NARRATOR INTERVENTIONS IN THUCYDIDES*

THE main narrative of Thucydides is characterised by a third person 'objective' style where signs of the narrator are concealed. But this predominant narrative mode is punctuated by passages (2. 65, 6. 15, etc.) where the narrator interrupts the main account, referring to himself in the first person and/or to time outside that of the main narrative. These rare intrusions of the voice of the narrator-historian—'narrator interventions'—are the most quoted and discussed in the whole *History*. Reaction to them has been of two sorts. They have either been seen as later additions and used as the centrepiece of analyst interpretations of the *History*, or they have been treated as expressions of the 'judgement' of the historian, providing the key to the *History*'s meaning. The result of these approaches is unsatisfactory. The interventions are either bracketed as foreign to the original plan of the historian, or given special status as the exclusive source of his meaning. The effect is to cut them loose from the reading of the rest of the work, as intrusions of another stage of composition or of another voice which no longer narrates, but gives judgement. Worse still, such interpretation compares the decontextualised 'judgements' it has isolated from the narrative and declares them inconsistent with each other. Such 'extrinsic' approaches to the interventions risk reducing Thucydides' text to a patchwork of differing and competing voices and opinions.

In this article, I will argue that the narrator interventions fulfill a narrative and rhetorical purpose which such readings cause us to overlook. Rather than treating them one by one as individual outbursts of opinion, I will consider them together as examples of a general narrative strategy[1] which I will try to describe using the terms of narratology. Seeing these passages as instances of a general phenomenon with a distinct narrative role will, I hope, allow both a better understanding of Thucydides' rhetorical technique, and a more sensitive interpretation of individual interventions.

'Objective' narrative and narrator intervention

Wherever there is a narrative, there is also a narrator: a story must have someone to tell it. But in a very familiar device of literature, texts written in the third person (like that of Thucydides) may be read as stories without a narrator.[2] The narrator deliberately leaves no obvious trace of his presence in his text, so that the story can be read as though it were 'telling itself'. In the terms of Genette, this effacement of the narrator turns 'discourse' (someone telling a story) into 'narrative' (pure story).[3] The 'narrative illusion' thus created of the story telling itself may be compared with the dramatic illusion experienced in theatre,[4] where the audience

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[1] As far as I know, there is no general treatment of narrator comment in Thucydides. But note N. Loraux, 'Thucydides a écrit la guerre du Péloponnèse', MHTIS: *Revue d'Anthropologie du Monde Grec Ancien* 1 (1986) 139-61 on the persona of the narrator; and L. Pearson, 'Thucydides as reporter and critic', *TAPA* 78 (1947) 37-60, on expressions of 'personal opinion' in Thucydides.

[2] On the pervasiveness of this model in Western literature, the origins of which can be traced partly to Thucydides himself, see W.C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*[2] (Chicago 1983), esp. chaps. 1 and 10; and G. Genette, 'Boundaries of narrative', *New Literary History* 8 (1976) 1-13 at 11-12.

[3] (n.2) using 'discourse' in the restricted sense of utterance by an agent. On the use of this narrative mode in historiography, see R. Barthes, 'The discourse of history' in Barthes, *The Rustle of Language* (Oxford 1986) 127-40; H. White, 'The value of narrativity', in W.J.T Mitchell (ed.), *On Narrative* (Chicago 1980) 1-23; and *id.*, 'The question of narrative in contemporary historical theory', *History and Theory* 23 (1984) 1-33.

[4] Barthes (n.3) 132 refers to a 'referential illusion'.

imagines that the stage action offers them direct access to another time and place, and the mechanics of production (the actors, the set) are effaced for the purposes of the play.

In this sort of narrative, the narrator carefully avoids features, such as personal comment on the events described, sudden jumps in time, and above all, use of the first person, which would signal his presence, by revealing signs of his 'voice' (i.e. that it is he who is speaking) or his 'focalisation' (i.e. that events are seen through his eyes).[5] In reality, he can never fully absent himself from the text. Even in the most 'classic' narratives every phrase conveys inevitable hints of his presence, because even apparently objective statements suggest the position from which the world described in the text is structured, and/or the identity of the narrating voice.[6] Nevertheless, we may, for want of a better term, call the type of narrative where the narrator conceals the signs of his presence 'objective' narrative,[7] as it purports to remove the subjectivity of the narrator or author.

The 'narrative illusion' of 'objective' narrative is eminently suited to historiography, especially to a type of historiography which is concerned with conveying an impression of veracity and the sensation of a direct and unmediated approach to historical event.[8] Such histories offer the reader an experience parallel to the experience of fictional narrative illusion: forgetting the presence of an interpreting narrator, readers can imagine they are experiencing the events described more directly and more faithfully than if the author had written in the form of an analytic discourse. In Thucydides, who, in contrast to Herodotus, enthusiastically adopted this type of narrative from epic, direct 'unmediated' narrative is linked to the search for the impression of veracity, the attempt to convey τὸ σαφὲς τῶν γενομένων (1. 22.4) It is associated with the characteristics of enargeia[9] and 'transparency' which readers have found in his text. Such a strategy may be contrasted with that of a modern historian (or with Thucydides himself in the Archaeologia), where the constant presence of the author through passages of direct analysis creates a very different sort of rhetoric.

Yet the phenomenon of narrator intervention is a familiar one, not just in history, but in

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[5] On 'focalisation', the narratological term for describing 'who sees', cf. G. Genette, Narrative Discourse (Oxford 1980) 185 ff.; M. Bal, Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative (Toronto, Buffalo & London 1985) 100-15. For other works applying the terminology of narratology (particularly focalisation) to Thucydides, see T. Rood, Interpreting Thucydides: A Narratological Approach (Oxford D. Phil. thesis 1995); S. Hornblower, 'Narratology and narrative techniques in Thucydides', in Hornblower (ed.), Greek Historiography (Oxford 1994) 131-166.

[6] Booth (n.2) 3-20; Genette (n.2) 9-12. Though writers of such narratives may think they are writing in a way that is absolutely objective, there is in fact no pure access to reality through language. To use the terms of Genette (n.5, 189), there is no 'zero-focalised' statement; cf. Bal (n.5) 128; Hornblower (n.5) 133, 148 ff.. On the pervasiveness of the historian's voice in classical historiography see R.L. Fowler, 'Herodotos and his contemporaries', JHS 116 (1996), 62-87 at 70 ff.

[7] The term is intended to refer only to a narrative mode involving the effacement of the narrator, without any implications as to the level of involvement of narrator or reader in the fate of the characters. On the various narrative strategies available to an author, see Bal (n.5) 123-6.

[8] On this effect see Genette (n.2) 9, quoting Beneviste ('the events seem to tell themselves'); and Barthes (n.3) 131-2, 138-40. Such a narrative mode offers not objectivity, but a rhetoric which encourages readers to believe they are being given direct access to the facts. White 1984 (n.3) 4 sees this strategy as a way of concealing the inevitable interpretative element of historiography: the historian resorts to it out of embarrassment that his history includes not just 'the facts themselves' but also interpretation. On 'objective' narrative in ancient historiography, see M.J. Wheeldon, '"True Stories": the reception of historiography in antiquity', in A. Cameron (ed.), History as Text (London 1989) 33-63 at 45 ff. On 'objective' narrative in Thucydides, see Loraux (n.1) 139 ff.

[9] Cf. Plu. Mor. 346f-347c; D.H. Thuc. 15; A.J. Woodman, Rhetoric in Classical Historiography (London & Sydney 1988) 25-8. Cf. also G. Zanker, 'Enargeia in the ancient criticism of poetry', RhM 124 (1981) 297-311.

fiction, including early epic.[10] If the 'objective' narrative strategy is so effective, why intervene at all? As far as historiography goes, the answer, I think, is that a historian cannot afford to rely completely on arousing the sort of reader response typical of fiction, for one of the characteristics of this response is that it involves a purely temporary suspension of disbelief: for the purposes of the literary experience, readers accept what they read as in some sense 'true',[11] but when the narrative is over, the spell is broken and the temporarily assumed belief evaporates. The writer of 'objective' historical narrative is thus in a delicate position. If he does not reveal his presence in the text at all as the trustworthy organiser of, and authority for, the events described, if he avoids signalling his work as history, he risks giving readers the impression that what they are reading is in some sense fictional. But if he intervenes too much, thus constantly signalling his work as his own historical interpretation, he will forego the advantages of the 'objective' narrative. So he is forced to maintain a sort of double game, absenting himself from the text at the same time as maintaining the residual impression that the 'objective' statements of the narrative are historically authorised by his own narrative persona.[12] Intervention is thus an integral part of the rhetoric of 'objective' history.

The borders between fiction and history in ancient literature do not necessarily correspond exactly to our own.[13] Nevertheless, Thucydides is at pains to distinguish his work from that of epic and Herodotean history in terms of its 'truth' value. For this purpose, it is important constantly to reassure the reader that the narrative is validated by the narrative persona established at the outset of the work, that of a seeker of truth of great intellectual power. Thucydides too is caught in the paradox of the need for a narrative which is direct and unmediated and at the same time mediated through the constant (concealed) person of the narrator. The proem, including the *Archaeologia*, is central to this dual strategy.[14]

Proem and narrator's voice

Unlike the main narrative, 1. 1-23 is written in the form not of an 'objective' narrative, but of an academic discourse similar in form to a sophistic essay like that of the 'Old Oligarch'. This prefixing to the *History* of a strongly intellectual section in the narrator's own voice creates an important ambivalence in our reaction to the rest of the work, encouraging us to read the narrative as 'objective', without quite forgetting that it is authorised by the tough-thinking narrator of the first 23 chapters,[15] so that the narrator is simultaneously 'effaced', and present

[10] *Cf.* Booth (n.2) 155, 205-9. On the narrator's voice in non-historiographical classical authors, see E. Block, 'The narrator speaks: apostrophe in Homer and Vergil', *TAPA* 92 (1982) 7-21; C.S. Byre, 'The narrator's addresses to the narratee in Apollonius Rhodius' Argonautica', *TAPA* 121 (1991) 215-27. *Cf.* also S. Goldhill, *The Poet's Voice* (Cambridge 1991), and on Homer, I.J.F. de Jong, *Narrators and Focalizers: The Presentation of the Story in the Iliad* (Amsterdam 1987).

[11] *Cf.* Booth (n.2) 423-4.

[12] The role of interventions in fictional works with third-person narrative is apparently somewhat different. Here, adversion to the person of the narrator may be used to remind the reader of the constructedness of the text and the fictionality of the narrative. Such interventions can be compared to the 'metatheatre', which reminds the audience of a play of the circumstances of performance and 'break' the dramatic illusion. In historiography, on the other hand, interventions are normally designed to reinforce belief in the credibility of the author and reliability of the narrative.

[13] *Cf.* Woodman (n.9); Wheeldon (n.8); and J.C. Moles, 'Truth and untruth in Herodotus and Thucydides' and T.P.Wiseman, 'Lying historians: seven types of mendacity', both in C. Gill and T.P. Wiseman (eds), *Lies and Fiction in the Ancient World* (Exeter 1993).

[14] On rhetoric in the prologues of ancient historiography, see Woodman (n.9); Wheeldon (n.8); Moles (n.13). On the classical historian's effort to establish authority, see J. Marincola, *Authority and Tradition in Ancient Historiography* (Cambridge 1997).

[15] W.R. Connor, 'Narrative discourse in Thucydides', in *The Greek Historians, Literature and History: Papers Presented to A.E. Raubitschek* (Stanford 1985) 1-18 at 6-7.

as authoriser of the narrative, continuing to 'valider le récit'.[16] Later narrator interventions remind the reader of the authorising narratorial presence: these are rare enough to make a strong impression, so that readers will be reminded not only of the prologue, but also other interventions, and a chain of narratorial interventions is established embracing the whole work.

