SPEECH AND NARRATIVE: EXPOSITIONAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL PRACTICE IN THUCYDIDES

> He who would explain to us when men like Plato spoke in earnest, when in jest or half-jest, what they wrote from conviction and what merely for the sake of argument, would certainly render to us an extraordinary service and contribute greatly to our education.
> ¾ Goethe

AS A POSSESSION FOR ALL TIME: HISTORY AS PHILOSOPHY

Protagoras told us that "on every subject there are two *logoi* opposed to one another." Plato echoes this idea in the *Phaedrus* (261e) where he concludes that: "We can therefore find the practice of speaking on opposite sides not only in the law courts and in the Assembly. Rather, it seems that one single art…governs all speaking." The practice of "speaking on opposite sides" is a practice we find powerfully employed in Thucydides; but I would like to call attention, in addition, to another aspect of Thucydides' practice. Plutarch sums up much of the ancient and modern response when he claims that: "In his writing, [Thucydides] is constantly striving for this vividness, wanting to turn his readers into spectators, as it were, and to reproduce in their minds the feelings of shock and disorientation which were experienced by those who actually viewed the events." I want to suggest that this effort toward participatory spectatorship that Plutarch and many others have found at work in Thucydides (and in Plato) involves the use of a particular oppositional art importantly related to Platonic practice.

I want to start this paper about Thucydides by talking about Plato. As all of you know, the question of the purpose and accomplishments of the aporetic in Plato's dialogues, the question of the full role of Socrates' elenchic practices and Plato's philosophical or pedagogical use of them, have been at least a background or related question in a great deal of Plato scholarship in the last half of the 20th c. You are all familiar with the strands of thought and interpretation in this matter. Most often, however, this inquiry is performed almost solely upon

the Platonic corpus. Where efforts are expended outside of the dialogues or the letters, the turn is usually to "historical" sources, i.e. near contemporary commentators on the dialogues. There has been some, not a great deal by ratio, but some discussion of Plato's relation to his philosophical forebears: the various thinkers gathered under the umbrella of pre-Socratic. But most of this inquiry has focused on doctrinal inheritance and conceptual influence. Very, very little attention has been paid to the relations of what I call expositional practice between the thinkers of the 5th c.

One might suggest that very little attention has been paid on account of very little relation existing. There has, after all, been at least some attention paid to the expositional practices of most of the thinkers of this period, as most of them employ genuinely unusual and interesting expositional strategies. It is clear in some ways that the way Heraclitus chooses to present his philosophical contents is quite different from the way that Parmenides does, or from Zeno, or Empedocles. And I do grant the importance of inquiring into each thinker's practices on their own terms. It has been a large part of my work over the past several years to seek into the relations of the epistemological commitments of these various practices, and to uncover, if they exist, any important relations of those commitments, in an effort to better and more fully understand Plato's own practices. In this work, I have found it helpful to inquire outside the anachronistic boundary of "philosophy." In doing so, I have found the incredibly rich text of Thucydides to have a very important role to play in my analysis.

In Plato's *Sophist*, the Eleatic Stranger remarks not primarily upon the content but upon the expositional practices of many of his predecessors, characterizing them as difficult, abstruse, mythic, enigmatic, and offered with a certain obvious contempt for their audience. There are several levels of irony to be found in such an assessment, placed as it is within one of the most aporetic and enigmatic philosophical genres in our tradition. Still, his remarks serve to sharply

illuminate the metaphilosophical and epistemological questions that explicitly occupy the Stranger in this dialogue and philosophy in this era: the question of the appropriate expositional practices for communicating philosophical contents. Further, I would suggest that during the fifth century, the time of the "New Learning" or intellectual enlightenment, the boundaries between rhetor and philosopher, natural scientist and historian, such boundaries as the Eleatic Stranger, if not also Plato, sought in part to establish but also question, were ambiguously drawn at best. It is tempting to isolate Thucydides' *History* as a distinct and recognized genre, but I believe this work both informs and problematizes these boundaries. This difficult and enigmatic work challenges its audience in ways that sheds important light on the nature and goals of early philosophical expositional practice.

In the scholarship on Thucydides, much attention has been paid to the device of the speeches, occupying a quarter of the text in his *History*. Donald Kagan noted several decades ago that "There are few arguments of longer standing in the scholarship on Thucydides than the one concerning the speeches in his *History*, and none is more important for understanding it and its author."[1] Some very good work has been done examining the role of the speeches, and their relation to each other, a relation generally recognized to exhibit, as Finley put it, "diametrical opposition." In short, the speeches, or at least many of them, are paired. Some interpretations conclude that the pairing serves to signify both the correct and the incorrect account of events and motives, but such an interpretation leaves much of real value in the speeches unacknowledged.[2] Many other scholars have recognized that one of the more remarkable qualities of the paired speeches is that they produce the intellectual equivalent of counterpoint. To accept one explanation or account as the real cause or best course of action, and dismiss the other as serving only to indicate mistaken advice or assessments of events, amounts to a very partial sort of reading. To do so is to intentionally abandon the perspective made possible from

hearing both sides, to ignore the careful composition of the whole, and to place ourselves on one side or the other in the conflict and at that level, an intentional truncation of the wisdom sought and made possible by the historian. Thucydides seeks to see at least "both" sides and to tell both tales. Indeed, and problematically for the interpretation that would have one of the pair indicate the correct account or action, the speeches through which these "sides" are related rarely seem to convince anyone of anything. Thucydides is careful to show that, most often, the decisions made after speeches urging a given action have already been determined by the needs, desires, or fears of the actors.[3]

Connor has led the way in understanding the speeches as paired in order to accomplish some specifically pedagogical goals.[4] In the tension expressed and created both by the speeches and Thucydides' narrations, Connor believes something very important about Thucydides' text comes to the fore. While aiming at an audience that values cleverness, intellect, and self-interest, Thucydides' text does not simply affirm and reinforce those values, but rather is prepared to exploit uncertainties and ambiguities in the attitudes of his readers and their values, and to challenge and even subvert their expectations and certainties. He concludes: "Ultimately, I believe, the work leads the sympathetic reader -- ancient or modern -- far beyond the views it seems initially to utilize and affirm."[5] This is a caution that I believe many would do well to keep in mind when reading Plato.

