the issue of a single ruler whose superiority is clear to all with eyes to see? Would it satisfy those concerned with their own noble superiority?

As we saw in chapter 4, Themistocles' sensitivity to the advantage promised by the beautiful supplied the basis for the Athenians' appreciation of noble self-sufficiency. It thus supplied them with the grounds for their articulations of justice as the power by which they could try to secure self-sufficiency. But the promises made by the beautiful or the noble must have certainly become a question for Themistocles in the wake of the patently unjust charges against him. If such unjust charges did compel him to reconsider the goodness of his political efforts, then perhaps it also led him to reconsider the link

between the beautiful and advantage, as well as the neediness that made him susceptible to such a union. Perhaps these injustices led him to question the very integrity of Greek political power, its ability to deliver on the promises at its core and the coherence of Greek political life. Might it be just such a path – from the problems facing expressions of justice and injustice to the truth about political power, from a life devoted to political service and the common good to the quiet life of a private individual - that Thucydides' manner of procedure invites us to travel? Might the example of Themistocles represent the "answer" to the Cylonian question?

We are tempted to answer in the affirmative when we note Thucydides' great praise of Themistocles. This temptation grows stronger when we consider that Themistocles' career and exile mirrored those of Thucydides. But the example of Themistocles does not likely represent Thucydides' answer to the Cylonian question if only because his example requires a striking disengagement from politics and from Greekness. While there is no obviously clear account of the end of Themistocles' life or what he thought about his expulsion from Athens, it is clear that he did not choose to pursue a life of political dominion within or through Persia. At the most he served as an advisor to the Great King. Themistocles never attempted, as Hippias before him did, to return to Greece at the head of a Persian army to punish and enslave those who wronged him. Nor did he try to play the forces of the globe against one another in an effort to return to Athens and restore his rule there, as Alcibiades following him did. In fact, Themistocles never even attempted to make good on his promise to help lead the Persian invasion of Greece.[61] As should be clear from Thucydides' praise of Themistocles, he

[61] According to Plutarch, Themistocles refuses to help Artaxerxes invade Greece out of a concern to preserve his greatest political triumphs. He also notes that the power and success of Cimon may have

certainly possessed the talents to make such an effort.[62] Instead, Themistocles contented himself with growing wealthy through the production of meat, bread and wine.

For his efforts, the people of Magnesia commemorated Themistocles with a statue of him in the marketplace. But this minor remembrance pales in comparison to that massive edifice of Athenian imperialism that Thucydides memorializes in his singular work. The true monument to Themistocles is the character of the political community that he helped create, a community - as we saw in chapter 4 – whose attachment to nobility tends towards a forgetfulness of one's needs and limitations. The Athenian community risks forgetting itself and its genuine needs by pursuing a wholeness or self-sufficiency through a global and deathless empire it can never obtain. It further demonstrates such forgetfulness by exiling the one man most responsible for its greatness. As such, the regime is never forced to address the role that exceptional men play in establishing and preserving a regime that secures its citizens' equality. Themistocles' Athens will remain ignorant of its true self. The question is whether Themistocles remains sufficiently sensitive to that profound neediness which is the precondition for the possession of genuine goods. This is another way of asking about the extent to which political life remains important for a private person concerned with possessing genuine goods.

Themistocles' posture towards politics as it defines Greekness becomes clearer in light of his flight from the Athenians. His escape, far from some reckless jailbreak, is one

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served to daunt Themistocles. In his treatment of Cimon, however, Plutarch attributes Themistocles' decision entirely to his appraisal of Cimon's valor. Thucydides makes no mention of Cimon in this context, prohibiting us from drawing such a conclusion on the basis of his work alone. Plutarch attributes his burial in Attica to Themistocles' kin.

[62] J.R. Grant (1974, section II) understands Thucydides' praise of Themistocles to constitute "an intellectual's tribute to a man of action." But Pericles, Alcibiades, Demosthenes and Brasidas were all men of action, so why reserve this praise for Themistocles?

of the most delicate set of maneuverings by one of the work's most skilled statesmen.[63] On the run in the Peloponnese, Themistocles finds himself forced to seek help from a personal enemy - Admetus, King of the Molossians (136.3-4).[64] When he reached the home of Admetus, Themistocles found only the king's wife and son. Following the advice of Admetus's wife, Themistocles sat near the king's hearth with his enemy's son on his lap until the king returned. The wife's advice followed from a custom wherein a suppliant sought to establish one's weakness and one's need for mercy. But one can imagine that the picture for Admetus was quite different. Upon returning home he finds the great and hated Themistocles requesting his help - a request made with a death sentence now hanging over his head and Admetus's son firmly in hand. The picture is a subtle one; the message is not.

To his credit, Themistocles avoids stating his request in such crude terms. Instead, he couches his appeal to the king in terms of noble revenge (*gennaion*). Noble revenge requires a condition of equality, a condition that does not apply here. Themistocles thus appeals to a limit on the individual's ability to aggrandize himself.[65] By framing the issue as he does, Themistocles makes it possible for the king to help him on the grounds of nobility and not fear. He also notes that the source of their enmity was not a matter of life or death, as it currently now is for Themistocles (and perhaps Admetus's son?). He thus appeals to his sense of fairness. Making his request in this way with the king's son on his lap reinforces the scene's irony and by doing so highlights Themistocles' statecraft.

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[63] In my opinion, Themistocles' efforts here are on a par with the nearly insane juggling that Alcibiades almost pulls off near the end of the war. See my treatment of that effort and the relevant references in chapter 6.I.C.3.b below.

[64] Thucydides doesn't tell us the details of their animosity, only that Themistocles ruled against the King in his dispute with the Corcyreans. For an historical record of the conflict between Themistocles and King Admetus, see Kagan (1969, 216).

Such maneuvering is only topped by his handling of King Artaxerxes. Having made it out of Greece, Themistocles writes to the Great King , seeking assistance from the son of the man whose forces he defeated at Salamis. In one of the most brazen acts of the *History*, Themistocles asserts his friendship with the former King, refers to the favors *he* conferred on Persia (which outweighed whatever harm he committed!), claims that Artaxerxes now owes *him* a good turn and further requests that he be granted a year to prepare for his audience with the royal court. Amazingly, Themistocles is granted his request. His success here is followed a year later by his arrival before the Great King in full Persian dress, speaking the native language and employing all of the ritual customs of Persia. It seems Themistocles, in response to Athenian injustice, has "become" Persian.

In the first case, Themistocles' success is due to his ability to manipulate the concerns for nobility. His success derives from an ability to place a legitimate limit on one's self-interests *in the service* of his self-interests. In the second case, his success results from his willingness to forego a concern with noble superiority altogether. We see such adaptability exalted in Thucydides' praise of Themistocles. As his praise makes clear, Themistocles' abilities allow him to turn with great facility to almost any endeavor. But it is these very malleable talents, these personal or private qualities given to him by nature, that allow him to leave behind Greece forever. Thus in Persia he seems to abandon completely that distinctively Greek sense of noble superiority that required one to eschew external goods in the effort to demonstrate one's self-sufficiency, an effort that culminated in moderate political rule. In fact Themistocles drops out of politics almost entirely. He doesn't even bother to keep his word to Artaxerxes about delivering

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[65] Even when he pays off the Athenian naval captain for his safety, Themistocles does so in terms of the captain's "merit" or "worth" (*axian*; 137.2).

Greece.[66] Instead, he rests content with wealth from the production of bodily goods and the satisfaction of bodily needs.

Such a practice seems to constitute a regression in Greekness. The earliest Athenians understood that one could never be free of certain bodily needs, thus their effort to establish superiority via eschewing such goods. Themistocles' native gifts, praised in terms of what belongs exclusively to him (his personal or private judgment) are thus insufficiently bound or disposed to politics as the Greeks embodied it. Perhaps it was such a shortcoming that contributed to his failure to anticipate the fears and threats of the demos.

Because he fled to Persia, Themistocles can comfortably liberate himself from any attachment he might have had to the Athenians. He can dismiss their actions against him as insensible and unjust. He could even discount his previous political devotion to their welfare as misguided or unenlightened. Free of such presumed errors, he can now give himself over to the apolitical pursuit of wealth and comfort.[67] Unconcerned with establishing his superiority he also need not pursue political domination. Whatever he might have done, it is clear that he need not, like a citizen who lives under the Athenian

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[66] At the end of his life, the Persian King Artaxerxes asks Themistocles to help deliver Greece into Persian subjection. Themistocles reportedly kills himself because he is unable (for whatever reason) to fulfill the request. This report seems to receive support from the fact that Themistocles desired to be buried in Athens (138.6) from where he was expelled, and not in Persia, where his tremendous talents were rewarded. But Thucydides stresses that these accounts were merely *reported*. In the latter case, the report was circulated by Themistocles' kindred, by people who had an incentive to improve their infamous relative's traitorous reputation through a rumor promoting his profound attachment to Athens. According to Thucydides, whose judgment we must respect here, Themistocles simply fell ill and died.

[67] To see that Themistocles' wealth in meats, bread and wines (138.5-6) satisfied certain needs one should consider the broader context. In the treatment of Cylon, need comes to sight as the fundamental need for *sustenance*. Awareness of this need led the poor to moderate their sacrifices. But what of the reference to wine here? It is not necessary for sustenance. Perhaps the production of wine, as an intoxicating relish, serves to dull the awareness that mere sustenance is itself not what one ultimately longs for. Wine thus dulls the awareness of need and the concerns (and moderation?) that arise from such awareness. Perhaps Themistocles' activity in Persia represents in minor what he did in Athens. Although if we are to believe Hornblower, nobody got drunk during the Peloponnesian war (1986, 42).

regime, square the demands that the city made of him (imprisonment, expulsion, death) with any doubts he had as to the goodness of those demands. And because Themistocles did not stay to defend his cause, the political community he helped create need not justify why the demands it made of its leading citizen are just or good. Both city and citizen are free to remain ignorant of themselves and each other. Having apparently freed himself from the demands of noble superiority, Themistocles encounters the same problem as Pausanias: he is no longer sensitive to that profound neediness that is the precondition for the possession of genuine goods.

In light of Act II, Themistocles' political legacy is a political community that brings our radical neediness into relief only by forcing us to flee to "Persia," to flee to what is barbarian and thus to flee from Greekness, to flee from politics and thus from the awareness of our neediness that is the core of Greekness and of politics. Having exposed us to our deepest needs, Athenian imperialism as founded by Themistocles and as embodied in his example, leads us to turn away from a full confrontation of those needs. Themistocles' Athens allows us to raise the question of the goodness of political right only to dismiss its goodness as a mirage, as a false good. It thus preempts a direct and vital engagement with the question of the power and goodness of political right, of Greekness. In light of Act I, Themistocles' political legacy is a moderate political rule in accordance with noble superiority that results in distrust of the governed, and imprisonment, exile or death at their hands. As such, the career of Themistocles cannot fulfill the "Cylonian" need to come to a full and complete appreciation of political life. The goods sought by those concerned with their superior nobility, the good sought through ruling alone and unquestioned, must be found somewhere else. The shortcomings

of Themistocles' "two Acts" suggest that the answer may be found in a private life of some sort; a life unconcerned with political rule, but yet one that remains inextricably connected to Greek politics. The digression is connected to Thucydides' broader interest because it points to the necessity of Greek politics in coming to a full and genuine confrontation with one's neediness and the goods one thinks will satisfy that neediness. It points to the political horizon of theological considerations.

3. Conclusion: The Cylonian Question and Periclean Politics

We are led to conclude that in order to undertake an investigation of whether political goods are in fact good for one, one must not only understand the demands of political justice to be consistent with what nature demands for all men. One must also be aware of the hope that fulfilling such demands is in fact good for the particular citizen in question. According to the digression on sacral law, this awareness only seems possible if a citizen lives under a regime that articulates a notion of the common good whose goodness is natural. It is just such a regime that forces the particular individual to reflect on his particular good in light of what his regime claims to be naturally best for the class of human beings. Of course, this in turn compels one to reflect on the class of human beings as a whole, what they are, what constitutes their good and what role or part they play in the "whole." This in turn leads one to pursue an understanding of the "whole." Such reflection is not possible under the Archidamian or Pausanian reduction of one's good to one's own. For that matter, it is not possible under the Corinthian articulation either. And Themistocles' Athens seems insufficiently self-aware to supply the conditions necessary for genuine reflection. It does seem, however, that it is just such reflection on the class human beings that Thucydides' *History* promises to help supply.

One finds a defense of the common like that discussed above in Pericles' justification of the goodness of Athens embracing the necessity of the coming war. This is not to say that Pericles' articulation offers the true articulation. Nor does he explicitly defend political goods as naturally good. This comes later in the Funeral Oration. But his defense does rely on a conception of the common good that is ostensibly available to all men alike and whose goodness can be experienced by all men as such. This at any rate seems to explain Pericles' decision not to justify explicitly the goodness of freedom and empire. Periclean democracy is not a regime that depends on its citizens being insufficiently reflective. Rather it depends on them to reflect for themselves on the goodness of the ends the city pursues. When it comes to the individual's attempt to evaluate the ends of the regime for himself, the natural justification of the regime's authority should be understood as distinct from and superior to any regime that justifies its authority on what is merely given, or on what is contingent.

The regime-type of Periclean Athens thus supplies the political preconditions for judging with one's own two eyes whether the political goods touted by one's city are in fact good for one.[68] As a consequence, Periclean Athens also supplies the political conditions for subjecting the considerations of pious devotion to what is politically reasonable. One cannot overstate that the need to undertake an evaluation of the ends of the regime, and thus the importance of distinguishing between one's own and one's good, is absolutely vital to living well. It is the vital importance of this concern for the individual that compels us to subject considerations of piety and divine justice to the

[68] For another, parallel perspective on the importance of Periclean Athens to the discovery of nature and for the quest of what is natural, one should see Forde (1989, 47 (last full paragraph) and 49).

political horizon, or to subject our conduct towards the divine to considerations of what is by nature right for us.

If knowledge of political goods is as important to individuals as the fates of Cylon, Pausanias and Themistocles would suggest, and if the particular individual's concern to know his own particular good inspires him to know what is good for human beings generally, and thus what part humans play in the "whole," then Thucydides' digression indicates that boundaries between cities, regions, and peoples must always exist for the quest for self-knowledge to take place. That is, the articulation and defense of a universal and natural limit on the conduct of men must always be made by particular, limited and exclusive regimes. It is only through the expression and defense of such a limit on behalf of a particular community, such as Athens and not Sparta, or a particular people, such as the Greeks and not Persians, that the distinction between one's own and one's good comes to light. And it is only in light of this distinction that one can begin to evaluate the soundness of political goods. To defend devotion to Athens or to all Greeks, to show that such devotion is good, one would need to show that Athens and not Sparta, or Greece and not Persia, approximates to the highest degree those standards measuring all men and that service to those standards is good for one.

A universal or world community would in effect abolish the relevance of boundaries between Athens and Sparta or Greece and Persia. It would thus revive the dangers to which Themistocles succumbed, namely being insufficiently aware of the character of the individual's concern for his own good. Why? A regime that applies to all men would in effect neglect the importance of what constitutes the particular good of each individual citizen. The global regime ceases completely to speak of one's own: the

common good is the good of all, not the good merely of a part (which is always the case for cities even at their best). Thus in the case of Athens the common good is, at most, the good of all Athenians, not Spartans. But under a global regime, one would have to eschew all forms of exceptionalism since exceptionalism is at odds with the all-encompassing embrace of a universal common good. To defend devotion to a community whose dignity must accept as fundamentally equal the lowest as well as the highest, the ignoble as well as the noble, the good as well as the bad, one would need to cease making distinctions between high and low, noble and ignoble, good and bad.

Of course, once one stops making such distinctions (or exceptions), then the pursuit of what is good for one, or the need to judge whether political goods are good, becomes utterly irrelevant. Once one stops making these distinctions there is no longer any serious way to argue for a legitimate limit on the individual's conduct. How could one, on an unexceptional basis, legitimately argue for the goodness of serving such a limit? Thus what is right to do risks becoming identical with what one wants to do. Such a universal community no more offers the conditions for one to inquire into what is genuinely good for one than does a community whose authority is based on utterly contingent and particular circumstances. It is the coming into being of a particular community that understands itself in the light of a universal and natural limit that creates that "pathos of distance" necessary for the individual to undertake the quest for what constitutes one's particular genuine goods. The conditions that make possible treason, tyranny and even this surpassingly great war, along with all the suffering it entails, are also the conditions that make possible the quest for self-knowledge.

We are now in a better position to comment on the political character of Thucydides' speech. The genius of Periclean politics seems to consist in its marriage of the concern for genuine goods, which requires a rational demonstration of its goodness in terms of nature, or at least human nature, and the concern that those goods be good for the particular individual. Its genius consists in its marriage of the universal and particular. Such a marriage seems to engage the most powerful human concerns for living well. This should recall the observation at the end of Part I that Thucydides' speech itself might be characterized as a marriage of the universal and particular.

By recreating the effect of Periclean Athens through his treatment of speeches and deeds, Thucydides can engage the reader's concerns, leading the reader to investigate the goodness of Periclean Athens long after Pericles departs the drama of the *History*. One is thus never allowed to flee from Greekness. Surrounded by this Periclean web of universal and particular, of speech and deed, Thucydides' audience is invited to come to terms with the problems facing the Athenians' articulations of justice and injustice. Moreover, they must come to terms with the human basis of such articulations, and thus the human basis of the theological considerations that those articulations govern. We will elaborate on this political character at the close of chapter 6.

The conclusions drawn in chapter 4 (and Part I of this chapter) explained part of the necessity for Thucydides' treatment of speech and deed. Only through such an interplay between speech and deed as he creates, an interplay that eschews strict distinctions, could Thucydides capture and preserve the truth about politics to which his lessons pointed. The conclusions drawn in Part II of this chapter established the necessity of Thucydides' unique manner of procedure insofar as it was necessary to ground our

confidence in the preceding conclusions, a grounding that makes it possible to recover the truth about political power. Thus the manner of procedure that reflects his insights also preserves the possibility of and confidence in uncovering them. By preserving the possibility of a genuine engagement with and study of political life, Thucydides restores the importance and vitality of politics and political science in the face of their denigration. His concern to provide an education in politics dictates that he provide a political education. Of course, Thucydides restores the importance and vitality of politics and political science at the expense of the kind of wisdom such a study can provide. It will not provide an absolute, unqualified, or purely objective human wisdom since the effort to do so would mean the acceptance of those conditions that make human knowledge untenable. Thus the question we are left with at this point is "Why provide an education in politics at all?" To what end does the individual concerned with satisfying his own needs and his concern for power – concerns which are highlighted and excited by the brutality and violence of this war - seek genuine goods and the knowledge that such goods are genuine?

6

Thucydides' Intention in the *History*

Book I of Thucydides' *History* provides the reader with the key to understanding Thucydides' intent. It does so by supplying the reader with an education in politics. This education begins by introducing the problem of political history, namely how to uncover the truth about the ancient past and the origins of right without direct access to that past and right's origins. It then offers a glimpse of how the *History* will address such a problem. Through an analysis of the Greek and particularly the Athenian articulations of justice as power, Thucydides will reveal men's notions about right to derive from their experience of the noble or the beautiful, itself the product of human neediness and awareness of that neediness. But he must establish that a focus on the contradictory character of what men say about justice is in fact sufficient for drawing conclusions about first things. To this end, Book I draws theological considerations into the orbit of political justifications. And it subjects political justifications to the individual's need to know that the goods of politics are genuine goods. By pointing to this in the third and final part of Book I, Thucydides shows the consequences that follow from our contradictory expressions about justice and injustice. He thus supplies the basis for his confidence in his proposed solution and thus supplies confidence in the permanent utility and the surpassing greatness he claims for his work. Through his lessons about the importance of Periclean politics to the individual's pursuit of certain genuine goods, a "politics" reflected in his studied treatment of speeches and deeds, Thucydides preserves and thus makes possible a genuine engagement with and study of politics.

But as the last chapter concluded, if Thucydides' lessons and manner of procedure in Book I suggest that there exists no perfect solution to the problem of our neediness, then to what does the *History's* reflection of Periclean politics point the needy but thoughtful reader? What "goods" is he to seek? If Thucydides is to surpass the poets and the prose-writers he must present a positive account of the goods that are genuine. In order for him to preserve the possibility of a genuine engagement with and study of politics, he must provide, as a corollary, some evidence that such engagement and study is worthwhile. He must show that they meet the concern to possess genuine goods.

So as not to make too great a demand on the reader's patience it might help to anticipate here how Thucydides shows the engagement and study of politics to meet such concerns. One must first reconcile the individual's need for certain goods and the need to know that those goods are genuine with Thucydides' apparent conclusion that the world does not support things that are good simply. One must also factor in Thucydides' insistence on the importance of Periclean Athens, or his suggestion that the knower be a citizen of such a city, though perhaps not a partisan of such a city. In putting together these two requirements, one finds that the concern to possess genuine goods means eschewing false goods, and thus eschewing belief in a human "wholeness" or in universals that can not be known as such. The pursuit of genuine goods finds its measure of fulfillment in the individual's grasping the interplay between universal and particular, an interplay to which Thucydides' blurring of speech and deed (chapter 3) pointed and which characterizes man's moral and political world. It is this interplay that is preserved in the unique demands made by Periclean Athens.

Of course, being a citizen of such a regime depends on chance. The *History*, which reflects this interplay through Thucydides' methods, reduces this dependence on chance. Through his methods, the lessons he relates, and the connection between them, Thucydides preserves the political conditions necessary to address the individual's concern to possess goods and to know that those goods are genuine. The *History* further addresses such concerns because the interplay between universal and particular at its core most completely addresses and does the most justice to the individual's concerns for wholeness that give rise to a contradictory understanding of political right. The surpassing greatness of Thucydides' speech and the drama it unfolds consists in meeting this concern and engaging this concern for wholeness within the reader.

To spell out this understanding of Thucydides' intent as it is revealed in Book I and in Books II through VIII, this chapter will proceed in two parts. The first part addresses the relationship between Book I and Books II through VIII and proceeds in three steps. The first step provides a brief restatement of Thucydides' intent in Book I and notes how that intent dictates the overall movement and arrangement of the *History's* plan. The second step charts that movement and arrangement, and the third step sketches the content of that movement. The final part of this study proceeds in two steps. The first offers a final statement on Thucydides' intention in writing a single political work about a single political event. The second step brings to light Thucydides' contribution to the classical study of politics. It highlights Thucydides' contribution to a more complete understanding of classical political rationalism.

I. Thucydides' Intent and Books II through VIII

A. The Dynamics and Character of Thucydides' Speech

We can see how the education Thucydides provides in Book I plays out in Books II through VIII if we recall how the *History* preserves the possibility of a study of politics. As the investigation of the watershed moment of Book I showed, the only way we could bridge the gap between Thucydides' explicit comments and the envoys' explicit comments was to turn to Thucydides' account of the deeds fifty years prior to the Peloponnesian War. To conclude on the basis of this that the narrative of the deeds is superior to the speeches, or that the deeds of actors effectively govern the speeches of actors, would be a mistake. Such a conclusion would mean that the truth of Thucydides' work depends on unverifiable hearsay about the deeds prior to the war – events Thucydides himself did not and could not see for himself. This would mean rejecting the need to see for ourselves, a need that is at the basis of Thucydides' rejection of the accounts of past wars delivered by the poets. Instead the narrative of the deeds confirms the lessons learned from the speeches of political men, while at the same time making up a critical part – but only a part - of Thucydides' speech. As I tried to show, the account of the deeds in the Pentecontaetia offers us the truest and most complete insight into Thucydides' authorial intervention at I.72.

In the envoys' speech at Sparta, the effort to make one's worthiness evident required a candid and rational demonstration that ultimately relied on the supra-natural and supra-rational for support. Their candid attempt to reveal what "is" obscured the fundamental character of political life. Thucydides' treatment of speech and deed must therefore eschew such aspirations; his speech must distance itself from this character of

political speeches. It does this by capturing the interplay between universals and particulars that is inevitably obscured in any explicit or direct expression of what "is." Thucydides thus preserves what an explicit or direct investigation of politics loses. As we saw in chapter 3, his statements on his treatment of speeches and deeds promised just such an effort.

Thucydides cannot engage in explicit treatments of or discourses on political life since in doing so he would merely imitate the corrupting explicitness of political speeches about justice. As the explicitness of such speeches distorts the view of what generated them (i.e., the concern with the noble), so too will a direct, explicit investigation of politics inevitably corrupt the very object that makes possible political wisdom. Thucydides thus points to a danger facing any explicit exposition of politics (or any science that makes politics an explicit object of study), namely that it risks obscuring or corrupting the object it studies. He also shows that such explicit approaches may, in their very explicitness, commit the very fallacy they hope to expose. As such they might reinforce the belief in pure, unblemished wholes capable of satisfying our neediness.[1] But doesn't this conclusion lead us to relegate the speeches of the actors, as attempts to articulate what "is" just and what "is" unjust, to secondary importance? And if they are of secondary importance, or not as true as the deeds, then why not just read and study Thucydides' narrative?

[1] Euben claims that "Thucydides investigates and corrects what he regards as the naïve, distorted, and corrupted self-understandings and self-definitions articulated in the political practices of the actors in his History and the projected readers of it" (1986, 360). As noted, Euben bases this on his appreciation of Salamis to Athens's ability to theorize. But Euben misses the importance of Periclean *politics*. He misses the importance of Periclean politics because he abstracts from the concern for the good. The concern for the good, understood as a concern for wholeness, emerges for the reader in the speeches about justice. Thus Euben sees the "naïve, distorted, and corrupted" notions as something the reader's new understanding must get beyond.

Thucydides' insights into the character of moral and political categories do not only dictate that his speech reflects an interplay between speech and deed. They also dictate the peculiar character of that interplay or the specific form that that interplay must take. As chapter five concluded, a genuine engagement with and study of politics requires one's "regime" to demand that its citizens make sacrifices for it in the name of a universal and natural principle, or in terms of principle that applies to all men as men, and that can, in principle, be discovered by all men as such. It requires an "exceptional" regime, or extraordinary politics. If one's regime does not make such a demand, then the political effort to address the individual's concern for genuine goods must resort to hearsay (and thus the trust) that one's good is equal to "one's own." The bulk of chapter 4, Part III, and chapter 5, Part I, pointed to the difficulties facing a political community in attempting to supply such a rational standard.

The special importance of Periclean politics to Thucydides' work does not undermine this general point about political life. On the contrary, Periclean Athens represents for Thucydides the greatest attempt within the horizon of Greekness to address the concerns arising from the individual's radical neediness. That Periclean politics fails to satisfy such concerns does not lessen its importance. After all, Thucydides' speech must imitate Periclean politics if it is to engage his audience effectively. And it is the failure of Periclean Athens that makes his speech – i.e., the *History* -- and its surpassing greatness possible. For only by having the shortcomings of Periclean politics exposed, can the reader of Thucydides' *History* raise with the utmost seriousness the question of what is by nature good for him.