One of the functions of the prologue is to establish the character of the narrating persona, and the nature of the narrative contract between narrator and reader. The prologue is a kind of *sphragis*[17] (the opening statement of the historian's name at 1. 1.1 serving as an identification of authorship), which also has the function of establishing the historian's narrative voice competitively against that of his predecessors, in this case primarily Homer and Herodotus.[18]

Contrasting himself with his predecessors in the prologue, Thucydides professes to aim not at pleasing his readers, but at presenting them with the more enduring satisfaction of accuracy and understanding (1. 22).[19] Not that the experience, so important to Homer and Herodotus, of perceiving the *greatest* deeds (including the greatest suffering) is abandoned by Thucydides, but he offers the deeper satisfaction of perceiving this greatness accurately without invention or exaggeration.[20] Likewise the understanding of the human condition offered by Homer is also sought after by Thucydides, but the latter maintains that *proper* understanding, of the sort that can be useful, can only be obtained through an *accurate* picture of the way people behaved, of a sort which (it is implied) cannot be obtained from epic.[21] The distinction thus implied is not so much between myth and history as the objects studied, but between epic and Thucydidean methodology as methods of regarding the object:[22] what distinguishes the two is the aim of getting closer to 'what really happened'.

Unlike Herodotus,[23] Thucydides does not seek to appear in his work or in his prologue as 'organiser'.[24] Reference to the narrator's role in organising the material would be hard to

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[16] Loraux (n .1) 142, 153-7. Loraux argues that the disappearance of the narrator is already prepared for in the prologue: note the opening third-person at 1. 1.1, with its claim that Thucydides 'wrote' the Peloponnesian War, as though the war were an object 'out there'.

[17] On the *sphragis*, see L. Woodbury, 'The seal of Theognis' in *Studies in honour of Gilbert Norwood* ((Toronto 1952); Goldhill (n.10) 109-12.

[18] On the rhetoric of the prologue in Herodotus and Thucydides, see Moles (n.13) and the works cited there.

[19] Not that pleasure is excluded: Woodman (n.9), ch. 1. Contemplation of great achievement and suffering brings both pleasure and understanding: on the lessons of Thucydides' *History*, cf. R.B. Rutherford, 'Learning from history: categories and case studies', in R. Osborne and S. Hornblower (eds), *Ritual, Finance, Politics. Athenian Democratic Accounts Presented to David Lewis* (Oxford 1994), 53-68.

[20] Moles (n.13), who points out that both Herodotus and Thucydides claim to compete with Homer in truthfulness. Moles details other similarities between the two prologues: both begin, for example, with a third person, which suggests the objectivity of the text. In order to depict himself as more truthful than Herodotus, Thucydides thus imitates Herodotus' own rhetoric.

[21] But there is similarity as well as difference in the claims of epic and history to tell the truth. Epic poets also claimed to sing the truth, but they relied on a concept of truth which had more to do with fittingness, inspiration, or beauty than with accuracy: cf. C.W. Macleod, *Collected Essays* (Oxford 1983) 4-5, noting how Homeric story-tellers are praised for telling things κατὰ μοῖραν (truthfully, fittingly) or ἐπισταμένως (skilfully). Thucydides in the speeches aimed to record not only what was actually said, but also τὰ δέοντα (which includes a notion of what is fitting).

[22] Nevertheless (1. 21.1), the further back one goes into the past, the more difficult events are to reconstruct with any certainty: through the passage of time they have 'entered the mythological realm'. Thucydidean historiography is thus primarily a historiography of the present: F. Hartog, 'L'oeil de Thucydide et l'histoire "véritable"' *Poétique* 13 (1982) 22-30 at 23-4.

[23] Cf. C. Dewald, 'Narrative surface and authorial voice in Herodotus' *Histories*', *Arethusa* 20 (1987) 147-70 at 164 ff.. On Herodotus' voice, with its distinctive constant appeal to sources, see now Fowler (n.6).

[24] Normally, the narrator does not alert the reader to his own role in organising the events into a narrative ('as I said earlier'), except 5. 1.1; 6. 94.1, on which see appendix 1, below. Instead, the narrative purports to offer direct access to events which exist 'out there', unmediated by the structuring efforts of a narrator (Loraux [n. 1] 142), who

reconcile with the impression of an unmediated approach to the veracity of events. Whereas Herodotus introduces the principle of a multitude of possible stories at an early stage in his work,[25] Thucydides eliminates alternative and competing stories[26] (hence his history is to this extent less suggestive and 'open'). Unlike Herodotus, Thucydides does not seek to enter into dialogue with the reader, who only appears in the *History* as the impersonal τις.[27] The reader is seen as someone who, if he looks at events carefully, will come to see things in the same way as Thucydides.[28] But although the narratorial voice seeks to rule out the *openness* of alternative versions of the facts, there is still a *complexity* of historical understanding, arising from the multiplicity of voices in the work.[29] There may be only one story, but what is presented is still a complex story, not a treatise. So Thucydides demands a sensitive and intelligent audience capable of responding to the complexities of a work of literature (rather than a compliant one, as in oratory).[30] Rather than towering over his readers like a hero,[31] Thucydides imagines them as motivated by the same intellectual and historical goals as the narrator-historian himself (1. 22.4), like him possessed of highly developed intellects and sensibilities.

Again, the *basis* of narratorial authority in Thucydides is different from that in either Homer or Herodotus. In Homer, narratorial authority comes from the Muse. Indeed, to a certain extent it is the Muse who is conceived of as singing,[32] so that we could see her as a religious and literary way of imagining the effacement of the poet in the 'objective' narrative (where is the story coming from?—from the Muse). Herodotus' narratorial authority is sometimes based on direct experience, but more often the historian adopts the role of the presenter rather than the narrator of stories, taking no responsibility for the λόγοι he collects.[33] Adapting the rhetoric of the Herodotean prologue, Thucydides' prologue aims at a new standard of truthfulness, based not just on autopsy and source (which may be faulty—1. 22.3),[34] but on a methodology which evaluates and compares various accounts in order to get to 'what really happened'.[35]

appears only in clearly-signalled interventions, and then as commentator rather than organiser. On 'shifters of organisation' in historiography, see Barthes (n.3) 128-9.

[25] Dewald (n.23) 147-54, noting that the narratorial voice actually points to the multiplicity of *logoi* and questions their relationship to the truth in various ways: an early, and programmatic, example is the ambiguously distancing attitude of the narrator to the stories explaining the origin of conflict between East and West: Hdt. 1. 5. The result (and perhaps also the cause) of this distancing is a less straightforward attitude to 'what actually happened' and the ability of a history to capture this in language. In Thucydides, as I will argue below, the narratorial voice always confirms the main narrative.

[26] Hence he hardly ever suggests the possibility of other stories, or casts doubt on his own narrative: Hornblower (n.5) 151; Connor (n.15) 5-6. The 'arduous' task of sifting through competing stories (1. 22.3) does not leave a mark on the narrative itself, a trait of Thucydides' method often overlooked when considering his 'omissions'.

[27] Hornblower (n.5) 149; Loraux (n.1) 157 f..

[28] *Cf.* 1. 21.1; 2.23.5 (Thucydides' account of the origins of the war will free others from the need to investigate the origins.)

[29] On this, see further below.

[30] *Cf.* W.R. Connor, *Thucydides* (Princeton 1984) 14-18; Connor (n.15) 7-8.

[31] Loraux (n.1) 155-6. Loraux claims (157) that the ideal reader of Thucydides is characterised by a complete submission to the historian. This goes too far. For a more reasonable account of the impact Thucydides imagined his *History* would have on its readers see Rutherford (n.19).

[32] *Cf.* de Jong (n.10) 45-53 arguing that it is both poet and Muse who are regarded as singing.

[33] Dewald (n.23) 153; Hartog (n.22) 22-3: the narrator's role is 'dire ce que se dit'.

[34] Autopsy and source are not generally cited to guarantee the veracity of the narrative proper. Such 'shifters of listening' (Barthes [n. 3] 128) would undermine the sense of objectivity and direct access to the facts.

[35] Hartog (n.22) 22-4. This attempt to establish the authority of the text competitively against epic anticipates Plato's attempt to replace epic with philosophy in the *Republic*: cf. Goldhill (n.10) 167 ff. Yet whereas Plato claimed a new and better kind of insight for philosophy, Thucydides presents his brand of carefully researched analytical historiography as more able than epic or Herodotean performance historiography to fulfil the educative role (in terms

Thucydides' status as a (presumably, primarily) non-oral narrator,[36] as writer rather than entertainer, helps to explain his striving after an accurate and lasting object (like an inscription).[37] It must also be important in the adoption of an 'objective' narrative mode: the disappearance of the narrator is an appropriate development in a written text, where the narrator is literally absent (in Homer's 'objective' oral poetry, this absence is related to the figure of the Muse). Thus explicit reference to the reader, which is so characteristic of Herodotus, is also absent in Thucydides who, like an inscribed memorial poem of Simonides, addresses 'the passer-by', unlocated in time or place.

I have argued that the proem (1. 1-23) has a rhetorical function to do with the narrator and the reader. Not only does it establish key features which the narrator and reader 'agree' to concentrate on (in particular, admiration for the magnitude/pathos of events and an attitude of accuracy in observing them), it also depicts the narrator as a certain sort of figure, in particular a trustworthy one. By 'narrator', then, we mean the figure presented as the speaker in the prologue and the interventions in the *History*. It is not clear whether we should make a firm theoretical distinction between narrator and author in factual narratives.[38] Nevertheless, I will continue to speak of 'the narrator' rather than 'the author' or 'Thucydides', in order to emphasise that I am talking about the rhetorical strategy of work, the narrating persona[39] (concerned by pathos and striving after accuracy), rather than the biographical Thucydides.[40]

I have already suggested a general account of the purpose of narrator interventions: they remind the reader of the status of the work as history, preserve the ambivalence between a story which tells itself and a story authorised by a trustworthy narrator, and remind the reader of the narrative 'contract' established at the beginning of the work. In the following sections, the aim will be to explain why interventions occur precisely where they do in the narrative. I will argue that narrator interventions are deployed in a conscious way, that they belong to Thucydides' armoury of narrative techniques. In discussing their specific role in the text, I will consider three narrative aspects of interventions: intervention as adversion to the presence of the reader; intervention as adversion to the voice of the narrator; and intervention as adversion to the time of narration.[41]

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of information and contemplation of suffering) traditionally expected of literature.

[36] Though note that 1. 22.4 implies not that the *History* is not designed 'for listening' at all, but that it might be less pleasurable for this purpose. *Cf.* S. Hornblower, *Thucydides* (London 1987) 29.

[37] On the importance of Thucydides' awareness of the non-oral status of his work, see B. Gentili and G. Cerri, *History and Biography in Ancient Thought* (Amsterdam 1988) 11-16.

[38] G. Genette, 'Récit fictionnel, récit factuel', in his *Fiction et Diction* (Paris 1991) 65 ff., argues that in factual narratives the author takes responsibility for the statements of the text, so that there is no point in trying to distinguish a separate narrator: a distinction between narrator and author is, in fact, an aspect of the distinction we make between factual and fictional narratives. But though the adoption of a narratorial mask ('now I will tell you a story') may seem to be distinctive of fictional and not factual narratives, Thucydides too says, in effect, 'now I will tell you a story': his decision to employ a narrative style, and one which effaces the author (i.e. a strategy precisely parallel to that of epic and many novels) generates, and makes it appropriate for us to speak in terms of, a narrating voice (in this case one which is effaced or concealed). The narrator arises wherever there is an attempt to persuade, or structure reality, through a narrative. For further discussion of the applicability of 'rhetorical' analysis to factual narratives, see Booth (n.2) 407-8, 424-5.

[39] On the distinction in a fictional text, see R. Scholes and R. Kellog, *The Nature of Narrative* (Oxford 1966) 266 ('a projection of the author's empirical virtues'); Bal (n.8) 119-20; De Jong (n.10) 44-5. Booth (n.2) 67-77 uses the somewhat different concept of 'implied author'.

[40] When Thucydides speaks in his text, he speaks as careful observer and acute analyser, as the historian in his work. One might compare the role of the first person in Pindar, which so often stands for the voice of the professional poet rather than the person Pindar: on this, see most recently Goldhill (n.10) 142 ff., with full bibliography.