Thinkers of the latter part of the fifth century were deeply engaged in a complex and sophisticated investigation into the nature and use of persuasion, and of the strategies best calculated to effectively bring about a desired state or set of beliefs in their auditors. Thucydides applied this investigation and implemented similar techniques,[6] not to achieve a single response or specific evaluation of events, but to draw the reader into the attempt to *construct* sense, to awaken critical and evaluative faculties to be exercised on the matter itself of which the text is an

account in a particular and peculiar way. I wish to build on the foundation constructed by these scholars. I will argue that a careful analysis that places the speeches in conversation with the narrative portions of the *History*, an analysis that has not been fully and carefully done, may contribute to a long-standing conversation by adding a particular kind of philosophical voice to the dialogue.[7] When one listens to Thucydides as one is invited to, as prompting us to undertake a particular epistemological stance with respect to both his text and, by extension, events and their causes, one may learn from his methods more than how to do history, however that may be construed, but also how some of the early Greek thinkers believed one may do philosophy.[8]

SPEAKING ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ARGUMENT: THE RELATION OF SPEECH AND NARRATIVE

Thucydides offers this much remarked upon qualification early in Book I concerning the speeches that constitute so much of his history:

> What particular people said in their speeches, either just before or during the war, was hard to recall exactly, whether they were speeches I heard myself or those that were reported to me at second hand. I have made each speaker say what I thought his situation demanded, keeping as near as possible to the general sense of what was actually said.(1.22.1)
>
> And as for the real action of the war, I did not think it right to set down either what I heard from people I happened to meet or what I merely believed to be true. Even for events at which I was present myself, I tracked down detailed information from other sources as far as I could. It was hard work to find out what happened, because those who were present at each event gave different reports, depending on which side they favored and how well they remembered.(1.22.2)

Here, Thucydides offers a claim of objectivity that historians have often latched onto with vigor and vehemence; but there are elements of it that advise caution, and, I believe, do so quite explicitly. First, Thucydides distinguishes here between the speeches and the events or actions of the war, drawing a line between the speeches and the narration in his history. I believe such a line is more ambiguously drawn than has generally been recognized. The passage calls direct attention to the fact of selection and to the difficulties involved in selection as well as to the

ultimate reliance upon judgment. Further, he calls attention to the biases and other vagaries of witness accounts as well as to the fact that interpretation occurs in the very process of observation, not solely at the level of the reporting of events. He includes himself within the compass of this characterization, at least implicitly, when he assures his audience that he did not rely upon even his own witness, but sought detailed confirmation or refutation as far as it was possible to obtain from as many sources as possible, despite the fact that the multiplication of sources meant always, whatever else, the multiplication of difficulties due to the inevitable discordance between accounts. Interestingly, he does *not* suggest that his method for determining the correct account is simple consensus. In fact, his suggestion that such determination was unceasingly hard work suggests criteria quite a bit more complex. He specifically denies the propriety of trusting what he merely believed to be true, but does not directly offer any other selection criterion for sifting through the competing alternate accounts. One should not miss the irony in a passage which, while seeking to reassure its audience concerning the reliability and objectivity of its account, calls attention to the unreliability of both beliefs and accounts in general while also raising questions concerning the immediate credibility of the author's own beliefs.[9]

However, Thucydides has not finished his excursus to the reader concerning the intent and process of his work. His very next words make quite plain that, in writing his history, he fully intends to provide a tool that will allow those who wish to and are willing to work at it the ability to grasp the clear truth (**to\ safe\j skopei=n**)[10] about *both* the past *and* the future. A bold claim, especially with respect to his apology concerning the speeches he includes in his history. Its acceptance requires, under the usual interpretation of the speeches, that we allow that what people actually said upon the occasions reported in the *History* could be determined and transmitted with accuracy. We must then be equally willing to allow that such a feat, in the very

words spoken by those actors in isolated, context-embedded situations, would provide to us such an insight into human nature that in similar circumstances, regardless of what the people involved actually say upon those occasions, we could already understand the real issues and the reasons for what will come to be. If we will grant that words can achieve such remarkable results, then we need also to be provided with very good reasons why it is that *these* words provide such insight, and not, for instance, those heard in the marketplace or in the courts or in private discussion as well. What entitles the *History* alone to such a claim?

It is apparent, when these issues and Thucydides' claims are thought carefully together, that something other than accurate transcription is required in the speeches of the *History*. If we are inclined to think otherwise, Thucydides offers us, at 1.23.6, one last claim that troubles our reading of the speeches:

> I believe the truest reason for the quarrel, though least evident in what was said at the time, was the growth of Athenian power, which put fear into the Lacedaemonians and so compelled them into war, while the explanations both sides gave in public for breaking the Peace and starting the war are as follows.

Here Thucydides posits an antithesis between the "truest reason" and what was said at the time. In what follows, Thucydides offers a version of what each side said in public in the form of the paired speeches at the dispute over Corcyra (1.31-45) and the debate at Sparta (1.66-88). The growth of Athenian power as the "true cause" that Thucydides mentions is indeed an important part of the content of several of the speeches that follow, most notably the speeches of the Corinthians, who are quick to raise the specter of Athenian imperialism when it may influence the audience to favor their side of the debate. Sthenelaidas makes the threat of the growth of Athenian power the climax of his speech. At one point (1.124) the Corinthian embassy advises the Spartan League to simply make up its mind that Athens desires to rule all of Hellas, despite the fact that nothing in the details their speech presents leads to such a conclusion

except the evocation of Athenian power and the fear that such power could result in imperialism. As we shall see, it is the fear that it should be so -- and fear does indeed seem to be the focus in much of Thucydides' analysis concerning the war and not merely the particular claim we are now examining regarding the "true cause" -- that is the common attitude of the participants, coloring all discussion of the actual growth of power.

In this way, the Corinthian embassy is of a piece with the important narrative elements of Book I: the "Archaeology" which immediately precedes the programmatic statement wherein his proposition concerning the "truest reason" is found, and the "Pentecontaetia" which follows the paired speeches. The tale of the growth of power which is the "true cause" of the war begins at the very beginning of the *History* in the section known as the "Archaeology." This section, while purporting to be as careful a recovery of ancient Greek history as is possible, given its remoteness in time, is largely a discussion of the nature of naval power and the advantage such power bequeaths.[11] This discussion begins with a description of Minos of Crete, including his efforts to build and exploit the first naval power (1.4), continues through an essay on naval power in general (1.13-15), and ends with a discussion of the emergence of Athens as a "people of sailors" (1.18). Many have recognized that there is an inordinate focus in the "Archaeology" on the nature and distribution of power available to a sea-faring people and the potential for imperialism in those peoples who possess such power. While such a focus *can* be taken as explanatory of and evidence for Athenian imperialism, it may do so only upon the application of a generalized stereotype to a particular situation. The question of whether Athens' particular circumstance aptly falls under the general category is not only left unanswered, it is left *unasked*. This invitation to perform such an application of a generalized stereotype is quite important, and I will develop its importance shortly.