Thucydides' treatment of speech and deed reflects this Periclean political character because the very arrangement and drama of the *History* force the reader to *begin* from speeches about justice and injustice. As we saw in our discussion of his turn to the causes of the war, one must begin by discussing the allegations of Athens's injustice before one can come to the truth about Athenian imperial power. Perhaps more important, as we saw in our discussion of the problem of political history, the question of right as power compels us to start with what men say about justice and injustice. By compelling the reader to begin with the efforts of political actors to make universals manifest in speech, Thucydides invites the reader to begin with his own interest in what is true universally, apart from his interest in what is merely his own. The reader must therefore be invited to begin from the concern for some universal standard that exists independent of and superior to his concern for his own. Thucydides thus appeals to the reader's untutored belief in favor of a justice that "is" simply, and thus a category "justice" that cannot be understood in terms of any one particular member of that category.[2] Indeed, his manner of procedure could work, he could reasonably expect his reader to move from the speeches to the deeds and to appreciate the deeds in light of the speeches, *only* if he manipulated those concerns in the reader that are at work in citizens of Periclean Athens. And this means that his manner of procedure could be effective only if it successfully engaged the reader's concern to possess and thus know for himself those things that are genuinely good. [3]

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[2] See Strauss's comments about the nature of speeches both as universals (1964, 166) and as highlighting Thucydides' own speech (ibid. 165). On the relationship between Periclean Athens and Thucydides' thought see Strauss (1964, 229; 1989, 101).

[3] Isn't this what Thucydides' surprisingly immodest claims for his work appeals to – the desire on the part of the reader to come to some universal understanding about human affairs that governs (and thus measures and informs) one's own particular condition? Isn't it Thucydides' superior judgement about politics that we

To appeal to and refine the concerns for what is genuinely or naturally good, Thucydides' treatment of speeches and deeds exposes a gap between the truth about deeds and the *attempt* by political speeches to capture the truth about deeds. This gap provides the opening necessary to lead one to inquire into the truth about political matters by one's own unaided human reason. Unsatisfied by the contradictory things men say about what is just or wise or good, one must inquire for himself "What is in fact just?" or "What is good for the city and what is good for me?" To see the clear truth about politics (about what politics "is") one must transcend what men say about justice and injustice only after beginning from what they say. By so beginning, one can start out on the path to see the true character of those universal categories at the heart of politics and the true character of those human concerns at the root of such categories.

To sum up, the picture of politics Thucydides paints recreates the gap effected by Periclean politics between the universal demands of right and the individual's concern for his own particular good. If a direct, rigorous and serious study of politics springs from such a gap, then it would seem that political science – as an explicit investigation of politics - threatens to obscure and thus undermine those conditions that initially made the study of politics possible. But by preserving or reproducing political life as he does, Thucydides makes it possible for his careful readers to undertake that explicit study of politics that produced his own understanding. In other words, his insight into the character of moral and political categories allows him to highlight through his methods those conditions under which politics can be seen for what it is. He can thus preserve the possibility of a direct and explicit investigation of political life without distorting what

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seek to submit to when we turn to the *History*, a submission predicated on the possibility that Thucydides' promise to reveal the clear truth of those things that have happened and will happen will bear fruit?

such an investigation studies. His *History* -- that is his unique conception of political history -- articulates those pre-theoretical conditions that are necessary for a genuine theoretical engagement with politics. In this way, Thucydides' work justifies its own possibility. It supplies the conditions that make possible a kind of political investigation that in turn allows one to conclude that the conditions presented do in fact prevail.

To be specific, it provides an account of the human basis of politics and of religious convictions. The character of this account invites an investigation that allows one to confirm for one's self that the human basis hypothesized does in fact exist. Because the "human grounds" supply the necessary basis for the study of politics (see chapter 5 Part II, introduction; the existence of the divine invalidates claims to know what anything is), then the *History* makes the study of politics possible. Through his reticent or inexplicit treatment of politics (which itself must have been the result of an explicit and thematic approach to politics!), Thucydides intentionally preserves the possibility of a direct and thematic engagement with political life.

Because Thucydides' intent requires that he reject explicit teachings or discourses on politics, he cannot present an explicit or logical deduction of his thesis regarding the human origin of right and the theological considerations that our opinions about right govern. He must instead make a thoroughgoing effort to show how the political insights of Book I are embedded in the very fabric of political life. The *History* does this by presenting a lengthy portrayal of politics. This portrayal becomes more convincing the more it is placed before the audience and the more it is studied. It gains in persuasive power the more it engages the fundamental human concerns to live well and the more it

demonstrates the importance of the individuals' need to know what goods are genuine.[4] It is in this way that Thucydides' particular work and the single event his work relates takes on universal importance. Book I lays out the necessary conditions for the study of politics or what must be true if the *History* is to possess the universal utility that Thucydides claims for it. Books II through VIII serve this goal by showing that such conditions do prevail.

In chapter two, I offered a lengthy discussion of the scholarship's contributions to understanding Thucydides' intent and Book I's place in that intent. In the chapters that followed, I argued for a different reading of Book I and Thucydides' intent. But the effort to offer a new interpretation of Book I and Thucydides' intent also has implications for how one reads the rest of the *History*. My argument on Thucydides' intent and Book I allows me to make two contributions to the study of Books II through VIII. First, it makes it possible to understand the *History* as a complete and unified whole. As such, my reading differs from those interpretations that understand the *History* to be 1) unfinished and without unity or 2) unfinished but unified. As for the few scholars who understand the *History* to be 3) finished and unified,[5] my reading differs from theirs because my

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[4] For a similar reading of the didactic and pedagogic purpose of Thucydides' reticence or inexplicitness, one should see Connor (1984, the Introduction and Conclusion 231-6, 249). The differences between Connor's conclusion and my own stem from our different appreciation of the archaeology's teaching on power (cf. his 246,248 in this respect) and a different appreciation of Thucydides' explicit comments about his work (and in particular the tension between Thucydides' comments regarding the *to saphes* at I.1.2 and I.23.4). These differences lead me to conclude, contra Connor, that Thucydides offers a positive or affirmative defense of the goodness of the contemplative life, one based on his analysis of human need and his sensitivity to the human concern to know the clear truth of things. This defense can be found in the wisdom guiding Thucydides' construction of the *History* and to which his work points us. For similar views regarding Thucydides' inexplicitness, see White (1984, 88-90) and Euben (1986, 360-1). See my Part II, *section A* below.

[5] Scholars have long argued over the completeness and unity of the *History*. Most of those who understand the *History* to be unfinished and lacking unity (group 1 above) belong to the generation the preceded the landmark works of Romilly (1963) and Finley (1942) – works that recovered the basis for understanding the unified, if incomplete, nature of the work. Almost all scholars over the last six decades fall into the second group. While scholars present many different readings of the work's unity, almost all of them judge

study of Thucydides' intent uncovers the criteria under which the study of politics can begin and under which that study must conclude. My interpretation of Book I thus allows one to anticipate both the beginning and the end of the war.

My second contribution consists in how one understands the arrangement of the speeches and episodes of Books II through VIII. It follows from my understanding of the work's completeness and unity. I will discuss the substance of this arrangement below. My reading differs from most because it allows me to situate Thucydides' treatment of Athenian imperialism in the broader context of his theoretical concerns. It thus allows me to show how the classic work of political history offers a thoughtful articulation of the relationship between theory and practice while avoiding the obscurantism characteristic of those non-Straussian readings most similar to my own.[6]

As far as those readings of the *History* to which I owe the most -- the so-called "Straussian" readings--, my reading differs from theirs in terms of its ability to explain why Thucydides presents certain debates, speeches and episodes where he does. Thus it can explain why a speech as important as that of Diodotus comes where it does in Book III. It also explains why Thucydides reserves as much, if not more, "air-time" for Nicias as he does for Alcibiades. As a consequence, my understanding of the unity of Books II through VIII differs from that of Strauss. He argues that the *History* is divided into two parts: a comedy (the Pylos affair) and a tragedy (the Sicilian campaign), with the last Book constituting an epilogue (see Strauss 1964). For those familiar with "Straussian" scholarship on Books II through VIII, my interpretation does not require a complete

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the *History* to be incomplete on the basis of Book VIII's unique character: it is the only work that has no set speeches and it ends in the middle of a sentence. Because the most serious disputes over the work's completeness center on the character of Book VIII, I reserve my discussion of the secondary literature for B.2 below.

rethinking of their interpretations of Pericles, the Mytilinean debate, the Corcyrean civil war, the career of Alcibiades and so on. But at the very least, my reading of Book I illuminates the rest of the *History* in a way that others miss. As such, my reading requires one to re-calibrate the sense of the roles that the speeches and episodes of the *History* play in the entire work while highlighting their theoretical importance.

After presenting over 200 pages of analysis to Book I, it hardly needs to be stated that devoting a part of the last chapter to Books II through VIII is not meant to be comprehensive. The analysis presented here should thus be taken in the most conditional spirit. Moreover, it will be impossible for me to cite all of the relevant secondary literature on these passages since that would require footnotes nearly as long as this entire study. I will therefore limit myself to noting only the works that most influenced my reading.

B. From the Funeral Oration to Tissaphernes' Sacrifice: the Bookends of the History

To show that the conditions necessary for the study of politics do prevail, Books II-VIII must engage and refine the individual reader's concern for his own true good. To understand how Books II-VIII do this, one must keep in mind that the lessons of the *History* are made possible by certain political conditions, conditions that it itself reflects and effects. Because of Periclean Athens's importance to a genuine political education, we should not be surprised to find Thucydides begin Book II -- and thus the account of the war proper -- at the height of Periclean Athens and the apex of the interplay between universal and particular that this regime effects. But one of the lessons of Book I is that

[6] I have in mind here the conclusions drawn in the work of White (1984), Euben (1986, 1990), Grene (1965) and Connor (1984).

such political conditions were not always present. Greekness originally emerged from what was barbarian or from what was non-Greek. And like all political matter, no guarantee exists that Greekness, once on the scene, will remain on the scene. So while the conditions for political study emerge out of barbarism they may also recede into barbarism. In light of this we should not be surprised to see the *History* conclude when that Periclean interplay unravels, with one aspect of that interplay dominating or overtaking the other. If this is correct, then the rest of the *History* may be understood as a movement from one bookend to the other.

1. The First Bookend: Pericles' Funeral Oration

What Pericles' first speech implies, Pericles' third speech (his second in direct discourse), traditionally referred to as the Funeral Oration, must make explicit. Pericles' first speech comes with war on the horizon, before the advent of any hostilities and thus before any Athenian blood has been shed. Prior to any great sacrifice on the part of his fellow citizens, Pericles in this first speech can rely on the self-evident goodness of preserving the freedom and empire that their ancestors have won and which they have expanded. Thus in exhorting them to war, there is no need for Pericles to point out the dangers that lie ahead. But Pericles' second speech comes after the war is underway. While the customary funeral oration seeks to commemorate the first that have fallen in war (first casualties at II.22), Pericles delivers his speech the winter following their deaths (funeral oration begins at II.34). In the intervening months the Spartans continued to waste the homes and farmlands of the Athenian countryside, while the Athenians endured their cramped retreat within the confines of the city. During this "retreat," the Athenians did not remain idle. They imposed severe limits on their spending (II.24), they

sent a navy to waste parts of the Peloponnesus and battled the Spartan Brasidas (II.25), they dispatched a navy to ravage parts of Euboea (II.26), they seized Aegina and displaced all inhabitants (II.27), they formed an alliance with the Odrysians and Macedonians (II.29), they took the Corinthian town Solium, they deposed the tyrant of Astacus, they subdued Cephalonia, and with the "whole power of the city" they invaded Megara (II.30-1). Thus while the first Athenian casualties were few and while they fell in an otherwise insignificant skirmish with Boeotian cavalry, Pericles' commemoration of them occurs after the Athenians had seen no small amount of action and had risked no small sacrifices.

It should come as no surprise then that Pericles would not rely as easily as he once did on the self-evident goodness of preserving Athens's freedom and empire.[7] At the same time, we must recall that such an explicit defense is crucial to our concern to know that the goods we seek are in fact genuine goods. It is with the urgency of this concern that we must listen to Pericles' golden words. For if his articulation of the natural goodness of fighting and dying for Athens should fail to address our particular concerns for goods that are not just good for us as particular citizens of some particular city, but as human beings, then we must wonder on what basis, if any, his defense rests.

Pericles must commemorate the dead at the beginning of what will likely be a long and massive military conflict (see Pericles' analysis at I.141.5). While he must address the concerns of his audience – concerns no doubt focusing on their mortality and the mortality of their loved ones - he must not inflame them. After all, he must make those in his audience willing to run the same risks as those who died. Pericles strikes this

[7] Cogan presents a much gloomier picture of circumstances at Athens at the time of the Funeral Oration (1981, 40-1).

balance by explicitly appealing to those hopes to which their greatest fears give rise. He manipulates their fear and anxiety about their own neediness, vulnerability and mortality in order to excite their hopefulness for immortality and invulnerability. And he excites their hopefulness for immortality and invulnerability through his defense of Athens and Athenian power: through devotion to Athens and Athenian power, one will achieve immortal glory. Pericles can persuade his fellow Athenians to run the greatest risks on behalf of Athens only if he can persuade them to understand their interests in terms of what is genuinely good for them and not in terms of what is their own. His ability to do this hinges on his effort to persuade his audience that Athenian power can in fact deliver what they believe to be genuinely good, and thus what they think will satisfy their own deepest needs as humans.

According to Pericles' speech, the basis of Athenian power consists in her superior nobility. Athens's noble character not only makes her worthy of her citizens' sacrifice, it also offers the means to satisfying the individual's deepest needs. [8] One might paraphrase Pericles' call to arms as follows: Athens deserves that you run the greatest risks because she is devoted to and has secured for her citizens the greatest human goods, namely freedom from need and fear, and thus an unrivalled self-sufficiency. If you fall in

[8] This connection between Athenian nobility and Athenian power recalls the earlier treatment of nobility and justice as power in Book I and offers further support for my argument about the presence of this theme in Thucydides' work. That it occurs at the heart of one of the most prominent – perhaps *the* most prominent – speeches in the entire *History* supports my claim regarding the importance of this theme. Saxonhouse understands Pericles to attribute Athenian power to their regime. She thus misses Pericles' distinction between the succeeding generations, all of which lived under the same regime (1978, 468). For a reading of power and nobility or virtue in Pericles' Funeral Oration similar to my own see Orwin (1994, 18, 22 and 23 especially), who at first glance seems to call this connection into question. See also Wickersham (1994, 69). He writes that Pericles "does not conceive of *dunamis* [power] as just plain *dunamis*, unattached and with no implications beyond itself; he thinks it is a result of *arete* [virtue], of *tropoi* [character or ways] which are in themselves praiseworthy. This is how he removes every ethical obstacle to being proud of the empire." Of course, it is a question if one can be proud of anything of which one is not deserving or worthy. And could one be deserving or worthy without the possession of some ethical traits?

love with Athens (or her power) and serve her cause she will maintain the noble self-sufficiency that makes her capable of preserving your own immortal glory.

According to the speech, Athens's noble self-sufficiency manifests itself in four ways. First, Athens's laws and institutions secure her citizens' private and political freedom (II.37). The equal freedom to engage in political life produces a democracy in name, but is in practice (or in effect) the rule of the virtuous and the capable. The Athenians' democratic equality is thus consonant with the belief in superior political virtue. This political freedom is bolstered by a private freedom that is secured by their equality before the law. Thus private citizens, equally subject to written law regarding injuries, all refrain from harming each other. And through fear of the shame of violating unwritten laws, they equally refrain from personal jealousies and casting personal offenses. The ugliness of partisan politics, excessive litigation and personal insult does not mar the beauty of Athenian political life.

Second (II.38), Athens's great wealth and maritime prowess affords her access to the markets and goods of the Mediterranean and the Caucasus. She thus releases her citizens from the press of necessity, allowing them to delight in the bounty afforded by harvests from the known world. Consequently, her citizens can not only relish the freedom from having to labor for their daily needs, but they can also savor the diversions afforded by games and sacrifices to the gods. [9]

[9] Their freedom from the press of necessity and thus need turns their sacrifices into mental diversions whose chief aim is pleasure. Being so freed from need they no longer need to focus on the gods so seriously, nor do they need to moderate themselves as those who celebrated the Diasia did.

Third, Athens possesses a liberal disposition towards friends and foreigners (II.39). Confident in her courageous nature, [10] she need not zealously cling to or otherwise conceal her particular institutions or practices out of the fear that others, through imitation, will use those institutions and practices against her. To best the Athenians as a whole, one must possess a superior nature; convention alone cannot outshine the gifts nature bestows. She can thus throw open the gates of her city for all humans to enter and enjoy. Athens's natural courage (II.39.1, 39.4) thus supplies the basis for her liberal disposition.

Such liberality reveals itself most clearly in the Athenians' willingness to spend their private wealth freely on their city and their confederates (II.40.4-5).[11] This liberality also reveals itself, perhaps less clearly, but more importantly, in their generous disposition towards rational deliberation (II.40.2-3). Because they lend themselves to reasoned deliberation prior to acting, the Athenians show themselves to be concerned with wise action and good action and thus action that does not merely serve their own cause. By freeing them from a concern with their own, the Athenians' natural courage allows them to pursue what is good for men as such. It is just such freedom that allows Athens to be the school of Greece (II.41.1). But what about Pericles' claim that the Athenians refuse to lose themselves in the delicacy of philosophy (*philosophoumen*) or to forget themselves in the beautiful (*philokaloumen*) (II.40.1)? Doesn't this speak to an un-

[10] While Pericles refers to the Athenians' courage as the product of *tropon* (habits, ways or customs), and not the more forceful *phusis* (nature) (II.39.4), he clearly distinguishes the kind of courageous "habits" the Athenians possess from those of the Spartans, which follow from the law or custom or convention (here *nomon*). Natural courage is then clearly implied if not clearly stated.

[11] Pericles' discussion of Athenian generosity here calls to mind Aristotle's discussion of magnanimity in his *Nicomachean Ethics* 1124b9-17. Aristotle notes that the magnanimous prefer to bestow benefits rather than to receive them insofar as the reception of benefits indicates one's neediness and thus one's inferiority. The interest in performing generous actions is thus best understood as an interest in demonstrating one's

Athenian frugality? Their moderation in these respects actually constitutes a sign of their liberality. The Athenians don't surrender themselves to the delights of beauty and philosophy, as voluptuaries surrender themselves to pleasure, because they fully possess, or are in control of, themselves. And because they fully possess themselves, they can avoid the illiberal abandonment of their senses and wits.

Finally, Athens's surpassing self-sufficiency consists in her unrivalled power (II.41.2-4). Such power not only frees her from the threat of foreign enemies, but it forces the "highways of the world" to bend to her design (II.41.4). It thus allows her to leave behind permanent monuments of both good and evil that are to signify her superior self-sufficiency (II.41.4).[12] Athens's glorious reputation is thus freed from depending on the corruptible and distorting poetry of Homer. Athenian power supplies the basis for the full and complete disclosure of her superior character; her power and the effects of her power surpass the power of speech to disclose her worth.

Unlike the Spartan King Archidamus and the Corinthians who rest the goodness of their counsel on the particular and contingent goodness of Spartan and Peloponnesian institutions, Pericles spells out for both citizens *and foreigners* the noble superiority of Athens. Far from relying on the authority of what is uniquely Athenian to establish the goodness of his counsel, Pericles defends the goodness of Athens in terms of genuine human goods which are available to all men as men and whose goodness all men as men can understand. One does not need privileged access to the particular authority of some regime or tradition to appreciate freedom from fear and want, or the pleasure of leisure

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superiority. I am indebted to Ronald C. Lee and his paper on "Justifying Empire" (2000) for pointing out this passage in Aristotle to me.

[12] Bolotin (1986, 20) makes the excellent point that the monuments of "evil" Athens will leave behind not only refer to what she inflicted on others, but to the sufferings she endured to achieve her empire.

and diversion. And one need not rely on hearsay either to appreciate the goodness of being free from the anxious anticipation of danger or to enjoy the self-confidence that allows one to meet without trembling future threats.

But if all of this is true, then doesn't Pericles' oration serve as an argument for *living in the city* rather than an argument *for dying for the city*? According to his speech, the greatest good available to the individual lies in the very moment in battle he dies. In the very effort to exact revenge on Athens's foes one both serves the common cause and receives more wealth than one would ever need (II.42.4). How? Those who give their lives so selflessly win an "unwritten epitaph" in the minds of all men that preserves their eternal greatness for all to see (II.43.2-3). Athens thus rewards those who die by supplying them with immortal glory. She supplies a self-sufficiency far out-lasting that available to those others "unfortunate" enough to enjoy the product of their sacrifice. Because their glory is lasting it is invulnerable to the fluctuations of chance. Her citizens' sacrifice snatches for themselves in particular a certain glory from what would be an otherwise uncertain future.[13] Dying for Athens allows the indecent and criminal to win the permanent mark of virtue and it liberates those who enjoy all the blessings of life from the unforeseeable path of chance (II.42.3). It allows them "to quit while they are ahead" (see also II.43, end).[14]

All of this can be the case only if one dies serving that particular city that embodies and secures genuine human goods. It is in this vein that Pericles makes his final statement of the Funeral Oration proper. He notes that one can find the most virtuous men where the greatest rewards lie (II.46.1). Because the greatest rewards are made possible

[13] See Orwin (1994, 19).
[14] On this point I am indebted to Dr. Arthur Melzer's comments on an earlier draft of this section.

through Athens and through service to Athens, then men's virtue, the singular good of the individual, cannot be understood in terms of the particular or one's own. The singular good of the individual can only be understood in terms of the genuine human goods Athens embodies and secures. Thus at the very beginning of the war and the *History* proper we find a rational articulation of the Athenian citizen's good in terms of the goods of all men as men. Pericles' effort in the Funeral Oration represents *the* political effort to establish in terms all men can see for themselves that the voluntary observation of a legitimate limit on self-interest (in this case, fighting and dying for such an exceptional city) constitutes one's good.[15]

2. The Second Bookend: Tissaphernes' Sacrifice

Even at the outset there is reason to wonder if Pericles' articulation will hold together. To mention just one consideration now, his emphasis on the goods that an individual can win through his service to his city runs the risk of undermining the concern with the common good. By inflaming the individual's concern for his own good, one will no longer come to understand his good in terms of what is good for Athens, but – to the extent that one thinks of Athens at all - will understand the good of Athens in terms of one's own interests. Pericles' political charge, Alcibiades, makes just such a reversal in his speech to the Athenians in Book VI. He states that he, of all Athenians, most deserves to lead the Sicilian expedition because the city benefits most from his pursuit of glory and honor (VI.16); the common good now follows from the pursuit of his particular good. It is not unreasonable to think that such a reversal in speech made by

[15] For accounts of Pericles' effort to achieve a unity between individual and state, see Immerwahr (1973, 27) and Orwin's treatment of the Funeral Oration (1994, 19-26). Palmer (1982) also provides a useful and sensitive treatment of how "the city...may ask its citizens to sacrifice their lives for the sake of its

Pericles' political "heir" might also be the offspring of Pericles' original articulation. In the wake of Alcibiades' political career, a career that embodied this reversal, we see the common good that unites Athens's citizens begin to dissolve. It should not surprise us therefore if the *History* details the short shelf-life of Pericles' political vision and thus the frailty of Periclean Athens. In other words, if the *History* supplies the conditions under which a genuine engagement with and study of political life is possible, it should also articulate the limits of such engagement and such study.

The perplexing character of Book VIII and its much-debated conclusion offer support of this point.[16] Book VIII stands out from the rest of the *History* since it is the only Book of the *History* that includes no speeches delivered in direct discourse (the closest one gets to a speech is that of Pisander, which Thucydides merely reports; see VIII.53). If it is the case, as I argued in chapter three, that universals exist essentially in

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preservation" (825). My treatment of Pericles' Funeral Oration, I believe, is consistent with that of Palmer's.

[16] The character of Book VIII is a hotly disputed topic among Thucydidean scholars, largely because it is considered to constitute the chief evidence that the *History* is incomplete. See Romilly (1963, 7); Finley argues that the work is incomplete, Thucydides having died before he finished writing or revising it (1942, 77), as does Immerwahr (1973, 16). For similar arguments, see Gomme (1937, 178), Hornblower (1986, 7), and Proctor (1980) among others. For an excellent, albeit general, response to those who argue for the incompleteness of the *History*, see Stewart Flory's 1990 article.

On the absence of quoted speeches in Book VIII as a sign of Thucydides' artistry and the completeness of the work, see Strauss (1974, 12-3). Pouncey, in arguing for the coherence of the whole, albeit incomplete (1980, 38) work, contends that Book VIII shows the "unraveling of the communal threads that makes public deliberation possible" (ibid. Preface xii; it is the final term of a progression in the work (*ibid.* 38)); see also his comments about the circular-destructive character of human nature in ibid. xiii. For agreement with Pouncey's thesis see Rood (1998, 200-1). Rood also understands Thucydides' work to be incomplete (286, fn's 96, 97), but intending to show the fall of Athens (286) and to draw a link between Themistocles and Pausanias, on the one hand, and Alcibiades and Lysandros, on the other (287). For a similar conclusion, see Rawlings (1981, 60, 99-100). Connor (1984), while arguing that the work is unfinished, contends that Book VIII develops many of the themes noted in my treatment and elsewhere: "the breakdown of civic unity, the internalization of violence, the close connection between domestic and foreign policy, and the struggles for prominence by politicians of every persuasion..." (218). Connor's discussion (219) of the Spartan treaties in Book VIII and the theme of enslavement (Sparta agreed to allow the Great King to dominate Greek cities in Asia Minor in return for Persian aid) supports my own discussion of the breakdown of "Greekness" in this book. See also White (1984, 68, 87-8) and Euben (1990), who both contend that Book VIII reflects the final dissolution of communal discourse and thus meaning in Athens and Greece at large. See Cogan (1981) for a similar understanding of this Book. He understands the incomplete work to detail the emergence and evolution of ideology in the Greek world.

speech alone, then Book VIII marks the retreat of universals from Thucydides' *History*. Insofar as Book VIII consists in a narrative of the deeds of the twenty-first year of the war, and to the extent that the realm of deeds is the realm of particulars, then Thucydides' work closes with a receding of universals and the predominance of particulars. That is to say that the *History* concludes with the disappearance of those means by which distinctions – and thus categories and universals – are made.

