

“Every Form of Death”: Thucydides on Death’s Political Presence

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Death looms large in Thucydides’ (c. 460-400 BC) *History*.¹ As a political historian whose subject is the twenty-seven-year war (431-404 BC) between the Peloponnesians and the Athenians, Thucydides necessarily depicts and analyzes widespread death and destruction. Yet it would be more precise to say that Thucydides chose to “write up” the war not least because of its unmatched destructiveness.² In Thucydides’ own words: “never had so many cities been captured and destroyed . . . never had so many people been driven from their countries or killed, either in the war itself or as a result of civil strife.”³ Thucydides eagerly attends to the atrocities and calamities of warfare, which are otherwise sidelined, to a great extent, in the history of political thought. Thucydides’ attention to war, suffering, and political collapse may lead the reader to wonder why Thucydides does not, like other classical political thinkers, offer a vision of the flourishing individual and city. Where are the characteristic discussions of the best regime, the best practicable regime, the best way of life for the individual, and the definition of justice that we find in Plato’s *Republic* and *Laws* and Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics*?

In my view, Thucydides anticipates later anti-utopian thinkers, who self-consciously refuse to take their bearings from imaginations or professions of the political best, focusing instead on the operation of efficacious power. Among these are Niccolò Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes, and Friedrich Nietzsche, themselves readers and admirers of Thucydides.⁴ Nietzsche, for example, casts Thucydides as the original political realist, the first political thinker to theorize power by itself, untainted by the delusional hopes for justice that mark Platonic and Biblical

thought—and all thought derived from those two sources. According to Nietzsche, if you feel the pull of utopian longings within yourself, then you need a certain bitter medicine—namely, to read Thucydides' *History*.⁵ Thucydides may be the most thoroughgoing realist of all, since he, unlike Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Nietzsche, does not write to remake the political world.

Thucydides foregrounds death, then, because the cultivation of judgment requires accurate understanding of the whole of political life, including its dark side. Rather than trade pleasing stories for approval or influence in the manner of a poet such as Homer, a demagogue such as the Athenian leader Cleon, or a fabulist historian such as Herodotus, Thucydides proclaims that his war narrative will be both “accurate” and “useful” and “a possession for all time” as a result.⁶ A former Athenian statesman himself, exiled in 424 BC for failing to prevent the revolt of Amphipolis, an Athenian tributary ally, Thucydides offers would-be political leaders among his readers an unvarnished account of political life that lingers on the level of brute facts and refuses to cover over unpleasantness or complexity.⁷ In fact, Thucydides devotes himself precisely to the depiction and analysis of calamities that appear to be as horrific and as fatal as they are difficult to explain in full—for example, the plague at Athens and civil war at Corcyra. In sum, Thucydides eschews moralism and systematicity because he aims to cultivate a kind of judgment that is attuned in a quasi-tragic mode to unexpected disasters—to the many forms of death and destruction—that shape political life. This Thucydidean education also checks the tendency of Athenian citizens, if not of all citizens, toward self-aggrandizement and self-justification by highlighting the many ignominious deaths that the Athenians cause and suffer themselves in the course of the war.

Pericles' Funeral Oration

Yet the most well-known passage in the *History*—the Funeral Oration delivered by Thucydides’ Pericles—might seem to be anti-tragic, even utopian. Not only is this speech the most famous in Thucydides’ text, but it is also the most famous speech to have survived from classical antiquity, at least in the judgment of the classicist Paul Woodruff.⁸ As many scholars have observed, in fact, one can hear echoes of the Funeral Oration in Lincoln’s “Gettysburg Address.”⁹ Pericles’ speech has also informed philosophical defenses of political action in the Twentieth Century—in the work of Hannah Arendt, for example. Following Arendt, at least initially, we can approach the speech as a beautiful defense of political action in general and of Athenian democratic citizenship in particular.¹⁰

According to Pericles, democracy means rule by the people, for the people.¹¹ In Athens, all citizens are equal before the law; the outcomes of lawsuits do not hinge on social status. Although many offices in Athens are filled by sortition, when the Athenians appoint office-holders through election (as they do their generals, for example), they forget about wealth and think only of the citizen’s virtue.¹² Pericles also emphasizes the idea of freedom—the freedom to participate in public life and to live as one pleases in private life.¹³ This freedom is compatible with lawfulness: for all their liberality, the Athenians fear breaking the law.¹⁴ To hear Pericles tell it, Athens squares the political circle by integrating into the democracy practices and virtues usually held to be irreconcilable: equality and meritocracy, reverence for the law and freedom to pursue pleasure in private, the activities of speech and those of action. The “both/and” syntax of Pericles’ speech—the Athenians have both this *and* this—achieves its peak in a well-known line: “We are lovers of nobility with restraint, and lovers of wisdom without any softening of character.”¹⁵ Athens has both philosophers and warriors.