[41] As Genette (n.2) 9-11 demonstrates.

What is an intervention?

But first let us try to define what we mean by narrator interventions. An exact definition is not possible: signs of the narrator fill even an 'objective' narrative, and the feeling that this narrative is suspended and the narrator is present depends to some extent on the individual reader. In practice, however, the tendency to avoid obvious signs of the presence of the narrator in the normal course of the narrative, and to cluster them at certain key moments, makes it possible to pick out a number of relatively well-defined passages as narrator interventions, which I have set out in the list below (the prologue, 1. 1-23, and the 'second prologue', 5. 26 are excluded).[42] I do not intend such a listing to imply that the text is easily divisible into segments where the presence of the narrator is obvious and segments where there is no sign of the narrator: indeed interventions are just 'continuing steps in our acquaintance with the narrator',[43] and sensitivity to narrator—and other voices and focalisations is most important to a reading even of a work employing 'objective' style like Thucydides'. Some of the passages on the list (e.g. 4. 65.4 and 6. 69.1) illustrate how an 'intervention' can arise from a slight strengthening of a voice already heard implicitly in the narrative.

Since passages like 2. 65, which do not involve an actual first person, should still be classed as interventions, it is clear that the first person is not the only indication which produces the feeling of the narrator's presence.[44] Since interpretation and causation are normally left implicit in Thucydidean historiography, explicit statements of cause or causal generalisations extending beyond the passing remark remind the reader of the presence of the normally invisible interpreting author, the suppressed first person. I have indicated in the right-hand column of the list certain specific narrative signs which suggest the presence of the narrator: use of the first person; reference to τις—an implied reader; jumps in time, either retrojections, anticipations, or a more vaguely-defined anachrony (with superscript 'E' indicating anachrony to a time outside the planned narrative); counter-factuals;[45] and superlatives—statements that something was the greatest or the only instance. I do not mean to imply, however, that narrative interventions can reliably be identified purely in a formal way by the presence or absence of such signs.

	Text	Theme	Remarks
1	1. 88ff.	the ἀληθεστάτη πρόφασις (leading to the *pentecontaetia*)	first person (97.2) retrojection
2	1. 138.3-6	evaluation of Themistocles	retrojection superlative

[42] A prologue is not an intervention, because the 'objective' narrative has not yet been established, the narrator not yet effaced, so there is no sense of an intervention. The beginning of the narrative proper is clearly marked by the change of style at 1. 24.1 ('Epidamnus is a city ...', which is the signal of narrative: 'now I will tell you a story'). 5. 26.1 is a clear resumption of the prologic voice of 1. 1.1 ('These things too were written down by the same Thucydides, an Athenian ...'), and the return to narrative mode is clearly marked at 5 .27.1 ('For after the fifty-years peace had been made ...').

[43] Booth (n.2) 208.

[44] So one cannot restrict the discussion of interventions to 'first-persons', as Loraux (n.1) 156 does.

[45] On counterfactuals in Thucydides, see K.J. Dover, 'Thucydides' historical judgement: Athens and Sicily', in Dover, *The Greeks and their Legacy* (Oxford 1988) 74-82; S. Flory, 'Thucydides' hypotheses about the Peloponnesian war', *TAPA* 118 (1988) 43-56.

3	2. 47.3-53	plague and ἀνομία in Athens	first person (48.3)[46] anticipation superlative
4	2. 65.5-13	Pericles and his successors	anticipation retrojection
5	3. 17[47]	Athenian military strength	retrojection superlative
6	3. 82-3[48]	stasis	anticipation
7	3. 113.6	Ambraciot disaster	first person anachrony counter-factual superlative
8	4. 65.4	Athenian εὐπραγία	
9	4. 81	Brasidas' influence	anticipation superlative
10	4. 108	fall of Amphipolis	anticipation
11	5. 14-16[49]	Peace of Nicias	
12	6. 1.1ff.	Athenians' real purpose in Sicily: (leading to digression on Sicily)	first person (2.1) retrojection
13	6. 15	Alcibiades and the city	anticipation
14	6. 53.3-60.1	Athenian fear of tyrants	first person (54.1, 55.3) retrojection implied reader (55.1)
15	6. 69.1	Syracusan skill	anticipation
16	7. 28.3	Athenian φιλονικία	anachrony implied reader

[46] This is the only instance where the first person refers to the narrator as an actual agent in the narrative (contrast the use of third persons in 4.104).

[47] The most convincing account of this disputed passage is that of Gomme in A.W. Gomme, A. Andrewes, and K.J. Dover, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides* (Oxford 1945-81) 2, 277: the passage is genuine and in its proper place, and ἀρχομένου τοῦ πολέμου in 17.1 refers to the first years of the war in general, though the conditions described would best fit 430 specifically. *Cf.* Rood (n.5) ch. 4, 207-10.

[48] 3. 84, regarded as spurious from a very early date, is rejected by most editors. See Gomme (n.47) *ad loc.*

[49] This passage is most untypical in that it provides information and analysis (especially on Pleistoanax) which could in no way be gleaned from the main narrative: it is perhaps influenced by the suspension of narrative purity and continuity associated with the end of the war, and the imminence of the second preface.

17	7. 42.3	Athenian strategy in Sicily	retrojection counter-factual
18	7. 55	Syracusan democracy and Athens	
19	7. 86.5	ἀρετή of Nicias	first person superlative
20	7. 87.4-6	scale of the Sicilian disaster	first person anachrony superlative
21	8. 24.4-6	Chian σωφροσύνη, Athenian resilience	first person (24.4) anticipation retrojection[E] superlative
22	8. 96.1-4	loss of Euboea	anachrony counter-factual superlative[50]

Six of these passages (1, 2, 3, 6, 12 and 14) are associated with digressions, which are discussed in appendix 2. Some other interventions not on the list, which I have labelled 'casual' interventions, are dealt with in appendix 1.

Fictional narrative and historical narrative
      In contrast to fiction, in historiography the story really happened, or rather, historiography is composed and read with a view to establishing more closely what really happened, in a way that fiction is not.[51] This has an important bearing on the question of narrator interventions. In fictional narratives there is a temporary 'suspension of disbelief' to which readers willingly submit themselves for the sake of the experience of the work, so that the audience of a tragedy, for example, is prepared to accept an alternative version of the myth as 'true' for the purposes of the play. But in a historical narrative, readers' willingness to submit to the experience of narrative is more or less limited by their own experience of the historical story: a version or interpretation of the events which runs counter to their own experience of those events (Germany depicted as winning the Second World War), or even what they regard as historically plausible, is likely to be taken as a breach of the rules of historical narrative. One of the roles of narrator interventions in 'objective' historiography may be to recognise tensions in the reader-narrator relationship caused by an unusual presentation or interpretation of events and to attempt to resolve them ('You may be surprised that I have depicted Germany emerging as the victor of the Second World War, but if you compare the relative strategic and economic positions of Britain and Germany at 1936 and 1955, you will find this is the truer account'). Such

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[50] Note use of another device here: a rhetorical question, an obvious signal of the reader (or, more technically, the narratee). This passage and 7. 44.1 are the only two instances of the device in Thucydides: see Dover in Gomme (n.47) 5, 400; Hornblower (n.5) 149.

[51] The distinction between history and fiction is not the object studied, but rather the method of regarding the object (so historical fiction is not history). As I suggested above, Thucydides' distinction between his historiography and epic was not so much the objects studied (though lapse of time does tend to push events into the realm of the mythical), but the methodology employed to study them.

interventions are thus strongly addressed to the reader.

As we have seen, in Thucydides the narrator does not address the reader, and there is rarely any reference to alternative versions, or alternative sources or authorities.[52] Of course, the topics which were the most hotly debated in Thucydides' own day (the causes of wars, the analysis of individuals,[53] the reasons for success and failure) are also often the subjects of interventions, but these topics would anyway have formed the analytical core of the *History*. Interventions may well suggest an awareness of the controversial nature of the material discussed, but the narratorial comment arises not above all as a reaction to an implicit controversy,[54] but rather because the material touches on key themes and issues (I shall say more about this below).

The aim of entering into dialogue with the reader at moments of controversy, of dialogue with other authorities, or of surprising interpretation is thus, I suggest, rather unimportant in Thucydides' narrator interventions.[55] For a more fruitful line of enquiry we must turn to the role of the interventions in comparing story (or 'chronicle') time with the time of narration.

Chronicle time and time of narration

Signalling of the narrator also implies a signalling of the time of narration and thus, naturally, many of the interventions in Thucydides involve anticipation, as a glance at the list will show. This is important. In historiography, the distinction between the time of narration and the time of the story has a dimension which is not present in fictional narratives. Because of the claim of historical narrative to aim at establishing what really happened, it is meaningful to consider the relationship between the way people acted then and the way things actually turned out, i.e with the time of narration: indeed, such comparison is one of the central experiences of historiography. The reader's foreknowledge in historiography resembles the foreknowledge in literary works where the story is known in advance, like Greek tragedy. In terms of the reading of the work, this comparison of times may thus be compared with dramatic irony, but its effect is not just 'literary' and related to emotional effect, but also vital to the experience of the work as history. In Thucydides, where there is so much concentration on what was said and thought by the actors at the time, and on the success or failure of actors in analysing the present with a view to the future, comparison between time of story and the way things turned out is especially important. A key function of the narrative interventions is to make such comparison explicit: '[adverting to the presence of the narrator] has as its goal not so much to give the historian a chance to express his own subjectivity, as to 'complicate' history's chronicle time

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[52] Hornblower (n.5) 151. Such reference is normally confined to material outside the main narrative: e.g. Hellanicus in the *Pentecontaetia* (1. 97.2), or popular Athenian tradition on the Peisistratids (6. 54.1). On narrator address to the reader (second persons) in other classical authors, see K. Gilmartin, 'A rhetorical figure in Latin historical style: the imaginary second person singular', *TAPA* 105 (1975) 99-121; Block (n.10) 13 f.; Byre (n.10).

[53] The most disputed of all was Alcibiades, and interventions relating to Alcibiades may be influenced by a careful attempt to steer a way between excessively polarised viewpoints. The later reputation of Nicias (whose name was struck off the list ot those killed in Sicily because he surrendered) may also have influenced the narrator intervention about him at 7. 86.5. Other interventions on individuals whose reputation was disputed are 5. 14-16 and 8. 68. On interventions relating to individuals in book 8, see appendix 1.

[54] Thus the narratorial voice in Thucydides does not present itself as taking part in a 'contest of public voices': contrast Aristophanes' first persons, skilfully analysed by Goldhill (n.10) 167 ff. The narratorial voice presents itself as rising above the controversies surrounding the interpretation of the events of the war, to address an audience which is not civic but private, timeless, international (*cf.* 1. 22.4). This does not mean that Thucydides' work is not sometimes a contribution to an Athenian civic debate (as at 2. 65), merely that a distinction can be made between the narratorial voice in the work and the voice of the (civic) dramatic poet or orator.

[55] On the narrator's providing of detail likely to be unfamiliar to readers, see R.T. Ridley, 'Exegesis and audience in Thucydides', *Hermes* 109 (1981) 25-46.

by confronting it with another time, that of discourse itself'.[56]

There are two key moments, corresponding to the two key elements of the reader-narrator contract, when Thucydides chooses to confront chronicle time (i.e. the time when the events took place) with time of narration: the moment of pathos (where reference is made to the scale of suffering), and the moment of accuracy or understanding. The moment of understanding is associated with points where the events described are brought dramatically into contact with the course of later events (perceivable to the narrator at time of narration), and thus achieve significance as part of a wider picture. The moment of pathos is associated with points where narrator and reader join in contemplation (from the vantage point of time of narration) of a climax of insight into the magnitude of achievement or suffering. In interventions of this sort, the deliberate reemphasis of the distance to the events described, which is involved in the acts of narrating and reading, is itself a powerful generator of pathos.[57] The moments of pathos and understanding are in fact closely related: for the Greeks, the understanding derived from contemplation of the past could be emotional (arising from the contemplation of suffering)[58] as well as intellectual (arising from the contemplation and comparison of what people did, said and thought).[59]

The intervention at 3. 113.6 marks the climax of pathos in the narrative of the Acarnanian campaign in book 3:

'This was the greatest disaster to overtake a single Greek city in an equal number of days in the whole course of this war. I have not written the number of the dead, because the number of those said to have died is not credible when considered in comparison to the size of the city. However I know that if the Acarnanians and Amphilocians had been prepared to take Demosthenes' advice to assault Ambracia, they would have taken it without a struggle'.