Before Greekness emerged no sensible distinction between Greeks and barbarians existed (I.3). Thus before there were "Greeks" there were neither Greeks nor barbarians.[17] Since the Greek conception of justice emerges most clearly in political speeches about what constitutes a legitimate limit to the individual's pursuit of his self-interest, then as political speech goes, so too goes the means for making Greekness manifest. Before Greekness was made manifest in speech, there were only deeds, or particulars undifferentiated by the existence of categorical distinctions (and thus not even particulars in the strict sense). As speech goes, so too goes the distinction between Greek and barbarian.

In this light one can understand Thucydides' rather strange conclusion to his work. At the very close of the *History*, we find a barbarian – the Persian satrap Tissaphernes – sacrificing to the Greek goddess Diana (VIII.109.1). Tissaphernes originally comes on the scene as an ally of the Spartans in their war against Athens (VIII.5). Later Tissaphernes, working with the exiled Alcibiades, sought to hinder Sparta's progress in the war with Athens in an effort to pit the two cities against each other (VIII.57). Tissaphernes' sacrifice to Diana at Ephesus comes as he seeks to clear

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[17] See Strauss (1989, 83; 1964, 156).

himself of accusations of such wrong doing by the Spartans (VIII.108, an apology intended for the actions of his lieutenant Arsaces). Thus at the close of the *History*, we find a barbarian, and a Persian at that, sacrificing to a Greek goddess on his way to justify his actions before those men whose chief claim to glory is the Greek invention of the common good.

Tissaphernes' motive in making the sacrifice is clear. He wants to maintain good ties with the Spartans so that he can work more effectively against the Athenians than his fellow satrap, Pharnabazus (VIII.109.1). No longer trusting in and relying on Tissaphernes, the Spartans sought assistance from his fellow Persian governor and "competitor" for the Great King's good graces (VIII.6). In other words, Tissaphernes wants to outshine a fellow Persian political chief to enhance his own standing in the eyes of Darius. Persia's willingness to involve herself in the Peloponnesian war - funding the Spartan navy and promising to help the Athenians - was part of her continual effort to extend the influence of the Great King over Ionia. Tissaphernes' efforts thus serve Persian aggrandizement. But because Tissaphernes does not come to sight as someone seriously concerned with anything outside *his own* advantage (consider his initial reasons for offering aid to the Spartans, VIII.5), it is not clear that he takes seriously either the good of Persia (which is in reality the good of King Darius) or the Spartan conception of justice.[18] Because his sacrifice serves his own interests, it is an empty sacrifice.

One should note that in Tissaphernes' effort to put justice in the service of his own self-interests, the distinctive boundary between the particular gods of the Greeks and

[18] One might chalk up the fact that he sacrifices to a Greek goddess in a Greek temple (*thusian epoiesato*: VIII.109) - something that would otherwise be unnecessary for a man who doesn't recognize any limits to his own interest – as a sign of his strategic genius: "See, Spartans, how genuine my desire is to assist your interests? I even sacrificed to a Greek goddess." Orwin (1994, 11, fn. 25) seems to suggest that

the particular gods of the Persians seems to dissolve. What is parochial thus relinquishes its claim to superiority or universality. Unless Tissaphernes devoutly believes in the gods of the Greeks, then his sacrifice to a Greek goddess, from the perspective of pious Greeks such as the Spartans, amounts to an act of impiety. It is central to the belief in the divine that one's gods are the true gods and thus universal gods and therefore superior to any other deities whose divine authority must be merely asserted. To recognize foreign deities as adequate judges of one's case, one must equivocate on the question of the divine authority of one's own. It therefore means rejecting the tradition and conventions that vouch for their divine authority and which are to be believed and obeyed because they are one's own. Such equivocation therefore means rejecting the identification of one's good in terms of one's own. But if such equivocation on the universality of one's gods means that one no longer understands what is good in terms of one's own, then doesn't this allow considerations of nature to enter the picture? Isn't Tissaphernes' apparent rejection of the special authority of Persia's gods and his apparent embrace of Greek deities the first step towards inquiring about natural universal standards?

In the earlier treatment of Periclean Athens (5.III.B.3 "Conclusion"), I argued that for considerations of nature to enter the picture one must pursue genuine goods in terms of one's particular nature. This means, in the first place, that one can not merely pursue natural goods "as such," or goods that were good simply, good in and of themselves. One has to pursue goods that are good *for* one's self. In the second place, it means that one must approach the question of one's good in light of the distinction between one's contingent good (as a person who happens to live in this time and place, who inherits a

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Tissaphernes' sacrifice represents some small Hellenization of a barbarian. This would require him to make a genuine sacrifice, which I do not think he does.

particular legacy and tradition) and one's good as a particular human being. So while one must pursue goods that are genuinely good, they must be genuinely good *for* one as a particular human being.

In this case, the Persian satrap does not voluntarily submit to the dictates of Diana because he hopes that through service to her he can reveal and confirm his superior nature. Tissaphernes approaches the divine justice of the Greeks much like the Medizing Pausanias approached the Spartans' respect for justice - as a means to further aggrandizing himself. Because Tissaphernes' "sacrifice" is self-aggrandizing, it does not provide the first step to inquiring about nature. In this Persian's deed, the universal authority of both nature and one's contingent traditions become subordinate to the individual's concern for his own self-interest. His sacrifice thus indicates ignorance about both the importance of one's particular good and the concern that one's own goods be genuine, human goods. The boundaries that distinguished exceptional or extraordinary politics from unexceptional or ordinary politics begin to fade.

This should not surprise us. The absence of speeches in Book VIII, the absence of that means whereby universal categories are made manifest, prepares us for the blurring of distinct lines between Greekness and barbarism at the close of the work. If the existence of Greekness is necessary for universals to exist and if the existence of universals are necessary for political science to emerge, then as the distinction between Greekness and barbarian goes so to go the conditions for political science. If Book I reveals that Thucydides intends to preserve the possibility of a direct study of politics through his reflection of the universal-particular interplay that political study requires, then as universals recede from view, so too does the possibility of Thucydides continuing

his *History*. Thucydides knows that the war rages for another six years, but this fact is hardly relevant from the perspective of his intent. The Greekness whose emergence made this war so surpassingly great has already disappeared from view.[19] Thucydides must conclude his *History* when he does in the way he does. By understanding the lessons of Book I as we do, we are better prepared to appreciate the subtle conclusion to Thucydides' work.

C. The Argument Between the Bookends

The account of the war proper very nearly begins with Pericles' Funeral Oration delivered at the peak of Periclean Athens. It ends with the total absence of direct discourse and a barbarian sacrificing to a Greek goddess. Perhaps then the rest of the *History*, as a text whose unity has been thoroughly debated, should be understood as a movement from one bookend to the other, from the dawning of politics and its study in Greekness to their setting in the cloudy and darkening blur between Greeks and barbarians. In keeping with Book I's critical perspective on the failure of politics to meet successfully human concerns for wholeness, we should not be surprised to see a thorough treatment of the shortcomings of politics with respect to this concern. In keeping with the

[19] To this one might point to the Athenian naval victory at Kynossema (VIII.106) as an objection. After the devastating loss of their "ally" Euboea (VIII.95-6), which not only entailed the destruction of many Athenian ships but represented the loss of one of Athens's main sources of sustenance, the Athenian navy won a major victory in the 21st year of the war. So great and unexpected was the victory that after hearing the news the Athenians thought that they might yet survive the war despite their crushing defeat in Sicily, the internal rivalries in the city and the loss of Euboea. Does not this great Athenian victory (three chapters before the close of the work), along with Tissaphernes' sacrifice to a Greek goddess, suggest a more optimistic, more pro-Greek, pro-Athenian ending than the one I present? But Thucydides has already informed us that Athens will lose the war (II.65), that the democracy will be dismantled and that her empire will be destroyed. This Athenian resurgence clashes with the general sense of decay and loss that characterizes the close of the work. Instead of constituting evidence of Thucydides' unfinished work, I think a careful reading of the Athenian response to their victory will actually reinforce my reading of the "2nd Bookend." Suffice it to say here that the Athenians understand their victory to establish (or re-establish) their superior power, which is to say that they measure their power (or character) in light of the goods they possess, in light of their victory. But according to the sketch presented in chapters 3 and 4, such

non-tragic view of Book I, we should also find within the *History* some indication that a genuine human good exists.

1. The Decline of Pericleanism

1. a. The Funeral Oration Revisited

If there is such a movement, then there must be something within Pericles' Funeral Oration and the peak of Periclean Athens that lends itself to the blurring between Greekness and barbarian. There must be something within Pericles' articulation of the particular goods of individual Athenians in terms of their nature as human beings that lends itself to the eventual subordination of the universal (be it natural or contingent) to the particular. In the opening to B.2 "Second Bookend", I suggested that Pericles' emphasis on the goods individuals win by sacrificing for Athens threatened to undermine a citizen's ability to understand one's own good in terms of the common good of Athens. But the problem runs deeper than his emphasis on the rewards Athens makes available.

In the Funeral Oration, Pericles attempts to bridge the gap between the good of the city and the good of the individual citizen by appealing to Athens's power. It is Athens's power that makes her, of all cities, worthy of one's sacrifice and allows her to vouchsafe the immortal glory her citizens win through such sacrifice. In the end, however, Athens's ability to bend the world to her design and to secure the freedom and imperial sway of her citizens is rightly understood as the product of her citizens' natural courage and daring (II.39). Without these qualities of individuals, the city would lack the men – and thus the means – to leave behind immortal monuments of good and evil. And without her natural courage, she would lack that liberal disposition that allows her to

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a measure appeared barbarian. Greekness understood one's character as a claim to possess goods and not one's character in light of one's possession of goods.

educate all of Greece. But Pericles' comments about Athens's natural courage and daring indicate that they are the product of the Athenians' sense of shame.

Pericles claims that those citizens who are worthless (*achreion*, II.40.2; literally useless) are good for nothing. Such men are good for nothing because they are unwilling to struggle against their own poverty. They are insufficiently mindful of the shame (*aischron*, II.40.1) that accompanies the blithe acceptance of one's neediness, dependence and vulnerability. Thus, Pericles states that the Athenians possess wealth not for show but for use and particularly for use in the cause of the city. Those who are sufficiently mindful of the shame that comes from accepting one's neediness, dependence, and vulnerability will pursue wealth and will put that wealth in the service of the city. Those who are *most useful* for the city, by implication, will pursue the greatest forms of wealth, and thus pursue the greatest form of freedom from need and dependence. And the greatest freedom from need, dependence and vulnerability consists in eschewing all forms of material goods, including one's own body and one's own life (see *aischron* at II.42.4 in connection with "bodies", *toi somati*). Thus those citizens who offer their lives in the effort to exact revenge on the enemies of Athens are most self-sufficient. These are the men Pericles calls the most virtuous and it is such men who receive the greatest rewards (II.46).

As the precondition for such rewards, these Athenians must accept as shameful the failure or refusal to struggle against their neediness, dependence and vulnerability. Awareness of their profoundly needy nature and their shame at such neediness are the bedrock of the Athenians' willingness to offer their allies money, to lend themselves to reasoned deliberation and to countenance the greatest dangers. All of those qualities that

make Athens worthy of sacrifice and able to secure the goods men want are based on shame. And this means that Pericles' effort to marry the universal human goods that Athens embodies and offers, on the one hand, and one's own particular good, on the other hand, also depends on shame. This poses severe difficulties.

In the first place, the harmony of Athens's domestic life that Pericles extols is not secured through freedom, but through fear of punishment for violating the written law and fear of shame for violating unwritten laws.[20] Furthermore, Athens's democratic principle seems secured less by the belief in the fundamental equality of all men than by that personal vanity and envy of his audience which Pericles fears will detract from the credibility of his praise for the fallen (II.35, 45). Envy of others' success and fear that others will surpass and dominate them - not the concern to be led by the most qualified citizen - explains the Athenian citizens' attachment to democratic practices. Moreover, the sense of shame at their own neediness and dependence on external goods like money, family, and even their own bodies, seems to make many in Pericles' audience unwilling to grant that others could be so selfless (II.35.2-3). Because they find it so hard to sacrifice voluntarily their money, family and lives, they are reluctant to believe that others could do so. Because one's immortal glory depends on future generations who are willing to honor and glorify the dead (II.45). And because that requires one to concede

[20] The shame behind their willingness to sacrifice themselves may be the same shame that secures the beauty of Athenian domestic life. In the case of their democratic practices, the Athenians look to virtue and not to possessions. To judge one's excellence by one's possessions implies that self-sufficiency ultimately requires and thus depends on external goods (see the references to *pleon* and *penian* in II.37). True excellence, according to Pericles' remarks, consists in what one can do *without*. (See Dover 1973, 38.) This explains their emphasis on individual qualifications and not property. Such shame may also preserve their social equality. It is shameful to try to grab another's goods for one's self since by doing so one admits to one's needy and vulnerable nature. Moreover, because they are all equally trying to liberate themselves from need and dependence, it is shameful for the rich and the poor, the well-born and the low-born, to engage in personal insults. Their inequalities, as the source of such animosity, are irrelevant in light of all Athenians' fundamental neediness. To grant that such inequalities merit anger, insult or injury is to grant

the superiority of another, the envy of others and shame at their own neediness might prevent future Athenians from granting to past citizens the goods of honor and glory that Pericles promised.

Athens faces a similar problem with her allies. As Pericles points out, Athens's friendship keeps their allies in a constant state of gratitude (II.40.4). But as he admits, gratitude can be a burden. It is just this burden, which is a sign of one's neediness, that the Athenians seek to avoid by offering such gifts. Their "friendship" thus amounts to the effort to keep their allies subordinate to them. By imposing such burdens (or needs) on their "friends," the Athenians cannot hope to win the admiration and praise of their allies that their glorious reputation requires.[21] Far from grounding their liberality, their shame amounts to a contraction of character.

This sense of shame also poses a problem for rational deliberation. Genuine deliberation about the proper course of action requires an openness as to what will best satisfy one's interests. And this requires a willingness to ask what in fact constitutes one's genuine interests. If the Athenians are concerned with wise action and good action and thus not action that merely serves their own particular cause, then they need to be willing to delay action until they know what is good for them. But their shame preempts such deliberation. Athenian deliberation presupposes the importance of action and the goodness of the ends action seeks to effect. The priority of action, predicated on the shame of their neediness, cuts short genuine deliberation. It takes for granted knowledge

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the importance of and dependence on external goods. It is just such dependence that the Athenians, though their shame of it, strive to overcome (see, in this context, *aischunen*, II.37.3).

[21] J.T. Hooker (1974) argues that Pericles, in referring to the generosity Athens bestows on her "allies," suggests that she puts herself in a "stronger position" (as opposed to a "firmer friend"; *bebaioteros*). She implicitly invokes the rites of "guest-friendship." Hooker's point about the dual implications of extending *charis* to "allies" supports my ultimate reading of Pericles' speech, even though I think his rendering of

of the character of human need and what will in fact satisfy that need. Far from constituting their wakefulness, their reason serves the dreams of action. Indeed, what Pericles promotes is so far from genuine wakefulness, so far from genuine self-awareness, that even the greatest good Athens has to offer her citizens – dying in service of her – will not even be perceived by them (theirs is an *anaisthetos thanatos*, an "unfelt/unperceived death" II.43.6).

This lack of genuine reflection is not entirely incongruous with Athenian daring. In fact, Athenian daring and courage seems to require its absence. Pericles says that those who clearly perceive what is dangerous and what is pleasant and are not turned from danger are justly judged to be strongest with respect to soul (II.40.3). But if the Athenians were convinced that dying for Athens did in fact secure their greatest goods as individuals, then one would not need daring to make the sacrifices for which Pericles calls (see his references to daring at II.40.3, 41.4, 43.1 twice). The mere desire for one's own good, informed by knowledge of what constitutes one's genuine self-interest, might be sufficient. Knowledge of one's genuine interests eliminates the gamble; there is no risk – and thus no daring – in placing a $50 "bet" on a guaranteed return of $100. The risk – and thus the daring – enters when one's money is not guaranteed, when one may either win $100 or lose $50. The greater the risk and the greater the daring required to make the bet, the less certainty there is that placing the bet is good for one (or that it will pay off). This means that one of Athens's chief strengths, her daring, is predicated on the lack of knowledge that the goods Athens offers her citizens are in fact good. Her daring follows from a shame that prevents a genuine confrontation with one's needs. She must

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bebaioteros is perhaps too cynical (168-9). It does insufficient justice to the sense of graciousness that Pericles' praise of imperial Athens emphasizes.

remain uncertain whether the gamble she makes will "pay off" even if she ends up victorious. Seen in this light, her daring becomes a questionable virtue.[22] To circumvent this problem one needs to overcome the shame preventing genuine deliberation.

It should not surprise us that Pericles' Funeral Oration, dependent as it is on this sense of shame, will not provide us with the means to overcoming it. After all, the very signs of Athens's eternal glory – those monuments of good and evil – that Pericles bids his audience to leave behind, are mute. While he may want them to testify to Athenian greatness they cannot instruct us, as Homeric poetry can. As for those whom Pericles calls to make these sacrifices, their individual concerns – which *he appeals to* - receive no corresponding individual attention. Pericles' speech amounts to the effort to get his audience to forget themselves, as those who died forgot their bodies, in the effort to actualize themselves. Thus unlike the city that is free to leave behind monuments of her greatness, whether of good or evil, the Athenian women are to make no impression (whether for good or evil, II.45, end).[23] And while her male citizenry get praised by one of her leading citizens, Pericles avoids mentioning any of the names of the Athenians who died. No individual monuments for them; the world as a whole will have to do for their gravestone.

Pericles does not want his fellow citizens to reflect but to act. And there is good reason to expect his speech will be effective. He appeals to a prejudice about what we hope our good is or about what we want our good to be. In the midst of our fears about our vulnerability and mortality, Pericles holds out the promise of an immortal glory that

[22] See also Orwin (1994, 27-8). One should consider that on the basis of Pericles' formulation, it remains possible to judge rightly the pleasant and the dangerous and still see that one's good consists in pursuing the more dangerous alternative. But it is not clear that one would need daring to encounter such dangers as Pericles' Oration insists. Perhaps one merely needs a soul that possesses *kratos* and not *tolma*.

will wipe away all blemishes of any current, prior or future neediness. But precisely because Pericles preempts genuine reflection about human needs and appeals to our prejudices,[24] he cannot expect his audience to understand their interests in terms of what is genuinely good. In the final analysis Pericles compels his audience to understand what is good, the universal, in terms of what they most hope their own to be, or what is particular. Instead of understanding the good of the individual in terms of the city, one must view the goods of the city – freedom and empire – in terms of what one most hopes for one's own: to be liberated fully from the fickle ways of chance.

1.b. Pericles' Third Speech (60-64)

Pericles' third speech reinforces our sense that Pericles' political vision admits of such a transformation. After his Funeral Oration and before his final speech (in the summer of the second year), Athens was ravaged by the plague. The effects of the plague were compounded by the fact that the city was severely overcrowded (nearly tripled its pre-war size) due to Pericles' war-time policy.[25] Those who lived outside the city proper had to retreat inside the city's walls during the summer while the Spartans wasted their farms, burned their homes and destroyed all of their personal possessions (II.49-59). Expecting the Athenians to endure their cramped conditions, to suffer through the plague and to watch Sparta destroy their homes without retaliating was expecting too much. The Athenian demos not only tried to sign a truce with the Spartans, but they also sought Pericles' ouster (II.59.2). But perhaps more than all of this, Pericles, in his final address to the Athenians, had to consider that for many the sense of any rightful limit on the

[23] This is one of the few references to women in the entire *History*.
[24] Bruell (1981) notes "That such glory or fame is indeed worth the price was somehow *felt* by Perikles and, so far as one can judge from Thucydides, by almost all Athenians of quality" (27).

pursuit of self-interest had almost completely disappeared. In the wake of the plague's relentless and seemingly indiscriminate attacks, men lost almost all sense of the connection between good character and the possession of goods (II.53). As such, law-abidingness and devotion to the common no longer presented themselves as goods worthy of the individual citizen's respect and voluntary self-restraint.

In his effort to restore the importance of the common to private individuals, Pericles appears to place the relationship between the good of the city and the good of the citizen on a footing different from what we saw in the Funeral Oration. The Athenians are now to understand the welfare of the city in terms of their own welfare; they are not to understand their success in terms of the city's success (II.60). While it is true that the city's ruin necessarily means the ruin of the individual, the success of the city does not mean the success of the individual. Nor does the individual's success constitute the city's success. Pericles' formulation here is a negative one insofar as devotion to Athens no longer constitutes the individual's chief good. Such devotion constitutes a precondition for the pursuit of one's private good. It is in this light that he bids his citizens to set aside their private grief and to work toward the good of the city.

Of course, setting aside one's private grief and working to save the city can lead to one's individual ruin. To account for this difficulty, Pericles, near the close of the speech, again resorts to the immortal glory of Athens and those who fight for her (II.64.5). But the glory he speaks of now lacks the luster of his earlier speech. One's actions on behalf of Athens may earn one hatred (presumably by one's victims) (II.64.5). Over the course of time, that hatred (and the reasons for that hatred) will fade leaving as

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[25] Pericles advised the Athenians not to engage the Spartans on land so long as Sparta merely wasted the territory outside the walls of the city.

its residue only the fame of some action worthy of note. And as for the glory that will outlast their enemies' hatred, Pericles seems to qualify even this, noting that everything that "is" - including the Athenian empire and its so-called "eternal fame" - must die (II.64.3). There is perhaps no greater evidence of Pericles' deviation from his earlier articulation of Athens's noble superiority and the empire that she is worthy of than his concession that the empire Athens holds is "in the nature of a tyranny"(*hos turannida gar ede echete auten*, II.63.2). And while it may have been unjust to take (*hen labein men adikon dokei einai*, II.63.2), it is certainly dangerous to surrender.

Pericles' apparent retreat from a belief in the justice of Athens's empire[26] marks a more visible equivocation on the superior nobility of Athens. But if one will equivocate on the content of one's fame (whether the monuments they leave behind be of good or evil, whether it earns love or hate, whether it is just or unjust), then on what basis can one claim to deserve the honor of others? On what basis can Pericles ask one to prefer the good of Athens over that of Sparta, the good of Greece over that of the barbarians, or the good of "others" over one's own good? Pericles reminds his listeners that should they falter in the defense of Athens, the city will certainly become enslaved to neighbors who no doubt bear fresh memories of the evils Athens inflicted upon them (II.63.2-3). In this final speech, Athens deserves the individual citizen's sacrifice for the same reason that he should risk his life in order to save the lives of his loved ones – because it is one's own.

In the wake of the gap between one's goodness and one's goods effected by the plague, the second Spartan invasion and Pericles' war-time policy, the manifest goodness of fighting and dying for Athens can no longer merely be accepted. This is partly because

Pericles, in his Funeral Oration, wrote his fellow citizens checks that the power of Athens could not cash. They were bound to be disappointed. And under the circumstances of this final speech, the odds stand against Pericles reviving the notion that a rightful limit exists that can call for the "last full measure of devotion." To preserve the city he must invite his audience to place the relationship between citizen and city on a new footing. But this new footing is not entirely new. The apparent deviations in the third speech represent a more explicit statement of what was merely latent in the Funeral Oration's appeals to our hopes for what our own could be. Based on such latent premises, Pericles no longer explicitly bids us to understand our particular good in terms of what is universally good. He now publicly asks us to identify the one with the other and to do so in a way that allows the individual to subordinate the good of the city to his own good, to understand the universal in light of the particular. At the very least, nothing exists in Pericles' speech to prevent such a subordination.

At the end of the third speech Thucydides looks ahead to the death of Pericles and the end of the war. He writes that

> as long as [Pericles] was in authority...he governed the city with moderation, and in his time it was at the greatest...[for] being a man of great power both for his dignity and wisdom, and for bribes manifestly most incorrupt, he freely controlled the many and was not so much led by them as he led them...But they that came after, being more equal amongst themselves and affecting everyone to be the chief, applied themselves to the people and let go the care of the commonwealth ...For through private quarrels about who should bear the greatest sway with the people they both abated the vigor of the army and then also first troubled the state at home with other division...and [Athens] never shrunk until they had overthrown themselves with private dissensions (II.65, trans. Hobbes, brackets mine).

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[26] I say apparent because Pericles never openly denies its justice. Moreover, it may not be just for Athens to lay down her rule if in doing so it means the destruction of the city. One should also note that Pericles does not say that the empire is a tyranny, but is "like" or "as" (*hos*) a tyranny.

Such comments here are striking, for almost as soon as Thucydides introduces the war itself he forces us to contemplate its end. By reading this "jump" from beginning to end in the context of Pericles' death, the reader is led to wonder how Periclean Athens will fall apart and how that dissolution contributes to the way the war and the *History* end. Contrary to what most scholars argue, attention to the whole passage will show that it was the Athenians' internal dissension and not any specific military policy (e.g., the Sicilian campaign) that led to her defeat. Athens's inability to maintain a stable, coherent sense of the common good and thus a rational or quasi-rational account for why individuals should prefer the good of others to their own interests, led to her demise. Her defeat was not caused by the abandonment of Pericles' policy of "imperial restraint." But if it wasn't the abandonment of Pericles' war-time policy that led to the destruction of the Athenians' concern for the common good, then what did?

Thucydides' emphasis on internal strife and his "acceptance" (or non-rejection) of the wisdom of undertaking the Sicilian campaign (II.65.11-12) weakens his praise of Pericles' foresight and military advice (which would have rejected the proposal regarding Sicily). The Periclean virtues Thucydides doesn't seem to question are those that allowed him to unite the city under his guidance. But after his death, this unity gradually dissolved. Wasn't Pericles' political vision sufficiently stable to preserve in his absence some notion of the common? Indeed, it seems a strange kind of "unity" that depends almost entirely on its maker to retain its integrity. Perhaps the passage as a whole then – instead of praising Pericles - forces us to wonder if Pericles himself bears some responsibility for the eventual dissolution of the common good in Athens.[27] Was there

[27] According to Forde, Pericles' own rhetoric helped fuel the Athenian ambitions for Sicily, ambitions that amounted to the overthrow of Pericles' policy of restraint, a "development, in retrospect, [that] looks all but

something within Pericles' formulations or speeches that lent itself to the dissolution of the common and thus to the blurring between Greek and barbarian, speech and deed, and universal and particular that we find in Tissaphernes' sacrifice? However this may be, Thucydides' "eulogy" induces us to read the rest of the *History* in light of the questionable stability of Pericles' political vision. By recalling the preceding observations about Pericles' speeches, one might conclude that the shame of one's neediness -- on which Pericles' speeches relied -- prohibits genuine reflection and promotes identifying the good in terms of one's own. Perhaps it is this identification that allows the tragedy of the Athenian civil war to occur. If so, the *History* should chronicle the resurgence and triumph of this identification.