But how, exactly, does participation in the life of the city benefit the individual Athenian? In Pericles' own words: "In sum, I say that our city as a whole is a lesson for Greece, and that each of us presents himself as a self-sufficient individual, disposed to the widest possible diversity of actions, with every grace and great versatility."¹⁶ According to Pericles, democratic Athens is *kallipolis*, the beautiful and best city, a regime that cultivates the full humanity of its citizens and promotes their flourishing. Athenian democratic politics educates its citizens to virtue—in particular, deliberative rationality and courage.¹⁷ The Athenians learn how to think for themselves through deliberating in the assembly; and they courageously carry out what they plan.¹⁸ On the one hand, we can say that Pericles is not simply boasting: in their speech at Sparta in Book 1, the Corinthians had presented the Athenians as a whirlwind of thought and action—in contrast to the Spartans, whose ignorance the Spartan King Archidamus had freely admitted and defended.¹⁹ The kinetic energy of the Athenians arises out of their unique combination of daring and deliberation. Thus, the commemoration of death is an occasion to reflect on the distinctive virtues of the Athenian people.

On the other hand, the Funeral Oration strikes a triumphalist note at odds with its dismal subject and circumstances. Pericles issues a clarion call to his fellow citizens: die for Athens, and you, like Achilles, will win "praise . . . that will never grow old" and have as your monument "all the earth," especially "the unwritten record of the mind . . . even in foreign lands, better than any gravestone."²⁰ But whereas Homer's Achilles agonizes over his tragic choice between a long and undistinguished life or a short and glorious one, Pericles insists that the choice is easy.²¹ "Any man of intelligence will hold that death, when it comes unfelt to a man at full strength and with hope for his country, is not so bitter as miserable defeat for a man grown soft."²² And whereas Herodotus' Solon had advised the Lydian King Croesus to consider no man happy until he is

dead (on account of the many reversals of fortune that beset human beings ruled by jealous gods), Pericles suggests that the individual Athenian, by choosing to die in battle on behalf of Athens, cuts off the possibility of future reversals and secures a good end for himself.²³

Pericles' promise, more precisely, is that democratic Athens will save the individual from oblivion by incorporating him into the collective greatness of the city. So choiceworthy is death in battle for Athenians that Pericles insists that such a death comes "unperceived" or "unfelt."²⁴ Nor should family members feel much grief for their lost sons, husbands, and brothers: to the parents of the dead, Pericles offers not condolences, but rather "good cheer."²⁵ These discordant remarks are accentuated by the end of the speech—Pericles' command that the women of Athens stop lamenting, that they be silent and absent.²⁶ Perhaps most disturbing of all, Pericles commands his audience, to "look . . . at the power our city shows in action every day, and so become lovers (*erastai*) of Athens."²⁷ Is it really appropriate that citizens redirect their sexual longing toward politics in general and toward the greatness of empire in particular? Wherever one lands on that question, Pericles' remarks on death, grief, and *eros* suggest a radical depreciation of the body, the family, and the household.²⁸

Pericles' utopian vision of Athens was and remains alluring; it is not for nothing that Thucydides assigns to Pericles soaring praise of the Athenian democratic regime. Evidently, Thucydides wants to make a strong case on behalf of Athens.²⁹ Viewed as a whole, however, Thucydides' *History* questions the Periclean vision, if it does not explode it altogether.³⁰ When the Athenians died during the war, their deaths were often inglorious, even pathetic; and they experienced terrible bodily suffering. What is more, the city for which they died was less worthy of their devotion than Pericles had thought or said, not least because of the gruesome deaths that the Athenians frequently and unjustly inflicted upon others. Death is a useful leitmotif for

deflating Pericles' Funeral Oration and for appreciating Thucydides' more somber political perspective—a perspective that calls into question Pericles' radical depreciation of the body and private life and his corresponding inflation of the Athenian democracy and empire.

