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PROJECT WORKING PAPER

THE DIALECTICAL LOGIC OF THUCYDIDES'

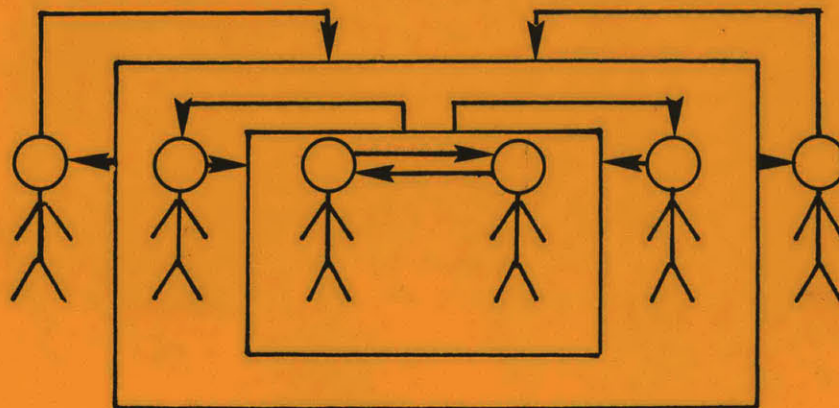
MELIAN DIALOGUE*

by

HAYWARD R. ALKER, JR.

M.I.T.

REFLECTIVE LOGICS FOR RESOLVING INSECURITY DILEMMAS



...This political necessity, the mere mathematics of power politics, is defined [by Thucydides] as the true cause ... of the war.¹

We can discern something of the "tragic" grammar behind the Greek proverb's way of saying "one learns by experience"; "ta pathemata mathemata," the suffered is the learned.²

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Reading Martin Wight's claim that "one of the supreme books on power politics is the history by Thucydides of the great war between Athens and Sparta, commonly called the Peloponnesian War"³ recalls the message of my own teacher during the Cold War. Doubtless for him World War II was the most obvious analogue. Certainly Thucydides' search for "an exact knowledge of the past as an aid to the interpretation of the future, which in the course of human things must resemble if it does not reflect it" rings true to Realists seeking timeless truths, or even mathematical laws, about human nature's ruthless search for dominance (I.23). Jaeger's quote at the beginning of this paper probably conveyed the same Realist message to many members of the German speaking world of the 1930s, even though it was part of a more general treatment of Greek civic culture.

Beyond the Realist preoccupation with the motivational bases of human nature and power politics, Thucydides' work is perhaps most known for the total moral cynicism of the Athenian statement in the Melian conference that "right, as the world goes, is only in question between equals in power, while the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must" (V.89). Surely this quotation continues to dazzle, shock and subdue students in introductory courses on International Politics around the world.

Would not any positivistic social scientist also want to claim to "have written my work, not as an essay which is to win the applause of the moment, but as a possession for all time" (I.23)? I would indeed be surprised if "quantitative/scientific" international politics falsificationists have not approvingly cited Thucydides' search for "the clearest data," or his standard of objective precision: "the accuracy of the report being always tried by the most severe and detailed tests possible" (ibid.).

Timeless laws of power politics, independent of moral praise or blame, objectively and falsifiably delineated with what Jaeger takes to be mathematical precision -- surely these were the goals of Thucydides' "scientific history" or "scientific politics." And just as surely they serve as reasons why Morgenthau inspired Realists as well as neopositivist behavioralists could agree on their own contemporary interpretations of the insights of a great classical writer.

These views I take to be those of the majority of contemporary students of international relations; they were my own until a few years ago when I began regularly to assign Thucydides' great work in a historically oriented class on theories of international relations.

Although I still agree that Thucydides is one of the first "scientific historians" in the Western tradition,⁴ I now think his conception of "scientific history" to have been a dialectical view rather characteristic of philosophically serious students of the sophists, not the logical positivism or amoral Realism in terms of which so many of us have been trained to see the past, nor the ambassadorial sophistry to which some of us still aspire.⁵ And it seems equally clear that his historiography combines a commitment to factual accuracy with what we would now call a dramaturgical perspective on human affairs. Thus, like other Greek thinkers, Thucydides sought nonpositivistically to derive practical, moral "lessons" from his historical analysis. These were grounded in an eternal, dialectical grammar of natural human possibilities.

To better understand the relevance of Thucydides' insights and historiography for today's problems, I want to focus on the dialectical ways in which he presents the Melian dialogue. For it turns out that Thucydides

consciously used a formalizable sophistic dialectic in the writing of this dialogue.⁶ Additionally, Thucydides' dialectic has both a dramatic and an ontological aspect. Thus Thucydides uses the dialogue in a way that heightens the dramatic impact of his tale, and the lessons we are to derive from it. Finally, I want to suggest that Thucydides was consciously a participant in ongoing debates within the Greece of his time about the proper conduct of international affairs, debates which find many echoes in contemporary paradigm conflicts between Marxists, Realists, traditionalists, peace researchers, feminists and behavioralists. Through a critical appreciation of Thucydides' arguments, we may gain insights pointing toward new conclusions in our own debates.

I The Melian Dialogue as Formalizable Dialectics

A. Three levels of argument in the Melian Conference

There are three levels to the discussion in the Melian Conference (V. 85-116). The first level of discussion concerns the type of negotiation to take place -- whether it will be a logical and analytical investigation of the sort we would call deductive science, merely a rhetorical exchange before a large group of people, or a formal disputation allowing interruptions at any point, i.e., a serious debate. My analysis is that the third opinion prevails: there is a jointly recognized form of serious diplomatic argument paralleling the notions of formal disputation evolved by pre-Socratic philosophers as well as in the early Greek law courts, where sophists were often hired to plead one or the other side of an important case.

A second level of discussion concerns the subject of the Athenian-Melian debate, what they are going to argue about. In this context appears the

famous quote about the strong doing what they will and the weak suffering what they must. It is part of an argument about the standards to be appealed to in the debate, as well as the genuineness of Athenian participation. The conclusion of this exchange, on which there is not total agreement, is that at least tactically both parties will argue in terms of each other's interests.

Once the terms of the debate and the subject of the debate have been settled upon, after earlier agreement on what the form of the debate is going to be, we come to the Melian dialogue proper. This third level of discussion proceeds as a structure disputation, formal dialectics. I wish to illustrate how the rules followed in the dialogue proper conform to a formalized procedural theory of dialectics offered more than 2,000 years later in a book by Nicholas Rescher, published in 1977, entitled Dialectics: A Controversy-Oriented Approach to the Theory of Knowledge.⁷

B. Formal Debate, Not Rhetoric Nor Apodictic Reasoning

As evidence for my characterization of the character and context of the Melian dialogue, I quote Thucydides' Athenians: "Since the negotiations are not to go on before the people, in order that we may not be able to speak straight on without interruption, and deceive the ears of the multitude by seductive arguments which would pass without refutation," they propose a "method more cautious still": "make no set speech yourselves, but take us up at whatever you do not like, and settle that before going on any further" (V.86). They are not then, going to use rhetorical methods for persuading multitudes, a subject given a classical treatment by Aristotle (in his Rhetoric) several decades later; instead, they use mutually educative, interruptible, philosophical discourse. The Melians say, "To the fairness of

quietly instructing each other as you propose there is nothing to object, but your military preparations are too far advanced to agree with what you say...." The noncoercive nature of genuine philosophic argument has been clearly recognized, even though we may doubt the Athenians' sincerity in adopting such a form of discussion. Without being too anachronistic, we see here a style similar to that of Plato's Socratic dialogues.