With respect to this description of naval power, Thucydides' early attention to Minos is both startling and very telling. Minos is one of the few people to be named in this section, and one to whom the majority of Thucydides' audience would not be pleased to trace the roots of their power, since, as Herodotus tells us, Minos had a well-established reputation for ruthless imperialism in the Aegean.[12] Here, already, Thucydides begins to weave into his analysis elements that cause cognitive dissonance in the informed reader. Reference to Minos does indeed serve to raise the specter of imperialism, and does so in a manner hardly flattering to Athens, but the allusion is implicit and subversive. With a deft touch, while ostensibly relating "remote history" in a self-professed objective fashion unconnected to either Athens or Sparta, Thucydides plays on his readers' deeply-rooted prejudices and challenges their categories.

The "Pentecontaetia" takes up the theme again, but it hardly asserts the growth of Athenian power as an intentional effort on Athens' part. It speaks of Athens fortifying itself, of Themistocles urging the wisdom of making Athens' navy as strong as possible, of *Sparta*, with Athenian help, advancing *its* conquests, of Ionians seeking Athenian help against the threat of dictatorship on the part of the treacherous Spartan general, Pausanias, of Sparta willingly and intentionally turning over command of the Anti-Persian efforts to Athens, of Athens putting down revolts within its alliance, and finally, in a brief account lacking any real detail, of Athens forming new alliances with Sparta's enemies.[13] In balance with these events, it also speaks of Athenian failures against Sparta and against Egypt, and against its Persian and Phoenician allies. In all of the above, there is certainly room for circumstances to indicate the mere fact of growth in Athenian power, but little or nothing to indicate any real imperial intentions on the part of Athens. Such intentions may have indeed been very much present, but little if anything in the narrative accounts offered in the *History* indicate that they were.

In the middle of these two narrative accounts we find a brief section (1.24-88) that sets out the two main causes discussed at the time: the Corcyrean dispute and the Potidaean revolt. The Potidaean revolt is treated succinctly in a narrative of comparative brevity, but the Corcyrean embassy, the first treated, is portrayed largely through the device of paired speeches, one of the main components of which is the Corcyrean offer to Athens of an alliance with their navy, an alliance that would pair two of the strongest naval forces in the Aegean at the time. This is the only alliance discussed in the text. Again, we find the emphasis on naval power, and Athens finds herself, after accepting the offer of alliance, capable of wielding the strongest contemporary naval force in the world. However, if this detail is intended to further evoke the fear of imperial intentions of the sort that have been implied as typically accompanying such power, then it must do so, once again, largely by insinuation.

After the brief discussion of these two circumstances leading to the war, Thucydides turns to Sparta and to the convention of her allies to which she has also invited any other states with grievances against Athens. This section is important not only for its speeches and the manner in which their content and the details of their recounting serve as explanatory, but primarily for the way in which the method of their offering furthers the construction of what is becoming a complex framework of explanation. Of the many embassies to that convention, and out of the many debates and grievances submitted, Thucydides focuses on the Corinthian embassy and the Athenian response. In the Athenian response, the importance and preeminence of Athenian naval power is again reemphasized, this time as a good reason for avoiding war.

This section takes the form of two *antilogoi* given in direct discourse between Corinthian and Athenian envoys and between two of the leaders of Sparta, Archidamus and Sthenelaidas, over the wisdom of going to war. These characters are revealed, as is usual in Thucydides, through a combination of the appellations applied to them and the form of their speeches.

Sthenelaidas' speech is a series of clichés and rhetorical word plays,[14] wherein he urges the immediate inauguration of hostilities. Archidamus, the good statesman, warns Sparta that Athens holds the upper hand in almost every respect. He reminds the Spartans that they have been taught that there is not a great deal of difference between the way they think and the way others think and warns that it is impossible to calculate accurately events determined by chance: "Instead, we think the plans of our neighbors are as good as our own, and we can't work out whose chances at war are better in a speech" (1.84). The Spartans ignore this very Thucydidean advice. In presenting the speakers as he does, Thucydides allows the assessment of Archidamus to carry much the greater weight, and his assessment (1.80.3-81.4) is that Sparta will fare quite poorly in a war with Athens. However, it is the action that Sthenelaidas urges that is approved.

The antilogy of this section is not completed solely in the pairing of speeches before the assembly between Archidamus and Sthenelaidas. For the reader of the *History*, there is a deeper antilogy, building upon the complex assessment of character and naval power, that becomes apparent a few pages later. Thucydides brings Book I to a close by relating Pericles' speech before the Athenians counseling them concerning the war and the impending embassy from Sparta. Where Archidamus' speech is not in the least matched by Sthenelaidas, it is quite carefully balanced against that of Pericles. Archidamus' experience and wisdom is presented as perfectly matched by Pericles' rigor and intelligence.[15]

What is most interesting in *this* pairing is that the overall assessment of these two figures agrees almost completely in substance and reveals a remarkable symmetry. Pericles virtually restates Archidamus' assessment with striking similarity: the unpredictability of war, the likelihood that the war will be long, the fact that Sparta is ill-equipped to accommodate distant engagements, the disparities of wealth and naval power, the tactical imbalance, the lethargy of Spartan deliberation (although the two differ markedly on the implications of that sluggishness),

the pressing need for Sparta to delay the war in order to build resources for the coming war, and the imperative to rely upon sound planning rather than luck. Again, the likelihood of Athenian victory is reinforced, and the agreement upon this likelihood by the two most respected figures in Book I sets up the larger antilogy that follows and which we will examine shortly.

Perhaps the most striking of the paired speeches in Book I, however, are the speeches made before the Spartan assembly by the Corinthian and Athenian envoys. These speeches do not primarily address grievances, but instead spell out in detail the contrast in the national character of Sparta and Athens (1.70.2-9 and 1.71.2 in particular), a theme made explicit here that runs implicitly throughout the whole of the *History*. In the course of this assessment, the point is driven home. Athens has all the qualities that would tend to ensure success in a war, regardless of whether those qualities are particularly admirable, and Sparta retains but the shell of its former self, clinging to outmoded traditions and a no longer effective national character.[16]

The end effect of these speeches in conjunction with the narrative and analytic sections enjoins a consistent judgment: Athens clearly should win the war. This is a paradox in Book I of the *History* and a key to its method. There is a conflict here, and on several levels. The largest conflict is, of course, with fact. Athens does not win the war.[17] This fact is not mentioned by Thucydides until late in Book II, but it is a fact of which every single reader of the *History* is aware. The modern reader is led by the sum force of these sections to ask the question, "What went wrong?" There is good reason, provided by the text, for the modern reader to be cautious of such a question; and it should be noted that such a reaction was probably not the first reaction of the contemporary reader, given the common wisdom at the time of the outbreak of the war that Athens would not be able to last long against Sparta.[18] Such a reaction on the part of the reader, however, *is* both called forth from and enters again into the antilogy of analysis and fact presented by the text, inviting and fashioning an ever more complex relation between reader and

author, wherein the author reasserts and drives home, in process, the cautions he provides explicitly in the programmatic statement. In this interaction, the reader, if she is attentive, is encouraged to take a stance of greater sophistication with respect to the author's authority and intent. I hope most of you are beginning to see why I am suggesting that Thucydides' practice might have something to tell us about Plato's.