The Plague at Athens

Thucydides moves directly from Pericles' Funeral Oration to his analysis of the plague at Athens. The contrast is stark: Athens as cosmopolis in Pericles' Funeral Oration turns into Athens as necropolis in Thucydides' commentary on the plague. Indeed, we can think of Thucydides' plague narrative as an instance of the genre that Bernard Williams has dubbed “stark fictions,” literary works that hold up for contemplation the most “extreme, undeserved, and uncompensated suffering.”³¹ Although Williams has in mind Greek tragedies, and especially the tragedies of Sophocles, he also associates Thucydides and Sophocles as the two pre-Nietzschean thinkers who directly challenge the belief that “somehow or other, in this life or the next, morally if not materially, as individuals or as an historical collective, we shall be safe; or, if not safe, at least reassured that at some level of the world's constitution there is something to be discovered that makes ultimate sense of our concerns.”³² Thucydides' commentary on the plague reveals the quasi-tragic core of his political thought.³³

More precisely, within the context of Book 2 of the *History*, Thucydides invites the reader to test Pericles' utopian vision of Athens against the degeneration of the city brought about by the plague during the very same year. To adapt Josiah Ober's useful interpretative framework to my own argument, Thucydides *Histor* implicitly criticizes Pericles *Theoretikos*.³⁴ While Pericles had promised the transmutation of individual bodily pain and loss into resplendent collective glory, the plague shatters the Athenian people, throwing them back on

their private corporeal suffering. Thucydides spares us none of the gory details. Since he had the plague himself, he writes about the symptoms at length, using the precise language of Hippocratic medicine: fever, bloodshot eyes, throat and tongue sore to the point of bleeding, sneezing, coughing, shortness of breath, vomiting, retching, blisters, sores, insomnia, ulcers, diarrhea, the loss of extremities and genitals, and amnesia.³⁵ He makes clear that most people who contracted this disease—whatever it was—died. It is the destructiveness of the plague rather than Pericles' utopian vision of Athenian politics and empire that elicits Thucydides' commentary. In fact, at the beginning of his plague narrative, he alludes to his comment at the beginning of the work about the war's superlative destructiveness: "no one could remember a disease that was so great or so destructive of human life."³⁶ In a war remarkable for its destruction and suffering, the plague at Athens is the single event that causes the greatest number of deaths.³⁷

Writing about the plague, Thucydides made a number of lasting points about the role of death in political life. First, the vulnerability of the individual human body, its susceptibility to terrible suffering and death, poses a severe challenge to collectivist political projects that aim to deny the significance of private suffering and grief. Even if public glory may be equally distributed throughout the political community (and it is not clear that it can be), bodily suffering, death, and grief are irreducibly singular, private: the Athenians' "community of pleasures and pains," to borrow a concept from Plato's *Republic*, crumbles in the face of calamity.³⁸ Indeed, many deaths as a result of the plague were lonely affairs.

At the same time, Thucydides suggests that the best Athenians voluntarily exposed themselves to suffering and death in order to care for the sick: "the doctors themselves died fastest"; likewise, "one person would get infected as a result of caring for another so that they

died in droves like sheep.”³⁹ This is a tragic insight that runs directly counter to the Periclean promise of a superlative reward—everlasting glory—for virtue: in a world of war, the virtuous tend to suffer most and to die young. Later in the narrative, at the conclusion of the disastrous Sicilian expedition (415-23 BC), Thucydides makes a similar point in his so-called eulogy of Nicias: “he was killed, a man who, of all the Greeks in my time, least deserved such a misfortune, since he had regulated his whole life in the cultivation of virtue.”⁴⁰ Nicias’ cultivation of ethical virtue and piety availed him little: it did not result in his being a capable commander, that is, in his possession of political virtue; nor did it protect him from a brutal and inglorious death in Syracuse, executed by his enemies after the destruction of his forces.