For those still concerned with knowing that the goods of politics are in fact genuine goods, Pericles' speeches, and his last speech in particular, make the choice clear. There is the quiet life devoted to something other than action (*apragmon*; this literally means "a life outside of politics"), which according to Pericles means being ruled by others, and the life of vigorous activity (*drasteriou*), which enables one to avoid being ruled (II.63.3). As we noted before, sound action requires deliberation regarding what is good, which means that it must be preceded by a pause that allows one to deliberate on the soundness of the alternatives. But such a pause, according to Pericles is only compatible with "safely serving," a notion closely associated with being enslaved (*asphalos douleuein*). If one wants both to rule and to deliberate (as his second speech would have it; II.40), then one must subordinate the quiet life, the apolitical life, to the

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inevitable" (1986, 440; brackets mine). See also Finley (1940, 161). On my thesis regarding the "movement" of the *History* (from Funeral Oration to Tissaphernes' sacrifice), one should consider Finley's remarkably perceptive treatment of the works' unity in "Unity" (1942). Finley however understands the *History* to move from Funeral Oration to the disaster in Sicily.

dictates of politics and thus the dictates of vigorous action. According to the third and final speech, the effort to maintain a balance between thoughtful deliberation and action (as in the Funeral Oration) amounts to the effort to marry two incompatible positions. [28]

One finds these two alternatives within the Periclean conception of politics – the alternatives of thought and action - spelled out with greater clarity in the first two Athenian speeches presented after Pericles' death.[29] In the Mytilinean debate, one finds in the person and speech of Kleon the example of action at the expense of deliberation. In the speech of Diodotus one also finds a call to action. But his call to action is completely subordinated to deliberation about human nature, politics and the relationship between the two; his is the example of one who fully subordinates one's own to considerations of what is genuinely good.

2. The Mytilinean Debate: Two Alternatives

Mytilene was a city on the island of Lesbos and was one of the few maritime powers that Athens allowed to remain free of her imperial sway. Athens also allowed Mytilene to keep her fortifications and her navy, a rarity in the Athenian dominated Aegean. In the fourth year of the war Mytilene, along with the rest of the cities on Lesbos (except Mthymne), revolted from Athens (III.2). After an initial indecisive engagement with the Athenians around their city, the Mytilineans sought Spartan assistance in

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[28] Cogan argues that "Pericles, at least, is convinced that there is a quiet life for the sake of which one engages in war" (1981, 43). If by "quiet life" he means death, I agree. Cogan seems to miss Pericles' glowing praise of those who expanded Athens's empire and his subordination of the life of thought and rest to the life of action.

[29] I consider this reading of the Mytilinean debate -- as a presentation of the alternatives following Pericles' death – to offer a new placement of the episode within the *History's* overall structure. It thus explains why the speech of Diodotus, widely considered to be the speech that most closely resembles Thucydides' perspective, comes so early in the work. It explains why nearly two-thirds of the *History* follow the presentation of speech "central" to the thought of the author. This means, of course, that my reading offers a new reading of the debate itself and of its importance to the work as a whole. As such, it constitutes one of my more serious contributions to understanding of the *History* as a whole.

defending their city (III.3-4). In pursuing Spartan aid, they sought to introduce Athens's greatest enemy into the heart of her naval empire at a time when Athens was just starting to recover from the devastation of the plague and Sparta's annual incursions (III.3). Outraged at such treachery, the Athenians pressed the siege of Mytilene. Without Spartan aid (which was dallying somewhere in the Aegean; III.26) and threatened by a mutiny of the recently armed demos (III.27), the Mytilinean oligarchs were compelled to surrender the city to Athens (III.28). In their righteous indignation, the Athenian assembly decreed that all of the adult males of Mytilene should be put to death and all of the women and children should be sold into slavery (III.36.2). The Athenians immediately dispatched the commander Paches and his forces to execute the sentence (III.36.3). The following day, however, the Athenians moved to reconsider their decree (III.36.4). In the ensuing debate over the fate of Mytilene and her citizens, Thucydides first presents the speech of Kleon, the most ardent supporter of the original decree against the Mytilineans (and the most violent man in Athens and the one who was most popular with the demos, III.36.6). He then presents the speech of Diodotus, the chief opponent of the original decree. In the wake of Pericles' vision and in the absence of his leadership, the speeches of Kleon and Diodotus come to sight as the two fundamental alternatives to Periclean Athens, two alternative accounts of the nature and character of political right and political power.

2.a. Kleon's Speech (III.37-40)

Of the two alternatives presented after Pericles' death, Kleon much more closely represents the interests of action and thus of ruling. As such his speech appears politically closer to Pericles than that of the private citizen Diodotus. There are two parts to Kleon's speech: his diatribe against clever speech and his counsel regarding the punishment of the

Mytilineans (III.37-38 and 39-40, respectively). These two parts are connected; the basis of his diatribe supplies the basis for his counsel. According to Kleon, the Athenian democracy is ill-equipped to maintain its empire. This is partly because the Athenians assume their subjects share the same freedom and security they enjoy. They do not realize that they possess an imperial rule that tyrannizes its subjects and which they hold only through their strength and not through their confederates' love and voluntary submission (III.37.1-3). But more importantly (and more dangerously), the Athenians give themselves over too readily to the delight of speeches. In trusting what they hear from others more than what they see for themselves, the Athenians open themselves to the sophistry of clever speakers who would subject the good of the whole city to their private desires for fame, money and power (III.37.3-5).[30]

To object to Kleon's original position, one must therefore admit either that he believes that Athens will best punish wayward allies by enduring harm to herself or that he seeks his own good at the expense of the city (III.38.1). And to admit that one wants to hear (or watch) and judge the speeches of others is no less flattering. According to Kleon it amounts to a self-congratulatory effort aimed at stroking one's own vanity. To express interest in hearing any matter debated, one must admit either to delighting in petty matters when grave deliberation is called for or to being insecure about one's own wisdom (III.38.4-7).

Under Pericles' vision, the Athenians loved beauty and philosophy without softness. They did so because they fully possessed themselves. And they possessed themselves because they were confident in their superior natures. But one could avoid the

[30] Orwin (1984) notes that the problem for Kleon is not just the speakers, but the zeal of the people in attending the assemblies (316).

illiberal abandonment of wit and good sense only by being mindful of the shame that comes from surrendering to one's vulnerability, exposure and neediness. By railing against the Athenians' love of speeches Kleon does not ask them to overcome that shame. Rather, he shames them into obeying the laws of the city and those decrees already passed. By asking them to trust in their "ignorance" and his wisdom, Kleon demands they set aside the deliberation that almost always comes at the expense of the common good. He therefore implicitly suppresses the concern for genuine goods that makes deliberation desirable. As such he does not encourage them to overcome their needs or their shame.

The effectiveness of the second part of Kleon's speech depends precisely on the suppression of such concerns. According to Kleon, the Mytilineans must be put to the sword because Athenian imperial interests demand it. Failure to mete death to all who rebel (and all those in the city that rebels; III.39.6) will signal that rebellion will either be rewarded with victory and freedom or it will be punished by -- well, nothing very great. And by delaying now the Athenians will soften their rage and thus their punishment. Delay will set a precedent for Athens's allies that will force her to spend more time suppressing domestic rebellion and less time defeating foreign enemies (III.39.7-8). If the Athenians are to make a good example of Mytilene, they must silence any doubts plaguing them now. The good of Athens demands action, not reflection. To this end, Kleon tries to recreate their original righteous anger. He reminds them of Athens's vulnerability at the time of the revolt and the consequent danger in which Mytilene's actions placed their city. And to put their injustice in the greatest possible relief, he recalls Athens's exceptionally fair treatment of Mytilene and emphasizes the premeditated nature of their acts (III.39.1-3, 40.1). Like the defense of Athens's interest,

the enforcement of justice is best served by its rapid execution (III.40.4-7). Kleon thus puts justice in the service of Athens's self-interests.

But Kleon's appeal to justice should not lead us to conclude that he recognizes justice or law-abidingness as a legitimate limit to the pursuit of self-interest. The justice of punishing Mytilene follows from the fact that it secures Athenian interests, and the interests of Athens deserves the attention of Athenians because Athens is their city, nothing more and nothing less. To reconsider the goodness of their original decision, one puts both Athens's interests and the cause of justice at risk. Kleon again shames them – out of fear of being a traitor to the cause of justice and one's city – into suppressing the desire to know what course of action is good. But if Kleon represents politics or "the political" in Pericles' absence then what prevents him from appealing, as his predecessor did, to the concern for glory, immortality and noble self-sufficiency? What allows him to state that the empire *is* a tyranny (*turannida echete ten archen*, III.37.2) that eschews considerations of justice, while for Pericles it was "like a tyranny" whose justice was at worst only questionable?

Kleon's connection to and distance from Pericles become clearer when we recall Thucydides' original effort to distinguish Greeks from barbarians (see my chapter 3.II.B.3). Early barbarians, having freed themselves from the constant pursuit of the goods needed to survive, began to pursue dominion over others in order to establish their superior worth to all those subject to them. The Greek discovery of the common good, and consequently the voluntary respect for a limit to one's self-interest, amounted to the means whereby one could secure those goods that confirmed one's prior superior nobility. Greek politics thus differed from barbarian despotism in terms of its rationality.

Establishing one's superior self-sufficiency by eschewing goods eliminated the absurd need for an eternal supply of those very goods. Such self-restraint was made possible by the prior awareness of one's profound neediness and the subsequent awareness that merely possessing more goods would not overcome one's mortality. This of course also means such restraint followed from and depended upon a first, failed effort to satisfy one's needs through such goods; Greekness evolved from barbarism.

Thucydides links Greek politics to the rational awareness of mortality when he links the emergence of the common good to the Greek practice of nude wrestling (I.6.4-6). The barbarians, in contrast to the Greeks, covered themselves and their sexual organs in particular in the effort to dominate others. Ashamed at the sign of their greatest neediness – their mortality - the barbarians concealed the evidence of such need in the effort to grab goods they assumed would complete them. But the Greek wrestlers could overcome their shame and need and could reveal and assert their superior worth only by countenancing the physical evidence of their mortality. In the cold light of their deepest need, the Greeks became vulnerable to the promises of the beautiful and the noble. Barbarian boxing and despotism seek to conceal the truth about one's nature from one's self. Because barbarism seeks to hide from the awareness of one's fundamentally needy nature, it is not open to the promises of the noble and the beautiful. So while the revelation of one's superior nature through voluntary self-restraint grows out of the primary (and barbaric) understanding that one's posture towards goods signals one's worth (see chapter 3.Part II.3a-b), Greek politics demonstrates an increase in the rational awareness of one's needs. Greekness takes a step closer to the pursuit of genuine goods.

Kleon's love of violence and his hatred of reason, his reduction of empire to tyranny and justice to self-interest (see III.47.7), his desire to dominate others and his unwillingness to address human mortality, cast him as a barbarian who gives into shame and refuses to countenance the fundamentally needy nature of man.[31] Pericles' defense of Athens's immortal glory, his emphasis on Athens's freedom and self-sufficiency and his rational defense of selfless devotion to the good of the city cast him as the quintessential Greek who strives to overcome shame by directly addressing man's greatest needs. By remaining ignorant of his deepest needs, Kleon remains incapable of experiencing the promises of the noble and the beautiful that are the hallmark of Pericles' Funeral Oration. But just as the limited Greek pursuit of goods followed from the limitless barbaric contest for domination, so too does Pericles' formulation evolve out of and collapse into a Kleonian view of politics.[32] By thinking through more fully the implications of Pericles' statements about immortal glory and the shame on which it was based, we uncovered the barbarian basis upon which Pericles erected his noble vision. While Pericles' justification of the universal goodness of fighting and dying for Athens represents a more rational response to the need men face, it nevertheless rests on the irrational attachment to the deepest hopes one has for one's own - to be wholly free from need. In Kleon's career and in his speech, we see the violence, shortsightedness and ugliness of that irrational attachment brought to life.[33]

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[31] This relationship between Kleon's neediness, fear and his desire to preserve the empire by enacting swift revenge on the Mytilineans is buttressed by Orwin's account of the psychological effects of *stasis* (1988, 845).

[32] On the possibility of a connection between Pericles and Kleon, see Proctor (1980, 214), as well as Bolotin (1986, 23). Neither, however, offer a sustained treatment of the connection between the two.

[33] Strauss (1964, 213) notes that Kleon "betrays the soul of Athens." Taken in context, Strauss suggests that Kleon's betrayal consists in his being untrue to Athenian generosity. But perhaps Kleon's betrayal also consists in his example serving as an unwilling admission on the part of Athens regarding the grounds of her character. Kleon's vulgarity betrays Athens as a blush betrays one's sense of shame, attraction, or guilt.

2.b. The Speech of Diodotus (III.42-48)

Directly following Kleon's speech, Thucydides presents Diodotus's speech in favor of rescinding the initial decree against the Mytilineans.[34] This is the only time one sees or hears Diodotus in the work. One might say that in the political work devoted to *drasteriou* (vigorous activity) he is embodiment of *apragmon* (activity outside of politics). Like Kleon's speech, Diodotus's counsel consists of two parts: his effort to rehabilitate the status of reasoned deliberation (III.42-3) and his counsel regarding the Mytilineans (III.44-8). And as in Kleon's speech the two parts are interconnected. In this case, the lessons of the second part supply the basis for the first. Diodotus opens by declaiming against those who oppose continued deliberation in political matters, as Kleon did (III.42-3). According to Diodotus, such men must think either that the course of future events can be determined by something other than speech, in which case they are fools. Or they must suspect that their own cause is so indecent that a sound argument in its favor cannot be made, in which case they seek to serve their interests at the expense of the city (III.42.1-3). But what harms the city most is raising suspicion about the motives of those who propose further deliberation (III.42.3-4). By declaring that such men are motivated by greed (or bribes), Kleon and those like him will in effect deprive the city of honest advisors out of a fear that they will be suspected of proposing further deliberation in order to aggrandize themselves at the expense of the city.

To rectify this, Diodotus proposes that the city should eliminate the honor and disgrace that attends the acceptance and rejection, respectively, of one's counsel (III.42.5-6). By eliminating such honor and disgrace the city will eliminate those

[34] On this reading of Diodotus's speech I owe much, both general and particular, to Orwin's analysis both in his *Humanity* (1994) and in his two articles on the Mytilinean debate (1984a and 1984b).

incentives that invite men to propose self-serving policies. The city will thus eliminate the need to suspect men's motives. With nothing personal to gain at the city's expense, those who come forth to offer their counsel will be concerned solely with the welfare of the city. Under the current practice, however, citizens within the assembly tend to envy the honors that *might* attend the adoption of a particular citizen's proposal. Their envy at the *anticipated* rewards such men will enjoy leads them to reject their counsel in advance no matter how wise (III.43.1-2). In order to get one's proposal adopted under these conditions, Diodotus claims that one must lie to one's audience, because "on account of such over-wiseness, the city is that alone which no one is able to benefit openly without deceiving it" (III.43.3). But if this is true of Athens, and if Diodotus seeks to benefit Athens through his counsel, then he must lie to his fellow citizens. Diodotus's promise to deceive his fellow citizens is all the more shocking since it comes at the close of his effort to rehabilitate the status of reasoned deliberation in Athens.[35] Understanding what Diodotus's deception consists in will help explain why he must deceive. As such the lessons about justice in the second part of his speech not only explain why his counsel is just but why his deception is itself an act of justice.

Diodotus introduces his advice on the Mytilineans by claiming that what the Athenians must consult now is not justice, as Kleon advised, but self-interest. Indeed, they must consult their interests even if it should come at the expense of justice (III.44.1-3). But to secure Athens's best interests, one must know what is possible. This seems to explain why Diodotus precedes his counsel on Mytilene with a psychological account of

[35] Orwin explains at length and in vivid detail what the need for such deception implies about the status of public deliberation (1984a, 321-2). One should see his comments about the trust that accrues to successful speakers and the problem this presents for Diodotus's suggestions about giving honor to the city's advisors (1984a, 1994).

human nature. His counsel as to what Athens should do, what serves her genuine interests, follows from his analysis of what is possible; the "ought" follows from the "is." Diodotus's account of human nature centers around the status of the death penalty as a deterrent in the affairs of men (III.45). According to Diodotus, the penalty of death that Kleon suggests to deter future revolts never hindered from acting those men and cities that were sufficiently convinced that they would succeed in their effort. Driven by the desire for goods and inspired by the hope of success, all men either will fail to recognize death as a genuine possibility (they don't think they will get caught) or will understand the potential rewards to far outweigh the risk of death. In both cases, the threat of death fails to prevent men from pursuing what appears good to them. This is exacerbated in the case of cities (III.45.6). Under the influence of a confidence inspired by luck alone, cities will suppose that they possess sufficient resources to effect their ends, so that "death" does not appear a real possibility for a whole city. With such risks minimized, the greatest goods of freedom and empire, appearing all the more attainable, become all the more irresistible. But a city is not itself a single entity; it is a compound made up of its citizens. It is thus the individual citizens who, in the wake of their good fortune as a community, think they possess greater power individually than they do. The good fortune and success of the community casts an imagined power onto each individual citizen (III.45.6). So long as men understand freedom and empire to outweigh the threat of death and so long as they think they possess the power - as a community and individually - to obtain those goods, it will be nearly impossible to deter subject cities and subject citizens from trying to revolt from Athens.

In light of such limitations, self-interest advises that the Athenians not destroy Mytilene, kill all of the adult males and enslave the women and children, as Kleon advised. Doing so would merely send the message that rebelling cities face a "do-or-die" choice, whereby cities, once having revolted, would possess no incentive to surrender (III.46). On the contrary, they would be forced to dig in their heels in the hope that they will succeed. And by demonstrating that the fate of those who rebel also awaits those who sit out the fight, Athens would drive the would-be "fifth columnists" into the ranks of the few, rebel forces (III.47). This move would effectively unite the pro-Athenian commons[36] with the anti-Athenian oligarchs in the revolt *against* Athens. As such, Kleon's policy would lengthen any siege of subject cities, forcing Athens to spend more time and money to destroy a town that, once subdued, would be unable to pay reparations or tribute– funds that form the economic backbone of Athens's imperial power (III.46.4-6).

Instead, Athens must try to show their subjects that any confidence these subject cities possess in their own common power is groundless, making death a greater possibility not simply for the city, but for the citizens subject to her. Athens must wake her subjects up to the hard reality that they are, as individuals, weak. As failure, and thus death, reemerges as a greater possibility for the individuals subject to her, the unquestioned goodness of freedom and empire – as goods that can be enjoyed by individual citizens – should become questionable for Athens's subjects. Having established their individual weakness in an effort to preempt revolt, Athens must also be

[36] Cogan understands Diodotus here to introduce an ideological element to the *History* (democracy vs. oligarchy) that transforms how the larger conflict is understood by both parties, and thus transforms how the war is conducted (1981, 144ff). Grene (1965, 58-9) as well as de Ste. Croix (1972, 13) understands Diodotus to be concerned solely with self-interest.

willing to forgive those who do revolt by offering the many peace (even if it participated in revolt), reserving punishment only for the few. In this way she will shorten her sieges and save her wealth. But in this light, Diodotus's counsel, far from eliminating death as a deterrent, ultimately relies on the threat of death to make subject citizens all the more aware of their neediness as individuals.

The deception Diodotus promised at first glance seems to concern the status of the death penalty. Having initially proclaimed its ineffectiveness as a deterrent, he now relies on its proper application to help deter future rebellions. But Diodotus's advice on the death penalty is situated within his treatment of Athens's interests. If Athens's interests are not served by resorting to the death penalty as a deterrent (because it is ineffective) then how can Diodotus suggest that Athens can deter future rebellions and secure her imperial interests through the sensible application of that penalty? The answer may lie in his analysis of human psychology sketched above. According to that analysis, the human concern for goods – common to both rich and poor - makes men vulnerable to the allure and the power of the apparent good (III.45.4), such that all men are compelled to act in accordance with what appears best to them at the moment. If this analysis of human psychology holds true, then nothing will prevent the Athenians, especially under the guidance of someone like Kleon, from pursuing one of the greatest goods – empire - in the harshest terms possible. And this means that nothing will prevent the Athenians from enacting the death penalty in the severest possible terms. Diodotus's counsel (to apply the penalty as it suits their interests) thus amounts to a moderation of Athens's pursuit of what appears to them good. But if, in the final analysis, deterrence does serve Athenian imperial interests, then why moderate their exercise of that penalty?

Diodotus's call for moderation seems to receive support from the position, found most clearly at the end of his speech, that it would be unjust to kill those who helped turn the city over to Athens. Athens should calculate considerations of justice in their decision to apply the death penalty (III.45 end, 47.3). But this concern for justice flies in the face of his explicit concern for Athens's interests (III.44.1, 47.3-5). It also flies in the face of his argument regarding the compulsory power of the apparent good (III.45, especially the beginning). After all, if men are compelled to act by what seems best to them at the moment, then it follows that they lack the freedom necessary for moral culpability. Doesn't such a lack of freedom exonerate those who commit the most violent and unjust acts in an effort to obtain what appear to them to be the greatest goods? Under this reading the oligarchic factions in cities subject to Athens are no less subject to the allure of freedom than the Athenians are subject to the allure of empire. The oligarchs are thus no more deserving of blame and of punishment for revolting than the Athenians are deserving of praise and reward for pursuing empire. And just as the Mytilinean oligarchs may have been compelled to revolt by their desire for freedom, the Mytilinean commons may have been compelled to hand over the city by their desire to live (recall, they were hungry, III.27). Because the commons were not acting freely, their actions cannot, strictly speaking, be understood as just and thus are not as deserving of pardon. Put differently, in the wake of Diodotus's arguments regarding the compulsory power of the apparent good, the Kleonian suggestion that the Athenians punish the entire population of Mytilene is no more unjust than it is just. If Diodotus is going to base his appeal for the moderate exercise of the death penalty on anything, then it must rest more on self-interest than on

justice. But one is still left to ask why Diodotus seeks to moderate their exercise of that penalty in the pursuit of their interests?

Diodotus's attempt to moderate the Athenians' application of the death penalty in the pursuit of imperial power serves their interests because it is informed by the limits facing men and cities. By acknowledging the limits facing politics and political men, Diodotus situates his counsel within the realm of the possible; the "ought" of his political counsel, follows from the "is" of political reality. His advice to limit the use of the death penalty enables the Athenians to pursue "goods" consistent with their limited natures as political men. Consequently, Diodotus does not flirt with the extravagant and unrealistic hopes that Pericles excited, like the hopes for immortal glory. Diodotus's advice circumvents these "hopes" precisely because he does not explicitly appeal to the Athenians' sense of justice, an appeal that must necessarily have recourse to the belief in a freedom of choice that does not exist in human affairs. But this isn't to say that Diodotus's speech doesn't implicitly appeal to their sense of justice.[37]

It may be that Diodotus's very concern to moderate Athens's exercise of her imperial interests, against the backdrop of his sketch of human psychology and the limits of what is possible, reflects the presence of justice in his speech. His counsel may be considered just, or may be considered congruent with justice, because in recognizing the compulsory power of the apparent good among men and cities, it is consonant with the limits facing men. Diodotus does not expect men to operate on the belief that impossible things are possible or that immanifest things are manifest. So while Kleon's advice is pardonable and while the actions he urges the Athenians to commit do not deserve blame,

[37] For an extremely careful treatment of the presence of a concern for justice in Diodotus's speech, see Orwin (1994, 151-157, especially his chart on 152-3).

they are animated by an anger that has no basis in nature. The righteous indignation Kleon enflames in his audience is based on the supposition that the Mytilineans acted unjustly. For them to deserve blame, their injustice must have been freely chosen. But according to Diodotus's psychology, that freedom is not possible. While the absence of such freedom excuses any actions following from their anger (being grounded as they are on the compulsory power of the apparent good), such actions would be based on ignorance of the possible. The Athenians' anger at the Mytilineans is as ungrounded as the injustice of the rebels.

At first glance, this submission to "what is possible" seems only remotely attached – if attached at all - to justice as it is traditionally understood. This perception changes, however, when one considers that in following Diodotus's advice the Athenians will impose a self-restraint on their actions that is not based on unrealistic expectations about political life. Like the more traditional notions of justice as a legitimate limit on the self-interested pursuit of goods, Diodotus's counsel invites men to set aside voluntarily what they might want for themselves in order to possess goods that are genuine. As such, his political counsel regarding the Mytilineans and his sketch of human nature reflect a convergence between what is just and what is good, or what is right and what is in his audience' interests. And it is through the knowledge of what "is" or of what "is possible" that he can capture this convergence.

Diodotus's deception then does not so much concern the status of the death penalty, but rather the extent to which he was going to appeal to the Athenians' sense of justice (i.e., hardly at all). But this isn't strictly correct either. If it were, then Diodotus would counsel them to pursue justice at the expense of self-interest. But Diodotus does

not ultimately counsel them to pursue their interests at the expense of justice, or to pursue justice at the expense of their interests. His deception consists in treating the two as polar opposites; the truth behind his deception consists in the extent to which justice and self-interest converge and the grounds on which they do so.[38]

This also tells us why he has to lie. As noted, Diodotus's deception (that he will talk about self-interest at the expense of justice) is predicated on the strict distinction between justice and self-interest. One might think that he needs to employ this distinction because his audience is not in the mood to hear about justice, but only about what is in Athens's interest. Having just heard Kleon's invectives, they will not be prepared to hear calls for justice, mercy or compassion. Moreover, according to Diodotus himself, the Athenians tend to suspect those who loudly declare their devotion to the common good. The Athenians doubt that any one could be so selfless, suspecting instead that men who candidly speak of the common good in reality seek their own good. To circumvent this prejudice, he must appeal to it, claiming to be more of a hard-nosed realist than the realist Kleon. Not high-minded justice, but low self-interest will be the matter of his counsel.

But even the vulgar and violent Kleon appeals to the Athenians' sense of justice. Of course, he does so in an effort to inflame the Athenians' anger, to move them to action (reconsider what he says at III.39.1-3 and 40.1, 4-7). But this appeal to justice confirms something we see only dimly in Diodotus's speech. Kleon's appeal to the Athenians' righteous indignation appeals to the freedom under which the Mytilineans' gross injustice took place; he appeals to the prejudice that justice – in order for it to be justice - be freely

[38] I think this reading of Diodotus's deception differs markedly from that of Orwin (1984a and 1994). I also understand the relationship between justice and self-interest in which this deception consists to be slightly different from Orwin's interpretation. If Diodotus's speech does come closest to articulating Thucydides'

undertaken (see III.39.1, 40.5-6). Diodotus's counsel, on the other hand, amounts to a subtle criticism of freedom, justice, deserving and praise and blame. Diodotus's deception, careful as it is to keep from sight the implications about the possibility of freedom and thus justice as it is traditionally understood, is informed by his understanding of men's postures towards *both* self-interest and justice. His apparent respect for the strict distinction that men maintain between justice and self-interest reflects the appreciation men have for such a distinction even as it ultimately refines it. The reasons for Diodotus's deception, seen from the perspective of his deception, consist in his respect for men's opinions about and attachment to justice (and thus his unwillingness to overturn these opinions explicitly) as much as it consists in his appreciation of men's outward attachment to the priority of self-interest. In fact, his deception so understood testifies to the superficiality of the Athenians' attachment to "self-interest" and thus testifies to the deeper attachment they have to what is just.