The kind of argument envisioned is also not what the Greeks (and Aristotle) would call apodictic (deductive, demonstrative, or necessary) reasoning. I suspect their model of such reasoning is geometric deduction, which already had achieved significant results by the end of the 5th century B.C. My evidence is the Melian desire "to profit by arguments not strictly valid if they can be got to past current." They recognized that since their lives depended upon their persuasiveness, they wanted to be able to make arguments that they could not prove, but against which effective counter arguments might not be made. This kind of dialogue clearly concerns the realm of dialectical inferences which, according to Aristotle, "must start from premises that command general assent" rather than universal or necessary truths.⁸

Is there a realm of practical reason, where arguments start from reasonable assumptions, where strictly deductive arguments can not always or regularly be made? Is this a serious realm, distinguishable from pure poetry, propaganda and rhetoric? Early logical positivism, with its attempted trichotomization of all statements into poetry, logical tautology and sense data, argued: "NO!" To the contrary, Rescher elaborates some formal rules for just this kind of discourse, a realm apparently well known to Thucydides' practical diplomats.

C. Rescher's Dialectical Logic

In order to argue Thucydides' use of a formalizable form of practical, dialectical reasoning in the Melian Dialogue, I must first review Rescher's way of formally representing moves and countermoves, his dialectical logic. Table I, extracted from the early part of his book, presents his major symbolisms, along with some of the associated rules of their use.

In going through the symbolisms in the Table, it should be emphasized that they are not identical with somewhat similar terms in the conventional sentential and predicate calculi. Thus "&" as a connective sometimes involves a more substantial combinatorial rewriting than the modern "logical and," while the provisoed inference indicated by "/" is not as strong as the " \supset " and " \dashv " used by modern formalists. Neither is the "ceteris paribus" interpretation of "P generally follows from Q, P/Q" certainly restatable using parametric probability distributions, which the Greeks did not understand. /See note 8./

On the other hand, the logic of assertion and counter-assertion, as schematically rendered by Rescher, includes the possibility of purely logical deduction, $P \dashv Q$, without being limited to it. (This is made clear in his use of such 'pure,' modern, formal deductions within provisoed denials).⁹ The asymmetry of options allowed proponents and opponents clearly also distinguishes Rescher's schematicization from modern sentential calculus.

In a sense, one could call Rescher's formalism a "dia-logic," to use a term I first saw in Jurgen Habermas' Knowledge and Human Interests.¹⁰ Thus the logic highlights dialogue-like, contradictory interchange possibilities and limitations, it allows updated empirical referents, it distinguishes direct from partial and tacit disagreements, and it has a kind of

Table 1: Dialectical Moves and Countermoves*

(i) *Inventory of fundamental move types*

(1) Categorical assertion

$!P$ for "P is the case" or "It is maintained (by me, the assertor) that P"

(2) Cautious assertion

$\dagger P$ for "P is the case for all that you (the adversary) have shown" "P's being the case is compatible with everything you've said (i.e., have maintained or conceded)."

Note: Moves of the $!$ -type can be made only by the proponent, those of the \dagger -type only by the opponent.

(3) Provisoed assertion

P/Q for "P generally (or *usually* or *ordinarily*) obtains provided that Q" or "P obtains, other things being equal, when Q does" or "When Q, so *ceteris paribus* does P" or "P obtains in all (or *most*) ordinary circumstances (or possible worlds) when Q does" or "Q constitutes *prima facie* evidence for P." It is assumed that Q has been previously asserted categorically (by the proponent) or cautiously (by the opponent).

Note: Thus P/Q could be construed as either "P obtains in *most* cases of Q's obtaining" or "P obtains in all standard (or: *typical*) cases of Q's obtaining." (Note that in either case the transitivity relation $P/Q, R/P \vdash R/Q$ will *fail* to hold. This alone blocks the prospect of construing the connection at issue as an implication-relationship.) Given that the function of this relationship is dialectic, the second of these constructions seems more appropriate.

(ii) *Dialectical countermoves:
countermoves to fundamental moves*

(a) *Countermoves to categorical assertion or counterassertion*

The following two responses may be offered by the opponent in reply against $!P$. Either could be rephrased as a question.

1. Challenge or cautious denial

$\dagger \sim P$

NOTE: this is simply the qualified assertion of the contradictory of an asserted thesis. Such a challenge traditionally took the form "Please prove P" (*faveas probare P*).

2. Provisoed-denial

$\sim P/Q$ & $\dagger Q$, for some suitable Q

Note 1 Whenever the proponent has made moves of the form $!X_1, !X_2, \dots, !X_n$, and some thesis Y is a *logical consequence* of these $X_1 (X_1, X_2, \dots, X_n \vdash Y)$, then the opponent can offer a challenge of the form $\dagger \sim Y$ or a provisoed denial of the form $\sim Y/Z \ \& \ \dagger Z$. Thus if $P \vdash Q$, the proponent's categorical assertion $!P$ can be met by the opponent either by a direct challenge $\dagger \sim Q$ or by the provisoed denial $\sim P/Q \ \& \ \dagger Q$. Challenges can thus be issued not only against categorical assertions themselves, but also against their logical consequences.

Note 2 In line with these two possibilities, a formal disputation always opens on one of the following two patterns:

Pattern I		Pattern II	
proponent	opponent	proponent	opponent
(1) $!P$	$\dagger \sim P$	$!P$	$\sim P/Q \ \& \ \dagger Q$
(2) $P/Q \ \& \ !Q$			

(b) Countermoves to cautious assertion or denial

The following responses may be offered to $\dagger P$

1. Categorical counterassertion

$! \sim P$

2. Provisoed counterassertion

$\sim P/Q \ \& \ !Q$, for some suitable Q

NOTE: (1) Because they involve components of the form $!X$, these moves are available only to the proponent.

NOTE: (2) It is necessary to preclude the repetitive—indeed circular, nonprogressive sequence: $!P, \dagger \sim P, !P$.

(c) Countermoves to provisoed assertion or denial

A provisoed assertion P/Q can only be maintained in the context of a nonprovisoed assertion of Q . Beyond attacking these assertions using the aforementioned responses, the following further responses may be offered in reply against P/Q as such:

1. Weak distinction (or weak exception)

$\sim P/(Q \ \& \ R) \ \& \ \dagger(Q \ \& \ R)$, for some suitable R

NOTE (1): Again, this move is available only to the opponent.

NOTE (2): In the special case of $R = Q$ this move comes to $\sim P/Q \ \& \ \dagger Q$. But this cannot be, given our convention that grounding moves of the form X/Y are always "correct," $\sim P/Q$ cannot arise in the face of P/Q . Hence R must represent some genuine qualification to Q , so that the move from Q to $Q \ \& \ R$ constitutes an advance in the discussion.

2. Strong distinction (or strong exception)

$\sim P/(Q \ \& \ R) \ \& \ !(Q \ \& \ R)$

NOTE (1): Again, this move is available only to the proponent.

NOTE (2): The same situation as with Note (2) of case (1) recurs.

(iii) *Dialectical countermoves:
countermoves to complex moves*

(d) *Countermoves to a provisoed denial*

A *provisoed denial* of the form $\sim P/Q \ \& \ \dagger Q$ may be met by the proponent by attacking either of its two components. It can be countered either by attacking the cautious denial $\dagger Q$ along the two lines of (b) above (viz., a categorical counterassertion $!\sim Q$ or a conditionalized counterassertion $\sim Q/(R \ \& \ !R)$), or else by attacking the provisoed assertion $\sim P/Q$. This latter attack can take the additional form of a strong distinction: $P/(Q \ \& \ S) \ \& \ !(Q \ \& \ S)$.

(e) *Countermoves to provisoed counterassertion*

A provisoed counterassertion of the form $\sim P/Q \ \& \ !Q$ may be met by the opponent's attacking either component. It may thus be countered either by attacking the categorical assertion $!Q$ (either by the cautious denial $\dagger \sim Q$ or by the provisoed denial $\sim Q/(R \ \& \ \dagger R)$), or else by attacking the provisoed assertion $\sim P/Q$. This latter attack can take the additional form of a weak distinction: $P/(Q \ \& \ S) \ \& \ \dagger(Q \ \& \ S)$.