Here, the narrator emerges from the narrative, pointing to the time of narration (so that the war is no longer seen as narrative in progress, but is regarded from an extra-narrative perspective, as complete), to ask the reader in effect: 'Was this not great, was this not terrible?'[60] The passage is not so much intended to introduce a subjective judgement (of the author), but more to remind the reader of a central aim of the narrator's and reader's contemplation of the past (the recognition of suffering) at a point of pathetic climax.

But as well as emphasising pathos, the narratorial voice in this passage strives for accuracy - in a rather paradoxical way, certainly, for as proof of his standards of accuracy, the narrator actually refuses to mention any figures.[61] This quest for numerical accuracy may look out of place here (who cares about the *exact* number of dead in a case like this?), but the point is that

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[56] Barthes (n.3) 130.

[57] The use of intervention to generate pathos in this way is familiar from epic, as in Virgil's apostrophe to the dead Nisus and Euryalus at *Aen.* 9. 446-9.

[58] Macleod (n.21) 11-12 citing *Od.* 1. 353-5; Timocles *CAF* 2, 453; Plb. 1. 1.2. The contemplation of suffering in literature is a training of the emotions, consoling us and steeling us through an appreciation of the fact that to be human is to suffer greatly. On insights of this sort in Thucydides, see Macleod (n.21) 103-22, 140-158; H.-P. Stahl, *Thukydides: die Stellung des Menschen im geschichtlichen Prozess* (Munich 1966) 135 ff., 157.

[59] As Thucydides sets out in the prologue (1. 22): the accurate perception of the past leads to understandings of general truths about human behaviour.

[60] *Cf.* also the comment on the fate of Mycalessus at the hands of Thracian mercenaries: 7. 29.5.

[61] On this tactic to reinforce an impression of accuracy, see Hornblower (n.5) 150-2; Loraux (n.1) 151. The technique is in fact less surprising than it seems: figures do not produce much emotional effect, and may distract from pathetic climaxes. A similar example is 7. 87.5-6. Here, although the number of those who were captured at the end of the Sicilian campaign is put at 'about 5000' (though this too was difficult to determine with accuracy), we are then told that they were 'wiped out so to speak completely', and that 'out of many, few returned home'. Such examples highlight the rhetorical dimension of the narrator's quest for accuracy.

contemplation of the greatness of suffering cannot be separated from regard for accuracy (cf. 1. 21-2), and that even at a moment like this the author refuses to be drawn into the danger of exaggeration for the sake of effect. This is why a direct intervention, with use of the first person, is used to emphasise an apparently unimportant statistical point. In fact, the narrator here manages to have his cake and eat it too, conveying a suitably vague impression of colossal losses, while at the same time reinforcing the rhetoric of accuracy: a sort of narratorial *praeteritio*.

The passage recalls a key moment earlier in book 3 (98.4), which comments on an Athenian defeat at the start of the Acarnanian campaign resulting from a strategic error of Demosthenes. The hoplites killed in this battle are said to have been the finest lost by Athens in the course of the war. Together 3. 98.4 and 3. 113.6 serve to structure the narrative of the campaign, by marking moments which are climaxes in terms of both strategy (for they show how Demosthenes learned from his mistakes), and pathos (they emphasise the element of tragic reversal which is made so prominent in the *anagnorisis* dialogue with the herald in 3. 113.1-5).[62] Thus the inclusion of an intervention precisely at this point is deliberately planned. It is to be regarded not as the intrusion of a purely intellectual judgement from the historian's armchair, but as integral to the themes and narrative strategies of the *History*.

The crucial intervention of pathos in the *History* is that in which the narrative of the Sicilian campaign culminates (7. 87): this is the event involving the greatest deeds and greatest suffering of the whole war, and there is a sense in which all previous climaxes of pathos have been leading up to it. But there are many such climaxes of pathos in the *History*, not all of which are highlighted by a full-scale narrator intervention. More often (as in 3. 98.4), the climax is marked by a less obvious suggestion of the time of narative and the narrator-reader relationship. Thus the climax of the narrative of the Mytilene revolt is marked (3.49.4) merely by the words 'by such a narrow margin did Mytilene escape danger' (which implies the attitude and perspective of the narrator), and that of the Plataean narrative by an anachronic reference to the date of the original Plataean alliance with Athens (3.68.5).

Whereas in 3. 113.6 or 7. 87 the distance established in the intervention between chronicle time and narrative time contributes primarily to pathos (emotional understanding), in other interventions adversion to the way things turned out in the end contributes primarily to a more intellectual perception. 2. 65 is an intervention of the latter sort. This passage marks a culmination of a movement of analysis,[63] initiated in the first debate at Sparta in book 1, which concentrates on the question of the strengths and weaknesses of Athens. This theme is closely linked to two further questions: the analysis of the origins of the war (since correct or incorrect analysis of Athens' strength was a crucial factor leading the participants to act in the way they did); and the historical appraisal of Pericles (whose analysis of the strength of Athens' position is confirmed in the narrative, and who is the central figure of the narrative so far). The question of Athens' strength becomes phrased as the question of the correctness of the analysis of Pericles, the man who 'encouraged the Athenians to go to war' (1. 127.3), and whose views are presented in extenso in three speeches.[64] Pericles' analysis culminates in his final speech (2. 60-4), where he defends his view of the strength of Athens at a time when it looks more than ever as though his policy has been a mistake. This speech thus brings us close to a culmination not only of the analysis of Pericles, but of the whole of the narrative so far. The passage which

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[62] Stahl (n.58) 130-7. Some interventions in the *Iliad* may be designed to provide similar narrative-articulating climactic moments: *Iliad* 2. 484-93; 12. 176; 17. 260-1: cf. M.W. Edwards, *The Iliad: A Commentary. Vol. V: Books 17-20* (Cambridge 1991) 2-7.

[63] For what follows, see Connor (n.30) 50-62.

[64] 1. 140-44, 2. 13 (in indirect speech), and 2. 60-4.

achieves this culmination is 2. 65, which adverts to the time of narration. In doing so it merely points explicitly to the knowledge shared by reader and narrator of the way things turned out which has been constantly in the background of the narrative so far, e.g. in Archidamus' warning (1. 80-1) that the Athenians are too powerful to be forced to capitulate easily, or in Pericles' claim (1. 142) that Athens has nothing to fear from invasion of Attica. The perspective provided by this knowledge has been ambiguous, because knowledge of Athens' unexpected resilience is tempered by knowledge of her eventual defeat. Both perceptions are reflected in the reference to the time of narration in 2.65: on the one hand the passage 'justifies' Pericles' interpretations by pointing to the way the subsequent course of the war revealed the deep strength of Athens; on the other hand, it signals certain internal weaknesses of Athens which were to lead to disaster.

Even these weaknesses had been represented as foreseen by Pericles ('I fear our own mistakes': 1. 144.1), so the upshot of the analysis in 2. 65 is mainly positive from Pericles' point of view. But 2. 65 cannot be reduced to the *author*'s desire to impose a justification of Pericles on his narrative, for the analysis of the correctness of Pericles' judgement and policy has far wider implications than the justification of Pericles as an individual, looking back as it does to the origins of the war and forward to its future course, and reflecting as it does the perspective against which the reader has reacted and will react to the narrative. The narrative effect of the passage is a function of anachrony, temporal manipulation.[65] So in this case too the intervention is integral and relates to narrative technique: it is not imposed from outside the narrative.

The appropriateness, from the point of view of narrative strategy, of introducing a reference to the future resilience of Athens precisely at this point of the narrative is, I think, clear. The relevance of the other main thrust of the passage, Athenian internal dissensions, may not be so immediately obvious, but this too is firmly tied to the thematic dialogue of the main text. Pericles had tried (especially in the Funeral Speech) to synthesise and justify Athenian dynamic individualism,[66] and this topic was also tackled by the Corinthians in their speech at the first debate at Sparta (1. 70). But the narrative has also presented an Athenian individualism which is not dynamic and civic, but selfish and divisive, e.g. during the first invasion of Archidamus (2. 20-2) and in the plague (2. 53). It is just such a display of harmful individualism which leads to the final speech of Pericles (2. 59), and another (the fining and deposition of Pericles) which provides the impulse for the intervention at 2 .65 (2. 65.3-4). With Pericles gone (for 2. 65 conflates the moment of greatest crisis for Pericles' policy with the moment of his death), the destructive aspects of this individualism are to come to the fore, and result in the internal divisions which are anticipated in 2. 65 (*cf.* the dissensions over Pylos, Mytilene and Sicily in the later narrative, and the revolution of the 5,000 and 400 in book 8).

The passage thus not only marks the culmination of the issues of the first two books, it shows, at this moment of analytical climax, how they will dominate the experience of the subsequent narrative. It sets out, for the first time, the two later phenomena which are most significant for the historical perspective of the *History*: Athens' ability to hold out for so long, and the failure of the Sicilian expedition, together with the fall of Athens which this foreshadows. These events define the central themes of the *History*: the deep strength of Athens, and her tendency towards destructive internal dissension. (These two themes can be seen as two aspects of an underlying Athenian character: the cooperative and dynamic individualism which gives the Athenians their strength, and the selfish and destructive pursuit of individual advantage

[65] For a subtle analysis of the effect of temporal manipulation in 2. 65 and other narrator interventions, see Rood (n.5), ch. 4, 204 ff.

[66] *Cf.* Connor (n.30) 68-70.

which causes their downfall.)[67] These themes and these events dominate the central interventions of the *History*.[68] All this is in a sense anticipated by the key moment when Pericles, correctly analysing the power of Athens, was deposed and fined by his fellow-citizens.

2. 65 uses historical perspective primarily to aid understanding, but the reference to the time of narration also helps establish pathos. The vision of Pericles and the greatness of the Athens he describes are set against their eventual fate at the hands of history. The idea of the great power undermined by its own mistakes, its 'tragic flaw', has its own pathetic appeal. This idea had already been introduced by the powerful use of the irony of the historical perspective in the 'epitaph' of Athens at the end of the last speech of Pericles (2. 64, the preceding chapter). In Thucydides, the gap between reality and the human perception of reality (a gap which is often revealed by historical perspective) is a subject for the contemplation not just of the intellect, but also of the sensibility. The fate of Athens, whose power was the greatest, and whose fall was the most catastrophic, is at once the most instructive and the most pathetic of all events, while the double defeat of expectation involved (that of the other Greeks faced with Athenian resilience and that of the Athenians faced with the destruction of their empire) is more redolent than anything else of the element of τὸ παράλογον, the defeat of human expectations, which is such an important theme in Thucydides.[69]

2. 65 is an example of intervention as a narrative move tied to the very heart of the *History*'s thematic, and extending far beyond the mere justification of Pericles: it is narrative strategy, not narrative afterthought. Of course, the narratorial voice exerts a powerful influence on reader reaction. But in the passages we have looked at, this voice is not used primarily to allow the author to impose his subjective views on the text, but rather to confront narrative time with chronicle time for narrative and rhetorical effect.

The paradigmatic in interventions

It is important to note that this confrontation of times arises out of a key moment, which we may call 'paradigmatic',[70] a moment which offers access, for the first time, to a pattern of central significance, a type of recurring action. This paradigmatic quality is suggested by the rhetoric of the interventions themselves, which typically signal that the event in question was the first,[71] the greatest,[72] or the only example of some general phenomenon. Key events are seized upon as suggestive of general pattern, or conversely, intervention arises out of events seen as having paradigmatic significance. This mode of thought or narrative may be compared

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[67] The individualism of the Athenians makes the city dynamic and strong, but it also leads to acts of collective folly or selfishness, like the decision to depose Pericles, the refusal of Spartan peace offers after Pylos, the recall of Alcibiades and (perhaps) the launching of the Sicilian expedition; or to the sort of obsession with victory (φιλονικία) described at 7.28.3.