When one considers that Diodotus's deception respects men's attachment to their own understandings of justice as much as it is an act of justice, then one might consider his speech to constitute a peak of Greekness, insofar as Greekness is identified by the emergence of right. Properly understood, Diodotus's deception seems to represent an *advance* on Greekness previously understood. As concluded at the end of chapter 4, the political does not consist so much in the effort to establish one's goodness through the possession of goods but rather in the rational (or quasi-rational) effort to overcome such neediness by eschewing such goods; the limited pursuit of goods replaced the limitless pursuit of goods. But even this effort, as rational as it is, amounts to an effort to make fit

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own view, then this difference should bear on our views of Thucydides' approach to the issue of justice and his manner of procedure.

what cannot fit. Thus, for instance, in the envoys' speech at Sparta, the Athenian speakers attempt to offer a defense of Athenian empire in terms of their superior worth, the compulsory power of the apparent good (or fear, profit and honor) and their justice. The inconsistency between these positions was made manifest in part by their candor, which was in turn based on both the hope that those of surpassing worth would spontaneously possess goods commensurate with their worthiness and the dim awareness that such support was not forthcoming from nature. Their candor is ultimately based on something incapable of candid or rational demonstration.

Diodotus avoids the problems facing a consistent articulation of the envoys' position because he does not indulge in the belief that justice is the means by which those of surpassing worth obtain and retain those goods whose possession was not spontaneously granted by nature. Thus the argument from deserving finds not foothold in Diodotus's argument from the compulsory power of the apparent good. He therefore has no need to disclose the superior character of some "nature" or some position in speech in an effort to try and rectify nature's apparent shortcomings. He has no need for the candor employed by the envoys. Diodotus can make his argument "fit" on rational grounds, even as his speech eschews the candid disclosure of those grounds. His lack of candor, by avoiding the corrupting explicitness of justice and of political speeches devoted to justice, is actually able to reveal the truth about justice and the convergence between justice and self-interest more fully than any candid speech could do. Diodotus's deception is a deception because what he *does* contradicts what he says he will do. But it is this contradiction that makes possible our insights into Diodotus's wisdom, just as the gap between what Thucydides says he will do and what Thucydides does provides the initial

opening into his wisdom. We will return to the connection between Thucydides and Diodotus in Part II of this chapter.

Coming opposite Kleon's diatribe, Diodotus's speech represents an appreciation of reason, a refusal to reduce justice to mere self-interest and a sensitivity to the existence of some rightful limit on the individual's self-interested pursuit of goods, a limit that, in the final analysis, takes its bearing from a genuine confrontation with human need.[39] But if these two speeches play a central role in Thucydides' work, then why do they come so early in the war and the *History* itself? In the wake of Pericles' vision and death, the "either-or" posed by Kleon and Diodotus forces the reader to decide between one and the other and to accept the consequences of that decision. In Diodotus's speech one finds the only consistent articulation of the Athenian thesis in the *History*. Furthermore, Diodotus offers this articulation in terms of human nature and thus in terms that apply to all men as men and that all men can see as men. He thus avoids the contradictions and inconsistencies that plague other attempts by political men to supply a coherent account of Athenian rule. But Diodotus avoids such problems because he does not understand the goods of politics to satisfy the individual's concerns for self-sufficiency and wholeness. His speech amounts to a retraction of what so many Athenians understand political power to be. Diodotus thus raises the ante for Greek political life. One might profitably understand the drama of Athenian politics that unfolds in the rest of the *History* to constitute the Periclean (or Kleonian) "response" to this challenge. To judge between

[39] White understands Diodotus to argue solely from self-interest and to separate completely self-interest from justice (1984, 75ff). Such a separation is responsible for the destruction of the community of discourse necessary for Greek life. White's inability to see the possibility of a harmony between the two such as I suggest makes it difficult for him to address why Thucydides thinks the world he captures is worthwhile or good for his readers. Why is it, to use White's parlance, good not to be alone (ibid. 90)? Why does Thucydides give in to such a fear? Under White's reading, Thucydides intends his reader to

Diodotus and Kleon, between the private life and the life of politics, the drama of Greek politics in the rest of the *History* should be tested against Diodotus's articulation.

3. Nicias and Alcibiades: Two Sides of the Periclean Coin

The drama of the *History* that follows this debate comes to center on the careers of Nicias and Alcibiades. Both Nicias and Alcibiades reflect the two sides of the Periclean coin. Whereas Nicias embodies life of traditional moderation and piety, a life devoted to the good of Athens and the service of the common, Alcibiades represents radical immoderation and impiety, a life directed by the desire for personal aggrandizement. One could reasonably understand Pericles' political career to consist in the effort to walk the almost imperceptible line between ruling and being ruled, piety and impiety, devotion to the common good and the pursuit of personal glory, moderation and immoderation. The successes of Pericles' political career reveal the fruits of such a balancing act. As I argued, however, Pericles' balancing act was based on the acceptance of the goodness of political action and thus on the refusal to confront fully questions surrounding genuine need, and in particular the identification of the good in terms of one's own. Like Pericles, both Nicias and Alcibiades, despite their manifest differences, understand their superior characters to derive from the contingent, from the identification of one's good with one's own.[40] In the case of Athens's greatest political figures, the power and goodness of politics derives its authority from what is contingent. In the end, the goodness of politics, and thus the basis for understanding political right as political power, remains hidden from them.

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resort to a commitment to meaning, to identity, to the self – the antithesis of rational inquiry and the clear truth that is its result.

[40] For a different reading of Alcibiades and Nicias's link to Pericles, see Rood (1998, 158): "Alcibiades is like Pericles without honesty, prudence and patriotism and Nicias is like Pericles without his coercive

3.a. Nicias

Nicias represents perhaps the most puzzling character in all of the *History*. Thucydides gives Nicias's speeches and deeds perhaps more airplay than any other actor in the work. While Nicias only delivers two speeches to the Athenian assembly, Thucydides presents three of his speeches (in direct discourse) to his troops before battle. He presents at least two speeches (in indirect discourse) to his fellow statesmen (V.46) and generals (VII.48), and he presents in full one of Nicias's letters to the Athenian assembly. He also presents the full text of the articles of the peace between the Spartans and Athenians (V.18-19), the peace for which Nicias was chiefly responsible. Thucydides also appears to reserve for Nicias his greatest respect, commenting on his death at the hands of the Spartans, that Nicias "was least worthy of all those Greeks of my time to come into such misfortune on account of having pursued his whole life that which custom holds to be virtue" (VII.86). As for his deeds, Thucydides shows Nicias in a variety of actions, a variety unlike those of any other.[41]

Yet, despite all of this, no other actor generally receives the level of scorn and derision from readers as Nicias does. This scorn is not entirely undeserved. He is the author of a peace that does not clearly serve the interests of Athens (see V.46). His effort to dissuade the Athenians from the Sicilian expedition merely increases their ardor for the campaign (VI.9-14). This effort also encouraged the Athenians to send a huge expedition, one that was to guarantee their success. But the very size of the expedition with its "guarantee of success" blinded them to the dangers they would face (VI.20-3). This blindness was aggravated by Nicias's blunders in Sicily. Instead of taking the fight to the

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prowess." For a further distance from Rood, see his agreement with Hornblower that the fall of Athens was not the failings of Pericles or his vision, but rather that of a single generation following him (1986, 200).

enemy, he relied on caution and piety. This allowed the Syracusans to recover from Athens's initial attack and it gave the Spartans an opportunity to aid the defense of Sicily. Nicias's blunders were possible largely because the daring Alcibiades had been recalled from the expedition. This decision was no doubt due to the people's distrust of Alcibiades, distrust sewn in part by Nicias himself (VI.9-14, 20-3). The result of these combined errors was Athens's greatest defeat in the war, the loss of seven thousand men and Nicias's own death.[42] Paradoxically, Nicias's greatest contribution to Athens's military success came when he *abdicated* his generalship to the boastful demagogue, Kleon (IV.28). Much to Nicas's chagrin, the gambit intended to humiliate Kleon resulted in Athens's greatest victory of the war and consolidated Kleon's political influence (IV.39-40). But all of this merely forces us to wonder why Thucydides reserves so much of his work for Nicias. His treatment of Nicias forces us to confront his example; it does not allow us to dismiss it.

One can understand Nicias's characteristic moderation by reflecting on an ambiguity effected by his speeches and deeds. One commentator notes that Thucydides reveals Nicias's moderation in the variety of deeds performed before he ever "speaks." Alcibiades, the apparent foil of Nicias, performs as many notable deeds before his first speech as Nicias did before his, but his actions are far less varied.[43] But if the variety of Nicias's actions reveal his moderation, then Nicias's moderation seems to be of a curious sort. A glance at his deeds will show that he tries to strike an uneasy balance between the effort to subject others to Athens's rule and the desire to treat gently those he would subjugate (see his acceptance of a truce at IV.119). He at once strives to dominate and

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[41] Strauss (1964, 202).
[42] Romilly contends that Nicias doesn't play an important role in these events (1963, 108).

liberate (see Athenian inconsistency at Mende, IV.130), and at times he would liberate those he would dominate. When he attacks it is not with full force (III.51, 91, V.83, and his conduct throughout the Sicilian campaign).[44] And when he is victorious he refrains from exercising that rule which makes attacking desirable in the first place (IV.54). Nicias tries to strike an unstable balance between domination and liberation, between ruling for one's own good and serving the good of others. His attempt to secure this balance becomes noteworthy[45] when one considers that in his speeches he unambiguously asserts the superior goodness of the law (both human and divine) and thus the priority of serving the common good over one's own good.

In his first speech to the Athenian assembly (VI.9-14), Nicias invites the Athenians to reconsider their decision to send an expedition to Sicily. He opens by declaring that while he would certainly benefit from the expedition, having been granted the honor of command (along with Alcibiades and Lamachus), he must object to it insofar as it puts the good of the city in great danger (VI.9). He is thus willing to forego his personal honor to secure the good of Athens. He further warns the Athenians to be wary of those who would risk the good of the city to ensure their private fortunes (such men not only bankrupt themselves, but the city as well; VI.12). In his second attempt to deter the assembly from undertaking such a dangerous campaign (VI.20-4), Nicias claims that if the city is going to proceed with such an expedition, then they need to approach it in terms that will guarantee its success (VI.21). They must send a force much larger than

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[43] Strauss (1964, 202 and fn. 49).

[44] For a brief but detailed account of these blunders, confirming my characterization here, see Orwin (1994, 120-1).

[45] Nicias is hardly the first political actor in Thucydides' work who tries to strike an uneasy balance between ruling and serving. One finds similar efforts in those speeches by the envoys, Pericles, Alcibiades, and the ambassadors at Melos. One also seems to find it in the very city of Athens herself. Nicias's

that originally envisioned.[46] The greatness of the city demands great individual sacrifices, financial and otherwise (VI.20-3).[47] Before their first battle with the Syracusans, a people they came to despoil and enslave, Nicias reminds his troops that as foreign invaders in a foreign land, they are exposed and vulnerable. On the eve of their grandest imperial design, he invites his men to recall the safety and protection of home (VI.68). After their fortunes in Sicily "turn south", the Athenians must fight a desperate naval battle in the harbor of Syracuse to secure their escape route (VI.59-72). Before the battle Nicias reminds his men that not only are their lives at stake, but the very existence of their city hangs in the balance. If the Athenians at home are to defend themselves against enemies there, then the sailors and soldiers must fight valiantly here (VII.61, 64). After their defeat and subsequent retreat over land, Nicias tries to restore his men's spirits by reminding them that their suffering is as unexpected as his suffering, insofar as he is pious and law-abiding (VII.77). Because the pious and law-abiding don't deserve punishment, then there is good reason to expect Nicias's fortunes will experience a reversal. Since his fortune is tied to their fortunes, the men should rest assured that their fortunes will also experience a reversal. Moreover, each man should take courage that wherever he stands he is himself a city and thus capable of deflecting any assault on his person; private courage is best effected by resembling the public form (VII.77; see also VII.64, end). If we take the speeches of Nicias as Nicias would have us take them, then they reveal a statesman possessed of a single-minded concern with and devotion to the law and the good of Athens.

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consistent vocal defenses of the goodness of the law and law-abidingness make his uneasy balance stand out.

[46] Cf.VI.31 (150 galleys) with VI.8 (60 galleys).

What accounts then for the tension between the ambiguity in his actions regarding the goodness of ruling and serving and his unambiguous declarations regarding his service to the law and the good of Athens? Thucydides makes it clear that Nicias is a political moderate.[48] As such, Nicias does not desire to expand Athens's imperial rule. But he doesn't wish to surrender or decrease her current dominion either. If Athens's current rule is good for her, then Nicias needs to reconcile himself to the fact that to preserve such a good one must sometimes be dominating and violent. The very fact, however, that Nicias needs to reconcile himself to *anything* suggests he remains uncertain about what constitutes Athens's good. But if he is uncertain about that, then it makes little sense for him to try to establish his single-minded devotion to the "cause" of Athens. By wavering as he does, Nicias forces us to wonder just what exactly *he* thinks he is devoted to.

A closer reading of his speeches indicates that Nicias understands his good and the good of Athens to be identical (or very nearly so). For instance, in his first speech Nicias notes that those citizens are "equally good" (as he is) who care for their own bodies and their property (as he does). Such men will want their city to fare well so that their bodies and wealth will likewise fare well (VI.9). And in his speech before the battle in the harbor, Nicias declares that the fate of their city rests on this battle insofar as one's city exists only if one is alive to see it (VII.61). Patriotism for Nicias, perhaps even the city itself, is a function of one's self concern. Thucydides confirms this about Nicias

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[47] Of course, Nicias presumes the *demos* to be unwilling to make such sacrifices (VI.19), but his appeal to the priority of the common good is undeniable.

[48] See also Grene's comments (1965, 46-7). For Nicias's association with "moderation' one should not only consider his policies of caution and restraint, but one should also consider his presumed connection with the "moderates" (*tois sophrosi*) at IV.28.5. See also Thucydides' comments about Nicias's motives in establishing peace with Sparta (V.16). Nicias's incredible wealth and his philolaconism would thus class him as more of an oligarch and thus more of a political moderate.

when, in reference to the peace he made with the Spartans, he states that Nicias "who was most successful in his military charges, by far most eagerly desired the peace. Nicias desired the peace because, being in a lack of misfortune, he thought it fit to preserve his good fortune and to put a stop to the present troubles and to give to himself and to the city a rest and for future time to leave behind a name that nothing caused the city to fail while he lived" (V.16). This might allow us to conclude that Nicias is devoted, ultimately, to his own good, albeit understood as his "single-minded" service to Athens (see V.46). But it doesn't tell us why his actions lack a similar single-mindedness. If his good and the city's good are identical, or even if the latter is the precondition for the former, then why not be more ruthless and more daring in his service to Athens?

One can find the answer in two speeches Nicias "never" delivers. In his letter to the Athenians describing the plight of the original expedition to Sicily (VII.11-15), Nicias offers a surprisingly frank account of Athens's dire straits.[49] While Nicias certainly downplays his own culpability (and plays up his former good services), the bad news the letter reveals is loud and clear. Nicias, as the sole leader of the expedition, could not hope to avoid the shame of being associated with such a failed military campaign. He even asks to be removed from the command, albeit for health reasons. As the example of Demosthenes showed, a minor military blunder and loss of Athenian lives can result in severe consequences for Athens's generals (III.98, 102).

For a man as concerned with his private honor as Nicias, such a letter seems to embody that selfless concern with duty and the common good so loudly proclaimed above (that such a letter could amount to a disgraceful concession according to Nicias himself see VI.21; compare with VII.15). He thus tries to "man up" and face the shame of

his failure. But however honest this letter might be, Nicias does not deliver it himself. A clerk reads it to the Athenian assembly. "Safe" in Sicily he engages neither his enemy nor his equally dangerous countrymen. While military necessity demands he stay with his troops, Nicias's distance from his own words tacitly calls into question both the virtue of their candor and the unambiguous goodness of serving those who might endanger him.

In the second "speech" (VII.48), Thucydides recounts Nicias's reasoning as to why, after being soundly defeated in Sicily, he won't immediately lead the entire Athenian army back to Athens in retreat. Nicias informs his commanders that he would not put his own private fortune and honor at the tender mercies of the Athenian assembly by retreating without its orders to do so. He would rather die at the hands of the enemy than be put to death unjustly by an assembly given to hearsay and the slander of others (including perhaps that of his own troops, VII.48.3-4). Nicias's judgment here, which he actually presented to his command, is not presented in direct discourse. Nor does he present all of his thoughts to his fellow commanders, keeping to himself the status of conspirators in Syracuse who might yet turn the city over to him. And on this decisive issue of "Syracusan conspirators," Nicias cannot even form a judgment for himself (VII.48.3). Faced with a glaring gap between the good of Athens and his own good, between law-abidingness and his own honor, he is unable to say anything clear at all. Nicias's indecision in acting now characterizes his speech.[50]

The source of the tension between Nicias's speech and his deeds, between his single-minded service to Athens and his schizophrenic approach to dominating and

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[49] On Nicias's letter as a "quoted speech" see, among others, Strauss (1974, 10).

[50] Strauss contends that Nicias's delay and lack of candor here is caused by his hope that the conspirators will turn over the city (1974, 10). If this is correct, it is only because Nicias hopes that the connection between good character and good things isn't as tenuous as his predicament suggests.

serving, now comes to light. Up until the Sicilian campaign Nicias's good and the good of Athens frequently coincided. He was never forced to confront fully the identification of his service to Athens with his good; he was never forced to reconcile what he expected or hoped for from his piety and lawfulness with what piety and lawfulness demanded of him. But now Nicias, who has devoted his life to Athens's laws and the divine rites of Athens's gods, may lose his fortune, his life, and more importantly his honorable reputation to an ungrateful and shortsighted mob. The goodness of serving such a mob is now clearly a question.

Nicias's previous failure to reconcile the pursuit of his good with that of the common good seems due in part to the fact that his personal wealth and family fortune shielded him from the natural shortcomings that make law necessary. Nicias is not one who, beginning from a profound sense of his own nobility, recognized nature's failure to reward and confirm spontaneously such nobility, and therefore devoted himself to the common in order to grab the goods nature withheld. He does not understand the law and law-abidingness as the *means* to the goods one deserves. This explains the lack of energy and daring in those campaigns in which Nicias led an assault. For Nicias, the law *confirms* that his wealth is due to his goodness. The law is that authority which invests one's goods with right. As such, it preserves his fortune, it does not demand that he expand it. This seems to explain why, when a chasm between his good and the goodness of law-abidingness arises, Nicias is utterly confused. If he were truly reflective, this would lead him to question whether he owed his wealth and great fortune to his law-abidingness or to something else. Nicias is not sufficiently reflective to question this identification. As we have seen, under such circumstances he cannot even form a clear

plan of action that would benefit either himself or Athens. In the end, he resorts to the authority behind Athens's law that invests her decrees with right.[51] Assured of the goodness of divine law, he surrenders his judgment to that of the gods. The result is his death and Athens's greatest defeat.

Nicias identifies what is good with what is his own. In this respect, Nicias, that law-abiding and pious representative of moderate Athens, comes to sight as fundamentally Kleonian (and thus immoderate, impious and lawless). While it may seem odd to understand Nicias in this way, his decision to subject the good of Athens's military, her finest commanders, and even the city itself to the preservation of his own honor derives from a selfishness and pride that strain the bonds of modesty, piety and lawfulness. If this is true, how can one explain Nicias's outward moderation and Kleon's outward immoderation? Nicias differs from Kleon because Kleon, like the demos whose vulgarity and interests he cultivates, is dogged by need. Kleon seems unable to raise his head from the relentless pursuit of empire to see the problem with relying on external goods to become self-sufficient. As a wealthy gentleman, Nicias doesn't face need and exposure as Kleon and the many do.[52] He can thus understand the law as that which protects his estates and preserves his self-sufficiency. For Kleon, the law comes to sight as an obstacle to the pursuit of those goods that would satisfy his needs and desires. But in each case, both Kleon and Nicias's identification of the good with their own is based on their refusal to countenance their truly needy nature, a refusal based on the shame of admitting that one is in fact needy and defective and is therefore insufficiently good.

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[51] For a similar conclusion, see Bolotin (1986, 26).

[52] This explains why Nicias fails to understand the demos. While they may equally be as equally untrusting of Alcibiades, they are so for different reasons. The demos fears his tyrannical aspirations because his rule

Unwilling to consider the possibility that he might not be good, Nicias refuses to address squarely man's truly needy nature. The basis of his goodness and of the goodness and authority of the law that vouches for his goodness must remain immanifest and contingent.

3.b. Alcibiades

In the first words we hear from Alcibiades, he loudly asserts the harmony between his good and the good of Athens such that by the single-minded pursuit of his personal interests the city of Athens will also benefit (VI.16).[53] While this echoes the harmony of interests expressed by Pericles in his Funeral Oration, Alcibiades here clearly and publicly places the good of the city below that of the individual citizen. His proclaimed interest in leading the Athenian campaign against Sicily derives from his concern for his personal glory. Traditionally, the glory he seeks was to derive from a statesman's long record of serving the good of others; selfless attention to the good of others, not self-aggrandizing rule, is the precondition for one's honor and praise. Alcibiades can only claim that the selfish pursuit of his own glory constitutes an unquestionable good for the city if the satisfaction of his superior nature will also satisfy the ends of a city bent on domination. Clearly such natures are few.[54] But for Alcibiades, both the superiority of his nature and rule over Athens as the end of his superior nature are unquestionable.

That Alcibiades understands rule over Athens to constitute his chief good is clear. The first time one sees him, he is creating an alliance with the Argives and arranging to

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will aggravate their vulnerability and need. Nicias opposes Alcibiades out of his concern to retain his wealth and honor. See also Strauss (1964, 203).

[53] My treatments of Alcibiades here and that of the Sicilian campaign – the story of tyrannicides especially - below (4.b) owe much, both general and particular, to the work of Forde (1989).

[54] To be sure, when Alcibiades claims that the good of the city follows from his selfish pursuit of glory, he does not simply bid all others to pursue the like in the false belief that Athens is best served by her many

expand Athenian influence in the Peloponnesus. His actions are intended to disrupt the Peace between Sparta and Athens, for which his rival Nicias won the credit (V.43), thereby destroying Nicias's crowning achievement. He also intends to weaken Sparta's long-held power over the Peloponnesus. Although Alcibiades fails, he comes quite close to arranging a victory that would have forced Sparta to sue for peace on Athens's terms and established Athens's influence in a region that had been dominated by Sparta for nearly 300 years. Such a victory would have destroyed the credibility of Nicias and would have secured Alcibiades' position as Athens's leading statesman.[55] Again, when Athens contemplates the Sicilian expedition, it is Alcibiades who spearheads the effort to attack Sicily (VI.15-19). In both his own speech in favor of the expedition and in those speeches made against it, Alcibiades' interest in enhancing his glory and thus his status and position within Athenian politics is clear. Alcibiades claims that he is not only worthy of leading the expedition, but that he of all Athenians *deserves* to lead this campaign (VI.16). And no matter how distasteful his private indulgences might be to some, he claims that no one can deny that he manages public affairs better than others do. Later, after the Athenians find him guilty of impiety and sentence him to death, Alcibiades flees to Sparta where he reveals Athens's interest in dominating the Mediterranean (VI.89-92 as well as VI.15; though this may be more Alcibiades' design than Athens's). He also makes it clear that in assisting Sparta as he does, he seeks to win his city back for himself, on his own terms (VI.92). Finally, having been sentenced to death by both Athens and Sparta, Alcibiades attempts to juggle the three great powers of

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inferior citizens pursuing their own selfish agendas. For the revolutionary character of Alcibiades' effort, see Forde's *Ambition*, 7.

the Mediterranean – Athens, Sparta, and Persia – in an effort to get the Athenians to recall him and have him save their city (see VIII.46-8 especially, 53, and 81). Alcibiades' deeds thus paint the picture of a single-minded pursuit of rule over Athens and of Athens's domination in Greece and beyond (and thus Alcibiades' rule over Greece and beyond).

That Alcibiades is convinced of his own superiority is made clear by his speeches. In his first speech to the Athenians, he claims that men who pride themselves on their superior position need not observe equality with others. Such men, though despised while alive, are admired by posterity and remembered as heroes, which is the very thing he aspires to achieve (VI.16.5).[56] Furthermore in his individual pursuit of honor and glory, whether by sponsoring chariots in the Olympic games, funding dramatic performances, or coordinating the Argive alliance and the subsequent battle with Sparta, he served the greater honor and glory of Athens (VI.16).[57] Thucydides seems to confirm this when he writes that, "publicly [Alcibiades] managed the affairs of the war well" (VI.15, brackets mine).[58] In both his remarkably candid statements regarding both his own worthiness to rule and the basis on which he deserves his position of prominence (that the city benefits from his private pursuit of self-interest), Alcibiades resembles those Olympic combatants who disrobe in order to display their natural superiority for all with eyes to see. But a

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[55] Thucydides writes that Alcibiades desired to lead the Sicilian expedition because "he hoped to reduce Sicily and Carthage and personally to gain in wealth and reputation by means of his successes" (VI.15). See also VI.16 end.

[56] To see the "family resemblance" between Pericles and Alcibiades, one should compare his comments here with those of Pericles about the envy and hatred of those who do great deeds (II. 64.3-5). One should also consider how Alcibiades resolves the problem that the envy of the living poses for the great among them (VI.16.5). This problem echoes what Pericles says about the difficulty of praising others (II.35, 45).

[57] For further evidence of Alcibiades' confidence in himself see his speech to the Spartans at VI. 92 where he expresses his confidence in the counsel he gives.

[58] For evidence that Thucydides might think that Athens would have succeeded in Sicily had Alcibiades not been recalled compare Thucydides' account of the Sicilian expedition at II.65 with his account of Alcibiades' recall at VI.28-9 and VI.61.

question arises when one considers that unlike those Olympic combatants, Alcibiades never openly or directly engages in combat with others.