(f) *Countermoves to a weak distinction*

A weak distinction of the form $\sim P/(Q \ \& \ R) \ \& \ \dagger(Q \ \& \ R)$ may be met by the proponent's attacking either component. It may thus be countered by attacking $\dagger(Q \ \& \ R)$ —either with a categorical counterassertion $!\sim(Q \ \& \ R)$ or by a provisoed counterassertion of the form $\sim(Q \ \& \ R)/S \ \& \ !S$ —or else by countering $\sim P/(Q \ \& \ R)$ by drawing a strong distinction: $P/(Q \ \& \ R \ \& \ S) \ \& \ !(Q \ \& \ R \ \& \ S)$.

(g) *Countermoves to a strong distinction*

A strong distinction of the form $\sim P/(Q \ \& \ R) \ \& \ !Q \ \& \ R$ may be met by the opponent's attacking either component. It may thus be countered by attacking $!(Q \ \& \ R)$ —either with the challenge $\dagger \sim(Q \ \& \ R)$ or by a provisoed denial of the form $\sim(Q \ \& \ R)/S \ \& \ \dagger S$ —or else by countering $\sim P/(Q \ \& \ R)$ by drawing a weak distinction of the form $P/(Q \ \& \ R \ \& \ T) \ \& \ \dagger(Q \ \& \ R \ \& \ T)$.

*Source: Condensed from N. Rescher, Dialectics,
SUNY Albany Press, 1977, pp. 6 - 15,
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meta-language property of being able to refer to and reformulate in various ways the propositions being discussed.

D. A Partial Formalization of the Melian Dialogue

We now shift to the statements of the debate, framed at least initially in terms of each other's interests. The Athenians argue: "We will now proceed to show you that we are come here in the interest of our empire, and that we shall say what we are now going to say, for the preservation of your country; as we would fain exercise that empire over you without trouble, and see you preserved for the good of us both." This is the main double-barreled thesis. Moreover, their force of arms places the Athenians in the position of the proponent. Our formalization of this argument is given in the first row of Table 2.

In order better to catch the refutation efforts by the Melians, in Table 2 the categorical assertion of the Athenian interest is broken up into a compound categorical assertion, $!(P_1 \ \& \ P_2)$. An argument sketch (line 2) links Melian submission to their own and Athenian interests.

As any member of an oral thesis evaluation committee knows, thesis critics do not have to propose and defend alternative positive propositions or categorical assertions.¹¹ Rescher argues there is a different type of argument appropriate for trying to discredit a thesis, either a cautious or a provisoed denial (see Table 1). The Melians counter argument, line 3 of Table 2, is indeed deferential and modest, appropriate to the circumstances. They cautiously beg to differ: "And how, pray, could it turn out as good for us to serve as it is for you to rule?" Symbolically, this is represented

Table 2

A Provisional Formalization of the Early Arguments
in the Melian Dialogue, according to Rescher's Dialectics

<u>Argument and Rescher's Formalization</u>	<u>Rescher's label</u>
<u>Athenians</u>	
1. $! P = ! (p_1 \ \& \ p_2)$ $p_1 =$ Melian submission is in Athens' interests $p_2 =$ submission is in Melian interest	categorical assertions (i.1)
2. Argument sketch: $p_1 / Q \ \& \ ! Q ; \ p_2 / R \ \& \ ! R$ $Q =$ Athenian imperial interest $R =$ Preservation of Melos	provisoed assertion (i.3)
<u>Melians</u>	
3. $+ (\sim p_1 \ \& \ \sim p_2)$	cautious denial/challenge (ii.a.1)
<u>Athenians</u>	
4. $p_2 / W \ \& \ ! W ; \ p_1 / X \ \& \ ! X$ $W =$ Melos' avoiding the worst $X =$ greater Athenian richness from subject, but preserved Melos	provisoed counterassertion (ii.b.2)
<u>Melians</u>	
5. $\sim p_1 / (Q \ \& \ N) \ \& \ + (Q \ \& \ N)$ $N =$ Melian Neutrality	weak distinction/exception (ii.c.1)
<u>Athenians</u>	
6. $! (Q \ \& \ \sim N) \ \text{or} \ ! \sim (Q \ \& \ N),$ based on $\sim Q / (N \ \& \ S) \ \& \ ! (N \ \& \ S)$ and $Q / (\sim N \ \& \ M) \ \& \ ! (\sim N \ \& \ M)$ $S =$ Athens' subjects see it as weak $M =$ Athens' subjects' recognition of her power	counterassertion and other countermoves to a weak dis- tinction (iii.f)*

* One could interpret the Athenian "your hostility cannot hurt us..." as $\sim p_1 Q$ which logically contradicts (2) above and raises logical questions about the Athenian sincerity. Rescher does allow (p. 66f) constructive negations like the rewrites of $! Q$ in (6) or a reading of this sentence as including $p_1 / (Q \ \& \ N \ \& \ S) \ \& \ ! (Q \ \& \ N \ \& \ S)$.

by $\dagger (\sim P_1 \& \sim P_2)$. The Athenians' reply would be described by Rescher as a provisoed counterassertion to the Melians' cautious denial (challenge): avoid "suffering the worst"; likewise the Athenians would gain a more valuable tributary "by not destroying" the Melians.

Rescher uses "dialectics" to denote the process of disciplined engagement in disputational inquiry (p. x). The discipline, "dialectic," whose rules we have been illustrating, "is to our factual knowledge what logic is to our formal knowledge: a mechanism of rational validation. Because its key inferential relation, provisoed assertion (" \dagger ") is only presumptive, it does not unconditionally support detachment of a conclusion q from $p \& (p \supset q)$. Hence "in dialectical (as opposed to deductive) reasoning an assessment of the cognitive standing of a thesis never leaves its probative origins behind altogether" (p. 8). Thus dialectical reasoning in Rescher specific sense meshes nicely with ordinary, non-apodictic historical inference.

Dialectical arguments can thus go back and choose further to examine and even attempt to redefine the grounds for provisoed inferences. This is exactly what the Melians do, questioning the asserted link between Athenian imperial interest (Q) and P_1 , the original Athenian assertion that Melian submission would be in Athens' interest. The attempt to redefine Athenian interests is a move Rescher calls "weak distinction." "Distinction," he argues, "is the most characteristic and the most creative of dialectical moves" (p. 12).¹² Specifically, they try to argue in favor of being "neutral, friends instead of enemies, but allies of neither side." In line 5, Table 2, a "&" is used to emphasize that the attempted, cautious redefinition of the Athenian imperial interest means a more thorough rewriting of Q than an ordinary, purely logical conjunction would imply.

Unfortunately for the Melians, the Athenian response, one of the provided countermoves against a weak distinction noted on Table 1, points deeper into Athenian imperial motivation: even Joseph Stalin might cringe to say "your hostility cannot hurt us as your friendship will be an argument to our subjects of our weakness, and your enmity of our power." Our multiple translations of this compound counterassertion in line 6 of Table 2 fit at least in part Rescher's rules in Section iv (d) of Table 1; they also provide a case where purely deductive sentential inferences among variant expressions and arguments might be presumed.

D. Implications and Issues

The clear, precise fit of Rescher's possibility rules of formal disputation with Thucydides' text written nearly 2400 years earlier deserves further reflection. On the positive side, this non trivial instantiation of an epistemological orientation should help renew and clarify a classical Western perspective that we do not, even in the contemporary legal profession, readily identify as dialectical. That this factually oriented, practical discipline appears to subsume, without being reducible to, ordinary deductive sentential logic, makes it more interesting for historically oriented analysts than they might previously had thought.¹²

In Chapter 4 of his book, Rescher demonstrates how dialectical logic can consistently¹³ introduce a clear quasi-Hegelian notion of constructive negation that nonmystically transcends the "laws" of double negation, contradiction and excluded middle.¹⁴ This certainly suggests intriguing modes of logical, precise, qualitative and empirical, historical analysis

available in principle since the dawn of scientific history (in the West), but now usually treated as nonsense by those outside the Hegelian or Marxian tradition.

