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ENLIGHTENMENT SELF-INTEREST IN THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR: THUCYDIDEAN SPEAKERS ON THE RIGHT OF THE STRONGER AND INTER-STATE PEACE

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Abstract

The speakers in Thucydides who give voice to the sophistic thesis that might is right do not generally think that what they are releasing upon the world is a war of all against all. On the contrary, they are quite hopeful, like the modern utilitarians they anticipate, that their realistic assessment of the motives of men can serve as the foundation of an inter-state order based not on justice but on clear and certain power relations. The most perceptive of these speakers is Diodotus, who addresses his theory of imperial management to the difficult problem of the rise and fall of states. But the psychology upon which this theory rests points toward confederation in place of empire and toward constitutional government in place of democracy run by demagogues. It also implies a reasoner, perhaps Diodotus himself, who is master of his own desires. In the end Diodotus seems somewhat at odds with the sophistic rationalism he so ably espouses.

Résumé

Les orateurs de Thucydide qui expriment la thèse sophistique que la puissance fait le juste ne pensent pas en général que ce qu’ils déclenchent au monde est une guerre de tout contre tout. Au contraire, ils ont bon espoir que, comme les utilitaires modernes qu’ils devancent, leur évaluation réaliste des motifs des hommes peuvent servir comme fondement d’un ordre inter-état fondé non sur la justice mais sur les rapports de puissance lucides et certains. L’orateur le plus percutant est Diodote, qui adresse sa théorie de l’administration impériale au problème difficile du grandeur et décadence des états. Or la psychologie sur laquelle cette théorie s’appuie se dirige vers la confédération au lieu de l’empire et vers le gouvernement constitutionnel au lieu de la démocratie dirigée par les démagogues. Elle implique aussi un raisonneur, peut-être Diodote lui-même, qui se rend maître de ses propres désirs. Au bout du compte Diodote paraît assez mal avec le rationalisme sophistique qu’il embrasse habilement.
"Human beings, it seems, are more provoked to anger when suffering injustice than when suffering violence" (1.77.4).1

Thucydides' History is deservedly famous for its articulation of sophistic antinomianism, and many commentators have come to regard Thucydides as a close pupil of the sophists prominent in his day.2 A papyrus fragment by the sophist Antiphon provides a succinct account of this view.3 Antiphon distinguishes nature (phusis) from convention (nomos), saying that nature is always operative, exacting penalties for its neglect, but that human law, or convention, is lax in its own defense and is thus to be obeyed only when others are watching. Because human law is the product of opinion and agreement, it often runs counter to the demands of nature; consequently, the faithful observance of law does damage to one's affairs and is foolishly honest. The law, for instance, esteems those who forego aggressive actions, who care for their parents, and who accept on trust the word of their courtroom antagonists. But the law also treats as equals all who come before it, and its decisions are influenced less by truth and goodness than by forensic skill. The trouble with law is that it cannot deliver on its promise to protect the innocent and to punish the guilty. Nature, on the other hand, never fails in its purpose, which is self-preservation and the pursuit of interest. Nature's necessities are known and acted upon by people everywhere, and so people everywhere are essentially the same. High-born and low-born, Greek and barbarian are distinctions without a difference masking the uniformity of human nature.4

If Antiphon discloses the disjunction between nature and convention, Callicles, in Plato's Gorgias (482e-484c), explains how this disjunction came to pass. Callicles is responding to an argument by Socrates that it is better to suffer wrong than to commit wrong. Callicles complains that Socrates is parroting the conventional platitudes required of civil society. Society is a compact among the many who are weak to suppress the few who are strong. The fact that all
people are equal captives of self-interest does not mean that all people are equally adept at achieving their ends. Nature has its own ranking of high-born and low-born, and only if nature’s high-born, the talented and energetic, are deceived by education and held down by law can nature’s low-born, the simple and unenterprising, protect themselves and attain equality. The whole of morality, of doing good to others, is but a useful tale for the empowerment of the weak. But morality inverts the natural order which ordains the rule of the strong. This Callicles knows by observing the behavior of animals and the relations among states. Xerxes and Darius were unapologetic takers, he avows, and their imperial piracy serves as a model for those daring enough to adopt it. More emphatically than Antiphon does Callicles thus propound the central tenet of sophistic antinomianism, that the rapacity of the strong enjoys the sanction of nature.