In contrast to the author himself, many of Thucydides’ characters are like Nicias—desperate to believe that they live in a cosmos that supports justice by rewarding the virtuous or at least shielding them from ruin. Even the sophisticated Athenians, who frequently make arguments about the severely limited sway of justice in political life, often reveal their Nician side. Strikingly, during the plague, which might seem to be an amoral natural disaster, the Athenians took great pains to understand and justify their fate. It is well-known that the plague produced “great lawlessness” in Athens according to Thucydides.⁴¹ While one would be forgiven for supposing that it was the prospect of imminent death which led the Athenians to become lawless, Thucydides shows, paradoxically, that the Athenians’ acculturated preoccupation with justice, human and divine, contributed to their lawlessness: “No one was held back in awe, either by fear of the gods or by the laws of men. . . . But they thought that a far greater sentence hung over their heads now, and that before this fell they had a reason to get some pleasure in life.”⁴² Having been sentenced to die, the Athenians decided that they might as well commit some crimes.⁴³ Transgressive action can provide comfort when so acting props up the belief in a

cosmos, a universe that makes sense of and safeguards human life. For Thucydides' Athenians, capital punishment meted out by the gods is less terrifying than the indiscriminate death of the innocent along with the guilty under a godless sky.

Corcyrean Civil War

The longest commentary in the work—longer even than Thucydides' remarks on the plague—treats the civil war at Corcyra. Clifford Orwin argues, persuasively, that the two passages go together: both are unusual in their focus on internal political life as opposed to war among cities; and both concern political collapse.⁴⁴

In 427 BC, the island of Corcyra (modern-day Corfu) degenerated into factional conflict and full-blown civil war. Thucydides depicts the extreme violence committed by the rival factions, the democratic and oligarchic Corcyreans. As Thucydides puts it:

Every form of death was seen at this time; and (as tends to happen in such cases) there was nothing people would not do, and more: fathers killed their sons; men were dragged out of temples and then killed hard by; and some who were walled up in the temple of Dionysus died inside it.⁴⁵

In other words, neither the attachments of family nor the demands of piety protected the Corcyreans from death at the hands of their enemies.

According to one common line of interpretation, Thucydides uses this episode to show the importance of “law and order”: in its absence, human beings succumb to their own worst impulses—as in the state of nature theorized by Hobbes.⁴⁶ But could the absence of “law and order” really motivate fathers to kill their own sons? On the contrary, for Thucydides, factional conflict (*stasis*) is defined not by an absence of politics, but by a surfeit of it. Fathers killed their

sons in Corcyra because, in Thucydides' own words, "family ties were not so close as those of factions, because their members would readily dare to do anything on the slightest pretext."⁴⁷

Loyalty to faction and hatred of the enemy swallowed all other human attachments and conventions. Whereas for Hobbes civil war refers to the utter absence or breakdown of political order, for Thucydides, civil war refers to the perverse totalization of political life.

So all-consuming was civil war at Corcyra that it fundamentally altered the way Corcyreans communicated with others and understood themselves. Most famously, according to Thucydides, Corcyrean civil war corrupted the language of the virtues. Corcyreans came to esteem reckless violence and to disdain courage. What was formerly praised as self-control appeared, in the context of civil war, to indicate an absence of partisan zeal; perversely, the most extreme individuals were praised for their self-control.⁴⁸ Note that, on a precise reading of Thucydides' argument, it is not the meanings of the words themselves that have changed, but rather the Corcyreans' estimation or evaluation of them.⁴⁹ In the absence of trust and a common ethical framework, the democratic and oligarchic Corcyreans were more like opposing armies than fellow citizens; in a beautiful, haunting line, Thucydides writes that "their thoughts were in battle array."⁵⁰ Faction had changed them. In fact, the civil war at Corcyra would never abate; later in the text we learn that the Corcyreans instead killed one another down to the last man.⁵¹

The Corcyreans thus became murderers—not because they were fundamentally evil people, but because their circumstances, like those of Sophocles' Oedipus, pushed them to err. On this point, Thucydides anticipates Sigmund Freud, who would later write of the atrocities committed by ordinary Europeans during World War I:

We may already derive one consolation from this discussion: our mortification and painful disillusionment on account of the uncivilized behavior of our fellow-

citizens of the world during this war were unjustified. They were based on an illusion to which we had given way. In reality our fellow-citizens have not sunk so low as we feared, because they had never risen so high as we believed.⁵²

No less than Freud, Thucydides taps the circumstances of war, including the larger war between Athens and Sparta, as that which infects the Corcyreans with the readiness, if not the capacity, to murder family members and neighbors. Although Thucydides in no way excuses people who commit atrocities, neither does he excoriate them. Their particular crimes strike him as less important than the corruption of the Hellenic world brought about by the war, that “violent teacher,” which taught human beings to indulge their capacity for violence.⁵³ Whether Thucydides would agree with Freud that these reflections provide “consolation” is another question. Perhaps they are true—but nonetheless terrible.