But surely the existence of a consistent, empirical, practical kind of rationality in restating a debate raises questions about Thucydides' use of classical rules of argument in writing parts of his history. In particular, what is the significance of his exceptional use of the dialectical form of argument, characteristic of sophistic disputation, in the Melian Dialogue, but nowhere else?

I accept Jaeger's and Finley's answers to most of these questions as far as they go: Thucydides used the most penetrating tool in his scholarly repertoire to probe deeply into the central conflicts in his whole history.¹⁵ Surely this includes the conflict between might and rationally persuasive justice,¹⁶ the fineness of debate contrasts vividly with Athens' final butchery and enslavement of the Melians. But just as importantly, the Melian dialogue opposes Athens and Sparta at the beginning of their second major period of war -- Melos is populated by Spartan colonists who have what prove to be vain hopes of Sparta's support. And it opposes both Melos' excessive, heroic hopes in the gods (religion and morality?) and unjustifiably cruel Athenian expansion to the Spartan ideals of moderation and expediency. By contrast we must also remember Pericles' exalted defense of Athenian ideals in his funeral oration, coupled with his advocacy of a patient, defensive war strategy. It has escaped no careful reader that the Melian butchery is followed immediately by a new book (VI) beginning Thucydides' dramatic account of Athens' fateful, self-defeating effort to conquer all of Sicily.

II Dialectical Elements in Thucydides' Historiography

Generalizing beyond the Melian dialogue, can we say anything about the principles of Thucydides' historical science, his historiography? Is his use of dialectic anything more than a "superficial layer of sophistic rationalism" (a phrase but not an argument from Jaeger, p. 390)? On these points, agreeing with Finley, I would first argue that Thucydides' most careful historiography "uniquely combined opposite tendencies of dialectic and observation, of generalization and observation..." (Finley introduction, p. xii, my emphasis). Secondly, Thucydides' scientific historiography derives from a dialectical ontology of things that sees war, strife, motion or fire as the revealing, transformative essence of things, dialectically opposed to peace, love, rest and material solidness. Thirdly, Thucydides' ontologically based "scientific history" is essentially dramaturgical. The tragic quality of its literary form, which even Jaeger grudgingly admits, conforms to, and is shaped by, what Burke has called a "dialectics of tragedy." Thus, dialectic or Thucydides is much more than what today, after Plato, we might pejoratively call "sophistic rationality." Dialectics is the ontological ground of his scientific thought, a basic component (along with his rigorous, objective observation) of his historical discipline, and the manner he uses most penetratingly to convey the most important "lessons" contained in the multiple tragedies of The Peloponnesian War.

A. Events Data and Speeches in Thucydides' Historical Science

Thucydides' book certainly distances his aristocratic craft from "the vulgar" who take "little pains... in the investigation of the truth" and "the

lays of a poet displaying the exaggeration of this craft, or by the compositions of the chroniclers that are attractive at truth's expense" (I.21). On many occasions, such as the last sentence of the Melian account, which ends his Book V, there is no direct commentary: "...the Melians surrendered at discretion to the Athenians, who put to death all the grown men whom they took, and the women and children for slaves, and subsequently sent out five hundred colonists and inhabited the place themselves." (V.116).

But before inferring that Thucydides simply wants the "facts," "events" or "data" to speak for themselves, let us consider the interpretive speeches before the facts! Any modern reader is struck by one of the most distinctive features of Thucydides' historiography: the speeches (such as the Melian dialogue) which regularly came before the great actions (or "motions") of his story. In his own words, "my habit has been to make the speakers say what was in my opinion demanded of them by the various occasions, of course adhering as closely as possible to the general sense of what they really said." (I.21). Given his evolving understanding of the significance of various events, and even the likelihood that many of the speeches were written or rewritten after the narrative was nearly finished,¹⁷ it is highly plausible to look for Thucydides' own interpretations and analysis of events and their motives in the contents and oppositions apparent in his speeches.¹⁸

Just such a series of contrasts, noted by many commentators, is the difference between Pericles, Diodotus, Nicias, Cleon and Alcibiades (described by Plutarch, but not Thucydides as the principal mover of the decrees ordering the slaughter of the Melians¹⁹). Does not the Athenian debate over the right response to the Mitylene revolt (a more serious offense than Melos'

neutrality, but earlier in the war, III, 1-50) contrast favorably with Athenian behavior at Melos? Cleon, "the most violent man at Athens, and at that time by far the most powerful with the commons" argued for killing all males and enslaving the others with statements like "if, right or wrong, you determine to rule, you must carry out your principle and punish all the Mitylenians as your interest requires"; but Diodotus recommends "moderate chastisements," killing the oligarchic leaders of the revolt, not potentially pro-Athenian democratic masses, who had indeed turned against the Mitylenian oligarchs. Diodotus carries the day in a close vote with a final appeal that "good policy against an adversary is superior to the blind attacks of brute force" (III, 49). Given Thucydides' clearly stated preference for a much more limited form of democracy (VIII, 97), Cleon's excesses are seen to be linked to a commons that is too large and influential.

Another, even more momentous contrast implicit in Thucydides' speech texts contrasts Pericles and Nicias with Alcibiades, the principal instigator of the fateful Sicilian invasion (and that of Melos).²⁰ Nicias argued against "risking things present for the sake of things future and uncertain," against the "madness of attacking a land which, if they prevail, they cannot hold," and against falling "sick of a fatal passion for what is beyond your reach" (VI. 1-13).²¹ Alcibiades, on the other hand, not long after having helped undermine Nicias' interim peace with Sparta by a spiteful trick (V.44), boasts that his "folly" (or "madness") brought benefits in alliances against Sparta, and asserts that the Sicilian cities are unpatriotic, inhabited by "motley rabbles." He defends his extravagant sending of a record seven chariots to

the Olympic games, scorns Nicias' 'do-nothing policy,' calls for supporting their allies on Sicily, suggests that the initiation of a second front will "humble the pride of the Peloponnesians," and concludes that "a city not inactive by nature could not choose a quicker way to ruin" than inaction: "the safest rule of life is to take one's character and institutions for better and for worse, and to live up to them as closely as one can" (VI, 17-20). The interest of the multitude in the allies' exaggerated reports of great wealth in Sicilian temples and treasuries help him carry the day.

How Alcibiades' remarks contrast with Pericles' speech at the beginning of the war! Like Nicias much later, he was "more afraid of /Athens'/ own blunders than of the enemy's devices," possessing many "reasons to hope for a favorable issue, if /the citizens/ can consent not to combine schemes of fresh conquest with the conduct of the war." (I, 143). On this contrast, which gives an ironic cast to Alcibiades' later remarks, Thucydides himself makes an explicit judgement, not in a speech, but in comments that constitute his encomium for Pericles at his death, two and a half years after the war began.

The correctness of his previsions...became better known by his death. He told them to wait quietly,...to attempt no new conquests.... /Rather,/ what they did was the very contrary, allowing private ambitions...to lead them into projects whose success would only conduce to the honour and advantage of private persons. /Moreover,/ committing even the conduct of state affairs to the whims of the multitude...produced a host of blunders, and amongst them the Sicilian expedition; though this failed not so much through a miscalculation of the power /of the Sicilians/...as through a fault in the senders in not /best helping those sent out/...but choosing rather to occupy themselves with private cabals for the leadership of the commons.../which/ first introduced civil discord at home. (II, 65-66).

These last remarks relate to a the public's love-hate relationship with Alcibiades, whose beauty, passion and daring they idolized, but whom they distrusted as a possible tyrant. He was recalled from Sicily under false suspicions of treason, weakening the war leadership and provoking his defection to the Spartans, whom he then mobilized against Athens. Further civil strife after the disaster of the Sicilian expedition also helped pave the way for Athens' final defeat.

This extensive and rather exceptional quote confirms, then, the interpretation we have made on other grounds, that speeches like the Melian dialogue are to be considered comparatively for their implicit judgmental implications about the motives of the principle actors in Thucydides' history. To use more contemporary language, events data sequences must be supplemented by dialectically interpretive, even judgmental, accounts of the principal actor's reasoning and motivations -- if Thucydides' model historiography is to be revived by contemporary analysts. This view is a far cry from any positivist perspectives calling for mathematical, value-free, historical science.