We should note the additional, and Platonic, complexity brought about by the fact that the assessment which so favors Athenian victory is placed, in part, into the mouth of the clever and persuasive embassy from Corinth, providing some distance between it and the authoritative voice of the historian as well as some reason for skepticism on the part of the reader, if only due to the fact that Corinth is a biased participant in the conflict with designs upon Spartan intentions and with a history of enmity against Athens which dates back to far before the Megarean difficulties. However, Corinth is allowed to develop its own reputation within the course of the early portions of the *History* by reason of its most prominent position as speaker and participant. Although the narrative description of their dealings with Corcyra and Athens shows the Corinthians acquitting themselves in a relatively above-board fashion, they also clearly demonstrate, in their first speeches to Athens, a cogent ability to marshal rhetoric, even eloquence, to their cause, twisting the facts and manipulating reasoning so as to cloud issues which they then present as clearly indicating a course of action in their favor.

It is important to note that while Corinth several times emphasizes the growth of Athenian power in her speeches, and is perhaps the strongest voice urging the danger of that growth, Thucydides, in giving such a prominent role to the description of the interaction between Corinth and Athens, and to the Corinthian speeches (in Book I, Corinth speaks approximately as much as the rest of the speakers combined), displays fairly straightforwardly the grievances and hostilities between Corinth and Athens as a major reason for the war. And now we have another

antilogy developing between this depiction of the long-standing hostility between Corinth and Athens as a major cause of the war, and of the "truest reason." It is Thucydides' selection and arrangement which serves to accomplish this, adding further reason to question not only the assessment of the Corinthians, but also the assessment contained in Thucydides' claim in the programmatic statement, if only because the Corinthian argument does echo the analysis of the two most trustworthy speakers of Book I, Pericles and Archidamus, as well as the analysis of the "Archeology" and the "Pentecontaetia" and Thucydides' own conclusions, presented as the result of careful and difficult investigation. Yet, we should pay careful attention to how the conclusions of the analysis are played against the narrative in the unfolding of events. The events reported not long after the various assessments in Thucydides' narrative call for many adjustments upon the Corinthian generalizations and also call attention to their partial nature.

One of the first characterizations of Athens offered by the Corinthian embassy, as evidence for the need of quick action, is that Athens is "quick to invent a plan and then to carry it out in action." While the "Pentecontaetia" does present several cases in which Athens acts relatively quickly – e.g., the building of fortifications following their return from victory against the Persians – their deliberations concerning the current war are presented as hesitant, and on several occasions, their second-guessing, as in the case of who to send to Syracuse to lead the war effort there, causes them the most trouble in the war. Of course, some of the description is so hyperbolic as hardly to be credited when applied to any state whatsoever. Many of Pericles' assessments, in addition to those of the Corinthians, are also soon shown to be mistaken. His assessment of the manner in which the relative wealth of Athens and Sparta will affect the outcome of the war, and his predictions of which side will find themselves resorting to forced contributions (1.141), one of the first points in his argument for war, is largely overturned as

early as the siege of Mytilene in Book III. In addition, the *History* in sum serves as a balancing counter-argument to the high appraisal of naval power in the analysis of Book I.

Perhaps the most striking example of this balancing between appearance and reality, analysis and fact, is that presented early in Book II between the assessment of Athens in Pericles' funeral oration and the example of fact adduced in the account of the plague, an example which is dramatic and telling whether one takes it to depict the thin veneer of Athenian virtue peeling quickly away under the adversity of its circumstances or rather that, in the face of a catastrophe of such magnitude, all sense and reason of what was previously understood to be right and proper must be lost.[19]

In short, we are struck by a most difficult problem of interpretation. Why does the examination of the origins of the conflict in Book I, in both its narrative analysis and in the carefully selected and crafted *antilogoi* of the paired speeches, so favor the probability of Athenian victory, against the almost unanimous conviction of the time?[20] A quick and simple answer to the problem is that Thucydides thought that Athens *should* have won the war, but her own foolishness did her in. Armed with this easy conclusion and facing similar circumstances, a nation might suppose, finding itself similarly fortunate in a particular balance of power, that were it only to avoid the same mistakes, it could not help but have every confidence for victory. Such an attitude, of course, would be silly and reckless, and would stand as another example of the same attitudes that brought these two great powers to a war whose outcome could not be determined by the best and most careful divination, judging from the analysis of Book I, the common wisdom of the time, and the predictions of the wisest and most rigorous analysis presented to us in the speeches discussed above.[21] Thus, both Athens and Sparta can be seen as victims of what Woodruff calls their own bad faith.

Woodruff has pointed out the relation of these bad faith judgments and a type of inference known by the Greeks as **ei)ko/j**: an inference of what is likely, reasonable, plausible; or, as Plato has it in the *Phaedrus*, of what is *like* (**o(/moioj**) the truth. We must resort to such inferences in those cases where the truth itself is unavailable, when the issue to be decided, as often is the case in Thucydides, concerns a future event or future outcome of present strategy, deliberation or action. The Sophists often appealed to **ei)ko/j** reasoning in their speeches, especially in their dicanic oratory, believing, it seems, that such reasoning is often more persuasive than the simple truth.[22] Plato presents the Sophists so operating in several places. However, in those cases where the matter being investigated is so abstract or complex as to make the truth difficult or even impossible to attain, even Plato resorts to **ei)ko/j** reasoning, and does so explicitly, as the best method available under the circumstances.

Woodruff finds that "Thucydides gives the readers the deepest understanding of the war, however, when he invites them to join in the bad faith of the combatants." This invitation, I suggest, is at the heart of Book I. Each section examined so far turns upon the invitation to the reader to entertain the exact same fear as the participants and to come to the same conclusion: that the growth in power of neighboring states must be feared as dangerous to one's self-determination and *requires* pre-emptive war. Indeed, if his intention were merely to show that, regardless of what others thought, he believed the advantage did indeed lie with Athens in a war with Sparta, but that somehow, that advantage was frittered away until the unforeseen and unexpected happened, he could have accomplished as much in briefer compass and more direct fashion. However, such an accomplishment could hardly be imagined to be of value for the ages. Even if Thucydides did believe the advantage lay with Athens, and most scholars do not think he did, it is very important to note that he does not simply say so. Indeed, he draws the reader toward this conclusion despite the likelihood that he reader comes to the text thinking just

the opposite. Such a focus on the conflict draws upon the reader's own views and biases while placing them in the very antithetical relation he sets up in his own statement regarding the "truest reason."