Atrocities

Thucydides’ *History* features many atrocities. The Athenians’ annihilation of the tiny island of Melos (416 BC) is the most notorious: it remains a stock example of the weakness of justice in guiding affairs among nations.⁵⁴ But the Athenians did the same to Scione (423 BC), though Thucydides curtly reports this atrocity without comment and almost in passing: “At about the same time this summer, the Athenians took Scione by siege, killed all the adult males, took the women and children into slavery, gave the land to the Plataeans to occupy.”⁵⁵ Moreover, while the Athenian statesman Diodotus had succeeded in persuading the citizen assembly not to execute the entire population of Mytilene (427 BC), he did not even attempt to save the oligarchic faction of that city—a full one-thousand men whom the Athenians readily executed (3.50.1). In addition, way back in the first year of the war, the Athenians had captured Spartan

heralds, executed them, and dumped their bodies.⁵⁶ Even this event was not a beginning point of Athenian atrocities. At least, according to Herodotus, the Athenians had murdered Persian heralds of Darius in the same way a generation earlier.⁵⁷ Murder—including the murder of innocent heralds, who were supposed to be protected by conventions of hospitality and warfare—is almost an Athenian tradition.⁵⁸

One possibility, then, is that the Athenians are uniquely unjust and brutal. What the Corcyreans do to one another the Athenians do to all Hellenes. That the Athenians themselves embrace a hardheaded view of rule might seem to support this view. The Athenian envoys to Sparta, Pericles, Cleon, Diodotus, the Athenian envoy to Melos, and Alcibiades all argue, albeit with important variations, that it is natural for human beings, and perhaps even for the gods, to rule to the limits of their power; moreover, what it is natural and hence compulsory to do, one must be excused for so doing.⁵⁹ For example, the Athenian envoys to Melos say to the leaders of Melos: “Nature always compels gods (we believe) and men (we are certain) to rule over anyone they can control.”⁶⁰ Worse, many of these Athenian leaders insist on their virtue, including their justice and moderation. The Athenian envoys to Sparta thus suggest that the Athenians “deserve to be praised” for exhibiting “more justice [and moderation] than they have to” in their rule over their subject cities.⁶¹ Having committed atrocities for the sake of empire, the Athenians have the gall to praise themselves.

In particular, the movement from the Melian Dialogue at the very end of Book 5 to the Sicilian expedition in Books 6 and 7 might suggest that the Athenians are uniquely unjust in Thucydides’ view—and that their injustice elicits a corresponding punishment.⁶² This is a classic Thucydidean transition, which seems to carry thematic significance, much like the movement

from Funeral Oration to plague. Having destroyed the Melians, the Athenians are themselves destroyed in Sicily. The final lines of Book 7 emphasize the complete reversal of fortune:

They were utterly vanquished on all points, and none of their losses was small. It was “total destruction” as the saying is, for the army and navy alike. There was nothing that was not lost, and few out of many returned home. This is what happened on Sicily.⁶³

Perhaps the Athenians get their comeuppance. Yet this moralistic account is too simple. For Thucydides, not injustice but error explains the disaster in Sicily; crucially, the expedition could have succeeded. Thucydides offers this judgment in his eulogy of Pericles: “these mistakes led to many others, such as the voyage against Sicily, which was due not so much to mistaking the power of those they attacked, as it was to bad decisions on the part of the senders”—especially, Thucydides implies, the removal of Alcibiades, the Athenians’ most able commander.⁶⁴ Irrespective of the Athenians’ injustice, they could have conquered Sicily and won the war.