There should be little mystery as to why people enlightened in the ways of nature would find it difficult to live amicably together. Once the veil has been lifted covering the fictions of society and nature revealed for what it is, the race is on to see who first can scramble to the top. But those speakers in Thucydides who display their sophistic learning are not always so pessimistic. In fact there is an undercurrent of "enlightenment optimism" that accompanies their dire reports on the selfishness of men, even a sense that a workable community can be constructed on the foundation of intelligent self-interest.5 In this they prefigure modern political philosophers, and Thomas Hobbes especially,6 who derive from the realism of natural law a science of politics offering the collective benefits of peace, prosperity, and ordered liberty. The base on which both groups build is the conviction that all people are subject to the same psychological necessities, that human nature in its desires and aversions is uniform.

I. Equals in Power: The Athenians at Sparta and Hermocrates at Gela

The Athenian ambassadors at Sparta are the first to introduce the theme of human nature. They speak in reply to the Corinthians who maintain, not that all people are alike, but that some people are restless and ambitious while others are quiet and content. They distinguish Athenians
from Spartans and warn that the Athenians are an alien race, eternal enemies never to be trusted. The Athenians answer that human beings operate by the same recognizable principles: fear, honor, and interest are what motivate them. These are universal passions which are compulsory to a degree and which exonerate people of wrong. The Athenians are to not to be blamed for their empire because nature prescribes that the weaker should be subject to the stronger. What the Athenians did others would have done in their place, and should Sparta bring about the fall of Athens and succeed to its power, Sparta will find itself performing the same actions and incurring the same resentment as has Athens. It is a mistake then to believe that the Spartans are a distinct human type put at risk by the Athenians, another distinct human type. Spartans and Athenians are essentially the same; they can understand one another by imagining themselves in each other's position. The confidence born of familiarity is an important part of peace, and the Athenians turn to human nature in order to make themselves familiar, their empire a commonplace.

But what is Sparta to do? The fact that Athens is familiar and blameless does not mean that Athens is neighborly and harmless. Sparta has its own interests which Athenian imperialism endanger, and merely to have stated the motives of one's rivals is not to disarm those rivals and to make of them friends. On the contrary, the psychology set forth by the Athenian ambassadors would seem to explain the necessity of war, for what compels Athenian expansion also compels Spartan resistance. But the Athenians see the matter differently, as indeed they must if their arguments are to function as a plea for peace (1.72.1). The Athenians do not profess to being inveterate imperialists, always on the hunt for fresh conquests and an enemy to anyone in their way. True, they look upon empire as a source of honor (meaning pride of place) and honor as a compulsory desire, but they also explain their actions, more modestly, in terms of fear and interest. Athenians are defensive as well as offensive, and they calculate the profit and loss of any new enterprise. Their behavior is measured, reasonable, and subject to any number of outside constraints, which—although they do not say so—it is in the power of Sparta to impose. All that the Athenians admit by way of their lesson in human psychology is that if the Spartans are as the Corinthians describe them to be, sleepy and complacent, then the Athenians are their
foe and will take them. But Spartans and Athenians are cut from the same cloth, so the ambassadors contend. Thus simply by consulting their own motives can the Spartans discover how best to handle their adversary—what would deter Sparta should also deter Athens. It is enough if Sparta makes the cost of expansion dear, or if it threatens an expanding Athens with a rebellion of its allies. Deterrence is the order of the day, not war between the principals. 8

This frank and confident style of bargaining requires a proper audience for its success, a Spartan who reasons like the Athenians and who is proof that people everywhere are the same. Archidamus is the Spartan who fits this description, for he believes with the Athenians that the intentions of neighbors are similar to one’s own and that custom accounts for the differences among men (1.84.3-4), that war is a matter for careful deliberation (cf. 1.72.1, 73.1, 78.1-3), and that negotiations coupled with an "arms build-up"—but not yet war—are the responses most appropriate to the occasion. 9