I have repeatedly highlighted how the analysis of power in the "Archeology" and the "Pentecontaetia" is an invitation to the reader to participate in **ei)ko/j** reasoning, i.e., speculative application of a general rule to a particular case. If we do so, we model the kind of bad faith that the participants in the conflict exhibited themselves. It is reasonable to assign such authorial intentionality to Thucydides because he was explicitly trained in recognizing and utilizing **ei)ko/j** reasoning. Even were we to discount the reports of his sophistic education, he is able to understand its nature and process enough to call attention to its use by the participants in their speeches, and so understands it enough to exploit it for his own purposes. His use invites the reader, in a particularly powerful way, to inhabit the perspectives and prejudices of the participants -- to 'see,' firsthand, the *fear* of imperialism as a cause, perhaps the "true cause" of the hostilities.

As we have noted, Thucydides' claim at 1.23 of the "truest reason" for the outbreak of the war must be filled out with specific details if it is to be any real explanation at all. We see, however, that the claim of the "truest cause" is developed not so much through the details, *per se*, offered in the speeches, details of the evidence and exercise of a growth of Athenian power, but by means of a larger sense which the speeches and narrative construct for us, if we are attentive. We are invited by the speeches to discover what sort of thing the conception of that growing power was as the participants in the conflict perceived it -- the image of Athens and her abilities as these were present in the minds of the Athenians, the Spartans, and her allies. We are invited to witness, as it were, the fears, desires, and other complex motivations bound up in these images and perceptions. We are invited by the narrative to entertain these images ourselves, to

live inside them and explore their impact. Thucydides' construction makes it clear that it was power as it existed not only in fact, but in this conceptual and perceptual way that was the power that mattered most, compelling Sparta to war.

That power is not readily apprehended in propositional statements concerning either its nature or its component elements. One could state straightforwardly that Sparta and Corinth held certain images of Athens and her abilities, and that these images induced them to fear her power and imperialistic tendencies, but such an account would fall far short of the kind of illuminating and compelling insight into the war and into Hellas that most commentators have depicted as the remarkable power of Thucydides' *History*. No amount of supporting detail or argument provided to augment those straightforward propositions would suffice to accomplish what Thucydides desires. Instead, such insight is more appropriately gestured toward, painstakingly unfolded for the reader in the balancing of the narrative portions of the *History* with the carefully paired and constructed speeches.

One might suggest that drama in general provides these benefits, and that the similarities between Thucydides and Plato are similarities in dramatic style; but I believe there is more at work here than drama, and what more is at work is quite similar to what is at work in Plato's dialogues. The drama in the *History*, as also in Plato, is performed by means of antilogy, by means of accounts intentionally opposed and presented as exclusive, but which, engaged carefully, lead, like Platonic dialectic, beyond the antitheses of the original pairing into a deeper understanding. The paired speeches call upon us to think carefully about the details of growth of Athenian power as offered by one side of the discussion and then refuted or reinterpreted by the other side. The further balancing of the analysis in the "Archaeology" with the speeches which serve to reinforce that analysis, as well as those speeches that call it into question, begins to take us beyond the understanding which is possible by means of propositional accounts, and offers us

the opportunity to see and interpret the motivations for ourselves in order to make sense of the events.

Thucydides crafts his *antilogoi*, within and between all the elements of his text, carefully balancing speech and analysis, analysis and fact, such that we are invited, as readers and as a strange kind of witness, both to the war, and to our own nature, to remain within the antilogy, to learn what that balancing itself can teach us. Like the speeches we have discussed, or, later in the *History*, those before the battle of Syracuse (7.66-68) or the Melian Dialogue (5.84-116), to name but two obvious examples,[23] in the larger antilogy of the *History* we are hindered from deciding which side is right or will or should prevail. We are presented with the opportunity to decide, but at the same time frustrated in our attempt to reach easy or final conclusions. Sifting through the descriptions and analyses present in the balanced weighing of exclusive alternatives which the speeches and narratives present, we come to a much deeper understanding, primarily of ourselves and of human nature but also of events, than is ever possible in any one-sided conclusion concerning a particular situation. Such a placement and balancing of elements serves to call each other into question in order to keep the auditor or reader engaged in the process of judgment rather than swayed to one side or the other and so brought, untimely, to a decision or conclusion. Thucydides demands from his readers a process of engaging accounts that constantly reminds us that the richest understanding will not be a partisan understanding. He asks us to pay close attention to and carefully investigate what lies behind the analysis and the speeches, and, in sifting through the alternative accounts, to remember, as he himself has warned us in his programmatic statement, that judgment is difficult, requires a sensitive touch, and is never, finally, univocal. In performing this epistemic stance, we are shown the epistemological value of *aporia*.[24]

The arrangement of Book I emphasizes to the attentive reader the hermeneutic necessity of a full, critical engagement with the matter itself, and not solely with the author's propositional accounts and explanations. The effect of the speeches, in their eloquent power and logical force, and of the analytic disquisitions on power in general and in particular, on the characteristics of people that lead to power and ensure success, is, as is everything else in Thucydides, complex. One of the most important elements of that complexity is that precisely because we know the outcome of the war, and because this knowledge is brought itself into the antilogy created by the text, we are forced to question the logic and force and confidence of the words of all the speakers, and not only those whose judgment Thucydides has openly called into question. We are forced to question the words of Archidamus and Pericles, and the words of Thucydides himself,[25] and, in so doing, allowed the opportunity to gain practice, and perhaps *skill*, at a particular intellectual process whose goal is to understand the complexities of the world that can neither be captured nor divined fully in either analysis or speech alone.