Nor can the Athenians be considered uniquely unjust: atrocity and self-justification (in bad faith) are ubiquitous in Thucydides’ text. The Athenians’ enemies, the Spartans, indisputably sink to the Athenians’ level of brutal violence and rank hypocrisy, if they do not fall even lower. For example, the Athenians’ butchery of the Melians corresponds to the Spartans’ butchery of the Plataeans (427 BC). Perhaps the latter is worse, as the Spartans subject the Plataeans to a kind of show trial, even though they have already decided to massacre them at the behest of the Thebans.⁶⁵ The most notorious Spartan atrocity in the war is their murder of some two-thousand Helot slaves. Thucydides reports that Spartans once invited the Helots to pick out the two-thousand best among them—in particular, those who had fought most valiantly for Sparta—with the promise that these men would receive their freedom. “The Spartans, however, soon

afterwards did away with them, and no one ever knew how each perished.”⁶⁶ Nor could one argue, finally, that the Athenians and Spartans, as the two great powers in Greece, have been uniquely corrupted by their power; for even weaker peoples commit atrocities. Arguably the most pathetic episode in the entire *History* is the massacre by Thracian mercenaries of the boys attending school in the small Greek city of Mycalessus (413 BC).⁶⁷ Of this massacre Thucydides writes: “everywhere confusion reigned and every form of death”; it was an event “unapproached by any in suddenness and horror.”⁶⁸ The phrase, “every form of death,” points back to Thucydides’ commentary on Corcyrean civil war, and suggests that the conclusions we drew about the Corcyreans—that the war unleashed their latent capacity for violence—apply to all human beings during war, Greeks and “barbarians” alike.

Conclusion

Viewed as a whole, Thucydides’ *History* is the true Funeral Oration of Athens, which, in contrast to Pericles’ Funeral Oration, eulogizes the precarity of the Athenian democracy and indeed of all decent regimes amid disasters such as plague and war. While the plague at Athens is a natural disaster, the chief cause of death during the war between the Peloponnesians and the Athenians is human action. The *History* is rife with atrocities; whereas the conventions of family and piety usually restrain human beings in times of peace, war overwhelms the sub- and supra-political limits on political strife. Death’s political presence also has psychological implications, perverting the conceptual vocabulary of the virtues as human beings struggle to justify their cruel actions and terrible ends. Remember, on this point, Thucydides’ commentary on the plague: as much as the Athenians feared death itself, what really gnawed at them was the meaninglessness of death caused by the plague. By contrast, Thucydides, who is otherwise preoccupied with

identifying the best explanations of the war, refuses to explain the plague, compelling the reader to inhabit its destructiveness, the omnipresence of death in Athens, without relief. And this he does for the reader's own benefit—that is, to educate his or her judgment for understanding and acting within a world of war, calamity, and atrocity. In particular, because war is normal rather than exceptional, Thucydides pushes would-be political leaders and students of political life to strip away their illusions about politics at its best, and to grapple instead with the tragic circumstances that surround them in fact.

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¹ Thucydides text has no title; I follow the useful convention of referring to it as the *History*.

Also note that we do not know the exact dates of Thucydides' birth and death.

² 1.23.2. References to Thucydides are text by book, chapter, and line numbers as appropriate. My own translations and transliterations refer to the Oxford Classical Text, edited by Jones and revised by Powell. I use the translation of Woodruff, *Thucydides on Justice*, wherever possible. Because Woodruff has only translated selected passages, I also turn to Mynott, *Thucydides*, modifying his translation as necessary. I have also consulted the commentaries of A.W. Gomme, A. Andrewes, and K.J. Dover, *Historical Commentary*; and Hornblower, *Commentary*.

³ 1.23.2

⁴ See Polansky, "Nietzsche on Thucydidean Realism," 425-58, for an excellent account of both Nietzsche's Thucydides and the literature on Thucydides' realism and its legacy.

⁵ Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, 117-18.

⁶ 1.22.2-4.

⁷ Connor, *Thucydides*, 236: "The text leads the reader back to events and individuals, not away toward abstractions and dogmas. It respects rather than reduces the complexity of events. . . ."

⁸ Woodruff, *Thucydides on Justice*, 39.

⁹ Orwin, *Humanity*, 26-27; Wills, *Lincoln at Gettysburg*, 41-63; Stow, "Pericles at Gettysburg."

¹⁰ Arendt, *Human Condition*, 175-247; see also Loraux, *Invention of Athens*; Plato, 7.87.6.7.87.6.