In every military engagement and in virtually every political maneuver aimed at securing his political rule over Athens, Alcibiades employs persuasion, manipulation and deception. He almost never engages in direct force or open confrontation. [59] For instance, he engineers Athens's alliance with Argos both by rudely deceiving the Spartan envoys who were "well-disposed" towards Athens and by manipulating the Athenian assembly (V.43-6). After the initial Athenian military expedition to Argos fails to engage the Spartans (without Alcibiades at the helm), the Spartans and Argives establish a truce. Upon his return to the region, Alcibiades scuttles this peace and persuades the allies to resume armed conflict against Sparta. The battle of Mantinaea, which results from Alcibiades' orchestrations, was according to Thucydides one of the greatest ever among the Greeks (V.74). In fighting it, Sparta risks as much as she wins, restoring her reputation for bravery and military skill after so nearly suffering a decisive defeat. But nowhere in the battle do we see Alcibiades. He shows up only as an ambassador (not a general – we know the two Athenian generals died) to instigate the fight (V.61). He does return to Argos the following summer, but only to manipulate the terms of the peace between Sparta and Argos (V.76).

At the beginning of the Sicilian expedition, Thucydides relates a conference on strategy between the Athenian generals. Alcibiades suggests that they first persuade other cities to revolt against Syracuse. Only after having won over these allies should Athens "at length" wage war against Syracuse (VI.48). Lamachus, on the other hand, argues for

[59] Gribble similarly contends that "we can sense the extent to which Alcibiades' military skill is a product of his own image-making" (1998, 57).

an immediate and direct assault on Syracuse (VI.49). Being surprised at the size and audacity of the Athenian force, the Syracusans would be unprepared and would panic. They would thus be unable to offer any sustained or organized resistance. And as Syracuse went, so too would go the rest of the island. [60] Alcibiades' strategy is selected and meets with little initial success. Thucydides seems to side with Lamachus' more direct, confrontational strategy. Shortly after Alcibiades' recall, he notes that "for when the Athenians did not immediately press them in accordance with their first fear and expectation, then as each day passed [the Syracusans] got filled with more heart and when [the Athenians] sailed to other parts of Sicily and appeared very far from them...they held them in contempt even more" (VI.63; brackets mine). Because of this respite, the Syracusans are able to mount an assault on the Athenians that eventually results in their destruction.

Alcibiades employs the same kind of strategies against Athens while in exile at Sparta, and perhaps most famously, while courting the favor of the Persian satrap Tissaphernes. Alcibiades persuades Tissaphernes to interfere in the conflict between Sparta and Athens (which Alcibiades is responsible for restarting) in order to pit the two Greek forces against each other (VIII.46). His ostensible motive is to strengthen the Great King's power in Ionia and Western Greece. But as we learn, Alcibiades' "handling" of Tissaphernes aims at his own recall in Athens (VIII.47). This requires that he not only deceive Tissaphernes, but that he juggle the interests of the Spartan navy, the Spartan general Astyochus, the Athenian army at Samos, and the Athenian general Phrynichus, as well as arrange an oligarchic coup in Athens *and* the establishment of the Five Thousand.

[60] Nicias argues that Athens should merely resolve the conflict between the Selinutines and the Leontines, the initial pretext for Athens being in the region, and then go home (VI.47).

To Alcibiades' credit, he succeeds in virtually all of this. But none of it is achieved through an outward show of force or a direct military engagement. His military and political efforts aimed at ruling, quite fittingly, parallel his success at the Olympic games. Alcibiades was not a contestant or a combatant at the games, but someone behind the scenes whose superior wealth, pride and ambition enabled his teams to take the first, second and fourth place finishes in the chariot races.

One might suppose that someone clearly bent on ruling and believing himself worthy to rule, as Alcibiades does, would strive to defeat openly all those who defy him or who question his worthiness so that all with eyes to see could recognize his natural superiority. One might expect such an ambitious person to enter himself into the Olympic games. Why doesn't Alcibiades? The apparent discrepancy between Alcibiades' actions and his confidence in his surpassing worth dissolves when we recall the example of Greek wrestlers. In discarding one's clothes to wrestle, one demonstrates one's natural superiority in a way that attempts to preempt or replace the actual contest. In the clear light of one's manifest superiority any opponent with eyes to see would concede the contest. (As we saw at the beginning and end of chapter 4, wrestling naked amounts to laying a claim on the goods of victory prior to the contest.) The need to engage in the contest even after one has revealed one's self suggests that one's superiority is not clear, at least not to one's opponent, who may hold quite the opposite opinion. But as should be clear, Alcibiades' "failure" to engage in open and direct conflict does not stem from his reservations about his superior nature. On the contrary, it stems from his profound belief that his natural superiority is so manifest that it renders any open or direct contest

unnecessary. The absence of Alcibiades in direct conflict in the narrative reflects Thucydides' psychological sketch.

Alcibiades' belief in his clearly superior nature explains why he places so much emphasis on his ability to persuade others to join his cause – whatever that cause may be. Through speech he can reveal that his course of action is the superior course of action, and through rational disclosure alone he can gain the voluntary compliance of his audience. This also seems to explain Alcibiades' insistence that the Athenians recall him, that they voluntarily consent and submit to his rule, thereby openly acknowledging his superior worthiness (see his concluding comments to the Spartans at VI.92). Thus his "behind-the-scenes" interference in Persian, Spartan and Athenian affairs – far from being designed to conceal himself –are meant to arrange matters so that his superior qualities will be thrown into greater relief, making his surpassing greatness and the necessity of his leadership even more visible. Alcibiades thus avoids recourse to force -- a recourse which would require the tacit admission that one's superiority is not manifest to others, an admission that would force one to question the connection between nature and the spontaneous reward of one's worth. But clearly Alcibiades is no fool. He knows that successful politics requires the use of open force (V.61). What prevents him from inquiring into the cause of this gap between one's worth and the failure of nature to secure spontaneously the goods belonging to the worthy?

Alcibiades' tremendous good fortune, his splendid natural ancestry, his Periclean tutelage, his considerable political skills, his enormous ambition, and as we learn from the Platonic corpus, his great beauty and intelligence, make him one of the most gifted individuals in Greece. Such great natural gifts seem to prevent Alcibiades from ever

questioning his superior worthiness to rule. They also prevent him from ever raising the "Cylonian question" as to whether the goods of politics are in fact genuine human goods. This is another way of saying that Alcibiades has not sufficiently reflected on his own true neediness so as to raise the question "what is genuinely good for me?" And he hasn't done so because he already appears to enjoy the goods that nature can bestow on men.

This seems to be the deepest problem facing Alcibiades. His great natural gifts preempt any inquiry into the character or content of his goodness and thus prevent him from knowing whether the goods he seeks are in fact goods. For Alcibiades, the question regarding the natural goods for man has already been answered before he has ever been allowed to ask it. For him, he himself is the embodiment of universal natural goods. Because in his case there is no apparent gap between the universal and the particular, he appears to embody Greekness itself. The relationship between universal and particular and between speech and deed that leads to reflection for Thucydides ends in self-satisfaction for Alcibiades. Reflection suggests however, that if Alcibiades were to attempt to provide a rational justification of his desire to rule over Athens, he would be unable to offer a coherent or satisfactory account.

The problem is rooted in Alcibiades' understanding of what rule over Athens means for him. In order for ruling to constitute the natural reward for his superior nature, Alcibiades cannot rule just anybody. The glory in ruling, like the glory in athletic victory, comes from ruling over a worthy citizenry (opponent), a noble citizenry (opponent) that also recognizes one's clear superiority and voluntarily submits to one's rule. Alcibiades' "subjects" cannot be unwilling slaves (or to keep up the analogy, ungrateful weaklings). He finds such a citizenry in the Athenians. According to his speech at Sparta, it belongs

to the Athenians to resist tyranny, and those who so resist are understood as the commons or demos (VI.89). Consequently, according to Alcibiades, it was through the democracy that the Athenians reached and preserved their freedom and empire (VI.89 end), the likes of which surpassed all other Greeks. If he himself has designs on spreading Athenian power throughout the Mediterranean, then it is only through the Athenian democracy that he can realize such aspirations. Such a powerful and freedom loving citizenry would certainly constitute a worthy and challenging "opponent" for him to rule. But as Alcibiades makes clear, both in his words to the Spartans and in his dealings with Tissaphernes, Phrynichus, the Athenian army at Samos and the oligarchs at Athens, he wants the Athenians to recall him. Were he to impose rule, as the despotic barbarians do, he would eliminate the fundamental condition of his superiority (voluntary submission to one's superiority) that his ruling Athens should confirm.

The desire to rule in this way reinforces the sense that Alcibiades prefers to rule a democracy rather than an oligarchy, insofar as an oligarchy forcefully excludes the *demos* from office and thus governs the unwilling. And while he did arrange an oligarchic coup to facilitate his recall, the "coup" was a bloodless one (based on persuasion – see Pisander's "speech" at VIII.53). Moreover, he himself paved the way for the removal of the 400 tyrants and the establishment of the Five Thousand (VIII.86). Alcibiades also claims that the principal source of his troubles in Athens is the envy of those who considered themselves his "equals" (V.16.5, *tois homois*, "those similar"). Their envy would be a far greater problem in an oligarchy than a democracy insofar as oligarchic rule would require him to share offices with such men (the judgments on Alcibiades and oligarchy at VIII.63 and 70; see also 65, 68). Alcibiades' experience with the oligarchic

faction in Athens confirms this preference (one should merely consider his dangerous and violent intrigues with Phrynichus at VIII.48-51). In a democracy he could effectively eliminate their influence (as he did with Nicias) through winning the acclaim of the people. Like the Spartans he counsels, Alcibiades seeks to enjoy a supremacy over the Greeks that "rests not on force but on consent and affection" (VI.92).

Alcibiades' preference calls into question Phrynichus's assessment of Alcibiades' unbridled desire to rule Athens, democracy or not (VIII.48).[61] But it also raises a larger question. For if Alcibiades wishes to rule Athens single-handedly and to do so without using force, but through the acquiescence of the people, then he must expect the commons to enter voluntarily into servitude. By doing so they would forego the very qualities that allowed Athens to secure her freedom and empire, the very qualities that made ruling them desirable. One's worthwhile "opponents" are worthwhile precisely because they will not surrender without a fight (see the Athenian envoys' assessment of themselves, I.72-7). In replacing their fierce attachment to freedom and domination with servitude, they render the basis on which he rules questionable.

If Alcibiades has his way, he will not only undermine his own argument for the great end of his nature, but his superior qualities, by never being openly "tested," will always remain essentially hidden. He is in a "catch-22." If he condescends to test his worth openly, then he must tacitly admit that a question exists as to his manifest superiority. He must acknowledge the gap between one's worth (or sense of that worth)

[61] While Phrynichus seems to have it right (according to Thucydides), and while Alcibiades himself reserves some of his harshest words for democracy, there is reason to think Alcibiades is more inclined to a democracy than to an oligarchy. As noted, while Alcibiades is responsible for the oligarchic revolution he is also partly responsible for the change to the rule of the Five Thousand (VIII.87). Moreover, one cannot deny Alcibiades' imperial ambitions nor that democracy offers him the greatest vehicle for him to achieve his ambitions. Thucydides' comment on Phrynichus suggests that the matter is more complicated than the

and nature's spontaneous support of that worth. If he does not condescend to compete for the public's recognition of his virtue, then his superior qualities will always remain in question. After all, one cannot enjoy the reputation of an Olympic champion without ever having entered the ring and won; and there can be no joy in winning by default. Thus on the basis of his assumptions about the goodness of rule or the goodness of his nature, it is not necessary for him to raise the question of his natural goodness. And as a result, it is not necessary for him to undertake that investigation which would allow him to know that the goods in question are in fact good.

Thucydides' treatment of Nicias and Alcibiades fleshes out and establishes a fuller case against political life. It shows how both aspects of political right that Pericles is somehow able to marry and to articulate jointly, ultimately derive their authority from the immanifest and contingent. Nicias and Alcibiades are unable to derive what is good from anything else (much like Pausanias and Themistocles) because they have not sufficiently reflected, or have not been forced to reflect sufficiently, on their true neediness - to know that the goods they seek are in fact true goods. It would seem that neither serving the common good, as in the case of Nicias, nor ruling for one's own good, as in the case of Alcibiades, allows one to know that political power is a genuine good and can thus genuinely satisfy the need that attends the human condition.

4. Narrative Confirmation: the Plague at Athens, the Civil War at Corcyra, and the Sicilian Campaign.

To this point I have focused on how the speeches of some of the *History's* main actors reflect and expand on the lessons learned in Book I. Of course, the speeches of the

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impression we receive from the narrative and Thucydides' explicit comments. On Alcibiades' lack of patriotism, see Hornblower (1986, 68).

actors constitute only a part of Thucydides' speech. If the speeches embody and expand on the lessons learned in Book I, then the narrative of Books II through VIII should confirm the lessons of the speeches while also reflecting the "shady spectrum of moral legitimacy" to which those speeches point. That is, the narrative should confirm the fundamentally contingent nature of politics, while reflecting the curious interplay between universal and particular whose demise Thucydides details and preserves. If the movement of the *History* from "one bookend to the other" details the unraveling of the interplay between universal and particular at the heart of Periclean Athens, the Funeral Oration and Greekness itself, then the narrative should reflect this. Of course, a serious confrontation with the narrative of Books II through VIII is well beyond the scope of this study. I will instead offer some observations about three of the *History's* more important, or at any rate more famous, episodes.

4.a. The Plague at Athens and the Corcyrean Civil War

One might object to my argument about the "movement" of the *History* from one bookend to the other on the grounds that the reader confronts the unraveling of Greekness embodied in Periclean Athens long before the end of Book VIII. In fact one sees it directly following the Funeral Oration in the effects of the plague at Athens. One also sees it in Book III in the Corcyrean civil war. If the quintessential product of Greekness is political right understood solely in terms of the laws of the political community and thus the good of others, then in both the plague at Athens and in the civil war at Corcyra, Greekness gets trampled underfoot. Thucydides' account of both details the weakness of written and unwritten laws in the face of men's passion, shortsightedness, avarice, jealousy and ignorance. In the face of the ravages of the plague (II.49-54), the Athenians

quickly lose all respect for human and divine laws. Due to the spread of the disease men no longer visit the sick among their friends and family (II.51). Preferring to save their own lives they leave their loved ones to suffer and die alone. The Athenians also became neglectful of divine burial rites (see II.52). Penned inside the city by the Spartan army, the Athenians run out of room to bury the dead and so begin to combine burials. But instead of asking the permission of those assembling the funeral pyre, families began to throw the corpses of their loved ones on burial fires already assembled and reserved for others. And those who had assembled the burial pyres no longer require such passersby to request the favor; each group merely adds the newly deceased and goes on their way without so much as acknowledging the other. Seeing the indiscriminate ravages of the plague, affecting alike the rich and the poor, the strong and the weak, the healthy and the infirm, the noble and the ignoble, men become contemptuous of both human and divine laws (II.53 all). Convinced that "some greater sentence" (II.53 end) has been passed against all Athenians regardless of their conduct, men abandon their shame and discretion and give themselves over to pleasure openly in an effort to enjoy the brief measure of life left them. In the face of what seems a certain and certainly gruesome death, the fear of both human and divine laws melts away.

While despair and disrespect for the law in plague-ridden Athens doesn't completely destroy Greek civilization and respect for humanity, the violence produced by the Corcyrean civil war seems to (III.70-84). People are slaughtered in every form possible - fathers murder their sons, suppliants are killed at the altars of the gods, neighbors turn on each other, and creditors kill their debtors. Self-aggrandizement in its basest forms reigns as the specious banners of "political equality for all" and "moderate

aristocracy" are raised by the "democrats" and "oligarchs" respectively in the vulgar justification of their feckless grab for power (III.82.8). Disregarding family ties and religious oaths, men honor only power, daring, cleverness, dishonesty and wit. Under the onslaught of such bloodshed Thucydides notes that words, the chief means for the Greek disclosure of Greekness, quickly change their meaning

> Thoughtless daring was held to be a loyal courage, foresight for the future a handsome cowardice, moderation a cloak for unmanliness, and to be wise in all things to be lazy in all things. A startling rapidity of action imposed upon one a portion of manliness. To contrive for one's safety was held to be a sensible pretext for desertion of one's party. He who was savage was always trusty, while he who contradicted such violence was held in suspicion. He who contrived against others - and such a thing happened - was held to be wise, but he who suspected such contrivances in advance was held to be yet more dreadfully clever. But he who contrived so as not to need any of those things was held to be a dissolver of comradeship and one who was panic stricken by his adversaries (III.82).

In the wake of such violence, justice as a legitimate and rightful limit on men's pursuit of their self-interest fades away. As Thucydides writes, "human nature having prevailed over the laws, and being accustomed to perform injustice against them, it revealed its delight at being ungoverned in its anger,[62] stronger than justice and an enemy to all which is superior" (III.84). It seems that as the concern for the common or the good of others fades, so too does Greekness. Indeed, speech itself – the rational means by which one makes his superior nature manifest and thus the hallmark of Greekness – seems to surrender to the deeds, as those capable of thought (or speech) are slaughtered by those who can only act (III.83).

But if one understands Greekness (or political right) in terms of securing one's own good through the voluntary observation of limits on self-interest, then in both the

[62] The Greek here (*akrates orges*) means literally an unmixed anger. It thus suggests an anger of excessive, unmitigated violence.

plague at Athens and the civil war at Corcyra, the quintessential element of politics, of Greekness, remains intact. In the plague, for instance, some Athenians, refusing the shame of clinging to mere life, choose instead to assist those friends of theirs who are sick, and thus falling ill and dying themselves (II.52-3). Even those who give themselves over to the pleasures of the moment do so on the grounds that it is both profitable and honorable (II.53.3, *kalon*). These men understand their hedonistic defiance of the laws to signify their freedom from false conventions and thereby reflected their ability to stand on their own two feet, as it were; their hedonism represents bravery worthy of the admiration of others. Even under the plague's oppression, the Athenians still understand the pursuit of their own pleasure in terms of a standard of human behavior that does not tolerate or permit all conduct.[63]

This becomes clearer in the Corcyrean civil war. While an initial reading suggests unfettered and indiscriminate violence, the citizens of Corcyra (and those of later civil wars) conduct their savagery in terms of partisan politics. So while members of a particular faction abandon family and religious ties, they nevertheless devote themselves to causes that can not be reduced to the interests of particular individuals. In other words, the Corcyrean civil war is not a war of every man against every other man. One can best understand the collective violence as analogous to gang warfare and the actions of individuals as analogous to "gang morality."[64] And while this is the morality or code of a

[63] While Orwin's account of the Corcyrean stasis (1988) differs from mine (discussed below), our accounts of the persistence of honor and justice during the plague are similar. Orwin also offers a helpful account of how men's concern for honor and justice are altered during the plague (ibid. 842-3). For an interesting treatment of the tragic character of the plague, see Macleod (1983, 140-58).

[64] Orwin (1988) offers a very different reading of this section. On the basis of Thucydides' account of the sorry fate of intelligent men at the hands of the "meaner sorts" (III.83.3), Orwin concludes that *stasis* "is a war of all against all, in which no one can trust anyone" (839; see also 837-8). I am not sure that Thucydides sufficiently details the corruption of partisan politics to justify this conclusion. One should consider for instance, the famous passage, quoted above, describing how words "changed their meaning"

criminal group, it is a moral code nonetheless. The presence of morality, as perverse as its content may be, is reflected in the fact that the murderous gangs in Corcyra do not understand all actions to be equally valuable or worthy of admiration; not everything is permitted. [65] Thus they do not abandon the universal distinctions between virtue and vice; they merely reverse them, as well as the values of moderation, impiety, honesty, loyalty and greed. To be a worthy or honorable member of a "gang," one must adhere to the "limits" imposed by the "gang's" code of conduct, which is to say that one must act before thinking, constantly doubt those around him, serve advantage before law-abidingness, put one's wit in the service of cunning betrayal, and so on. One cannot be moderate or appear too thoughtful or trusting or forgiving or honest and so on.

The fate of speech in the Corcyrean civil war is also revealing. While the particular content of words change, their fundamental "signification," as in the passage cited above, does not. Words are still used to signify what is shameful and what is honorable, what is noble and base, what is worthy of praise and admiration and what is deserving of blame and scorn. Indeed, both sides employ speech ("on their banners" as it were) to justify their cause; thus they fight under the pretext of equality or aristocracy. That they still have recourse to justification suggests that they haven't completely abandoned their concern for justice and for the words necessary to make that justice manifest.

(III.82). The values given to words are still understood in terms of whether one exhibits those qualities necessary for one's "cause" to prevail and thus the references to comradeship and loyalty to one's cause. For help through the grammatical difficulties of III.82-83, Macleod's discussion of faction (1983, 123-139) is useful.

[65] As the chief representative of the alternative reading of this episode, White (1984, 81) argues that all standards have melted away. Saxonhouse (1978, 464-5,7,470 and 474) understands the picture of man in the plague and in Corcyra – man unrestrained from any and all conventional bonds – to be the true picture of man's nature. It is on this basis that she equates Thucydides' view of man with that of Hobbes. For a

So while justice - understood as the decrees of the community - falls in the face of the plague and sedition, the Greeks in Athens and at Corcyra, by retaining their sense of the honorable and the admirable as a restraint on the actions of men, preserve their appreciation of something akin to the noble. Thus both Athenians and Corcyreans understand their particular violent, ugly, and hate-filled actions in terms of universal standards capable of distinguishing and ranking them. Put differently, the Greeks did not forego the effort to understand their actions, however selfish, in terms of a standard that transcends (if only barely) their self-interests. Again, not everything is permitted.

This reading appears perfectly consistent with the treatment of the relationship between justice and nobility presented in chapter 4. For while justice emerged as a correction to the natural shortcomings of what the noble was taken to promise, it did not come to sight as identical with or reducible to the noble or its promises. And it was the openness to the noble, its promises and its apparent natural shortcomings, predicated by a rational awareness of one's need, that constituted the original kernel out of which Greekness grew. The "Greek" response to this awareness of one's need, namely the susceptibility to the noble or the beautiful and the particular interplay between universal and particular on which its power rests, does not dissolve completely in plague-ridden Athens or in divided Corcyra. It dissolves completely only in Book VIII with the fracturing of the Athenian polity and the elimination of any notion of a legitimate restraint on one's interest.

4.b. The Sicilian Campaign

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different view on the status of "words" in the Corcyrean *stasis*, see Strauss (1964, 146-7) and his comments about "kin" and "kinship."

The Sicilian campaign represents one of the high points of Thucydides' artistry and perhaps the clearest example of Athenian exceptionalism in the entire *History*. But it also details the problems facing Athenian exceptionalism sketched earlier. Thus the dissolution of the common good in Book VIII noted above - the fading of universals and the resurgence of particulars at the end of the *History* - is prepared by the Sicilian campaign and the events that lead to its disastrous conclusion.[66] The unique contribution the Sicilian campaign makes to this dissolution comes to light by recalling the lessons of Book I. According to my treatment of Book I, the unraveling of the Periclean interplay between universals and particulars (or the subordination of the universal to the particular) that characterizes Athens is coeval with a self-forgetfulness that characterizes the Athenian pursuit of political goods. Thus one can best understand how the Sicilian campaign contributes to this unraveling by understanding how the Athenians' involvement in Sicily leads to a kind of "self-forgetfulness" on their part. And one can best access this self-forgetfulness by noting the Athenians' original incentives for pursuing conquest in Sicily.

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[66] One might wonder why I do not treat the Melian dialogue – arguably one of the most famous episodes of the *History* and generally considered the clearest exposition of those "realist" principles assumed to be at the bottom of the Athenian thesis. For the most part I follow the readings of Orwin (1994) and Bruell (1973and 1981) against that of Forde (1989). I do not offer a treatment of the dialogue here largely because of space. Bruell (1973, 1981) argues that it is in the Melian dialogue that the primacy of the concern for the good emerges most clearly. Thus it is here where the selfless attention to the good of others (also known as "justice") can most clearly be seen as the indirect pursuit of one's greatest good – i.e., as the selfish pursuit of one's own good. For a similar argument see Ahrensdorf and Pangle (1999, chapter 2). While I think that the primacy of the concern for the good is on the "table" well before the Melian dialogue, the force of its emergence here is important and revealing. Under my reading, this view of justice as, ultimately, the selfish pursuit of one's own good, coming as it does at the end of Book V prepares the reader for the Athenians' subordination of the universal to the particular that we see played out in the Sicilian campaign and the career of Alcibiades (Books VI through VIII).

According to Thucydides the Athenians had long desired to conquer Sicily (VI.6) [67] in an effort to extend their imperial sway in the West. In the 17th year of the war they finally decide to sail for Sicily. Ever the moderate, Nicias opposes this decision. Alcibiades defends the Sicilian campaign against Nicias's reservations and the assembly reaffirms the original decision. According to Thucydides, the older citizens, secure in the belief that the mission wouldn't fail, hope "to subdue the place," while the young, assured of their safe return, desire to see the exotic sites of "a foreign country." The commoners and soldiers also hoped to gain not only the wages "but to amplify the state in power as that their stipend should endure forever" (VI.24, trans. Hobbes). But whatever the individuals' particular reasons for going, the city's decision to set sail for Sicily in this case bears the indelible stamp of "Alcibiades." In his response to Nicias, Alcibiades claims that in pursuing Sicily, Athens is only remaining true to her legacy. Had Athens practiced Nicias's proposed policy of "isolationism," then "we should have little under our government of the estates of other men, but rather hazard our own" (VI.18, trans. Hobbes). But whether she approve of such a practice or not, Athens now, having received this legacy from her ancestors, must fight to expand her imperial rule. If she does not, she will risk losing her empire and will be forced to suffer the rule of others. Alcibiades states, "it is as necessary for us to seek to subdue those that are not under our dominion, as to keep so those that are; lest if others not subject to us, we fall in danger of being subjected to them... Let us rather make reckoning by enterprising abroad to increase our power at home" (VI.18, trans. Hobbes).[68] The reasoning behind such counsel is simple:

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[67] For Athenian interests in Sicily, see I.44.2, I.36.2, III.86.4, III.115.4, and IV.2.2. For an historical account of Athens's long interest in Western expansion see Kagan (1969, 157ff).

[68] Such a thought seems to support Connor's note that "the Greek idea of ruling others is an expression of true freedom" (1984, 123). See also section "3" in chapter 4. III.A above.