ANTILOGICAL INSIGHT: CONCLUSIONS

As should be apparent to the reader by now, such methods and goals are of more than historiographical interest. I would like to make rather more explicit comparisons between both these methods and goals to those employed by Plato in particular, but I do not have time to do so. Perhaps we can address these some in the question period. But I can suggest briefly that both Plato's and Thucydides' texts serve to foster a particular intellectual practice, drawing the reader into a process of engaging in a careful balancing of antilogical accounts, or of mutually exclusive conclusions and analyses, or of the incommensurability of analysis with fact. Such a process in Thucydides provides the reader with the opportunity to learn about and understand the practice of human deliberation and choice, the reasons for desire and action, even the "true causes" of events, by being witness to them and by discovering them for and, finally, within herself. She is

invited to inhabit each alternative explanation, to see the world from its perspective, but not exclusively, not so as to opt for one explanation over another. This invitation to inhabit *each* alternative is fostered by means of a careful balancing of the compelling force of each account, such that remaining within one alternative explanation is made difficult. The dissonance created by the strategy of the text plagues us as we inhabit each account in turn such that, even while grasping the manner in which each in turn serves to explain and make sense of the world, we are called back into the balancing, re-engaged with the complexities that prevent any one account from being sufficient and complete. It is a method Socrates' own caution calls for each time Platonic interlocutors come to some conclusion: that we must continue to investigate the matter and our agreements, lest we unwittingly fall into the error of believing ourselves to know something we do not. It is the method of the Eleatic Stranger in the *Sophist*, that brings the inquirers to equal puzzlement, and so hope of understanding.[26]

It is very likely that Thucydides offers to us so many alternative accounts, even diametrically opposed accounts -- precisely the sorts of accounts that he himself faced in his own investigation -- and presents them to us in such a deliberate and thought-provoking manner, in order to prompt us to enter along with him into the hard work he describes in 1.22.2 of coming to understanding, a work that could not be accomplished if one of the two or several accounts is simply selected as the 'correct' explanation, the 'truest reason' for the events and their outcomes. I believe that Thucydides, like Plato, in crafting his *antilogoi*, suggests that even the ability to assess and judge the equality and the appropriateness of the considerations to each circumstance is, again, not ever provided once and for all, and certainly not in propositional form, but is instead a matter of the ability to remain engaged within balancing *antilogoi*, carefully selected so as to assist one in seeing the matter from all sides, or as many sides as possible, such that one is thereby able to develop a deeper sense of the structure of the world, of its particular

circumstances and of the beliefs and motivations of the people engaged in living their lives within it. As Socrates says in the *Republic* (537c), the one who is a *sunopticos* is a dialectician, and the one who is not, is not. I believe that both Thucydides and Plato suggest that such a synoptic ability is to be found and gained, if at all, in an ongoing practice, an always underway quite evocative of Diotima's description of philosophy in the *Symposium* that, far from calling for final decisions upon each individual matter of investigation or upon the nature and structure of the world, instead calls for an understanding that always approaches and then re-approaches its judgment concerning the world, a grasping that remains a grasping only when it is fully occupied in the ongoing process of grasping.[27]

In such methods, a certain oppositional tension must be fostered.[28] This tension is at the heart of Plato's demonstration of dialectic. Platonic dialectic, as Gadamer has suggested, does not merely present two sides of an issue, but allows what is said to speak against itself, resulting in a careful balancing that prevents any single element of the dialectic from becoming too compelling and so tempting the reader to final conclusions and, thus, ending the exercise of skill in the practice of understanding. This tension greatly facilitates seeing an issue or event from as many sides as possible, since the practice of this tension makes such a seeing essential in order to accommodate the complexities that very practice reveals. This tension, Thucydides seems to be telling us, is the basis for good deliberation, good judgment, judgment which aims to accomplish a real understanding of the complexities of the world.

Thucydides' *History* is philosophical because it is constructed as and involves the reader in constructing an epistemological practice which goes beyond involving the reader in the complexity of the issues faced by the participants in events, beyond even the analysis or evaluation of human nature. Thucydides offers, even demands, a particular cognitive stance that reveals a particular vision of the nature and process of human understanding itself. In

Thucydides, there is something very like elenchus and even more like dialectic at work, the antilogical refutation of reasonable accounts, both at the level of the speeches and at the level of the larger antilogy that all the elements of the text crafts. Indeed, as in Plato, this larger antilogy is the subtler, but ultimately more powerful antilogy; and it produces a kind of *aporia*. And, as Protarchus puts it in the *Philebus* (20a), the aporetic at this level between the text and the reader, aims at something other and more than puzzlement: it aims at the richest possible understanding. It simply recognizes that something like *aporia* and dialectic is the path to its achievement.

One of the most remarkable elements of the programmatic statement is that Thucydides, who is a witness and seeks to witness to us does *not* rely on *his* status as eye-witness, but seeks *logoi*, *logoi* that will help us *become* the spectators/witnesses Plutarch evokes. Plato, as a similar and similarly strange witness to both Socrates and philosophy, seeks to show us, like Thucydides, ourselves, by means of *logoi* that call upon us to witness, as participants, the search for wisdom and judgment, the striving for virtue, the nature of understanding.

NOTES:

[1] Donald Kagan, "The speeches in Thucydides and the Mytilene debate," in *Studies in the Greek Historians, Yale Classical Studies*, Volume XXIV (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 71.

[2] There are a number of scholars whose interpretation of the speeches offer or assume this view, notably Hornblower and his followers, and more recently, Rood's *Thucydides: Narrative and Explanation* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1998). There is not room to survey this position and argue against it, although the reasons I would do so should become clear in what follows.

[3] I am indebted to Paul Woodruff, both in conversation and in an upublished paper presentation at Boston University, Feb. 3, 1994, entitled, "*Eikos* and Bad Faith in the Paired Speeches of Thucydides," for some of the insights of this paragraph.

[4] W. Robert Connor, *Thucydides* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

[5] Ibid., 15.

[6] We will be primarily concerned here with the technique of *antilogos*, the practice of speaking on both sides of an issue. Many scholars have noted that both Thucydides and his audience were clearly influenced by the Sophists and by other developments of the fifth century's 'New Learning.' Thucydides was reputed to be the student of Antiphon and/or Anaxagoras and/or Protagoras. He makes clear, himself, how much he admired Antiphon at 8.68, and seems to hold Pericles in unusually high regard in the early part of the *History*, taking special care to assess and justify his character and actions. Pericles, as a student of Protagoras, was himself deeply engaged in the 'new learning.' There is a significant amount of literature remarking the similarities of rhetorical technique in prose writers of the fifth century, particularly writers of epideictic and dicanic oratory; but for a solid introduction to that discussion, see Thomas Cole, *The Origins of Rhetoric in Ancient Greece* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1991). More recent studies include Philip Stadter's "The form and content of Thucydides' Pentecontaetia (1.89-117)," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 34, 1 (1993), 35-72; and Ian Plant's "The influence of forensic oratory on Thucydides' principles of method," *Classical Quarterly* 49 (1999), 62-73. Even the section of Book I known as the "Archaeology," where Thucydides himself claims to be breaking sharply with past tradition, bears strong connections in both style and method with other fifth century reconstructions of the past generally known as *archaiologiai*, especially in its polemical and impersonal approach to the topic (cf. Thomas Cole's *Democritus and the Sources of Greek Anthropology*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1967) and Connor, 22-24). Such *archaiologiai* were popular near the end of the fifth century and into the fourth, and Plato portrays Hippias as commonly telling such 'archaeologies' to delight the Spartans (*Hippias Major*, 285d-e). Connor believes that Thucydides was aware – as were many of his contemporaries among the orators, and to some extent, as was Herodotus (who makes a habit of disclaiming responsibility for many of the assertions in his work so as to put his audience in a more receptive position regarding claims he at times very much wishes to advocate) – that a straightforward statement of the author's own views, or an explicitly argued interpretation, or, worse, a direct assault on common attitudes and values would at the best be met with polite, but lukewarm interest. We can find very few occasions of such straightforward expressions or conclusions in Thucydides' text, and we are advised by Thucydides himself to be cautious concerning those few we do find, quite explicitly in his programmatic statement and in such paired speeches as Cleon and Diodotus in the Mytilene debate.