B. Thucydides' Symbolic Oppositions and Principaled Contradictions

In Rescher's suggestive view, the dialectic of debate exemplified in the Melian dialogue points toward a controversy-based path of knowledge cumulation. We have accepted Jaeger's similar claim that the format of the Melian debate fits a penetrating investigative purpose, augmenting this analysis by stressing the complementary value of both clinically observed event sequences and contrasting speeches from other occasions.

But the dialogue form points further for our understanding: it highlights the contradictions, literally the speakings-against-one-another, articulated in his analytically reconstructed debates, of which only the Melian debate allows frequent interruptions. As we have just seen, the reader is tempted to see the personae of such debates as articulating contradictory principles, viz. might and right in the Melian dialogue. Frequently the debaters are leaders of different city-states, or forces within them.

Briefly, Cornford, Finley, Jaeger and Strauss, among others, have all stressed Thucydides' stylistic or methodological appeal to symbolic, articulated oppositions. Finley (p. xiif) argues that the contrast of Athens to Sparta starts off the book, reaching a climax in Athens' victory at Pylos in Book Four based on the following of a Periclean harassment strategy, and dies away in the Sicilian disaster of Books Six and Seven (with the Melian conference as prologue). Athens is a naval power, based on an extensive commercial economy and political democracy (excluding women and slaves, but including many of the militarily and economically necessary oarsmen); Sparta is a land power, based on helot agriculture, controlled by a conservative oligarchy and a weak, rotating monarchy. Athens "encourages enterprise and initiative; Sparta emphasizes tenacity and tradition."

The second principled contrast, also requested in the speeches and commentary we have reviewed, contrasts "the wisely led democracy of Pericles to the corrupt democracy of his successors,.../first visible in the/ symptoms of mistake and misgovernment in the Mytilenean debate,..., generalized in the fearful analysis of revolution /a brutal Corcyraean class war/...made operative in the refusal of Sparta's offer of peace after Pylos, and reaching

its height in the Melian Dialogue at the end of Book Five and the Sicilian disaster of Book Seven."²²

On the basis of a close but sometimes controversial reading of Thucydides' text, Leo Strauss also stresses major, principled oppositions as a fundamental preoccupation of Thucydides writing: Athens represents "daring, progress, and the art"; Sparta, "moderation and the divine law." The Alcibiades vs. Nicias debate over Sicily we have just summarized contrasts motion and rest, seen this time (very dialectically) as internal reflections of the larger opposition of Athenian activism and Sparta's relative passiveness.

Moreover, there is the opposition between the Hobbesian "original and universal insecurity" and the later "security, power, and wealth" resulting for some in "Greekness, the union of freedom and love of beauty." The Greek vs. barbarian theme Strauss sees in the lavish Alcibiades-Nicias expedition to Sicily, with its parallels in Herodotus' history of Xerxes' fated attack on all of Greece (p. 205). Virtually the same critical characterization of Athenian remarks in the Melian dialogue was made by a classical commentator Dionysius, cited at length by Cornford: "Such words would be appropriate to an oriental monarch addressing Greeks." Surely this opposition is a condemnatory one.

Strauss puts some of the above oppositions into a partial hierarchy of dialectical distinctions:

Just as humanity divides itself into Greeks and barbarians, Greekness in its turn has two poles, Sparta and Athens. The fundamental opposition of motion and rest returns on the level of Greekness; Sparta cherishes rest whereas Athens cherished motion.

But even more telling is Strauss' argument:

/In/ the Peloponnesian War...one sees Greeks at their peak in motion; one sees the beginning of the descent. The peak of Greekness is the peak of humanity. The Peloponnesian War and what it implies exhausts the possibilities of man.... All human life moves between the poles of war and peace, and between the roles of barbarism and Greekness. By studying the Peloponnesian War Thucydides grasps the limits...the nature of all human things. It is for this reason that his work is a possession for all times. (p. 157).

This truly remarkable passage suggests first that substantial oppositions grounded in human nature limit or exhaust the possibilities of historical observation. The thought is at once dialectical -- in its revelatory search for fundamental oppositions -- and grammatical -- in its suggestion of a grammar of motives, or of opposed organizing principles spanning or generating the space of possible human political activity. The notion of Thucydides' science thus conveyed remarkably parallels what Radnitzky calls the continental European hermeneutic-dialectical approach; citing Marx, Freud and Chomsky, Habermas would similarly distinguish between "reconstructive-research" (like Thucydides according to Strauss) and empirical-analytic science (eg. game theorists, causal modelers, FORTRAN simulators, or optimal controllers likely to take my beginning quote from Jaeger as self-legitimizing.)²⁵

If the opposed generative principles of Greekness and barbarism, war (motion) and peace (rest), etc., delimit human possibilities, they also show why history contains both novelty and a tendency to repeat itself. It should be clear that Thucydides the Athenian, proud of Pericles' "school of Hellas," but equally sensitive to and appreciative of Spartan "moderation," certainly preferred "Greek" to "barbarian" conduct. Both a Hobbesian state of nature

and more civilized behavior exist within human potentialities. Thus, rather than advocating the cynical realism of "might vs. right," we may interpret Thucydides' own view of human nature and politics as closer to E.H. Carr's variant: Realism without Idealism is sterile; Idealism without Realism is utopian.²⁶

C. The Ontological Foundations of Thucydides' Oppositions

If our history, including its major turning point in or just after the Melian dialogue, is to be seen in terms of such fundamental human oppositions, what are we to make of their substance or "nature"? Why, furthermore, would one see the essence of human things in a single case history?

Do not the oppositions of the previous section derive at least in part from Heraclitus' dialectical ontology, his theory of change and opposed substances? The fit with Heraclitus (and later presocratic philosophers) is too deep to ignore. Consider a partial summary of Heraclitus' views from Diogenes Laertius:

Fire is the basic element.... All things came-to-be by conflict between opposites... The All is limited, ...alternatively born from fire and dissolved into fire... That phase of the cycle which involves a coming-to-be of things is called war and strife, while that which involves destruction by fire is called concord and peace.²⁷

Almost contemporaneously with Thucydides, the Pythagoreans linked the One and the many in terms of oppositions between the limited and the unlimited, rest and motion, good versus evil, odd vs. even, unity vs. plurality.²⁸

I would suggest that Thucydides' avoidance of the term for "essence," does not mean he avoids appeals to nature, to arguments about necessity, character

and compulsion concerning the causes of the war. Although Thucydides' rationalism and his sophisticated skepticism argue against attributing to him precise or unchanging ontological doctrines, these substantial roots of his mode of analysis in the "metaphysics" of his period is too strong to ignore.

Perhaps the most adequate modern reconstruction of Thucydides' ontology is a dramatist one, in the sense of Kenneth Burke's A Grammar of Motives (see note 18). The search for motivational explanations, in Thucydides' speeches, although never finally adequate, nonetheless invokes 'necessary' links to basic human characteristics, and seeks enlightenment in the interrelationships of human acts, scenes, agencies and purposes. "Dialectical substance... derives its character from the systematic contemplation of the antinomies attendant upon the fact that we necessarily define a thing in terms of something else" (p. 33). The many ironies of his dialogues may well be grounded in a dialectical concept of substance linking but contrasting one motivational element in terms of another.

Here are the compulsions of inner nature: Athens' and Alcibiades' search for hegemonial power, wisdom, glory and wealth. Sparta is equally human, but more conservative and collectivist in its resistance to "the growth of the power of Athens." "The alarm which this inspired in Lacedaemon, made war inevitable." (I.24). The Pelopponesian War was necessary, then, not because it could not have been avoided, but because the events taking place there substantially reflected the underlying characters of its principal antagonists.