The Athenian position is that human selfishness is necessitated, or largely so, and is excusable even though contrary to convention. Selfish behavior, therefore, ought not be cause for surprise and alarm. But Sthenelaidas, the Spartan ephor, is surprised and alarmed. He, it seems, is no adherent of this new morality which gives appetites their reign and uses reason to arbitrate disputes. He subscribes to an old morality which holds that virtue is free and praiseworthy and that people are accountable for their deeds and which dispenses rewards and punishments according to time-honored principles of justice. But insofar as this "old morality" raises expectations that others will serve your interests instead of their own, it can be a source of anger when expectations are not met or when people simply fail to measure up. Sthenelaidas is angry at the Athenians because their present conduct (fear, honor, interest) does not measure up to their past standards (Panhellenic patriotism). 10 The Athenians are unjust in their dealings with the Peloponnese, and their injustice is grounds for indignant remonstrance. They must suffer punishment, and Sthenelaidas wants a declaration of war to bring it about. The reason then that the Athenians venture to speak of nature’s way is to preempt appeals to the angry emotions that undergird retributive justice. The lesser justice of nature which treats human conduct as universal, compulsory, and blameless obviates the higher justice of retribution and
teaches people to excuse the shortcomings of others. It promotes reasonableness, commonality, and peace.

The Athenians, however, are not consistent practitioners of what here is called the "new morality," for they blend its psychological realism with surreptitious reference to justice. By the terms of the old morality, Greeks are a single people with a unifying interest, particularly defense against the barbarians, and those who have contributed the most to the common good deserve the most from the common store, in the form of power, wealth, and glory. The Athenians remind their audience that their possessions have been fairly won and that Athens is a city worthy of mention (1.73.1). In the Persian War they supplied the largest number of ships, the ablest commander, and the most unhesitating zeal, leaving their city to the ravages of the enemy while fighting at sea. Their empire, which was in any event handed to them, is in fact owed to them (hōste phamen ouch hēsson autoi ὑπολείπειν εἰς τοὺς πολέμους; 1.74.3). It is just that they rule, and others recognize their right to rule. Athenian hegemony, therefore, has not greatly disturbed the peace because hitherto people have agreed about who is worthy and who should rule. But the Athenians confess that they are tired of mentioning their past heroics (1.73.2), and it is probable that their audience is tired of hearing of them, too. Indeed, the ambassadors accuse the Spartans of rescinding their recognition of Athenian merit now that it suits Spartan interest to do so (1.76.2). That people would favor interest over justice is elementary to psychological realists and evidence perhaps that the old morality is a poor defender of the peace. For quickly the Athenians shift their ground from what is owed to them under the old morality to the aggression of the strong under the new. Those who have power take what they want without regard to declarations of justice, and those who are weak or merely equal call upon justice as their only defense.

Who though has such power? Not the Athenians, it should be noted, for they have just been heard commending their worth instead of their power (1.73.1-75.2). And not the Spartans, because they appeal to justice in order to shame and restrain the Athenians (1.76.2). The Spartans and the Athenians then are equals. The new morality of "might is right" makes provision for equals no less than it does for the strong and the weak. Equals in power are unable
to dominate and so must settle upon terms that are mutually beneficial. A new kind of justice arises, that of contracts and obligations. It is the justice of necessity, for its conditions would not be agreed to if one’s power were absolute.\textsuperscript{13} Law exists, say the Athenians, where force cannot be used (1.77.2). Justice and law, so understood, are guarantors of the peace to the extent that power relations are clearly perceived and equals acknowledge their equality—which they may not always do. A periodic test of strength is therefore necessary in order to determine the true ranking of states. But intelligent people, acting on selfish interest alone, can arrange their affairs so that the pursuit of power does not result in protracted and embittered war. And when people and nations do sort out their positions relative to each other, shared expectations respecting rights and duties follow as a matter of course. The weak know that surrender is their only hope, while the strong know to offer terms which make surrender for the weak a sensible option. Equals know the utility of abiding by treaties. Not universal and perpetual peace—because similar people compete for the same scarce goods—but relative and temporary peace is the promise of the new morality, which is judged to be more realistic than exhortations to virtue.