¹¹ 2.37.1.

¹² 2.37.1.

¹³ 2.37.2.

¹⁴ 2.37.3.

¹⁵ 2.40.1. See Manville, "Pericles," 73-84; Balot, *Courage*, 28.

¹⁶ 2.40.1.

¹⁷ 2.40.3.

¹⁸ On these points, see Balot, *Courage*, 25-46.

¹⁹ See 1.70 and 1.84.

²⁰ 2.43.2-3.

²¹ Homer, *Iliad* 9.410-16.

²² 2.43.6.

²³ Herodotus, *Histories* 1.32; Edmunds, *Chance and Intelligence*, 76-84.

²⁴ 2.43.6; *anaisthetos*.

²⁵ 2.44.1.

²⁶ 2.45.2.

²⁷ 2.43.1.

²⁸ Orwin, "Beneath Politics," 113-27; Jaffe, *Outbreak*, 143-48.

²⁹ Strauss, *City and Man*, 154; Romilly, *Thucydides and Athenian Imperialism*, 112-30;

Nichols, *Thucydides and the Pursuit*

24-50.

³⁰ Balot, "Was Thucydides a Political Philosopher?," 324-35.

³¹ Williams, "Fictions, Pessimism," 56.

³² Williams, *Shame and Necessity*, 164.

³³ Additional “tragic” or “pessimistic” readings of Thucydides include: Cornford, *Thucydides Mythistoricus*; Stahl, *Man’s Place in History*, 79-80, 186; Colin Macleod, “Thucydides and Tragedy,” 140; Wohl, *Euripides and the Politics of Form*, 50-54; Euben, *Tragedy of Political Theory*, 167-201.

³⁴ Ober, “Thucydides Theoretikos/Thucydides Histor,” 275-76.

³⁵ 2.48. On the Hippocratic vocabulary of this passage, cf. Connor, *Thucydides*, 58 n. 19; Parry, “Thucydides’ Description,” 116; Hornbower, *Commentary*, vol. I, 321-22.

³⁶ 2.47.3; cf. 1.23.2.

³⁷ At least 75,000 Athenians died in the estimation of Ober, *Rise and Fall*, 213.

³⁸ Plato, *Republic* 462b-e.

³⁹ See 2.47.2 and 2.51.4.

⁴⁰ 7.87.5.

⁴¹ 2.53.1.

⁴² 2.53.4.

⁴³ See Orwin, *Humanity*, 90.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 173.

⁴⁵ 3.81.5.

⁴⁶ For example, Slomp, “Hobbes, Thucydides,” 577-78. For a more sensitive treatment, see Ahrensdorf, “Fear of Death,” 580-83.

⁴⁷ 3.82.6.

⁴⁸ 3.82.4-5.

⁴⁹ Palmer, “*Stasis*,” 412. This interpretation is supported by Hobbes’s translation of the key line:

“The received value of names imposed for signification of things, was changed into arbitrary.”

Hobbes’s Thucydides, 222.

⁵⁰ 3.83.1.

⁵¹ 4.48.5.

⁵² Freud, “Thoughts on War and Death,” 285.

⁵³ 3.82.2.

⁵⁴ 5.116.

⁵⁵ 5.32.1.

⁵⁶ 2.67.4.

⁵⁷ Herodotus, *Histories* 7.137.

⁵⁸ See also 1.106.2, 3.112.7.

⁵⁹ See Strauss, *City and Man*, 192; Orwin, *Humanity*, 200-203; Ahrens Dorf, “Thucydides’

Realistic Critique of Realism,” 231-265; Eckstein, “Thucydides, the Outbreak of the

Peloponnesian War,” 757-77.

⁶⁰ 5.105.

⁶¹ 1.76.3-4.

⁶² For example, in the classic interpretation of Cornford, *Thucydides Mythistoricus*, 187.

⁶³ 7.87.6.

⁶⁴ 2.65.11.

⁶⁵ 3.68. Moreover, the Plataeans had played a pivotal role in saving Greece from enslavement during the Persian War, while the Thebans had medized.

⁶⁶ 4.80.4.

⁶⁷ 7.29.3-5.

⁶⁸ 7.29.5. On this episode, see Orwin, *Humanity*, 133-36.