D. Thucydides' Dialectics of Tragedy

At last we come to a central argument of this paper: Thucydides' historical science, his study of power politics if you will, is essentially dramatical. Specifically it is a dramatic collection of tragedies and comedies, written with the constraint of being objectively true to historical facts and to human nature. More technically put, his use of dialectical substance, "the overall category of dramatism," conforms to the dramatist's search for the roots of human action in the terms of verbal action.²⁹

Early on, we noted the distinctions between Thucydides' naturalistic narratives and his probing, interpretative speeches. "When men are treated in terms of other things, men may even be said to speak for the dumb objects /or forces/ of nature." Burke then goes on to characterize his dialectical conception of tragedy (and science):

...Galileo speaks of experimental testing as an 'ordeal.'
Stated broadly, the dialectical (agonistic) approach to knowledge is through the act of assertion, whereby one suffers or calls forth as counter-assertions the kind of knowledge that is the reciprocal of his act. This is the process embodied in tragedy, where the agent's action involves a corresponding passion, and from the sufferance of the passion /by the original agent or the empathetic observer/ there arises an understanding of the act, an understanding that transcends the act. In this final state of tragic vision, intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are merged...
/A/Although purely circumstantial factors participate...they bring about a representative kind of accident...that belongs with the agent's particular kind of character. (Burke, p. 38).

How does this dramatic conception of tragedy apply to Thucydides' work in general, and the Melian dialogue in particular? Several strands of argument point in the same direction.

First, Leo Strauss emphasizes in his commentary Thucydides' effort to prove the Peloponneisan War a greater one than all previous ones experienced by the Greeks, eg. their war against Xerxes and the Persians. How does the present war qualify for its special status? Thucydides is quite clear: because of the exceptional level of earthquakes, plagues and other 'natural' calamities associated with it, and, less religiously, because of the magnitude of "misfortunes" associated with it. (I.24). Or, as Strauss says, the "war surpassed the Persian War in regard to human suffering," caused (intrinsically) by men and (extrinsically) by nature. (p. 150). But how does this answer make sense? I suggest it does in terms of the Greek proverb at the beginning of this paper: "the suffered is the learned."

Living through the history, showing the passions of the major players (especially as their motives are revealed in Thucydides' carefully constructed speeches), we learn valuable lessons from it, war, as a "violent teacher" (Strauss, p. 162) instructs us. Recall Alcibiades' remarks about warlike Athens, following her nature, her true character, attempting to conquer all of Sicily. Like Thucydides, Athens and the reader "suffer" the kind of knowledge resulting from this act. As a "representative anecdote" (Burke's phrase) the Melian episode reveals the blindness of "tyrannical Eros," of blind Athenian Hybris and its insolent defiance of the gods. Besides paralleling Herodotus' moral-laden history of Xerxes over-extension, it instantiates the Aeschylean mythic notion that God "uses the tragic passions themselves as agents of punishment." (Cornford, p. 234). The dramatic irony of the Athenians' criticism of the Melians' blind hope is devastating. At the fateful turning

point of the war, "The dialogue on Melos separates the Spartan comedy from the Athenian tragedy."³⁰

The most dramatic piece of evidence, I have saved until last. It makes the greatest sense once the clear scientific character of the Dialogue's analysis has been accepted -- with the proviso that Thucydides, alive in an era when dialectics was the accepted methodology of scientific investigation, but not an inhabitant of our own post-Newtonian world. At the same time that it is a turning point in Thucydides' entire 'scientific history,' the Melian dialogue is pure drama. To quote Cornford, at the point in the Melian conference where the dialogue begins, "the historian changes from narrative to full dramatic form, prefixing as in a play, the names -- 'Athenians,' 'Melians' -- to the speeches."³¹ The dialogue was in fact, a principle feature of Greek tragedy of the period, as practiced by Euripides and others. By Thucydides' shifting into this form, Cornford argues, the dramatic ironies of this pivotal turning point are highlighted. These concern both the blind Hybris, Eros, insolence and pre-Christian Hope infecting both the Athenians and the Melians.

It turns out, then, that the Melian dialogue is a key scene in a classical morality play about might and right, not simply an eternal statement of the truths of Realpolitik. Blind, insolent, arrogant, lustful Athens will soon pay for her failings with the lives of many of her citizens and eventually her independence as well. Like the most thoughtful modern Realists, unlike behavioral positivists, Thucydides dialectically joins both normative and scientific investigations pointed toward the suffering-based "learning" of moral lessons. Surely the oppressive hybris of those "strong" who "do what

they must" is one such historical lesson; the importance of empowering the weak as a positive step toward genuine truth-seeking political debate can also be derived from a contextualized Melian dialogue as another.

III An Epilogue on the Appropriation of Historical Classics

Somehow an epilogue, rather than a conclusion, seems appropriate at this point. The major theses of this paper now having been stated and argued, it is perhaps appropriate to reflect more generally on how different traditions of research try to appropriate classical writers and events for their own ends.

From a reading of more commentaries on Thucydides and the Melian Dialogue than I have cited so far, it is clear that the practice is legion. Hobbes' translation suggests a vindication of monarchy and the authoritarian politics of fear and security. Toynbee's A study of History sees the Peloponnesian War as a downward turning point in Hellenic-Roman civilization.³² The Melian dialogue highlights the spread of the disease of militarism, so fateful some years later, both to the Spartans, the Macedonians and even the Romans. Radical peace researchers can find considerable evidence in Thucydides reflecting the feminist claim that aggressive, narcissistic, male chauvinist Athens reflects not all of human nature, despite its many Western imitators, but a peculiar and flawed Greek culture, vastly different from, and inferior to, other extant cultures.³³ Marxian analyses bring out many features of the special ways in which Greek and Roman conflicts reflect the underlying slave mode of production.³⁴ The connections of Spartan oligarchy and Athenian democracy with the political economic base of these systems are cogently argued by Cornford himself, who criticizes Thucydides for neglecting

the economically expansionist Megarian decrees.³⁵ Even the conservative Leo Strauss emphasizes the "grave troubles" due to Sparta's Helot-based political economy: "the Helots made her moderate."³⁶

Thucydides himself was clearly engaged in debates about the virtue of the Athenians and the Spartans, of Pericles, Alcibiades and others. Strauss finds texts supporting the interpretation of a pro-Spartan shift in Thucydides' judgements in the war after Melos.³⁷ More interestingly, Cornford (and many others)³⁸ see Thucydides as very negatively judging Cleon and Alcibiades, while Strauss finds sentences supporting a partial vindication or rehabilitation of Alcibiades, especially after Athens shifts to the highly limited democracy of the Four Thousand (VIII.87), Thucydides preferred political system. Cornford and Strauss may both be right.

To reflect for just a moment in possible lessons for the present, I suggest the following. Surely those who, like Karl Deutsch, saw Athens' self-destructive democratic imperialism far away from home as a more valid precedent against US involvement in Vietnam than the less applicable Manchuria and Munich pro-involvement precedents of the 1930s were right. More worrisome are the parallels with the US-USSR competition of today, suggested by the collectivist, authoritarian, "anti-imperial," Helot-based militarism of Sparta arrayed against a more democratic and individualistic but also slave-based, tyrannical and economically expansionist Athens. Happy endings may not be insight if militarism continues to rise. Put less pessimistically, a variety of structural sources of aggressive expansionism need to be transformed, if serious conflicts are not going to result.³⁹

Should we be against such efforts? I think not. Rather, we should adopt and testably utilize improvable standards of accuracy, epistemological relevance and contextual appropriateness in trying to learn precedentially lessons from the past. Thus we too may participate in the engaged dramatic, but relatively objective and analytical kind of historical political analysis that Thucydides was engaged in. Like the Athenians at Sparta before the war, or the relatively peaceful relations between Athens and its allies and even its subjects at that time, we can scientifically appeal to dialectical judgements, relatively unconstrained argument and counterargument, "impartial laws.../and/ differences settled by arbitration" (I. 76-77). We can join different sides of the inner contradictions of barbarian Greeks, and enlist Thucydides' or Euripides' insights in our own political-scholarly debates. By dialectically engaging ourselves in the endless, passionate search for objectively accurate, and motivationally superior historical accounts we relive the tragedies and comedies of the past and help create those that will be our own future.