[68] *Cf.* de Romilly, *Thucydides and Athenian Imperialism* (Oxford 1963) 223: see 2. 65, 3. 17, 4. 108, 6. 15, 7. 28.3, 7. 787.4-6 + 8.1, 8. 24.4-6.

[69] 7. 28.3, 7. 55.2, *cf.* 3. 16.2, 3. 113.2-6, 8. 24.5.

[70] On *paradeigmata* and patterns, *cf.* V. Hunter, *Thucydides the Artful Reporter* (Toronto 1973) 179-80 and passim. However, by paradigmatic action, I mean not the grand or metaphysical patterns which Hunter sees Thucydides' *History* as designed to reveal, but simply recurring causal factors.

[71] E.g. Naxos was the first allied city to lose its freedom contrary to established agreements (1. 98). The plague was the first beginning of ἀνομία in Athens (2. 53.1). The political infighting in 415 was the first time affairs in the city were brought into confusion (2.65.11). The Corcyrean stasis was 'among the first' of the staseis of the Peloponnesian War (3. 82.1). Brasidas was the first Spartiate to to be sent to help allies overseas, and the best (4. 81.2-3).

[72] On superlatives, see the general list of interventions, above.

with the Herodotean formulae ἔτι ἐπ' ἐμέ and τῶν ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν.[73] It is a mode which is fully consistent with the general claim that the events described in the *History* are paradigmatic for human behaviour (τὸ ἀνθρώπινον) in general (1. 22.4).

In interventions like 2. 65, this paradigmatic perspective sometimes produces forms of expression which have caused some difficulty of interpretation. What is meant, for example, by those 'other ventures' which seemed not to have any connection with the war, bringing advantage to individuals when successful, but harm to the city when they failed (2. 65.7)? What were the other mistakes, apart from the Sicilian expedition, which were caused by excessive rivalry and internal disputes (2. 65.11)? I suggest that these phrases are ways of referring to a single archetypal event (the Sicilian expedition) so as to suggest its wider significance—the Athenians' tendency to bring themselves to grief through internal disputes. The failure of the Sicilian expedition is the most important key event in the *History*, presaging the fall of Athens and the internal dissension which will bring this disaster about.

The vague-sounding sentence on the failure of the Sicilian expedition in 2. 65.11 has a similar cryptically paradigmatic quality:

> [the expedition] was not so much a mistake of judgement with regard to those against whom it was directed; it was rather that those who sent it out failed to make the right subsequent decisions for the forces in the field, but pursuing their own private political battles for the leadership of the *demos*, they made the expedition lose its edge, and the affairs of the city were for the first time brought into confusion by their quarreling.

This strongly suggests the decision to recall Alcibiades,[74] but described in such a way as to suggest the whole atmosphere of individualistic rivalry and dissension which, as we will go on to see in books 6 and 7,[75] undermined the expedition. The recall of Alcibiades as the result of a bitter dispute for personal political supremacy is symptomatic of the causes of the failure of the whole expedition, which failure is in turn paradigmatic for those internally-generated mistakes which led to Athens' defeat in the whole war (2. 65.12).

Such phrases are only problematic if pressed to produce a definitive authorial judgement. Yet this is just what language like this, and indeed the interventions in general, is apparently trying to avoid. Their purpose is not to establish a definitive explanation which will render subsequent analysis of events redundant, but to suggest the underlying pattern revealed by the perspective of later events.

An appreciation of this sort of paradigmatic thinking may help us to understand 6. 15, another passage which has often troubled commentators. Here, Alcibiades' paranomic behaviour is said to have 'afterwards brought down the city' (καθεῖλεν ὕστερον τὴν τῶν Ἀθηναίων πόλιν οὐχ ἥκιστα: 6. 15.8). To which events does this sentence refer? The most obvious reference is to the deposition of Alcibiades in 406 BC (which was soon followed by a general deterioration of the Athenian position and finally by defeat at Aegospotami), but it is clear that

[73] *Cf.* Fowler (n.6) 73-4. Fowler compares the traditional schema of the πρῶτος εὑρετής. *Cf.* also the habit of thought implied by the Greek phrase ἄλλα τε καί, on which see H. Erbse, 'Der erste Satz im Werke Herodots', in *Festschrift Bruno Snell* (Munich 1956) 209-22 at 215-7. On Thucydides' interest in 'Gelenkstellen und Krisepunkten', *cf.* Stahl (n.58) 92, 129 ff.

[74] *Cf.* de Romilly (n.68) 209; H.D. Westlake, *Essays on the Greek Historians and Greek History* (Manchester 1969) 168-73; H. Erbse, *Thukydides-Interpretationen* (Berlin & New York 1989) 84-5.

[75] The expedition was born out of dissension (the Sicilian debate), and undermined by the political sabotage and recriminations of the Herms and Mysteries affair, the main upshot of which was the exile of the most active of the expedition's generals, on its own a 'subsequent decision' capable of 'taking the edge off the expedition'. Moreover, Alcibiades' advice became crucial in spurring on the Spartans to send Gylippus, and left the ultimately ineffective Nicias in charge. *Cf.* Dover in Gomme (n.47) 5. 425-7; W. Liebeschuetz, 'Thucydides and the Sicilian expedition', *Historia* 17 (1968) 289-306.

the behaviour attributed to Alcibiades in 6. 15 (his quality of μέγεθος, his paranomic behaviour, the fear he was aiming at tyranny) is above all relevant to the events of 416-15 which are to lead to his *first* deposition: in fact the analysis connects directly with material immediately preceding and following (Alcibiades' unprecedented extravagance at Olympia, his ambitious plans to conquer Sicily). Thus even if many readers of 6. 15.3 will think in the first instance of 406-4, few will fail to think also of 415.[76] Outrageous behaviour on Alcibiades' part leading to a hostile (and equally deplorable) reaction on the part of the Athenians and disaster for the city: this was a pattern in the relationship between Alcibiades and the city. Once again the point of the intervention is to draw the pattern out of the specific event. 6. 15 can be seen as an example of the 'first instance' schema: narrative of the disastrous internal dissension focusing on Alcibiades in 416/15 leads by a natural turn of thought to contemplation of a more general pattern, and especially of the even more momentous deposition of Alcibiades in 406. The anticipation of these events in turn powerfully underlines the historical perspective against which the following speech of Alcibiades and the subsequent narrative is to be read (note the resumption at 6. 15.5: τότε δ' οὖν παρελθών ...: 'so on that occasion Alcibiades ...'). Once again, then, the role of the intervention is not so much to impose a subjective judgement as to confront narrative time with later event. Once the passage is perceived in terms of its narrative purpose, the problem of finding a specific reference for 6. 15.3 disappears.

Interpretative purpose in the interventions

Narrator interventions like 2. 65 and 6. 15 tell us what we already know or are about to find out more about from the narrative itself.[77] They are 'interventions' in a formal sense only, since they are embodiments of a voice that has been felt strongly all along. Though a background level of controversy is perceptible, the aim of resorting to the narratorial voice is not to establish authority to silence critics (so that the aim of justifying Pericles,[78] for example, is seen, in the event, to be consistent with, and eventually overlaid by, a much more general and wide-ranging purpose). Such interventions help direct our reaction in a general sense by establishing an interpretative framework, or an interpretative mode, but they are not 'judgements' providing an authoritative and authorial solution not otherwise available from the narrative. The suggestive vagueness of the interpretative language in the interventions seems rather to underline the desire *not* to employ the narrator's voice to impose interpretations, unless in the sense of modes of interpretation according to broad patterns of event and behaviour (the power of Athens, internal disputes, τὸ παράλογον). In Thucydides' narrative picture of the Peloponnesian War, some lines are more clearly perceptible than others: narrative and intervention leave relatively little room for interpretation in the depiction of Pericles, for example, or Brasidas, but leave the reaction to Nicias and in particular Alcibiades far more open: in these cases narrative and intervention artfully formulate the terms in which the question about such characters can be put.

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[76] It is usually thought that Thucydides must either be referring to 416-15 or 404. Thus P.A. Brunt, 'Thucydides and Alcibiades', in Brunt, *Studies in Greek History and Thought* (Oxford 1993) 17-46 argues (18-19) that he cannot be referring to 406; Dover in Gomme (n.47) 5, 242-5 that the verbs καθεῖλεν and ἔσφηλαν must refer to 406. But Thucydides saw the defeat in Sicily as so massive that it prefigured the final defeat in 404 (2. 65.11-12; 7. 87-8.1). The two defeats (both preceded by internal dissension and a deposition of Alcibiades) are inextricably linked: both and each may be referred to by καθεῖλεν and ἔσφηλαν.

[77] Other clear illustrations of this type of overlap, apart from those discussed below, are 4. 65.4 (where, as Hunter [n. 70] 78-83 shows, we have already had clear implicit indications of the effect of good fortune in encouraging the Athenians to stretch out for more); 6. 69.1 and 7. 55.2 (the daring and skill of the Syracusans—and also their similiarities to the Athenians—is evident from the narrative); 8. 96.1-3 (the contrast of Athenian and Spartan national characteristics is a constant theme from the first debate in Sparta in book 1 onwards).

[78] This aim is certainly present: e.g. the statement that Pericles looked after the city moderately and safely, and under him Athens was at her greatest (2. 65.5), which is not strictly speaking necessary to the main narrative.

Thus attempts to mine the interventions for precious evidence of Thucydides' own opinions are often misplaced. To take one example, though 6. 15.4 (δημοσίαι κράτιστα διαθέντι τὰ πολέμου) is favourable towards Alcibiades' military abilities, the remark takes its point from the context, which is concerned above all with the contrast between an objective and public (δημοσίαι) analysis of Alcibiades, and the way he was actually judged by the Athenians, based on a 'private' (ἰδίαι) antipathy.[79] The point is not to express a once-and-for-all judgement on Alcibiades' ability as a general, and indeed only two chapters afterwards, we can already sense the extent to which Alcibiades' military skill is a product of his own image-making.[80] The supposed inconsistencies[81] which such phrases have been held to involve are a result of a type of criticism which sees interventions as sites of nuggets of authorial direction and opinion.

Even an apparently directive intervention, like the statement of the ἀληθεστάτη πρόφασις in book 1, need not suggest a desire to impose definitive interpretations. The type of interpretation proposed by 1. 23.6 and 1. 88 can, in its general outlines, be seen as reflected in the narrative, so that once again the intervention is telling us what we already know or are about to find out.[82] Moreover, the 'truest cause' (Spartan fear of Athenian imperial pressure) is phrased in such a way that it could cover a wide range of actual accounts of the outbreak of the war: in fact as a statement of the cause of the war, it might be acceptable even to some of the modern scholars who most object to Thucydides' account of the origins. The 'truest cause' does not replace the story of the competing goals and pressures, the complex interactions, the whole *picture* of the origins of the war painted in book 1. What it does do is to establish a general scheme which can then be refined in detail, and, in the second place, establish an interpretative mode: power politics as the key to the cause of wars, as distinct from personal motivations. One of the reasons why this mode is established in advance at 1. 23.6 (so that, unusually, the intervention precedes the themes it introduces as well as following them, at 1. 88), may be that explanations of the causes of the war in personal terms (like those found in Aristophanes)[83] must be cleared out of the way at an early stage. The acceptance of a type of causation centred on power politics, and not on personal relationships as in the Herodotean prologue, is an essential foundation for the reading of the whole *History*.[84] Hence the statement of the truest cause at 1. 23.6 is attached directly to the narrator's powerful demonstration in 1. 1-23 of the force of *Realpolitik*-explanations in the interpretation of event.[85] (One might paraphrase, 'The truest cause of the war was the sort of explanation in terms of imperialism and the reaction to it which, as we have seen, activated previous history'.)