"a state as well as any other thing will, if it rest, wear out of itself...whereas by the exercise of war...the city will get a habit of resisting the enemy" (VI.18, trans. Hobbes). Alcibiades' defense, based on self-defense and local freedom, thus points to the necessity of a global and "deathless" Athenian empire. The conclusion of this counsel should recall the earlier treatment of the imperial logic behind Themistocles' vision of the beautiful and advantageous in chapter 4. [69]

But no sooner does the city vote to set sail for Sicily than allegations against Alcibiades arise regarding recently mutilated statues of Hermae and the profanation of certain religious mysteries (VI.27-9). And no sooner does Alcibiades set sail for Sicily and begin to draw up the plan for conquest of the island that the Athenian demos recalls him to stand trial for the allegations against him (VI.53). Knowing that the charges against him are a ruse by his domestic enemies to discredit him and remove him from power, Alcibiades refuses to return to Athens. Instead he flees to Sparta (VI.61). The demos's decision to recall Alcibiades appear to result, not from their daring and enterprising nature, for which they were renowned and which had won them their massive power. Rather it resulted from their piety, their cautiousness, their moderation and most of all their fear of tyranny at home. For these reasons, as well as Nicias's own efforts to discredit Alcibiades in the assembly, the demos' decision may best be called "Nician." But while the demos' near hysterical response to the mutilations and the

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[69] Forde notes that Alcibiades' proposal for the Sicilian campaign manipulates the Athenians' erotic longings for personal or private freedom. But this longing had itself been fanned by Pericles' bid that the Athenians become lovers (*erastai*) of the city (or its power), despite his policy of imperial restraint (1989, 31-3). On Alcibiades' view of the necessity of empire, see Forde, ibid. 14 as well as 1986, 443. On individualistic rivalry undermining Athens in Sicily and later see Gribble (1998, 53-5). Saxonhouse (1978, 470) claims that there is no room for individualism in Periclean Athens. Thus, when the concern for individual advantage rears its ugly head in Sicily, she contends that Athens has abandoned Pericles' policies and thus failed to preserve the distinction between the realms of *nomos* and *phusis* (ibid. 482-3).

allegations against Alcibiades may be "Nician," it was' Alcibiades' own excessive manner of living that inspired such fear and hatred in his fellow citizens (VI.15). In the light of his great wealth, his massive desires, his overweening ambition, and his unapologetic sense of superiority, Alcibiades' call for a global and deathless empire with Athens standing alone on top, could only suggest his own designs to rule Athens by himself. His outline for global tyranny abroad portended domestic tyranny at home.

In recalling Alcibiades, and in passing a death sentence against him in absentia, the Athenians handed the command of the expedition to Nicias. Nicias after all was Athens's most senior general, and one who had never suffered a reversal of fortune in battle (V.16). But in transferring the leadership of the expedition, the Athenians commit the execution of a radical, enterprising and daring plan of imperial expansion to a general who embodies caution, moderation, conservatism and whose single crowning achievement was a peace that effectively limited Athenian imperialism. Under Nicias's auspices, the Sicilian campaign founders. His caution, piety and indecision allow the Syracusans to regain the initiative. Having failed both to take Syracuse and to complete the siege-works around the city, Nicias allows the Syracusans to encircle the Athenian forces, leaving the besiegers besieged. And through Nicias's Spartan-like delay, the Athenian contingent is itself forced to become Spartan-like. In the battle that would seal their fate in Sicily (VIII.69-71), the usually enterprising and innovative Athenian naval forces are forced to fight in the narrow confines of the harbor of Syracuse. Thus they abandon the tactics that made them masters of the Aegean. Due to the daring nature of the Syracusans, the Athenian navy is reduced to boarding the ships of their enemies and

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Again, such a reading is predicated on the premise that Thucydides accepts the distinction between nature and convention.

fighting "by hand strokes" (VII.70.5), as if on land, much like their traditional Peloponnesian nemesis. The transformation of the Athenian military in Sicily, from daring, sea-powered Athenians to cautious, land-locked Spartans, foreshadows the regime change that would take place in Athens three years later. The massacre of the forces in Sicily precipitates a crisis in Athens that results in the eventual transformation of the Athenian democracy into a Spartan-like oligarchy (VIII.53-4).

One could argue that the history of the Sicilian campaign, following Alcibiades' recall and the story of the tyrannicides (VI.54-60), is a history of Athens's self-betrayal. Having abandoned Alcibiades, the Athenians seem to abandon all that he represents. Specifically, they abandon the individual concerns that lead one to aspire to dominate others openly, thereby revealing one's superiority. By doing so, the Athenians abandon themselves or, at any rate, abandon the desire to reveal their noble self-sufficiency for all with eyes to see - that quality that makes them exceptional, that makes them *Athenian*. Through their fear of Alcibiades, Athens becomes moderate, conservative, pious, cautious, oligarchic, or to say in a word - Spartan. One might be tempted to conclude that this represents the triumph of the "Spartan" (or Nician) aspects of Athens over its purely "Athenian" (or Alcibidean) aspects. But this would not be strictly correct.

As noted earlier, it was Alcibiades' own excessive manner of living that created enemies within Athens who sought to discredit him in the eyes of the city. Because Alcibiades' conduct was itself borne out of a private desire to reveal his singular greatness without respect for the conventions of the city, one could say that it was just such personal disregard for convention that also led to the tragedy in Sicily, the demise of the democracy and the eventual overthrow of the city. Thucydides seems to reinforce this

conclusion, as he expands on it, in the story of the tyrannnicides. In its immediate context, this digression is meant to explain Athens's fear of tyrants and thus their fear of someone like Alcibiades. But according to Thucydides' retelling of the story, the murder of Hipparchus by the lovers Harmodious and Aristogeiton was not done out of devotion to Athenian liberty or some other public-spirited cause. Their public act of defiance had its roots solely in the lovers' private desire to secure for themselves the freedom to enjoy their erotic longings. Thus Aristogeiton hatched the plan originally to kill Hippias (not Hipparchus) and bring down the tyranny out of a desire to free himself and his beloved from the considerable political power of his erotic rival (VI.54). And Harmodius followed the plan because Hipparchus besmirched as it were, the honor of his younger sister (VI.56.1). In each case, the lovers act out of their specific attachment to what is their own: Aristogeiton acts to eliminate his erotic rival so that he can enjoy the charms of his beloved; Harmodius complies in order to revenge the disgrace endured by his sister. Each longs for the private freedom to pursue or to protect his own erotic inclinations. And one's erotic attachment, at least in this case, derive from the fact that they are one's own, simply (as opposed to the fact that they are "good").

This personal, private desire for freedom is the same desire that lay behind the attraction of Alcibiades' call for Athens's continued aggressive imperialism. And it is the same desire that led the people of Athens, afraid as they were for their personal private liberties, to demand his recall. Thus the fulcrum of Athens's forgetfulness in Sicily is the misdirected erotic attachment to one's own and thus the understanding of one's good in terms of one's own. It is precisely such an understanding that undermines the ability to understand one's particular good in terms of universals, or the ability to understand how

one's own good can consist in voluntary self-restraint. In light of the digression on tyrannicides and the fate of Athens following the Sicilian campaign, it appears that the Athenians – far from rejecting what is Alcibidean in them - are too true to their Alcibidean character. Through the example of Alcibiades and his love of the particular, we see how the character of Periclean politics and the interplay between universal and particular at its heart unravels.

When we have worked our way through Thucydides' rather exhaustive analysis of political life, through the eventual unraveling of the universal-particular interplay at the heart of politics that makes the study of politics possible, we are prevented from drawing the tragic conclusions others have by recalling the example of Diodotus.[70] The alternative represented by his example is that of giving politics its due through the assessment of the limitations facing political life, an assessment that can itself only come through an engagement with and study of politics. To be sure, we see Diodotus only once in the *History* and there is no evidence that he made the study of politics his vocation. But his speech and the sketch of the human psyche at its core, represents the product of a serious consideration of politics and the human concern for goods that politics tries to address. Moreover, his political counsel and the insight about human nature that governs it supports the demands of justice that give Greek politics its distinct form better than the counsel and insight of any other Thucydidean character. Thus, despite his single appearance, Diodotus is in an important respect more political than any other actor in the *History*.

[70] I have in mind here the conclusions of Cornford (1907), Grene (1965), Edmunds (1975), Pouncey (1980), Euben (1986, 1990) and White (1989).

The example of Diodotus does not get refuted in the *History* and the sense of his superiority to the other actors in the work only gets enhanced by the political dissolution we witness. Of course, his example alone does not allow us to conclude that the theoretical life is superior to the life of political action. Indeed, it is by no means clear that Diodotus represents for the reader or for Thucydides the life of theoretical activity. But perhaps he embodies that example to which the shortcomings of Cylon, Pausanias and Themistocles pointed, as we saw in chapter 5. Perhaps Diodotus represents the example of *apragmon*, of the quiet life apart from political rule that nevertheless remains inextricably connected to Greek politics. Perhaps the study of politics and of human nature that supplied him with the most consistent account of the Athenian thesis addresses most fully the concerns for genuine goods and the knowledge that those goods are genuine, the primary concerns animating Thucydides' intended readers.

II. Thucydides' Intent in Writing the *History*

This introduction to Thucydides' intent has argued that Thucydides writes his work in the way that he does in order to preserve the possibility of a direct engagement with and study of politics. In the opening chapter, I argued that Thucydides' intent required that he proceed in such an indirect manner. For him to proceed explicitly, he would have to assume both the possibility of theorizing about politics and the existence of the conditions necessary for theorizing – two assumptions contrary to Thucydides' efforts. And while chapters 3 through 5 tried to show the textual basis for my interpretation, they did not show why Thucydides thought that both the engagement and study of politics were necessary to preserve. Those chapters did not establish the reasons why Thucydides thought the serious study of politics is worthwhile. The conclusion that

Thucydides wrote what he did, the way he did, because his insights into politics showed that those very insights could not be revealed any other way does not establish *why* he wanted to reveal such insights in the first place. Moreover, the question "Why does Thucydides think a genuine engagement and study of politics is worthwhile or good?" cannot be answered by resorting to his interest in uncovering the truth about the gods and the first things. Thucydides' interest in the theological question stems from his interest in uncovering the clear truth about that which is human (I.22.4) and not the other way around. To answer the question about his interest in the goodness of studying politics, we must consider Thucydides' explicit comments in Book I and his teachings as presented chapters 3 through 6 of this study.

In addressing the reasons why Thucydides thinks that the engagement and study of politics are worthwhile or good, we begin to uncover in greater detail the reasons for why Thucydides proceeds as indirectly as he does. And this will lead us to two kinds of reasons: those that can be stated and those that cannot be stated. For obvious reasons, we will begin with those that can be stated.

A. The History as a Response to Our Concern for Wholeness: the Change Thucydides Effects

It is best to approach Thucydides' reasons for preserving an engagement with and study of politics by keeping in mind the question with which the *History* opens. That question was "What effected the change in Thucydides from his pre-war perspectives to his post-war perspective?" If Thucydides' work reflects the change that the author himself experienced over the course of the war, then the "proof" of Thucydides' argument regarding the possibility of political science may consist in effecting a similar

change within the reader. How might he effect this change? And how might this be connected to Thucydides' intent in writing his *History*?

To address these questions, we need to return to some of the *History's* lessons about Greek politics and the concern for wholeness or self-sufficiency at its core. As we saw earlier, Athenian exceptionalism embodies and reflects to the highest degree awareness of human vulnerability and neediness. This treatment of the Athenians suggests that our fundamental neediness as human beings and our need for knowledge of genuine goods makes us long for a perfect or complete wholeness as well as knowledge that such wholeness exists. As a consequence we long for that power or means by which we can satisfy our seemingly endless need. Those sufficiently aware of the depth of this need and of the inability of external goods to satisfy such needs turn to justice. That is, they turn to the effort to demonstrate one's freedom from need and thus one's genuine self-sufficiency by serving the good of others. By doing so, they reveal a more rationalized concern for power. All of this suggests that the concern with power that belongs to all individuals and all political communities ultimately underlies a wish to be self-sufficient, to be free from need, or to *be* simply. But this concern to *be* simply cannot be fulfilled, partly because it would require the total elimination of human neediness. Insofar as need and vulnerability make possible the openness to the noble and the notions of justice that follow from it, then overcoming this need would mean overcoming our very openness and attachment to the experience of the noble. It would mean overcoming what it means to be human.

The possibility of transforming one's human nature, from a being defined by neediness and limitations to a being freed from all neediness and limits, cannot fulfill our

concerns for genuine human goods if only because such a transformation cannot be known. It cannot be known in the first place because, as we saw in chapter 4, its achievement requires a supra-natural and supra-rational power operating in accordance with a standard of justice that is not itself political in character. And yet, as the preceding treatment of Thucydides has labored to show, justice as originally conceived *is* political. That is, if one wishes to preserve the integrity and authority of political justice, then a non-political justice cannot be known as the fulfillment of what political justice aims to satisfy. A non-political fulfillment would require one to admit to the insufficient goodness of political justice. In the second place, it requires a justice whose goodness depends on it being at once permanent and impermanent, eternal and temporal, "A" and "not-A." Such a thing cannot be known. If it cannot be known, then it cannot be known as a solution. And if it cannot be known as a solution, then it cannot satisfy our concern to know that the goods we possess are genuine. These problems facing political justice invite the attentive reader to ask, "If the life of political activity and the devotion to others is unable to satisfy my deepest needs, then what will? What are my deepest needs as a human being and what will genuinely satisfy those needs?" Such questions are the first step of an inquiry into human nature.

But the effort to understand human nature and the genuine needs that define it gets complicated by what we have learned regarding universal moral categories. According to my argument in chapters 4 and 5, Thucydides preserves the conditions necessary for a genuine engagement with and study of politics only by denying the existence of divine beings that can change what "is" at will. But as it turns out, the same conditions that cast doubt on our ability to possess knowledge of the gods also make it

impossible for us to speak in any intelligible way about absolute or universal categories. Thucydides' effort to preserve the possibility of a genuine engagement with and study of politics makes it impossible to speak about "things in themselves" – e.g., the good itself -- or "things as such" – e.g., justice as such. The blurring of the distinction between universal moral categories and the particular moral actions that make them up makes absolute knowledge of such moral categories impossible. And insofar as moral categories are primary for us as political actors and vouchsafe the integrity and stability of all other categories, and to the extent the preceding analysis has shown that what men take justice to be issues in what they take to be injustice, then one cannot understand the category "human nature" (like the categories "justice," "war," "motion," "Greekness") to be a fixed or permanent thing-in-itself. Human nature cannot be known with an absolute certainty; it must be understood as susceptible to change. The necessary efforts to come to some understanding of what is genuinely good for us is thus impeded by the discovery that there is no such thing as human nature strictly speaking. To state it simply, Thucydides' effort to preserve the possibility of political science can do so only by requiring us to modify the character of what can be known or the extent to which one can know things with an absolute certainty.

One might think that the changeability of categories like "human nature" suggests a historicist bent to Thucydides' work and the insights it reveals. Such a reading would argue that Thucydides emphasizes that there are civilizations, like those of the ancient Athenians and Spartans, whose political regimes lay claims to universality, or who claim to possess the "truth" about what is noble and ignoble, just and unjust and so on. But Thucydides suggests that such claims to universality or to truth are merely the function of

their contingent circumstances, and thus bound to change in substance as their contingencies dictate. Such flexibility in human nature and the universal categories that arise from human needs suggest that, at bottom, all things are radically particular. The door thus seems open to a kind of radical relativism.[71] And under this reading, there is no way that Thucydides can justify the goodness of his intent or his work. Perhaps it is just such a change in our disposition towards goods that Thucydides hoped to effect in his audience.

Two considerations count against the "historicist" objection. First, one must keep in mind Thucydides' explicit comments regarding the permanent utility of his work (even as he concedes the possibility of change in human things). One must also keep in mind - as I have endeavored to show – that the permanent utility of his work is ultimately grounded in the universality of human neediness and thus in the political pursuits that arise as a response to that neediness. If we are not to disregard the observations supporting the universal relevance of Thucydides' work and if we are not to disregard our earlier observations about the flexibility of classes or categories, then we must attempt to reconcile the two. And we can reconcile these two by returning, once again, to Thucydides' intention as he introduces it.

Thucydides claims that his work is a possession for all time because it helps one "investigate the clear truth about those things that have happened and will happen in accordance with that which is human" (I.22.4). Such comments do not suggest that his

[71] Stating this case from the perspective of the historian is Collingwood. He argues that Greek historiography aims to show the radically particular character of events whose constant ebb and flow prevent them from being known scientifically. In its effort to preserve what is transitory, history foregoes demonstration – the objects of history can only be a matter of *aisthesis* (perception) and not *episteme* (knowledge). To the extent that Thucydides tries to reveal the substantive laws behind the particular events, then he deviates from classical historiography and approaches the idealizing of Plato (1946, 20-33 and 42-45).

work is governed by an interest in practical political applications. And one could only make the argument that Thucydides has an exclusively or fundamentally practical intent by importing considerations into that text that he himself refuses to entertain. Of course, such comments, as ambiguous as they are, do not exclude the possibility that his work will have practical applications for political life. And in fact, his incredibly rich work clearly offers practical political lessons. Up until now, I have excluded any sustained treatment of Thucydides' practical political intentions.

I do not pretend that such practical intentions play an insignificant role in Thucydides' work. Indeed, as I argued in chapter 5, Thucydides' interest in practical political life, and Periclean politics especially, is absolutely critical to his theoretical intent. For Thucydides, the possibility of theorizing about political life can only take place in the wake of certain political conditions. Without such conditions, theorizing about politics cannot arise. Or, arising under such conditions and detaching itself from them, political theory will float above politics, becoming a distortion of itself and distorting those concerns that give it life. Thus while I do not intend to discuss Thucydides' practical political teachings, I think that any effort to do so must ultimately understand those practical teachings – whatever their content might be and however indirectly they may be connected to his theoretical work – to owe their place and importance to Thucydides' theoretical intention. The question remains, however, how Thucydides understands this theoretical intent to be worthwhile or good. We can answer this by fleshing out the character of that theoretical intent.

In the discussion of Thucydides' statement on his treatment of speech and deed (chapter 3), we concluded that the *History* is itself the result of a deed, a life's activity

devoted to bringing the Peloponnesian war into being through speech. But the *History* is not merely the end of one's reflections; it is the means to further investigations. And, as we concluded in chapter three, "it is in speech that his permanently *useful possession* - a tool made of speech to perform some deed - exists. The 'deed' that this tool is to be useful for (I.22) is itself speech-like in character" (p. 115). After all, the investigation (*skopein*) into the truth of those things that have happened and that will happen, because of its focus on what might have happened and might yet happen, is ultimately theoretical or speculative. The truth of those things that Thucydides will relate can *only* exist in speech. This understanding of Thucydides' *History* as a theoretical work (dealing with what *could* and *might* happen) seems perfectly consistent with Aristotle's distinction of history from poetry and philosophy. The *History* is not a history, but either poetry or philosophy. Because Thucydides distinguishes himself from the poets, by Aristotle's own distinction Thucydides' work would more nearly approximate philosophy.

Of course, if his work approximates philosophy then the manner in which he conducts "philosophy" is utterly novel. Its novelty consists in the fact that the education it offers (or that it offers an education at all) is almost completely opaque. Such novelty, such a complete lack of transparency in his political discourse, may make one reluctant to include the *History* in the ranks of traditional philosophic texts like *The Republic, The Politics, The Ethics, The Leviathan, The Second Treatise of Government* and so on. But one can conclude that the "deed" for which Thucydides intends his work to be useful is fundamentally theoretical by understanding the novel manner by which Thucydides treats politics. By reflecting on the novelty of Thucydides' "speech," we will get a better sense of how he understands his theoretical intent to be good.

Thucydides' speech - understood as both what he says and what he does- takes primacy over those deeds that are subject to it. Because the speech of the *History* governs the deeds it relates (both verbal and non-verbal), then it cannot be understood with reference to those criteria that distinguish the speeches from the deeds of the actors in his *History*. It transcends the criteria that distinguish verbal doings from non-verbal doings. But in light of the fact that Thucydides' speech possesses a distance from the speeches and deeds of the actors in the *History*, it would seem that the "deed" for which this tool made of speech is to be used will not itself reflect the character of the *History's* deeds. Put differently, Thucydides' speech, as I noted, serves as a commentary on the distinction between speeches and deeds and a critical commentary at that. It is unlikely that the "deed," the "investigation" for which his work will be useful, will possess the character of that which Thucydides is "critical." Furthermore, the *History* offers an unremitting emphasis on the action -- on the practical deeds and speeches -- of political men. The deed for which the *History* will be useful must therefore not be understood as practical in the way that the deeds of the actors are. The activity which the work intends to foster must eschew the strict distinction between universals and particulars that appears to characterize the speeches and deeds of the *History's* political men.

By refusing to observe a strict distinction between speeches and deeds, the activity for which Thucydides intends his work to be useful, much like the *History* itself, will effect a blurring between speech and deed. It will bring universals and particulars closer together and it will do so by refusing to reduce the universals to the contingent (one's own). A concrete example of this makes the issue clearer. In Diodotus's speech we find an example of an activity that refuses to draw sharp distinctions between speech and

deed and thus universals and particulars. How? That speech, we concluded, seems to embody the particular individual's concern to posses genuine goods. Diodotus marries the concern for "universal" goods, or genuine goods, and the needs of particular cities and individuals. But his connections between universal and particular and between the "ought" and the "is," depends on a prior reflection about the nature of politics and human nature. To be specific, Diodotus's practical political counsel follows from an intellectual confrontation with human neediness and politics' (in)ability to satisfy that neediness. Such an effort surpasses the Periclean effort to address human need because it subjects the audience's hopes for what politics can achieve to the limits of what is possible.

It may be that the activity for which Thucydides' work will be useful consists in observing the limits to what humans can know and can *be*, limits pointed to throughout this study. By observing such limits one can begin to address fully the concern to possess genuine goods and to know that those goods are genuine. And by reflection on what is possible, we are compelled to recognize and submit to such limits by the desire for genuine goods and by the equally strong desire to know that the goods we seek are genuinely good. Such desires compel us to sacrifice those convictions and hopes of ours that we cherish in the effort to avoid possessing false or flawed goods. That Thucydides intends the investigation and knowledge of such limits to address the concern for wholeness or self-sufficiency receives support from his statement of his intent in turning to the causes of the war.

When he moves from the archaeology and his statement on methods to his more famous treatment of the war's causes, Thucydides writes that he does so in order that no man should have to seek from what grounds so great a war could arise among the Greeks

(I.24.4-5). This turn to causes involves understanding how justice can issue in or generate injustice as well as how such an understanding can serve as the initial cause of our insight into the human grounds of justice and injustice. Through a discussion of the charges leveled against the Athenians, we were slowly led to the human neediness and vulnerability that facilitate man's openness to the beautiful or noble and which make possible the contradictory notions of justice at the heart of political life. The powerful concern to possess goods that free one from need and vulnerability seems to present the formal or ultimate ground of men's belief in the existence of universals, of absolute and distinct moral and political categories. As such, it provides the formal causes of the universal lessons that Thucydides' *History* promises us. And it seems that it is just this concern that he addresses in his turn to causes.

One cannot possess genuine human goods and know them to be such if one lacks knowledge of genuine human needs. But one cannot begin the quest to know genuine human needs if one is not somehow made aware of one's ignorance of what they need and thus made aware of what is good for them to possess. Thucydides' important statement as to why he turns to the causes of the war constitutes a part of his effort to make this ignorance evident to his reader. The turn to causes excites the interests of the reader by raising a problem for him. This problem as formulated in chapter 4 was "How can what issues in justice, which we take to be a good, also issue in at the same time injustice, which we take to be its opposite?" How can justice exist and still be good for us? By beginning from this problem of our ignorance about justice - the very means by which we hope to satisfy our concerns - Thucydides compels us to ask then "What 'is' just?" and "What are our deepest concerns and what will best satisfy them?" His turn to

the causes of the war presents a puzzle for the reader to solve -- a puzzle whose recognition *as a puzzle* brings one's self-ignorance to the fore.

By treating the causes of the war as he does, Thucydides seems to promise his reader the gift of self-knowledge, or at least self-awareness. In return for his care and generosity, the reader gets to know himself in return -- or at least that part of himself that is aware of his needy nature. He wins that self-awareness that is the necessary precondition of any genuine satisfaction of his deepest concerns. Thucydides' treatment of the causes of the war that follows (I.24-118) is thus properly understood to be an effort to supply the knowledge of genuine human needs that is the pre-condition of knowing and possessing genuine human goods.

In the wake of the "historicist objection" raised earlier, we turned to Thucydides' comments about his intent. Reflection on these comments suggested a theoretical intention whose Diodotean character is decidedly different from the speeches and deeds of the *History's* actors. To show that Thucydides does indeed intend to address his reader's deepest concerns, we digressed; we argued that Thucydides prepares his reader by exciting his interests in knowing how justice can issue in injustice. He prepares the reader by making him subtly aware of his own ignorance about justice. In light of this, we must return to and complete the discussion of the goodness of Thucydides' intent. How does the Diodotean theoretical activity for which his *History* will be useful "make good" on his reader's preparation?

In submitting to the legitimate limits of what we can know and what we can be (legitimate because they are imposed on us by the human condition), one receives in return the self-knowledge and self-sufficiency that attest to the goodness of such a

submission. This self-sufficiency includes freedom from dependence on tales about the ancient past (tales that cannot be verified) for guidance as to how to live. It also includes freedom from suffering the pain of dashed hopes, from the anxiety caused by superstition, from the fear inspired by belief in vindictive gods and from the dangerous zealotry that such fear inspires.[72] In other words, it includes freedom from the fear and exposure to the phantoms that arise from being a *part* of the world that we do not and cannot know.

The cultivation of such self-sufficiency does not mean that man is to become apolitical or abandon political life altogether. As the argument regarding the importance of Periclean politics made clear, if one is to know that the goods of politics are genuine, then one must be a citizen of such a regime, if not a partisan of a Periclean-like regime. Of course, Thucydides details the weakness and vulnerability of Periclean politics. He saw it fall apart in his own lifetime. He clearly could not assume that future generations would inhabit such a regime and thus be able to pursue the study of politics. But if one cannot be an actual citizen living under someone like Pericles, then perhaps one can be an intellectual citizen of the Periclean Athens that Thucydides' work preserves. Indeed, such a possibility must exist if the permanent utility of Thucydides' work is not to depend completely on chance. Thus through his work, which is an unremittingly political work, man can find his home in himself and within politics.