[7] To that purpose, then, the following argument relies on some degree of familiarity with the speeches, and indeed the *History* as a whole. A fuller and closer analysis of the speeches would certainly help those less familiar with the *History*; however, the primary philosophical gain to be derived follows not upon careful analysis of the content of individual speeches, but from the relation of speeches as a literary method to the larger narrative text.

[8] In what follows, the focus will largely remain on Book I of the *History*. This is not because I believe that it stands out in terms of its practice along the lines argued, although it does present an unusual and interesting element in the form of its digressions; but rather because in focusing on a short, early, relatively self-contained section of the *History* in order to adduce and argue for my conclusions, I hope to demonstrate their efficacy regardless of the position one takes upon the issue of the change, or lack thereof, in Thucydides' assessments and judgments over the course of time and of composition. I also think it is of significant importance to recognize that the beginning of the *History* sets the stage for all else, and serves to train the reader as to how to read the whole.

[9] The issue of Thucydides' claims to accuracy is another of the more hotly debated topics in the scholarship. The debate tends to center around the veracity or validity of those claims, however, and the question of whether Thucydides actually intends to claim the kind of accuracy scholars have tended to desire or expect from the text has

received briefer attention. There is some engagement of this issue among the more philosophical approaches cited above.

[10] The term **safe/j** is commonly used to denote the plain, manifest, distinct reality. Cf. LSJ, s.v. It is used in a similar way in the texts of the pre-Socratics.

[11] Connor emphasizes this aspect of the Archeology, 24ff.

[12] Cf. Herodotus 1.171,173; 3.122; 7.169-71.

[13] Thucydides, of course, expected his audience to be familiar with the growth of the Delian League, but it is remarkable that the text omits the details of this growth. In the text itself, the only alliance noted is the Corcyrean affair.

[14] See Connor, 38.

[15] Thucydides, in his characterizations of these two, notes especially Archidamus' **e)mpeiro/j**, or wisdom derived from ample experience (1.80), and the constancy of Pericles' **gnw/mh**, his opinions and judgments (1.140). See Connor, 50.

[16] The appeal to Athenian character and disposition is only part, however, of the explanation presented in this digression. The narrative also clearly depicts and emphasizes the role of luck and of the intrigues of other states in bringing Athens to her place upon the Hellenic stage, for neither of which can she take credit or blame. Ironically, there is very little direct description of Sparta in Book I that depicts its historical importance. Were the reader not familiar with the growth of the Peloponnesian league and Sparta's formidable and famous land forces, he might be quite surprised at the suggestion of 1.18 that Sparta stood alongside Athens as the two preeminent powers at the time of the Persian War.

[17] Of course, Athens was the winner of what is called the Archidamian War, the first phase of the war before the peace of Nicias, so the balance of analysis with fact presented here is certainly subtle and nuanced. However, Thucydides portrays the Peace as badly needed by both sides. Further, the Peace is related near the beginning of Book V, after the dark investigation of Book III, which includes the detailed analysis of the moral failure connected to the civil dispute at Corcyra, and Book IV's telling depiction of Athenian folly (flirting with disaster in its rejection of peace) and the puzzling descent of Spartan military power into impotence. The eventual defeat is mentioned as early as Book II. Such early success throws the later defeat into sharper relief, even without Thucydides' depiction of the largely fortuitous and puzzling character of the early victory.

[18] See 7.28 for Thucydides' acknowledgement of this attitude.

[19] The distinction between speech and deed is thematic throughout the text, but relative to our discussion, calls to mind in particular the way the distinction is presented in Pericles' Funeral Oration and reminds us again of the importance of that distinction in 1.22. For a further discussion of Thucydides' use of the distinction between speech and deed, as well as further discussion of Thucydides' efforts to balance fact against **lo/goj** and **gnw/mh**, see Adam Parry's important work, *Logos and Ergon in Thucydides* (Salem: Ayer, 1981).

[20] Not all of Book I invokes Athenian victory so straightforwardly – the Oracle at Delphi is consulted (1.118) and pronounces Sparta the ultimate victor, if she will "fight with all her might," a fact to which Corinth later calls attention at the vote for war – but the overwhelming evidence, as presented and on its face, calls for such a prediction. It is what lies beneath that face which is most telling for our investigation. Even the Oracle hardly casts an unequivocal ballot, as is her fame. Thucydides mentions the oracle again at 2.54.

[21] That war is unpredictable is put forward by the participants themselves upon no less than four major occasions in Book I: Athens, in her address to Sparta in response to the grievances presented against her (1.78), Archidamus in his speech to the Spartans following (1.82), Corinth herself, in her final address to Sparta at the vote to go to war (1.122), and Pericles in his speech to the Athenians after the Spartan embassy (1.140). Several of the most blatant examples of Athen's foolishness would include continuing to follow Periclean strategy after his leadership in that strategy was no longer available, the attempts to deal with the situation at Plataea in ways that serve ultimately to refute Athens' claims and stated intentions, and especially the campaign against Syracuse undertaken against good sense and then undertaken without the leadership of the one person likely to pull it off. Thucydides foreshadows the very mistakes that do indeed contribute to the Athenian loss fairly early in Book I (1.69), where, in the first Corinthian address to Sparta, Corinth maintains that it was Persian mistakes which cost Persia the war and that their own success with Athens thus far was due mainly to Athenian blunders. That she does so in the very speech which lays out the Athenian strength of character serves also to call into question the value of the Corinthian assessment for a prognosis of victory. Pericles also augurs the outcome when he states that he is much more afraid of Athenian mistakes than of Spartan schemes and plans (1.144), but he does so in the very speech in which he eloquently calls the Athenians to prepare for and welcome war. The *History* as a whole reveals a rarely flattering depiction of

Athens and her citizens. There are certain Athenians whom Thucydides seems to have admired, but overall, he seems to have had little regard for her abilities and promise as a state.