To take another example, 2. 65.11 (where it is said that the failure of the Sicilian expedition was due 'not so much' to a mistaken analysis of the opposition, as to the failure of the

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[79] Objective analysis would have led to an appreciation of Alcibiades' value for the city. 'Private' analysis leads the Athenians to banish him, with disastrous destabilising results for the city.

[80] 6. 16.6. Though Alcibiades' presentation of his Mantinean policy is not actually untrue to the facts, the policy was nevertheless a failure, leading to the reassertion of Spartan supremacy in the Peloponnese (5. 75.3).

[81] Some scholars (e.g. Brunt [n. 76]) have been worried by the alleged inconsistency between 6. 15 and other passages which imply a more ambivalent view about Alcibiades' military performance, especially 8. 86.4.

[82] De Romilly (n.68) 22-37; A. Andrewes, 'Thucydides and the causes of the war', *CQ* 9 (1959) 223-39.

[83] *Ach.* 496-556, *Peace* 603-18. J. Richardson, 'Thucydides 1. 23.6 and the debate about the Peloponnesian war', in E.M. Craik (ed.), *Owls to Athens: Essays... Presented to Sir Kenneth Dover* (Oxford 1990) 155-62, sees Thucydides 1. 23.6 as a reaction to such popular accounts of the causes of the war.

[84] But the precedent of Homer and Herodotus is at least as important a reason for starting the narrative of a war with an account of its causes (as the journal's referee points out to me).

[85] E.g. 1. 9, where the Trojan War is explained in terms of imperial expansion rather than the judgement of Paris.

Athenians at home to make the right subsequent decisions regarding the expedition) does not prejudice the reading of book 6 by ruling out Athenian ignorance of the scale of the undertaking as an important factor in the failure of the expedition. This factor is given its proper emphasis when it comes to the main narrative,[86] but in the broader context of the discussion of the reasons for Athens' failure in 2. 65, it is natural that the focus should be on the internal dissensions which undermined the expedition. The intention might be to establish a hierarchy of causes (in the event internal dissension *is* dwelt on even more in books 6 and 7), but the 'not so much' clause is also a way of calling attention to the alternative causal motif where it might have been passed over in silence, thus signalling it in advance as important.[87] It is thus perhaps more pertinent to note that the emphasis of one element above the other in this passage is related to the narrative-rhetorical purpose of 2. 65, which is to establish Athenian internal weakness as a causal leitmotif for the rest of the work.

The formulations in 1. 23.6 and 2. 65.11 thus point the reader forward to the analysis which will come, and this is important. The actual narrative as it develops will flesh out such formulations and clarify their meaning, not to the extent of reformulating them, but transforming the bald statement into the complete picture.[88] Such passages thus resemble the introduction to a scholarly article, which is designed as a summary, foretaste, and initial formulation of the argument of the whole.

Focalisation in the narrator interventions

Having considered the role of interventions in adverting to the reactions of the reader and to the time of narration, we can now turn to the other narrative instance signalled by the interventions: the person of the narrator.

In 7. 42, Demosthenes has arrived at Syracuse with reinforcements for the Athenian expedition in Sicily, and reviews the Athenian position.[89] 7. 42.3 contains an analysis (the bracketed text in the OCT) of the previous course of the campaign which comments on the strategic mistakes of Nicias. But from whose point of view do these thoughts stem, Demosthenes' or the narrator's? In narratological terms, who is the focaliser? As Dover showed,[90] use of indicatives rather than accusative and infinitives suggests that it is the narrator, but this grammatical proof does not capture the complexity of the focalisation at this point. Because of the way the bracketed text is sandwiched between two sentences where Demosthenes is focaliser, the focalisation is curiously mobile (we almost have 'free indirect discourse',[91] as though Thucydides had written: 'What a mess Nicias had made of the Sicilian campaign!'), and the reader is encouraged to project the Demosthenic focalisation into the bracketed text. The initial perception of the reader is that the thoughts are to be regarded as Demosthenes' ('*thinking* he could not delay and suffer the same fate as Nicias'), but with an added narratorial authority provided by the indicatives. By the time we reach the end of the bracketed text, the impression is of a narrator-authorised, and thus 'correct' analysis, which Demosthenes, as a good general,

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[86] Though some hold that 2. 65.11 ('not so much a mistaken analysis of those against whom the expedition was directed') is inconsistent with 4. 1.1, which emphasises the Athenians' ignorance of the scale of the island: see Gomme (n.47) 5. 247; de Romilly (n.68) 109.

[87] On this and other 'not so much' clauses, see H. Westlake, *Essays on the Greek Historians and Greek History* (Manchester 1969) 161-7; Hornblower (n.5) 157. Distinguish 'negation by antithesis' clauses ('not x, but y'), which emphatically rule out an option: J.S. Rusten, Thucydides. *The Peloponnesian war, Book II* (Cambridge 1989) 24-5.

[88] Connor (n.30) 15-19, 233-40, pleads for a reading of Thucydides which takes into account the constant development of reader reaction.

[89] My thoughts on this passage owe much to some unpublished comments of Chris Pelling.

[90] (n.45); *cf.* Hornblower (n.5) 134.

[91] *Cf.* D. Fowler, 'Deviant focalisation in Virgil's *Aeneid*', *PCPS* 36 (1990) 42-63.

recognised ('Demosthenes, *considering*[92] all this... '), and upon which he then proceeded to act.[93] The focalisation slips smoothly from secondary focalisation[94] (through Demosthenes) to narrator focalisation, and back again, so that the hand of the narrator in the text is almost imperceptible.

This passage illustrates an important connection between narrator interventions as a means of suggesting analysis, and the devices of attributed motivation (i.e reported thoughts) and reported speech which are the usual means of creating an analytical superstructure in the narrative (what is unusual about 7. 42.3 is the extent and obviousness of the overlap between reported thoughts and narratorial comment). Thucydides' *History* is an example of what Barthes called 'reflexive' history,[95] that is, analysis arises out of a dialogue or comparison of reported points of view, whether this is a full antilogy like the Mytilenean debate, an organised reporting of (often competing) points of view like the conference of the generals in 6. 46-9, or the reporting of actors' thoughts.[96] Since this dialogue of secondary voice and focalisation is the normal analytical mode in Thucydides, it is natural that secondary voice and focalisations often give rise to analytical narrator interventions, as in 7. 42. The reporting of thoughts may already imply the presence of the narrator (thoughts are not generally known except to the actor himself, so reporting of them suggests the hand of the narrator, either as the conveyor of privileged information or the critical and intelligent reconstructor of motivation), and in the speeches it is natural that the implicit invitation to compare the claims made in them with the surrounding narrative should become explicit in an intervention. Intervention is made to emerge imperceptibly out of the dialogue of focalisations and voices in the text, so that the basic reflexive analytical schema is strengthened rather than abandoned in the intervention, and the impression of an authorial judgement intrusively imposed on the text is avoided.

The intervention on the reaction to the fall of Amphipolis at 4. 108 arises out of two secondary focalisations. The first focalisation is through the Athenians (108.1: 'with Amphipolis in enemy hands, the Athenians fell into a panic'), but by 108.3 the focalisation has shifted to the Thraceward allies of Athens and their eagerness to secede from Athens ('[the Athenians] were afraid that their allies would revolt...[for the allies], seeing Brasidas' capture of Amphipolis and what he was offering, and his mildness, were stirred to rebellion'). From here we move easily into the narrator focalisation of 108.4, which sets the eagerness of the allies to revolt in a historical perspective ('it seemed [ἐφαίνετο] to them that they were immune, because their misjudgement about the power of Athens was as great as the extent of this power as it was later revealed [διεφάνη]'),[97] and notes the human tendency illustrated by the allies' behaviour, to let hope rather than reason rule when the heart is set on a thing. This sentence, with its

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[92] Note the shift from νομίσας (before the bracketed text), implying a subjective evaluation of affairs, to ἀνασκοπῶν (after the bracketed text) implying an objective recognition of an actual state of affairs.

[93] Note the echo of the bracketed text ('when Nicias first arrived he aroused fear') in the narrative of Demosthenes' own actions ('recognising that he too [καὶ αὐτός] was most terrible to the enemy on the first day'). This underlines the conclusion that the thoughts are both the narrator's and Demosthenes'.

[94] In narratological terminology, a primary focalisation occurs when it is the narrator who sees; a secondary focalisation when it is one of the characters of the story who sees.

[95] Barthes (n.3) 137.

[96] On the attribution of motivations (many of which cannot have been, or are most unlikely to have been, known to Thucydides) as a way of establishing an interpretative structure *cf.* Hunter (n.70); C. Schneider, *Information und Absicht bei Thukydides* (Göttingen 1974); H.D. Westlake, 'Personal motives, aims and feelings in Thucydides', in Westlake, *Studies in Thucydides and Greek History* (Bristol 1989) ch. 14.

[97] The echo of ἐφαίνετο in διεφάνη underlines the contrast between the immediate perception on the part of the allies and the wider perspective of Athenian power revealed in the intervention (the change from imperfect to aorist and the addition of δι– achieving the transition from 'appearance' to 'reality').

conspicuous anachrony and generalisation, can only be focalised through the narrator, but since the narrator is commenting on the reaction of the allies, the focalisation through the allies is never forgotten (the narrator focaliser comments on the thoughts of the secondary focaliser). The transition to narrator focalisation is accomplished especially smoothly, by means of the word ἐψευσμένοις (which compresses the thought 'and they were wrong, because...'). 108.5 returns to the allies as focalisers (they were encouraged by Brasidas and thought no reinforcements would come from Athens), and the next sentence moves back to the Athenian focalisation with which we started ('perceiving this, the Athenians sent out garrisons'), so that the structure is a ring, with the narrator focalisation at its core: Athenians–allies–narrator–allies–Athenians.[98]

This structure confronts the perceptions of the participants with each other as well as with the historical perspective (the eventual resilience of Athens). These tactics assist the refocusing of reader reaction which is one of the prime aims of this passage: at a moment of disaster for Athens, the fears of the Athenians and the hopes of their allies are set against the wider historical perspective and shown to be unfounded (and the rhetoric of Brasidas, which played down Athenian power, misleading). We go into the ring full of the perception of the disaster the fall of Amphipolis represents for Athens, and come out if it with a renewed perception of her strength. Thus the passage starts with the panicky reaction in Athens, and finishes with the beginning of Athenian counter-measures and the first revelations of the ambivalence of Brasidas' support at home (108.7). Here, once again, adversion to the time of the narration is a feature of the emotional as well as the intellectual level of the work, for the resilience of Athens has pathetic implications for the Thraceward allies, as the subsequent fate of some of them (e.g. Scione–5. 32.1) reveals.[99] The adversion to time of narration (from which the events described can be seen against the perspective of the whole war) is so implicated in its context by the nest of focalisations, its effect so integral to the reading of the work, that it would be most inappropriate to analyse it as a later addition.[100] In this passage, as in others, reference to future time and use of narratorial voice are to be seen as deliberate devices intended as a contribution to the reading of the text at that point: they do not necessarily carry any implication for the date of composition.

The movement: disaster for Athens–foreshadowing of Athenian power–renewed perception of Athenian strength, is in fact a typical one in the *History*'s narrator interventions.[101] These passages establish a pattern of reader reaction, in which setback for Athens is followed by a renewed appreciation of her future resilience (with accompanying *paralogon* or momentous consequences for those who had miscalculated her power), a pattern most perfectly exemplified at the moment (8. 1) when Athens, shattered by the Sicilian expedition 'decided nevertheless not to give in, but to get together a fleet... and finances'.[102]

Thus the interventions present a confrontation of actor-focalisations with the focalisation of the narrator who writes afterwards, and comment on the action is rather a comment on, or dialogue with, the thoughts of the actor-focalisers, so that, as in 7. 42.3, the line between

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[98] *Cf.* Connor (n.30) 133 and S. Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides* (Oxford 1991) 2. 341, comparing the structure of 4. 81. The intervention at 7. 55 presents a similar ring structure (Syracusans– Athenians– narrator– Athenians–Syracusans). 7. 42.3 is framed by the focalisation of Demosthenes, 2. 65 of Pericles.