NOTES

1. This quote is from n.53, p. 488, of W. Jaeger's Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture, Vol. I, tr. G. Highet, Oxford University Press, New York, 1976. The reference is to Thucydides' famous argument (I, 23, 6) about necessary laws of state behavior: "The growth of the power of Athens, and the alarm which this inspired in Lacedaemon, made war inevitable." Thucydides, The Peloponnesian War, Crowley translation, introduced by J.H. Finley, Jr., The Modern Library, 1951, New York, p. 15. It is customary to refer to such citations in terms of the Books, paragraphs and perhaps the sentences in the standardized Greek text. Hobbes' Thucydides, edited and introduced by R. Schlatter, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, 1975, translates this passage using the mere dialectical metaphor of a quarrel, and his characteristic concern with fear: "And the truest quarrel, though least in speech, I conceive to be the growth of the Athenian power; which putting the Lacedaemonians into fear necessitated the war." Unless otherwise noted, I shall cite the Crowley translation in my text.
2. Kenneth Burke, A Grammar of Motives, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969, p. 39f. Quite apposite to Jaeger's quote is Burke's claim that "We can...catch glimpses of a relation between dialectics and /Platonic/ mathematics...in the fact that mathemata means both things learned...and the mathematical sciences...." Burke opposes a pathema (passive condition or suffering) to a poiema (an action, deed, poem) and restates the classic proverb "poiemata, pathemata, mathemata, suggesting that the act organizes the opposition (brings us to the fore whatever factors resist or modify the act), that the agent thus 'suffers' this opposition, and as he leaves to take the oppositional motives into account, widening his terminology accordingly, he has arrived at a higher order of understanding." (*ibid.*) This perspective I take to be a deeper vision of the potentialities of mathematical political history than that suggested by Jaeger's quote.
3. Martin Wight, Power Politics, edited by Hedley Bull and Carsten Holbraad, Holmes and Meier, New York, 1978, p. 24. Wight goes on to cite General Marshall's 1947 Princeton speech doubting "seriously whether a man can think with full wisdom and with deep convictions regarding certain of the basic issues of today who has not at least reviewed in his mind the period of the Peloponnesian War and the fall of Athens." (Department of State Bulletin, Vol. 16, p. 591).
4. Jaeger, *op. cit.*, n. 3, p. 483, argues Hecataeus was the first Greek taking "the scientific and rational approach to the facts of human life as the essence of history," while Herodotus' gets the credit for introducing "the religious and dramatic element" into history.
5. The phrase 'scientific historian' appears in many commentaries including Jaeger's and Leo Strauss, "On Thucydides' War of the Peloponnesians and the Athenians," pp. 139-242 of his The City and Man, The University of

Chicago Press, Chicago, 1978. With help from A.J. Ayer and G. Radnitzsky, I have delineated the meaning of logical positivist and dialectic views of social science in my "Learning About Political and Social Science," forthcoming in a book edited by Sheila Mann and Donald Stokes. See also the discussion of Lenin's reinterpretation of Hegel's dialectics as discussed in my unpublished "Dialectical Foundations of Global Disparities."

It should be added that I do not think that Morgenthau, Wight or Carr are amoral or cynical in their own sophisticated and prudent versions of Realism; nonetheless a superficial reading of their work has been used by many to justify such positions.

6. This observation is made in John Finley's 'The Origins of Thucydides Style,' in Harvard Studies in Classical Philology 50 (1939), p. 35 ff, and discussed at length in a less formalized way than mine in his Thucydides, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1942, p. 250 ff.
7. State University of New York Press, Albany, 1977.
8. My reasoning backward from Aristotle's slightly later texts is necessitated by the nonavailability of most relevant pre-socratic texts. His writings in the Rhetoric, the Metaphysics, the Topics and the Organon collection appear both to systematize and extend previous philosophical practice on such matters. Specifically, the cited characterization of dialectics, from Aristotle's Prior and Posterior Analytics, edited and translated by John Warrington Everyman's Library, Dutton, New York, 1964, p. 83, appears in a way that assumes common prior knowledge of its relevance. Since some translators, e.g. W.D. Ross in the Oxford edition, refer to dialectics as reasoning "from probable premises," to avoid misunderstanding by the parametrically inclined statistician, I give Aristotle's definition of the probable: "A probability is a generally approved proposition, something known to happen, or to be for the most part thus and thus" (ibid., p. 158). Dialectics is thus distinguished from reasoning from premises that are necessarily (and universally) true. As we shall see, this conception of the beginning of dialectical arguments conforms nicely to Rescher's various initial assertions and denials in his dialectical logic.
9. C. Hamblin, Fallacies, Methuen, London, 1970, offers a somewhat different treatment of the classical logic of philosophical debate and argument, but it too has the property of being more inclusive than, and reflective about, statements in ordinary sentential calculus.
10. Beacon Press, 1971.

11. This is not the time to discuss the history of formal disputation according to such rules, or to argue whether legal training in such argument forms better prepares governmental activists than a course in standard formal logic or several semesters of multivariate statistics. But it is worth noting that since Cicero, a fairly standardized body of legal-political argument forms (both rhetorical and dialectical) have existed within the legal profession. The reader might also reflect historically for a moment that Luther's 95 theses and Galileo's arguments for the Copernican system are two of the more important instantiations of traditional dialectical forms. Until the 20th Century, I am told, all Ph.D. students in German universities had to defend their theses in Latin, thus preserving rules very much like those in our brief excerpt from Rescher's book. The extent to which reflectivity was encouraged by role reversal requirements in certain standard debate formats is also of interest to Rapaport-inspired peace researchers, but will also not be pursued here (Rescher, Chapter 1, especially p. 8f).
12. Rescher's evidential note to this claim (n. 13, p. 12) is worth repeating: "Recognition of the central role of distinctions in the dialectical enterprise -- based on the division (dihairesis) of key concepts -- goes back at least to the Socrates of Plato's Phaedrus and is doubtless present in the theory and practice of the early Sophists" (as we now see!).
13. Rescher suggests (p. 13f) that his formal dialectics accommodates nicely with classical quantitative logic, Aristotle's formal syllogistic reasoning, modified to include an "all-things-being-equal" operator. Aristotle himself argues that syllogistic principles apply both to demonstration and dialectic, Prior and Posterior Analytics, p. 153ff.
14. The Melian weak distinction just offered would be a simple example of what Rescher means by constructive negation. "When P/Q is succeeded by $\sim P/(Q\&R)$, there is not just the displacement...from P to $\sim P$, but also the refinement (amplification, improvement) from Q to (Q & R)...: it advances the discussion and shifts the issue onto a more sophisticated ground" (p. 66).
15. This claim which my own reading confirms, is made and rationalized by Jaeger, op. cit., as follows. In the Melian dialogue, Thucydides "uses the dialogue form -- a sophistic device which occurs nowhere else in his book -- to show the two opponents parrying argument by argument...and to eternalize the painful conflict of might and right in all its inescapable necessity. It is impossible to doubt that he composed this private debate...with entire freedom of intervention, to express the conflict of two unreconcilable principles...the right of the stronger through the law of nature...and the forces of religion and morality....The very nature of the form he chooses to expand the conflict shows that it can never reach a final decision, for the strength of the sophistic debates...lay not in

finding the solution to a problem but in stating both sides as clearly as possible." (p. 401f). I would add that Greek judgement in such arguments did, however, look regularly for the better side of the argument.