[22] Cf., e.g., Gorgias, *The Apology of Palamedes.*

[23] Even a brief examination of these two examples will serve to demonstrate the manner in which Thucydides can craft a particular situation so as to defeat the effort to render one side or the other of the argument as the correct account, or the right side, or the one which should carry the day. As he crafts the accounts of these particular situations so as to render decision difficult, so he can be seen crafting his larger work, if one pays close attention to the exercise of that craft.

[24] Such an effort and result is all the more remarkable for being produced by someone who *is* biased and who recognizes that fact, as his caution at 1.22 makes clear. His very selection of material reveals bias. Although he details the Melian affair with care, he only briefly mentions the other Athenian massacres. It is striking, for instance, that Thucydides omits all mention of religious reasons for the war, such as the conflict over the control of Delphi. It is interesting to compare Herodotus 7.151 on the Athenians' relation to the Persians to Thucydides' account at 1.97. This contrast is important since Thucydides explicitly criticizes all previous writers for not covering this period accurately, adequately, or with chronological precision. He then proceeds to give even briefer compass, with occasional chronological lapses, to several elements, the relation of Athens to Persia, and her relation to Peloponnesus, particularly for the period known as the "First Peloponnesian War," among the foremost. For instance, the background to the truce mentioned in 1.112 is not explained, nor is the Spartan Treaty with Argos noted until 5.14. Hornblower called attention to Thucydides' selectivity and posited that Thucydides often explains in detail one particular event, such as the Melian massacre, or the civil dispute at Corcyra, while omitting other civil conflicts or massacres, in order to set the chosen event up as paradigmatic, and in so doing, betrays his concern to explain larger issues rather than individual events. As Finley put it in his introduction in *Portable Greek Historians* (New York: Penguin, 1977), 13: "One good example was sufficient for his purpose; the rest would be useless repetition."

Thucydides is less concerned, I would admit, to hinder us from accepting his moral judgment as that is made apparent in his selection and relation of particular events. However, he does, over and again, construct his text so as to call upon us to re-examine any final conclusions on our part. Several instances of this construction are to be found, in illuminating form, in the balancing between the narrative and the speeches surrounding individual characters, in particular individual characters whose role in the *History* is less than personally flattering. Connor offers two examples, worth quoting at length, concerning two of the most significant of these characters:

"In the treatment of Brasidas, for example, the development of the narrative exposes the rashness of the northern Greeks, the deceptiveness of Spartan policy, and the moral ambiguity of Brasidas' own actions in his brilliant campaign in the Thraceward regions. The account is not, as has often been thought, written in simple admiration of Brasidas, nor does it seek to condemn him. Rather, it is a way of leading the reader to deeper and more alert responses to the situation – to a far more cautious and complex reaction than the one the historical Brasidas attempted to induce.

The role of Nicias in the Sicilian Expedition also shows a remarkable development, although of a different sort. His leadership in the field compounded Athens' problems; it is presented as uninspired, unimaginative, ineffective, or even worse. At the end, when swift withdrawal is essential, Nicias temporizes, the victim of false hopes and a source of bad advice and fatal delay. At this crucial stage, moreover, we recognize that, although Nicias was brave in battle, he is frightened by the thought of facing the Athenian assembly, and, unlike Pericles, unwilling to stand up to it, preferring death on the battlefield to condemnation and disgrace at home (7.84.4). But, as we have seen, during the retreat, Nicias shows a devotion to his men, a personal integrity, an uncomprehending bravery that we cannot fail to respect even if we cannot fully praise. His death is as undeserved as it is ironic. He is destroyed by the collaborators on whom he had based his false hopes for the betrayal of Syracuse. He falls at the point in the narrative where we have become fully aware of another dimension to his character and when we have abandoned our own disposition (and that of the Athenians) to condemn him" (236-7).

The Melian affair might have served as paradigmatic for Thucydides for the very reason that although both sides could point to good reasons for what they asked, even to claim right on their side, both sides make decisions that resulted in disaster. Thucydides' placement of this event in his narration next to the narration of the Sicilian expedition, like the juxtaposition of very many of the details of his narrative, suggests that Thucydides has a judgment himself concerning these events. He does not often state that judgment explicitly, however; and the fact that his judgment is often clear is no argument against the equally present fact that he arranges his narrative not only to highlight the failures in justice or moderation that he believes contribute to disaster but also in such a manner that the readers are allowed, if not forced, to judge these matters for themselves. Plato has often been read as presenting

his own judgments, his own metaphysical or epistemological doctrines in puzzling fashion, because it seems clear that his character, Socrates, at some points, or even across several dialogues, has some judgment or argument that he seems to hold strongly. Perhaps Thucydides' practice can serve to support the suggestion that such authorial judgments can coexist with, even more richly invite, a critical engagement with the very nature of accounts, as well as the particular accounts selected and expressed.

[25] Kosso states: "The style of point-counterpoint is indeed an epistemically informative feature of the text, but it subverts rather than reinforces our confidence" (8).

[26] In the *Sophist* (249-250) the Eleatic Stranger shows Theaetetus that though they began their inquiry into Being by being deeply confused about not-Being, they have come to the point, in their discussion where they see that they are equally confused about Being, and it is at this point, and not before, that the Eleatic stranger claims there is hope, "precisely because both *that which is* and *that which is not* are involved in equal confusion." Now they can push through their *logos* as far as possible.

[27] Connor has this to say, in his examination of Thucydides' political views: "Thucydides, in other words, refuses to let us be trapped into the neat antitheses and binary oppositions so common in Greek thought" (242). While I agree with his conclusion regarding Thucydides' resistance to binary thinking, I believe that the latter part of his characterization betrays an incomplete understanding of the more complex conceptions of antithesis and opposition at work in the thinking of several of Thucydides' near contemporaries and antecedents.

[28] Along these lines, Connor has this comment to offer: "We can even suspect that Thucydides was sometimes inviting challenge and reassessment, a historical rereading of his text in which details and reactions postponed or minimized in his narrative are given a second look and then seen in a new relationship, with a new weighting. Certainly he knew that his treatment of almost every major figure, Pericles, Cleon, Demosthenes, Nicias, Alcibiades, would in his own day be controversial and would cut against conventional wisdom and judgments. His is sometimes a revisionist, often a polemical work, designed to provoke rather than suppress dissent" (233).