[99] Compare the intervention regarding the Chians at 8. 24.4-6, though here the Chians are practically absolved from the fault of miscalculating Athenian resilience, which was so surprising as to be almost too much for prediction by normal reasoning.

[100] *Cf.* Westlake (n.72) 138-44.

[101] 2. 65 (where the narrator's prediction of future resilience after plague and hardship is already anticipated by Pericles), 4. 108, 7. 28.3, 7. 87.4-6 + 8. 1, 8. 24.4-6.

[102] 8. 1.3. In this case, the whole of book 8 constitutes the demonstration of Athenian resilience.

secondary focalisation and narrator focalisation is often a flexible one and hard to pin down.[103] The section in these passages which is narrator-focalised may be introduced by γάρ, where the particle marks the transition from actor- to narrator-focalisation:[104] 'this is what Pericles thought, and he was right, for...'; 'this is what the Thraceward allies thought, but they were wrong, for...'. Even in the narrator-focalised sections themselves, the focalisation of the actors in the narrative at that point, out of which the intervention grew, is rarely lost: 'history would show how mistaken these thoughts of the Thraceward allies had been'; 'the Athenians thought Pericles was wrong in his analysis of the war, but the subsequent course of events would show how right he had been'. In Thucydides' 'reflexive' history, point of view is everywhere. There is nearly always an implied focaliser influencing the way things are put. As we saw in the dialogue of focalisations in 4. 108, the narrator comments on secondary focalisations and secondary focalisations comment on one another.[105]

6. 15, which we have already considered above, is another intervention set in a dialogic frame. Here, the narrative voice is merged into the text through the device of an expanded character introduction[106] of Alcibiades. Again, we find ring structure, the narratorial section ringed this time by the voice of Alcibiades, and focalisation through the Athenians:

- Alcibiades was the one who spoke most strongly in favour of the expedition [6. 15.2]
  - though the Athenians held him in honour, his behaviour was outrageous and provocative [6. 15.3].
    - This state of affairs later brought disaster on the city,
  - for the people did not trust him and entrusted others with affairs, thus bringing the city to ruin [6. 15.4].
- So on that occasion Alcibiades encouraged the Athenians with these words ... [6. 15.5]

It is interesting to note how the shift in focalisation, reflected in the changing subjects of the sentences in this passage, suggests the complexity of the disastrous relationship between Alcibiades and the Athenians, and the difficulty of allocating actual blame. Though it is Alcibiades' outrageous behaviour which is initially described, the subject of 'brought down the city' is an impersonal (ὅπερ, 15.3), while it is the Athenians,[107] surprisingly, rather than Alcibiades or the impersonal 'this', who are made the subject of ἐσφηλαν τὴν πόλιν. Both citizens and leader had a role to play in the city's downfall, and the passage closes by introducing the provocatively undemocratic speech of Alcibiades (6. 15.4: 'so on that occasion ...') which so well illustrates the relationship between him and the Athenians.

In terms of the Sicilian debate itself, the narrating voice in 6. 15 mediates between the voices of Nicias and Alcibiades. Alcibiades really was motivated to propose the expedition by personal ambition, so that the allegation of Nicias (6. 12.2) is confirmed, but attention is drawn to the way personal antipathy to Alcibiades overrode objective consideration of his considerable military talent, which supports in advance Alcibiades' claim at 6. 16.6.[108] Thus to regard 6. 15.3-4 as an imperfectly-integrated later addition would not only (as we saw above) have the effect of bracketing off a signalling of the historical perspective which is crucial to the experience of the work, but would also break the careful structure of the immediate context.

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[103] As in 7. 55 (the reaction to the first Syracusan naval victory in Sicily), where the narrator-focalised comments on the similarities between Syracuse and Athens as democracies are likely to be read to some extent as a continuation of the thoughts of the Athenians. In other key passages, though there is technically secondary focalisation, the feeling of the hand of the narrator is strong: e.g. 7. 18 and 8. 1-2, on which see Connor (n.15) 14. On shifting focalisations in general, see Hornblower (n.5) 164-5.

[104] 7. 42.3, cf. 2. 65.7, 4. 108.4. Cf. Hornblower (n.5) 134.

[105] Cf. Connor (n.15) 8 ff., noting the rapid changes of secondary focalisation in 3. 92.3.

[106] On character introductions in Thucydides (a quasi-intervention in themselves, particularly in extended form like 5. 43), see G.T. Griffith, 'Some habits of Thucydides when introducing persons', PCPS 8 (1961) 21-33.

[107] οἱ πολλοί: i.e. the Athenian assembly.

[108] On the role of 6. 15 in its context, cf. Connor (n.30) 164-6.

Conclusion

Since Thucydides was a master of the sort of narrative that contains its own significances, he did not need to resort to heavy-handed interventions to provide an interpretative framework, and in fact when interventions do occur, they tend, as we have seen, to duplicate significances implicit in the text. Their purpose is not to tell the reader what to think (or replace a close reading of the main narrative), but to shape reader reaction in a wider sense. They highlight crucial analytical threads in the work, or preview issues which are to be explored more deeply by the future narrative as a whole. They confront narrative time with chronicle time, confront various points of view with each other and with the way things turned out, and articulate climaxes of the narrative. The emergence of the voice of the narrator marks climaxes of the emotional and analytical superstructure of the narrative, and from this arises their structural function, not only to signal culminations, but also to suggest relationships with other similar or related moments in the narrative.

In confronting chronicle time with narrative time, interventions are a method of highlighting that comparison of what was said and done with the way things turned out which is so central to the experience of historical narrative: the revelation of the depth of Athenian power, and the failed Sicilian expedition which anticipates the fall of Athens, are the most important events here. This style of intervention-assisted reflexive history is a natural one in the context of a society where there was a constant need to evaluate, and decide among, various voices, and also a constant process of setting advice against eventuality.[109] The technique of setting story time against a foreknowledge of future events also recalls the rather starker dramatic ironies of the Athenian tragic stage, where a character's speech (Oedipus', say) is rendered significant by the audience's knowledge of the eventual outcome of the story. Thucydidean narrative 'irony' is capable of a similar contribution to emotional depth (as in the effect of the anticipation of the unguessed power of Athens on our reaction to the behaviour of the Thraceward allies). The 'irony' of the historical perspective is associated in particular with two crucial Thucydidean concepts: τὸ παράλογον, a gap between plan and event which often has tragic overtones, and πρόνοια, the ability to trace future events through intellectual power and the understanding of the patterns of human behaviour.[110]

Let us now return to the two main reactions to narrator interventions singled out at the beginning of this article. In analyst interpretations, references in the interventions to the way things turned out are read as signs that they were composed 'later' (such interpretations are thus faced with the problem of demonstrating that the surrounding text was produced 'earlier'). The 'intervention' of the narrative voice is read as the *literal* intervention of the actual author into an already-composed text. The problem with such an approach is that it may replace a reading of the work with a sort of operation on it, ruling out in advance an attempt to understand the narrative techniques of the text. The placing of interventions in analytical square brackets prevents these central exposures of the historical perspective from which the text is read from occupying their rightful place in our experience of the work, by stigmatising them as 'late', separate from the text, or even blatantly inconsistent with it. As I have tried to show, the combination of anachrony and the use of narratorial voice in these passages does not necessarily imply that they were added later, as it might at first sight appear.[111] Moreover, passages which

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[109] *Cf.* Diodotus at Thuc. 3. 43.4-5.

[110] On τὸ παράλογον, see above. πρόνοια: 2. 62.5, 2. 65.6, 4. 108.4, 6. 13.1 (*cf.* 2. 65.13, 2. 89.9, 2. 60.5, 1. 24.4, 1. 138.3).

[111] *Cf.* de Romilly (n.68) 223, n. 1 calling Schwartz's automatic branding of interventions as later additions 'a failure to understand the way Thucydides wrote'. De Romilly also argues persuasively that these passages are fully consistent with the surrounding narrative. She claims, moreover, that certain passages, including the key interventions, reveal a perspective which Thucydides can only have achieved after the end of the war. This is clearly true, though I am not convinced that this perspective is *not* demonstrated by the surrounding narrative, so that the interventions can be shown to be later (as de Romilly argues: 221-4, 228-9). But in terms of the *reading* of the work this

refer to events after the time of the main narrative are linked to the surrounding text by an integral structure. This does not, of course, prove that they were not written at another time than the main narrative: it does, however, show that whenever they were written, they are consistent with, and indeed central to, the thinking and themes of the whole *History*.

As I suggested, the second reaction to interventions has been to focus on them as expressions of authorial opinion, collecting them in an attempt to form an overall 'judgement' on a given issue (thus begging the question of the methodological aim of isolating the opinion of the author).[112] This approach equates the narratorial voice of the interventions with an all-authoritative authorial voice. Making a methodological separation between author and narrator, or if one prefers, between a narrative voice with a primarily narrative-rhetorical purpose and an authorial voice with a purely analytical purpose, can help us to avoid the main problem encountered by this approach, the alleged inconsistencies between the interventions. Statements about the cause of the failure of the Sicilian expedition or Alcibiades' military abilities are tuned to the dialogue of voices and focalisations at the point in the narrative where they occur. They are thus designed to be read in their narrative context, as part of the ongoing experience of the text, rather than to present the same authorial analysis each time. They cannot replace the experience of the text, which 'respects rather than reduces the complexity of events, and invites rather than dictates the reader's reaction.'[113]

Few these days will regard Thucydides as a 'scientific' historian, whose transparent, objective style offers access to the facts themselves. But the growing tendency to see him as a rhetorician concerned above all with imposing his version of events on the reader by dressing it up as zero-focalised objective truth is an exaggeration of another sort. The decision to write a narrative, and especially the decision to adopt not only the 'objective' narrative of the *Iliad*, but also its 'reflexive' technique of compared speech and point of view, involved the choice to create a *literary* work, in which meanings can only arise from a close reading and from a total response to the whole work, and can never be reduced to a simple statement.[114] The narratorial interventions are consistent with this choice: they do not open up a gulf between a complex, literary Thucydides (the speeches, the elaborate narrative) and a simplistically positivist or rhetorical Thucydides (the prologue and the narrator interventions).[115] Thucydides' choice of narrative technique suggests that he conceived of his historiography as a structuring of historical events which was in some sense definitive, but which was also dependent on an intelligent and sensitive response to the text matching his own to the events of the Peloponnesian War.

APPENDIX 1: 'CASUAL' NARRATOR INTERVENTIONS AND BOOK 8

There are a number of passages in Thucydides where the first person is used in the normal narrative to reinforce an apparently unimportant point, without the apparatus of the full-blown narrator intervention I have sketched above. The distinction between 'casual' and other

disagreement is not significant (as de Romilly herself maintains): what is important is that (i) the passages isolated by de Romilly are consistent with the rest of the work, and (ii) the work as we have it now reflects the perspective of the time after the end of the war.

[112] Whereas significances in literature are held from the total impression of the whole text, works of history are approached with a view to isolating the judgements of their authors.

[113] Connor (n.30) 236.

[114] Thus the objective style can actually be seen as 'a means by which the reader is drawn into the work': Connor (n.15) 232.

[115] *Cf.* Luschnat in *RE* Suppl. xii, 1257: 'Oder soll man sagen, dass das Vertrauen des Historikers in die Rationalität doch erschüttert ist (wofür sein Rückzug auf das Beschreiben als das Medium einer nicht-rationalen und nach-rationalen Weltbewältigung sprechen könnte) ... und dass Stellen wie II.65 nur Rückzugsgefechte sind, die ohne Überzeugung geführt werden'. But the picture of the narrator interventions as discordant outbreaks of positivism implied here is wrong, as I have tried to show.

interventions is admittedly somewhat arbitrary: an intervention is casual when the interjection of the narrator's voice does not appear to relate to important thematic concerns of the work as a whole. The passages which I am tempted to call 'casual' interventions are either associated with certain specific concerns, or they occur in book 8.