Because Thucydides trims some of our deepest hopes, his work appears – from the perspective of one who cherishes such hopes - remarkably austere, stark, mean and

[72] In a similar vein, Connor (1984) concludes that Thucydides' work seeks to free us from cliché, from easy answers and quick encapsulations. Gribble (1998, 63) concludes that "Thucydides' choice of narrative technique suggests he conceived his historiography...which was in some sense definitive, but which was also dependent on an intelligent and sensitive response to the text matching his own to the events of the

unforgiving. But this impression is only possible after having learned much at the feet of Thucydides, which is to say that he does not rip these hopes from us. As should be abundantly clear by now, he goes to great lengths to protect his audience from many of the implications his work possesses about the status of universal moral categories and the dignity of political life.[73] Indeed, Thucydides' austerity also constitutes his generosity. For in his work's very austerity, in its very starkness, the *History* reflects the very goods we seek. His work effects that interplay between universal and particular that allows the individual to grasp the whole through reflection on just a part.[74] Thus, through a careful reading of Thucydides we are led to see how the concern for absolute, universal moral categories arises from human concerns for wholeness. We cannot, however, see such an insight as good until our own expansive view of absolute and universal moral categories has been chastened. At this point, we have bumped into the second set reasons for why Thucydides thought preserving the possibility of political science was good, those reasons which further show why he had to proceed as indirectly as he did. These are the reasons that cannot be stated and I will "return" to these shortly.

The chastening of our moral perspectives may be the change Thucydides experienced during the war and which he hopes to effect in his readers. The revolution in one's posture or disposition towards moral categories may constitute that personal

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Peloponnesian War." Gribble's understanding of Thucydides' use of "reader response" techniques largely follows that of Connor. See ibid. 43 especially.

[73] For roughly parallel interpretations, one should see Pouncey, who contends that the plague is akin to the disease of Athenianism, that unbridled eros from which one cannot be fully cured (1980, 23); see also Orwin (1994, 205 fn. 11) *Humanity* where Athenian imperialism and the plague are compared (205), as well as the Romilly passage cited there *La Construction*.

[74] On Thucydides' work imitating what it captures, see Connor: "Perhaps then criticism should imitate its subject matter and having analyzed as best it can the development of the work through the twenty-first year of the war should simply stop without summary or generalization" (1984, 236). This conclusion also mirrors my argument on the conclusion of the work with Tissaphernes' sacrifice. See also White (1984, 90-1).

odyssey Thucydides hinted at in the *History's* opening sentences and which he seemed to chart in the archaeology. Perhaps it was just such a revolution that constituted the "greatest motion" (I.1.1) for Thucydides himself. This motion in our own understanding of moral and political categories is not merely an abstract or academic lesson. It also bears on our disposition towards goods and their possession. And it is this revolution, this change, towards goods in which the vitality of Thucydides' *History* consists.

Thucydides can effect this change because he doesn't force us to abandon the concern for right that is connected to our concern for goods.[75] Rather he works within that concern for right and attempts to do the most "justice" to it. Because submission to Thucydides' lessons delivers the goods he promises, devotion to such lessons surpasses the devotion to the common good that defines Greek politics. Consequently, our goodness, constituted by our submission to or recognition of the limits of what we can know and be no longer makes one worthy or deserving of rewards. It is its own reward. To the extent that Thucydides' work effects such change, his *History* is truer to the promise at the heart of that original experience of the noble that gives rise to political justice. It is truer to that experience because he is able to marry in the same activity the

[75] The abandonment of hopes, cherished beliefs and opinions, as well as, it would seem, a concern for "the good" is what some scholars understand Thucydides' *History* to effect. This reading seems to be the upshot of the work of White (1984), Euben (1986; 1990), Connor (1984) and even Grene (1965). One is freed from cliché, or is exposed to the framework by which we give meaning to the world, or sees the linguistic basis of justice and community. But to what end is one exposed to or liberated from such insights? Grene contends that as "[h]arsh, brutal, and bloody as the deeds were, he must face them with no comforting possibility of moralizing them away against a prospect of a necessarily brighter future or a universal good design of divine origin. To realize them in their true meaning, to divest himself of hope of things different and of unmeaning resentment at things as they were, to cling bitterly and doggedly to explaining the cold-bloodedness and brutality...became the whole duty of the historian" (1965, 91-2; see also 55). While more explicit, Grene's comments about "duty" reflect the effectual truth behind the readings of Euben, White, and perhaps even Connor. Commitment to such a duty belies not only Thucydides' concern with the truth as something good and good for us, but it flies in the face of his apparent criticism of "duty" as such, of absolute, moral categories.

voluntary exercise of self-restraint and the reward such restraint promises.[76] In this way Thucydides shows us that, like the earliest Spartan wrestlers, one establishes one's superiority by countenancing one's neediness and embracing it. One's superior self-sufficiency consists in "manning up," as it were, to one's fundamentally needy character and accepting it. But contrary to that early practice, Thucydides teaches that there is no need to try to overcome one's mortal nature by revealing one's superior worthiness in the effort to get the necessary goods. Such an effort indicates that one is still dependent on goods and thus not self-sufficient.

By making possible the voluntary acceptance of the limits to what we can know and be, and thereby moderating future readers capable of and open to such acceptance, Thucydides' impersonal self-revelation "out Greeks" the Greeks. But precisely because it is an impersonal self-revelation that "out Greeks" the Greeks, Thucydides must adopt an extremely indirect manner of procedure. To proceed more directly, Thucydides would run the risk of confusing his understanding of justice, which eschews candid self-disclosure, with that of the Olympians, or for that matter, the Athenians, who are nothing, if not candid. To proceed in a manner as open as the Athenians, would obscure the insights he hoped to reveal and would set back his effort to preserve the possibility of a genuine engagement with and study of politics; a candid exposition of the possibility of political science would itself assume that theoretical reflection on politics is possible. We can now return to the "second set" of reasons Thucydides proceeded as he did, those reasons that cannot be stated.

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[76] I take this to be the unstated line of argument behind Bruell's claim that "we sense in and through his work the presence of a nobility because it is undeceived" (1974, 11). This reading of Bruell's tightly argued essay receives support by putting together his comments about great strength at 15 (along with his

I noted earlier that the *History* reflects the interplay between speeches and deeds, and universal and particular that allows an individual to grasp the whole through the reflection of just a part. It is the "interplay" between speeches and deeds, universals and particulars, that cannot be said. It is the particular constitution of this "interplay" that cannot be spoken. Thucydides' insight into the whole, and thus his ability to grasp it and recreate it in his single work, cannot be stated. It must be shown. While the "whole" only finds its articulation through Thucydides' unique conception of political history– and thus defies expression here–we can perhaps state how such an articulation addresses our concern for genuine goods without obscuring that view of the whole he intends to effect.

Thucydides' conception of political history, with its unique treatment of speeches and deeds and the investigations that treatment invites us to make, allows us to return to the primary experience of the noble -- prior to its corruption by political right -- so that we may understand our openness to that experience rightly. The lessons of the *History*, as well as Thucydides' manner of procedure in Book I, make it possible for us to achieve a more consistent understanding of that experience. And as a particular work revealing universal lessons, the *History* reflects the union between universal and particular that the experience of the noble promises. But whereas the political expression of the noble promises the marriage of our own personal particularity with something pure, unblemished and universal that frees us from need, thereby forcing us to fly from our natures, to transcend them, as it were, to become something more than human, the *History* draws us, through the change it effects in us, closer to what it means to be human.

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references to the Corcyrean civil war there and at the above quotation) with his concluding comments about "the right of the stronger" (17).

Thucydides' insights into the fundamental character of political life, coupled with his manner of procedure, invite us to grasp for ourselves the interplay between universals and particulars at the heart of political life. As we saw in Part I.A of this chapter, his insights force us to remain true to our concern for what is good for our particular human nature as *individuals*. To be clear, our upward longings for self-sufficiency through the possession of certain universal goods are "satisfied" only insofar as they are grounded by the concern that such goods be good for us as particular individuals. I argued earlier that belief in the existence of universals, of absolute, distinct moral and political categories, arises from the human concern to satisfy one's neediness. The concern that there be universal wholes to fulfill our neediness thus gets based on the importance of the particular, namely the particular character of the human condition. And by showing that universals are grounded on what is particular to human beings, Thucydides points to how his political history best addresses our concern for self-sufficiency, our concern for "wholeness."

Because "universals," or our belief in them, arise ultimately out of certain concerns we have, man no longer needs to be understood as a mere part of some larger whole of which he is not the cause and over which he has no control. By understanding human concerns as the formal ground for belief in universal and absolute moral and political categories, human beings must now be understood as partly responsible for the universal-particular interplay that defines man's intelligible world.[77] Human beings would therefore seem to play an integral, if unintentional, role as a cause of our intelligible "whole" of which individual men are also a part. The concern for and pursuit of wholeness or self-sufficiency finds its measure of satisfaction in understanding the

"whole" in light of that which is human (*to anthropinon*; I.22.4), as opposed to understanding that which is human (*to anthropinon*) in light of the "whole."

This grounding of the whole on a part seems perfectly consistent with the possibility that human things may change or that we cannot absolutely or completely verify the stable grounds of a nature that would in turn supply the grounds for human nature. After all, knowledge of the part no longer depends on knowledge of the whole; knowledge of the whole comes through or depends on the knowledge of the part. Thucydides is thus forced to tie his insights into the whole to what he is certain of about the part – namely the importance of the individual's concern to live well and his concern for genuine goods. This means he has to tie his insights to the concern that we *know* that the goods we seek are genuine (and therefore to the importance of the law of non-contradiction for such concerns). Should this concern remain constant, then his insights into the whole (of which we are not merely a part but also partly responsible for) will also remain "constant." And it is the power and primacy of such a concern in human life that Thucydides seeks to substantiate through his treatment of politics in Books II through VIII.

In this way, Thucydides overcomes the obstacles to obtaining the clear truth (*to saphes*) about the ancient past with which this study began. Because he grounds his insights on a study of that which is human (*to anthropinon*), he no longer needs access to a past in which there were no humans. It is also in this way that one can resolve the apparent tension between the clear truth (*to saphes*) and the error-free judgment noted in the first chapter. Because the understanding of the whole depends on the knowledge of a part that is susceptible to change, then the possession of the clear truth hinges on an error-

[77] Compare with Strauss on "grounds" (1964, 228).

free judgment about the past. And this judgment about the past will serve as confirmation - not proof – of one's knowledge of the part.[78]

We can draw these conclusions only by having studied the question of Thucydides' intent in light of his explicit statements about his work, his unique manner of procedure and the gap that exists between them. When we reflect on his intent in this way, we see that he not only aims to preserve the possibility of engaging and studying politics, but by doing so, also points to the true usefulness of uncovering the truth about those things that have happened and will happen – namely the usefulness of realizing our humanity. Understanding the utility of the *History* in this way allows us to see the deepest connection between the themes of justice and necessity outlined in Book I, between the necessity to be fully human, and the importance of justice to actualizing the potential inherent in that necessity. Thucydides' comments about his work, understood in purely theoretical terms, reflect his moderate generosity and point to how the violent war he relates preserves our humanity.

B. Epilogue: Thucydides' Political History - Between the Poets and Plato, Aristotle, and Xenophon

1. Thucydides and the Poets

Thucydides' superiority to the poets consists in the fact that his speech, understood as his treatment of the speeches and deeds of the *History's* actors, reveals more completely than the poets the truth about the relationship between political justice

[78] This account, and not that offered by Cogan (1981 184-9 and ff) seems to make more sense of Thucydides' decision to use the broader and more ambiguous *to anthropinon* - as opposed to the more forceful and definitive *anthropeia phusis* – when the referring to the clear truth the reader of the *History* will uncover. For a clearer statement of what Thucydides has in mind with respect to what is human, one should see Bolotin's gloss of III.82.2 (1986, 17). Strauss seems to hint at the conclusion I draw about Thucydides' position on nature with a capital "N" when he points to the distinction between Demosthenes

and political power. As we anticipated in the treatment of Homer and the Trojan War in chapter 3, Thucydides' work surpasses Homer's because it avoids the polarization between one's concern for self-interest and the concern for right (or for serving others) that Homer's work seems to effect. The poets may share Thucydides' perspective on the problematic character of political life. They may share his understanding of the contradictory nature of justice and the openness to nobility and beauty that lends itself to such contradictions. They may even share his understanding of how human neediness and the concomitant concern for power supplies the rational basis for rejecting divine revelation or the claim to possess knowledge of divine revelation. In the end, Thucydides' superiority over the poets consists in the fact that his "speech," his unique treatment of the speeches and deeds of political men, more adequately engages the human concern for goodness, and thus the concern for the power necessary to secure those goods that confirm such goodness. And it does so by surpassing the poets in doing more justice to the experience of the noble.

Through his composition of the actors' speeches about what is just and unjust, what is noble and ignoble, what is good and bad, Thucydides engages our concern to live well (i.e., to become noble, to become just, to become good) and thus overcome the neediness that plagues us. By his artful treatment of the actors' problematic articulations of justice and injustice, the noble and the shameful, benefit and harm, he points to our own ignorance and confusion about such matters and reinforces our awareness of our own neediness. By heightening this awareness, the problematic articulations of what is just and unjust, noble and ignoble, good and bad, serve to direct our attention to the

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and Thucydides' references to the haven at Pylos (1964, 159; IV.3.2, 4.3). Demosthenes' view on fortifying the haven should be compared with my comments on the fortification of the Peiraeus.

narrative of the *History's* actions. Thucydides' narrative, by reflecting the blurring of the distinction between universals and particulars to which the speeches point, trims the corrupting expansiveness of our hopes about "the world" and about pure and distinct universals belonging to "the world."

By forcing the careful reader to begin from the speeches, Thucydides reverses this perspective about man's place in "the whole." After studying Thucydides' *History* we can no longer so easily consider ourselves *part* of a world such that any true understanding of our particular nature depends on first understanding the whole. As I argued in the "conclusion," to the extent that we can understand the whole of which we are a part, our access to that whole depends entirely on our understanding of the part, and especially our particular selves. Thucydides effects this reversal by showing how any investigation of "the world" or "the whole of which we are merely a part" must begin by examining men's opinions about what is just and unjust. He reinforces this beginning by showing that men's understanding of justice is the root of their understanding of fixed and distinct categories that are believed to exist independently of human causation or human agency. As a consequence of this reversal, Thucydides' work points to the limits facing both our attempt to obtain absolute or perfect knowledge and any attempt to ground "being" on something fixed and permanent. Because we face certain limits, our access to the world faces certain immovable obstacles.

The superiority of this approach derives in part from the fact that it requires the fewest assumptions about what it hopes to discover. By treating speeches the way he does, Thucydides points to the need for a treatment of deeds that rules out those approaches that require one to assume what the character of the world *must be* in order to

begin to discover what the character of the world *is*. His main rival for revealing the clear truth about those things that have happened and will happen are the poets, whose chief representative is Homer. The authority of the poetic tradition relies on the trust that the poets do in fact possess the privileged access to the gods and the first things that they claim to possess. But the poets' need to rely on trust also belongs to all approaches to the study of politics that require one to adopt from the beginning an assumption about the character of the world that their approaches claim to discover. One might find an example of such an approach in the rationalism of the 5th Century B.C. Greek Enlightenment, or for that matter in the rationalism of 21stCentury modern science. Both the Greek Enlightenment and modern science maintain the strict distinction between fact and value; both are characterized by a kind of "conventionalism" that understands justice or political right to be grounded in human artifice. Their studies of the natural world (of the whole of which man is a part) thus begin by making two assumptions. First, that to understand the world one must first separate the "ought" from the "is." Second, that to understand the world, one must investigate the "is" wholly independent of the "ought." They thus assume the character of the intelligible world they set out to prove. They take for granted that an intelligible, natural world exists independently of human causation. Thucydides does not take this for granted; he shows us the world as it is presented to us, the world as we encounter it prior to importing any assumptions about what the world must be.

The lessons about justice learned through Thucydides' focus on speeches reveal the essentially "religious" character of all other kinds of political investigations. It reveals that any other approach must begin by adopting certain assumptions, none of which

possess from the outset any more credibility than any other set of assumptions. Nothing in the pre-scientific awareness of the world suggests that we must approach the world by adopting as true the dicta of modern science rather than the ancient Greek myths.[79] Of course, Thucydides' central criticism of the poets is not that they take the religious stories they relate too seriously. His criticism is more directed at the strict distinction between justice and self-interest that their poetry effects, a distinction assumed by both the Greek enlightenment and modern Cartesian science. He is thus as much a critic of modern scientists as he is of the poets. His criticism of modern scientific rationalism and the distinction between justice and self-interest it shares with Homeric poetry thus amounts to a criticism of the contemporary scientific approach to politics, insofar as it shares these assumptions. For Thucydides, to study politics accurately, one must abandon the assumptions of political science, understood in the modern sense in particular; one must abandon the assumption that there are pure or distinct or unblemished knowable "wholes," an assumption based on the strict distinction between right and self-interest, speech and deed, and universal and particular. One must begin from what is manifest, if not always consistent; one must begin from speeches about justice and injustice.

2. Thucydides and Plato, Aristotle and Xenophon

By inviting his reader to begin from speeches about justice and injustice, Thucydides resembles the chief representatives of classical Greek political philosophy, whose major political and philosophic works begin by offering explicit investigations of men's political opinions. Thus the Platonic Socrates is best known for his "What is?"

[79] One could object to this point by asking "What about our pre-scientific awareness of regular patterns in the heavens, or the seasons? Would this not constitute part of our pre-scientific awareness that leads us to pursue scientific inquiry? After all, it does suggest some natural regularity to the world." To accept such observations as evidence of the workings of the *natural* world, or uncreated world – as opposed to say the

questions. But Thucydides' *History* predates the onset of Platonic political philosophy, even if it does not predate the practice of Socratic political philosophy. Aristotle takes up the direct investigation of the best regime in *The Politics*. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, he offers a sustained treatment of the moral and intellectual virtues. But Thucydides offers no such direct investigation and sustained treatment. How is it possible to understand his work to be in any way similar to the explicit theoretical investigations that herald the birth of political philosophy?[80]

The unique character of Thucydides' work, and thus the specific character of his intent, is brought into sharper focus by comparing him, in brief, to the philosophic tradition whose birth followed in his wake. In particular, the manner of writing of Thucydides bears comparison with the manners of writing of Plato, Aristotle, and Xenophon. Scholars have argued that Plato and Aristotle adopted esoteric writing as a means to conveying their most serious teachings to their most serious and most capable students.[81] The motives adduced for such writing are political (so that their least salutary writings will be hidden from public view thereby protecting the teacher, the student, and the very life of the mind from any threats posed by the political community) and pedagogical (to force the student to uncover the work's insights on his own and to reserve the more serious insights for those able to understand them fully). Another motive may also be epistemological. It may be that some insights cannot be adequately revealed through explicit discourses, but only by creating those experiences within the reader that are necessary to grasp the insights most fully. Just as young readers of Shakespeare will

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workings of the gods – is to assume from the beginning the possibility of knowledge. It is to forego the entire question. This is something that science, as the endeavor to see for one's self, cannot assume.

[80] For one of the earliest articulations of this question, see the comments by the British classicist R.C. Jebb as quoted in Grene (1965, 24).

be unable to grasp the full insights of the playwright's works on love or friendship without having some experience of love or friendship themselves, so too will students of philosophy be unable to access the wisdom of the greatest minds without having certain experiences themselves, experiences only made possible by the works of such minds. Thus, one might say of Plato and Aristotle, as Hobbes does of Thucydides, that they too secretly instruct their reader.

But the difference between Plato and Aristotle, on the one hand, and Thucydides, on the other, is that the works of the former, however esoteric they might be, do present explicit teachings on politics.[82] They, or their characters, engage in explicit discourses on what constitutes the best political community, the happiest life, justice, friendship and love and so on. Such explicit teachings make possible the Platonism and Aristotelianism that followed and that dominated the intellectual tradition for centuries.[83] Of course, it is by no means clear that either Platonism or Aristotelianism are in fact grounded on an adequate understanding of Plato or Aristotle. In the case of Plato, one is immediately led to think that Platonism is flawed since Plato never offers a teaching in his own name. He only leaves us dialogues, most of which include Socrates. And Socrates' well-noted irony makes it difficult to establish anything resembling a clear and consistent Socratic teaching. In the case of Aristotle, the mere fact that he wrote *about* the moral and intellectual virtues or that he treated at length the various claims to rule, does not mean that he shares the views of virtue he relates or that he endorses any of the claims to rule

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[81] See Strauss's essay titled "Persecution and the Art of Writing" in the collection of that title (1989).
[82] On the possible substantive agreements between Plato and Thucydides see Strauss (1989, 87, 97-102 as well as 1964, 140-3, between Aristotle and Thucydides see 1964, 142 and 242, between Xenophon and Thucydides see 1968, 662-4.
[83] That there is no Xenophontism seems largely due to his unfavorable and undeserved reputation as a second rate political thinker. It may also be due to the fact that Xenophon did not write treatises, nor did he

that he describes. Attempts at defining the tenets of Aristotelianism tend to founder on the fact that his treatises present political and moral matters in terms of what other people say about democracy and oligarchy, or happiness and pleasure. His judgments on such matters are frequently absent and more often than not, they are made clear to us only by studying his arrangement of the material. As such, one cannot, without great difficulty, identify Aristotle's view with those expressed in the text.

But all of this only means that Plato and Aristotle's manners of writing are partly responsible for the corruption of their own political insights. As the treatment of Thucydides' manner of writing suggested, explicit discourses on politics possess certain dangers, one of which is that their very explicitness might obscure the very insights they are trying to lead the student to uncover. To the extent that the explicit political teachings of Plato and Aristotle point to the difficulties and limits of political life, then the very procedures they adopted, through their apparent explicitness, reinforce the belief in unblemished wholes that such teachings seek to correct.

The Platonism and Aristotelianism based on the work of Plato and Aristotle helped effect a division between theory and practice such that theoretical reflections gradually came to be severed from practical political considerations. Thus Aristotle's explicitly political and ethical works are understood to constitute commentaries on practical politics and ethics and nothing more. Plato's Socratic treatment of the forms or his discussion the theory of "ideas" in *The Republic* comes to represent his firmly believed doctrine of ideas and is viewed as a sign of his belief in an eternal and intelligible universe. Such a "universe" is believed to exist independent of the variability

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stick to Socratic dialogues. But it does not seem to be due, as in Thucydides' case, to the absence of explicit teachings in his works.

of the particulars that make up the all-too-messy political world. And Thucydides' *History*, concerned as it is with the events of a single war, offers practical political men guidance about how to conduct the affairs of state – matters of war and peace, freedom and empire, ruling and being ruled. It does not offer a theoretical or philosophic teaching comparable to those of Plato or Aristotle. For those who understand Thucydides' concern with practical politics to give rise to theoretical considerations, such reflections are understood to get their theoretical wings clipped by his practical point of departure. But for Thucydides, as I have tried to present him, one cannot engage in genuine theoretical reflection without beginning from and remaining true to political reality, albeit an exceptional form of that political reality.[84] Necessity compels Thucydides to unite theory to practice.

It may be that Plato and Aristotle felt that they could proceed as they did, that the risks they ran in writing as they did were acceptable, precisely because Thucydides had written his work. Because his work captured the conditions necessary for the study of politics to arise, they may have been less concerned with obscuring those conditions that made their insights possible. But the division between theory and practice that their works are understood to effect also possess implications for political practice. For insofar as theory is understood to be severed from practical politics, then that theoretical pursuit which explicitly concerns politics - political philosophy – will remain in some tension with the concerns of practical political men. For such theory is either useless, and thus no positive benefit to the city, or it may prove a nuisance to the city, since it will draw away those citizens who might contribute positively to the city's affairs and guidance. In some

[84] For a similar reading of the difference between Thucydides and Platonism, one should see Nietzsche's *Twilight*, "What I owe to the Ancients," no. 2.

cases, it may even serve as a potential danger to the city, undermining the moral and religious vision that grounds the common good. But Thucydides' work avoids this tension between practical political men and those profoundly driven by a desire to possess genuine goods, because he understands the necessity of decent political opinion for the theoretical pursuit of genuine goods. Understood in this way, his inexplicit political discourse not only preserves the possibility of a study of politics, but in its treatment of Periclean Athens it preserves an articulation of the common good as something worthy of sacrifice and devotion. Thucydides may thus be cast as something of a friend to the contemporary practitioner of politics.[85] It is perhaps for this reason that his *History* has long been found under the arms of those practical political men who hoped to learn something from him about the art of statecraft – about war and peace, freedom and empire, ruling and being ruled, justification and persuasion. Again, Plato and Aristotle may not have felt compelled to pay this particular kind of respect to decent political opinion because Thucydides' *History* obviated the need for such an effort. The deference to conventional political opinion could be abandoned because Thucydides had already preserved it.

Of course, this conclusion presumes that Plato and Aristotle were familiar and agreement with Thucydides' work and his intent as I present it. Such familiarity or agreement between Thucydides and the representatives of classical political thought must remain purely speculative. To place such an interpretation on more solid ground, one would first need to establish in greater detail than I have done the peculiar differences between Thucydides and Plato and Aristotle. And this would require that one establish

[85] On the relationship between Thucydides' political history and healthy politics, see the conclusion of chapter 5 and 6.I.a above, as well as Strauss (1989, 74).

more firmly my characterizations of Plato and Aristotle's manners of procedure and my characterizations of the Platonism and Aristotelianism deriving therefrom. The second step would require that one establish a conversational basis between Thucydides, on the one hand, and Plato and Aristotle on the other. That such a conversational basis exists, that one is not merely comparing apples and oranges, can be seen by first considering the historical writing of Xenophon.

While Thucydides is largely recognized as the father of political history, Xenophon was a student of Socrates and has, of late, received considerable treatment as a political philosopher. Xenophon's *Hellenika*, which responds to and perhaps even intends to complete the work of Thucydides, promises to show how political history can be understood in the wake of Socratic political philosophy. It thus offers the best opportunity to examine political philosophy's response to and appropriation of political history. But in his very response (through the *Hellenika*) to Thucydides' *History*, Xenophon grants the importance of and need for political history. By examining the *Hellenika* in light of the *History*, one can see most clearly what is unique to Thucydides the political historian and what is unique to Xenophon the student of Socrates, without sacrificing what they share in common. While no such comparison can be made here, awareness that such a conversational basis between the two exists supplies the confidence necessary to compare Thucydides' historical work to the (largely) non-historical work of Plato, Aristotle, and Xenophon. Further study of the differences between Thucydides and Xenophon's treatments of history should prove helpful for understanding the costs and benefits of the manners of procedure of Thucydides, Plato, Xenophon and Aristotle.

What the foregoing study of Thucydides' intent tried to clarify was why his *History* has not and will not usher in an intellectual tradition of Thucydideanism. In the wake of the overwhelming practical successes of modern science, with its strict distinction between theory and practice (or its treatment of theory at the expense of practice or reality) it should come as no surprise that a more sensitive interpretation of Thucydides' intent has largely been missed by contemporary political scientists. My introduction to Thucydides' intent has tried to fulfill this gap in Thucydidean scholarship by restoring the importance of Thucydides' *History* to a genuine engagement with and study of politics.

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