16. Leo Strauss, op. cit., makes the important supplementary point that justice concerning war-initiation depended importantly in the Greek mind on the ideal of judicious disputation and/or arbitration. Thus, according to Strauss (p. 172), Sparta is implicitly blamed by Thucydides (I.77) as having started the Pelopponesian War without having brought the issues between Sparta and Athens to judgement, as was required by their previous oaths and treaties.
17. Jaeger (op. cit., pp. 342-7, and notes) argues that some of the most realist-type remarks in Thucydides' text, whether his own or attributed by him to others, came from his knowledge of the fall of Athens, at the end of the war, and his observation of the corruptness and brutality of subsequent Spartan rule.
18. In a book about possible answers to "What is involved when we say what people are doing and why they are doing it?," Kenneth Burke argues that "any complete statement about motives will offer some kind of answers to these five questions: What was done (act), when or where it was done (scene), who did it (agent), how he did it (agency), and why (purpose)." (p. xv). Burke studies the "inner relations" of these necessary components of motivational attribution, "hoping to make clear the ways in which dialectical and metaphysical issues necessarily figure in the subject of motivation." (p. xxiii, a view I shall discuss further below). He then asserts a strong version of a distinction between the purposes and contributions of Thucydides' speeches and his narratives: "Our speculations, as we interpret them, should show that the subject of motivation is a philosophical one, not ultimately to be solved in terms of empirical science." (p. xxiii, A Grammar of Motives).
19. After mentioning that Alcibiades had selected a woman from among the Melian prisoners and raised their common child, Plutarch goes on: "Even this the Athenians would have called kindhearted; only that he had been chiefly responsible, by supporting the decree, for the massacre of all the adult male inhabitants of Melos." Plutarch, Alcibiades, p. xvi. Quoted and discussed in Francis M. Cornford, Thucydides Mythistoricus, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1971 (originally 1907), p. 186.
20. Since Thucydides does not mention Alcibiades' role in shaping the Melian massacre, one can better contrast Athenian degeneration as a whole (in voting the related policy) with Athens' early claims to moderation and justice in its relations with others (I.76) or with Pericles' funeral

oration: "In generosity we are equally singular, acquiring our friends by conferring not by receiving favors." (II.40). The ironic contrast between this view and the Athenian self-justification at Melos is of course patent; it could have been argued by the Melians, but Thucydides chose rather to leave the articulation of this contrast to his attentive reader. Frances Ford Coppola's Apocalypse Now offers similar contrasts concerning American kindness and cruelty in Vietnam.

21. This interpretation of the contrast between Alcibiades, Nicias and Pericles is very much inspired by Cornford's amazing book, especially Chapters X-XII. In the above paragraphs, I use Cornford's Greek translations, not those from the Finley-Crawley translation.
22. The main oppositions in this paragraph, as well as the quoted phrases, came from Finley's introduction, op. cit., especially p. xiii.
23. The major points attributed to Strauss in this and the next several paragraphs all came from Strauss, op. cit., especially pp. 145-162, 192-209. In the important (and more genuine?) debate at Lacedaemon just before the war, the Corinthians offer contrasts between Athens and Sparta (I.68ff) not unlike those mentioned by Finley and Strauss.
24. Cornford, op. cit., p. 176.
25. See Alker, "Learning About Social and Political Science," forthcoming, for a more detailed discussion of "logical empiricism" and "hermeneutics-dialectics." Habermas' scientific discussion of the classical mode of political theory in his Theory and Practice, Beacon Press, Boston, 1973, is an extremely relevant cite on the points in the text, as is Habermas' Communication and the Evolution of Society, Beacon Press, Boston, 1979, translated and with an introduction by Thomas McCarthy, especially McCarthy's introduction and Habermas' first chapter on "What is Universal Pragmatics?"
26. I have in mind E.H. Carr's The Twenty-Year Crisis, 1919-1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations, Macmillan, London, 1940 and 1946, where a view similar to my maxim is argued at length.
27. The Presocratics, Edited by Philip Wheelwright, The Odyssey Press, New York, 1966, p. 82.
28. Ibid, p. 214ff. A related view, reflecting Lenin's borrowing from the classics and Mao's own indebtedness to Lenin, defines "Dialectics in the proper sense, is the study of contradiction in the essence of things." The universality of contradiction appears in such oppositions as plus and minus, action and reaction, electric charges, the combination and association of atoms, and the class struggle. See The Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung, Volume I, Foreign Language Press, Peking, 1967, "On Contradiction," p. 311, p. 317.

29. These quotes are from Burke, op. cit., p. 33. See Charles Roig's Symboles et Sociétés, Laing, Zurich, and Las Vegas, 1977, for a lucid introduction to and systematization of Burke's approach.
30. Strauss, op. cit., p. 225. On p. 227, note 39. Strauss sketches an elaborated interpretation along the lines indicated. Comparisons with Cornford's remarkably similar analysis (uncited by Strauss) would be worth another paper. I content myself here to stick with Burke's terminology, and to quote Strauss: "the core of the work is the two sequels 'Funeral Speech-Plague' and 'Melian Dialogue-Sicilian Disaster.'"
31. Cornford, op. cit., relying heavily on Dionysius, p. 175ff, gives a much more extensive analysis of the structure of the Dialogue itself, as well as Thucydides' dramatic reconstruction of the originally intended narrative form. The treatment of Cleon, the victory at Pylos, the non-mentioning of Alcibiades' role in the Melian decrees all fit into his more elaborate conception of Thucydides' dramatic craftsmanship.
32. Arnold J. Toynbee, A Study of History, Oxford University Press, London, various dates. See the index for specific references. That a study of Spartan militarism led to Toynbee's entire project is especially worth noting.
33. See Eli Sagan, The Lust to Annihilate: A Psychoanalytic Study of Violence in Ancient Greek Culture, Psychohistory Press, New York, 1979, Chapter 9 and the relevant writings of Philip Slater. Strauss, op. cit., catches a small part of this critique with his remarks: "What was called manliness took the place of moderation" (p. 147); and (paraphrasing Pericles): "that wife is best who is least mentioned for good or ill in male society" (p. 195).

That feminist critiques of Greek male culture were made during the Peloponnesian War is clear from a reading of Aristophanes' Lysistrata (c. 415 B.C.) which has the women of both Sparta and Athens withholding their sexual favors and dictating peace terms to end the war. Regarding other plays, by Euripides, Sagan argues, after mentioning Athens' genocide against Melos, that "One of his purposes was to unmask the slogan of political necessity that had been used at Athens...as the banner under which the grossest cruelty was committed... Their only choice given the illusion that the progress of reason had "left people free to choose any life they pleased"/ was either to reject heroic violent values and move forward morally or to continue the sins of their forefathers and defend their actions with the...new: facile argumentation." (pp. 138-141).

34. Perry Anderson, Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism, New Left Books and Humanities Press, London, 1974, is the single most important citation I know. An entirely appropriate comment from a Marxian theory of the Greek warrior/slave state would be to note that Thucydides' preferred rulers -- the 4,000 -- were those who could provide their own armour!, presumably paid for by slave-generated surplus value.

35. Cornford, op. cit., Introduction and Part I. I have downplayed the Cornford-Busolt-Gomme discussions of the Megarian decrees and Athenian economic/tributary expansionism, primarily because of my interest in Thucydides' dialectical logic. That such behavior fits nicely some variants of Marxian or neomercantilist political economy, I have little doubt; but note also the reformulated view of such expansionism suggested by lateral pressure theory (note 39)..
36. Strauss, op. cit.
37. Ibid., p. 145ff, p. 225 ff.
38. Cornford, op. cit., especially Chapters 7 and 11. I resist adding up commentators critically or favorably disposed toward Alcibiades. But I must demure from Strauss' generally pro-Alcibiades position, at least to demure from Strauss' interpretations of Thucydides' kind words about the predemocratic period (VI. 54) as implying "there is no conflict between tyranny and piety" (p. 196)!
39. I am thinking here of Richard Ashley's The Modern Security Problematique, Pinter Publishers, London, 1980, forthcoming. I expect Thucydides on demographic expansionism might also fit the theory. Extending forward Choucri and North's study of lateral pressures leading to World War I. Ashley shows how the USA, then the USSR, and now the People's Republic of China, have evidenced similar conflict-generating tendencies.