Two 'casual' interventions are appearances of the narrator as organiser ('as I related earlier'): 5. 1. 1 and 6. 94.1. As for these, it is far more important to notice the contrast with the explicit Herodotean style: apart from these two passages, 'cross-referencing' in Thucydides is accomplished by implicit parallels and reminiscences, not by the use of the narrator's voice.

Three casual interventions refer to the significance of oracles and portents:

C1	2. 17.2	oracle predicting harm if τὸ Πελαργικόν inhabited	first person
C2	2. 54.3	oracle predicting Doric war and λοιμός/λιμός	first person counter-factual
C3	3. 89.5	cause of tidal waves	first person

The backgound of these passages is apparently a dialogue with the narrative technique of rival historians. They occur at a place where one might have expected a narrator intervention of a different sort, relating events to a divine level. Following the introduction of what is apparently a Herodotean oracle excursus adding a level of divine predetermination and structure to the narrative, the narratorial voice is introduced to *sabotage* the effect: 'There was an oracle predicting this, but if you ask me, the most interesting thing was how men interpreted the oracle'.[116] Whatever conclusions one might draw from these passages about the beliefs of the author, they have the effect of rejecting a divine superstructure for the narrative and throwing explanation back on to the level of the human (or in the last case, the natural). Thucydides has transformed the 'oracle intervention' of his predecessors from a means of suggesting the workings of the divine, into a way of reinforcing the weakness of humans who turn to the supernatural in moments of crisis and uncertainty, so that theology is diverted into anthropology. The tendency of the actors in narrative time to turn to oracles as an easy way of structuring experience illustrates a typical theme: the intellectual strategies of humans in adversity. The perspective of the narrator outside the story time enables him not to perceive a divine superstructure,[117] but to see how forced or convenient the interpretations of the actors at story time were.

The 'casual' interventions in book 8 are more difficult, but a few observations can nevertheless be attempted.[118] Firstly, they tend to deal with the motivations and justification of individuals, so they are an aspect of the 'reflexive' method of analysis in the *History*. Two

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[116] *Cf.* N. Marinatos, 'Thucydides and oracles', *JHS* 101 (1981) 138-40, with full bibliography, and the additional remarks of K.J. Dover, 'Thucydides on oracles', in Dover, *The Greeks and their Legacy* (Oxford 1988) 65-73. Marinatos may be right to emphasise the fact that Thucydides does not (except perhaps in 5. 26.3) actually call into question the validity of oracles. By adopting an attitude which is agnostic (tending toward the cynical), Thucydides contrives to get the sense of depth and pattern provided by having oracles in the narrative without abandoning his concentration on the human, rather than the divine, as the motor of historical causation. (Even in 5. 26.3, which appears to throw doubt on the worth of oracles in general, the oracle that the war was to last 27 years is nevertheless deployed to give oracular sanction to Thucydides' own interpretation of the length of the war.)

[117] The perspective of the historian puts him in a unique position to determine whether or not oracles were fulfilled. But Thucydides uses this prerogative only tentatively or ambivalently.

[118] Rood (n.5) 339 ff., noting the emphasis on familiar themes in some of the book 8 interventions (e.g. Athenian internal dissension in 8.89; the continuing strength of Athens in 8. 97) would prefer to see them as somewhat more integral to the overall narrative strategy of the the work as a whole than my presentation here implies. His arguments about book 8 are to be expanded in the forthcoming book version of his thesis, to be published by OUP.

passages are concerned with the motivations of Tissaphernes, specifically with emphasising the difficulty of establishing his motivations:

C4	8. 56.3	why Tissaphernes behaved as he did in conference with Athenians	first person

C5	8. 87.4-5	why Tissaphernes did not bring the Phoenician fleet	first person counterfactual

Two deal with the thinking of Phrynichus, specifically with justifying his analysis as legitimate and intelligent:

C6	8. 27.5	Phrynichus' decision to abandon Miletus justified, his intelligence praised	anticipation

C7	8. 64.5	oligarchy for allies was a bad idea (*cf.* 8.48.5-7)	first person anticipation

In the second of these passages the narratorial voice justifies the thoughts of Phrynichus in 8. 48, where, in a long focalisation, he had been attributed with similar thoughts on the folly of installing oligarchies in the allied cities. The other main thrust of Phrynichus' thoughts in 8. 48, the unsuitability of Alcibiades for the revolution, is also confirmed on the spot by the narratorial voice ὅπερ καὶ ἦν: 8. 48.4).

Another well-known passage deals with Alcibiades:

C8	8. 86.4-5	first benefit Alcibiades did to Athens	anachrony counterfactual superlative

Finally, three passages deal with the motivation and justification of those behind the revolution of the Five Thousand and Four Hundred in 411 BC:

C9	8. 68	the talent of the 411 revolutionaries	anachrony first person

C10	8. 89.3	φιλοτιμία among oligarchs was cause of collapse of revolution	

C11	8. 97.2-3	constitution of the 5,000 praised	anachrony first person

The concentration on individuals in the story of the revolution of the 400 and the 5,000 is appropriate in the narrative of a coup which was dominated by a few key players, and which was eventually destroyed partly by dissension between individuals (note the way 8. 68 and 8. 89.3 balance the ability of the revolutionaries as individuals with their weakness as oligarchs when it came to working together).

Increased occurrence of narrator intervention in book 8 has been taken as a sign of incompleteness:[119] the narrative, it is claimed, is still at the stage of representing the author's

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[119] Andrewes in Gomme (n.47) 5. 399-400.

thoughts, and has not yet become the transparent account of 'what actually happened'.[120] But the greater fragmentation of book 8, and the increased use of the narratorial voice to mediate between focalisations on relatively unimportant points seems to me more likely to represent a conscious decision for a different type of narrative[121] than evidence of a first draft. Increased use of 'casual' interventions is clearly connected to an attempt to build up a more detailed picture of increasingly complex events through a dialogue of focalisations on specific points. The action Thucydides chooses to describe in this book (the complex Greek-Persian diplomacy, the revolution of 411) is more minute than in any previous section of narrative, the general themes less clear. Focalisers are called on to provide insight on very specific points: was it the right decision for the Athenians to abandon Miletus, for Tissaphernes to provide poor pay to the Spartans (8. 46.1), for the oligarchs to set up oligarchies in the allied cities? The narrative voice too intervenes in a more minute way, to support or undermine motivations and analysis of actors. This is consistent with the general tendency of book 8, which is not to introduce new techniques for structuring the narrative, but to have more frequent recourse to techniques already familiar from the earlier books.[122]

The amount of narrator-directed focalisation through Phrynichus must partly be due to the controversy surrounding his reputation (his enemies in the oligarchy threw his abandonment of Miletus in his face, 8. 54.3; and after his assassination he was execrated in Athens).[123] But the interest shown in his analysis of events is also related to his role as a very useful interpretative focaliser in book 8, particularly as the rival, and rival focaliser, of Alcibiades (note especially the dialogue established between the advice of Alcibiades to Tissaphernes in 8. 45-6, and the thoughts of Phrynichus in 8. 48.4-7). The depiction of both figures is interestingly parallel: both are turncoats, driven by personal goals, and hard-headed realists with no liking for democracy, yet they find themselves bitter enemies. Their treacherous conduct and self-centred motives are realistically presented even while their intelligence is emphasised. Both are the subject of reaction-guiding narrator interventions.[124] The certainty with which interventions attribute motivation to Alcibiades and Phrynichus contrasts with the use of interventions to underline the uncertainty of (the notoriously devious) Tissaphernes' motivations: where Persian policy was opaque, the thoughts of Alcibiades and Phrynichus are used to suggest its outline.

The use of narrator interventions to balance rival focalisations of Phrynichus and Alcibiades is thus apparently part of an attempt to weave interpretative threads into a narrative which is more complex and finely-drawn (and perhaps less definitive) than that attempted in the earlier books.

APPENDIX 2: INTERVENTION AND DIGRESSION

Six of the interventions on the main list are associated with digressions from the main narrative. It is distinctive of Thucydides, in contrast to Herodotus, to use the narratorial voice to introduce a digression.[125] This is related to the sense of the 'purity' of the main narrative

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[120] Loraux (n.1) 156.

[121] *Cf.* Connor (n.30) 214-8, and the critique of Andrewes in H. Erbse, *Thukydides-Interpretationen* (Berlin & New York 1989) 1-82.

[122] Rood (n.5) 344.

[123] See R. Meiggs and D. Lewis, *A Collection of Greek Historical Inscriptions*[2] (Oxford 1988) 85; Gomme (n.47) 5. 309-11.

[124] In the case of Alcibiades, this reaction-guiding is part of an ongoing development of a key figure, begun in 5. 43 and 6. 15, which would have been continued in the lost or incomplete section of the *History.*

[125] Though note 1. 128-38 (on the curses associated with Pausanias and Themistocles) and 2. 97 (on the Odrysian empire), where digressive material is introduced in 'Herodotean' manner, without the formal apparatus of intervention. Still, the Pausanias/Themistocles digression moves easily into the intervention about Themistocles, at a point where we can start to see a relevance of the digressive material to the main narrative.

in Thucydides, so that a digressive breaking of the narrative has to be formally introduced. In Herodotus it is also less clear what constitutes digression and what main narrative than in the rigorous summer-and-winter chronology of Thucydides.

I argued above that the narratorial voice was associated with the providing of a temporal perspective outside the time of the main narrative, and with the signalling of paradigmatic event. These observations help us understand the narratorially-introduced digressions. In the *Pentecontaetia* (1. 89-118), the history of Sicily at the beginning of book 6 (6.1-6), and the tyrant digression (6. 54-60), the narratorial voice introduces material from the past which is presented as important for the interpretation of events of the main narrative[126] (*cf.* 2. 65 etc., where the narratorial voice is used to introduce the perspective of the *future*). Thucydides, unlike Herodotus, explicitly introduces his digressions as contributions to the primary analysis, and the narrator appears as seeker of explanations rather than as organiser of narrative (this does not mean, however, that in fact Thucydidean digressions are not in some sense methods of organising narrative, or that Herodotean digressions do not contribute to the analysis of the 'main' narrative). In the digression on the plague (2. 47.3-2.54), and on *stasis* (3. 82-3), the digression is tied to the narrator's role of alerting the reader to pattern, through the paradigmatic. The description of the plague is included at the moment when it 'first began to arise amongst the Athenians' (2. 47.3); it is presented as 'the first beginning of ἀνομία in the city' (2. 53.1); and, like the *History* itself, is recorded with a view to its paradigmatic usefulness (2. 48.3). The description of stasis in book 3 arises out of the example of the stasis at Corcyra, which was 'among the first' of the *staseis* which disturbed 'so to speak the whole Greek world' (3. 82.1). In these two digressions, the narrator explains the specific case in terms of a general background, and provides general background on the occasion of the first (important) specific appearance of the phenomenon.[127] This is parallel to the function of an intervention like 2. 65, which records, at the moment when it first becomes important, a general pattern of Athenian strength and weakness, in order to help explain a specific event in the narrative (the moment when, after an outbreak of selfish individualism, Pericles correctly points to the deep strength of Athens), but also to establish an underlying pattern which will help in the understanding of future event (Athenian resilience, Athenian destructive individualism). Thus digression is linked to intervention through the narrator's function of analysor and alerter to pattern.

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[126] The *Pentecontaetia* fills in essential background of Athenian imperialistic growth and the threat this posed to Sparta (1. 88, 1. 118); the Sicilian history sets out the strength and antiquity of the group of cities the Athenians had set themselves against (6. 1.1, 6. 6.1); and the tyrant digression explains Athenian paranoia towards potential tyrants (6. 53.3, 6. 60).

[127] This is related to a wider phenomenon in Greek narratives of withholding mention of an event until the moment it becomes relevant: see E. Fraenkel, *Aeschylus. Agamemnon* (Oxford 1950) 3, 805.