The Athenians are candid enough in telling of their motives but not so precise as to explain all of the security arrangements of the new dispensation. Instead they endeavor to justify themselves by relating how generously treated are their allies and subjects. The Athenians are proud of the fact that they do not exercise every prerogative of their power, that they extend to others some rights of citizens and some protections of law. But they also lament having allowed their allies to think themselves Athens’s equal, for treated as equals, the allies resent any demonstration of Athenian power. In effect, the Athenians confess to being guilty of overlaying one morality with selected precepts of another. Mainly they live by the new morality of necessity and power, but they also perform free and magnanimous deeds in order to prove their superiority according to the old morality of nobility and virtue. Nobility has its cost without which it could hardly know itself as nobility; thus the Athenians willingly, if only occasionally, sacrifice their interest for the good of others. But by behaving in so grand a fashion, they confound the pecking order which they have no intention of adjusting and encourage rebellion among their subjects who mistake generosity for duties and rights. They do much the same here
at the Peloponnesian congress and with similar results; for notwithstanding their assertions that all people are the same and equal, they cannot resist presenting themselves as somehow unique and special: They are not just anyone, they seem to say; they are Athenians, those remarkable people who took to their ships and saved the freedom of Greece. The Athenians imply, and Thucydides is sensitive to the implication (1.72.1), that their strength is in their character, which is singular, which is dangerous, and which is correctly feared by the Spartans. By clinging to the terms of the old morality, the Athenians undermine their case for peace which they base upon the power relations of the new morality.14

Although the Athenians fail to prevent war with their rivals, there is another who succeeds in establishing peace among equals. This is Hermocrates of Syracuse, who in 424 addresses a congress of Sicilian cities gathered at Gela. Sicily has been at war with itself, and some of its lesser cities of Ionian extraction have invited the Athenians to assist them. Fearing that Athens means to exploit the conflict to its own advantage, Hermocrates argues that Sicilians have a common interest in keeping the Athenians out. Sicily, he says, is like a single state, its several cities like factions, and its present war like a civil war (4.61.1-2). The situation in Sicily is similar then to the revolution at Corcyra, except that the Sicilian "factions" have the wisdom to step back from "civil war" before one of their number opens the door irreversibly to Athenian intervention. What persuades them to live in peace is new-morality rationalism.

Like the Athenians, Hermocrates affirms that the strong by necessity attempt to rule and that their aggression is excusable. But he is not prepared to add that nature requires the submission of the weak; rather, the weak resist, or, better said, the weak are entitled to make themselves equal (and are blamed if they do not)15 so that resistance is a reasonable endeavor.16 The onus, therefore, is on the cities of Sicily to settle their differences, to band together, and by presenting a united front to lift Sicilian strength to the level of the Athenians. The formula for peace is a balance of power, and proof of its effectiveness is the fact that the Athenians, when told of the truce, break off their campaign and set sail for home.

Hermocrates gives greater prominence to fear than did the Athenians at Sparta, for he suggests that fear is the emotion most conducive to peace. War is an uncertain business at best,
and fear of its perils can cause even the vengeful to believe that peace is a conservor of goods and a remedy for ills. "The uncertainty of the future is what for the most part prevails, and of all things it appears the most perilous and equally the most useful, for fearing equally we attack each other with a greater caution" (4.62.4). Fear is useful, Hermocrates observes, because it forces restraint and promotes forethought (promêthia). Hermocrates is addressing the proud, the righteous, and the confident, those most likely to despise the quiet of peace and its half-a-loaf compromises. And he understands, not unlike Thomas Hobbes, that the salutary effects of fear require the suppression of pride or the surrender of natural right. Peace is possible if people forego the satisfaction of getting even and standing tall and entrust their safety, not to prowess anymore, but to agreements with their foes. And trusting one’s foes means forgetting the hurt of past grievances and finding advantage in cooperation.

II. The Strong and the Weak: The Athenians at Melos and Euphemus at Camarina

The Melian Debate affords the occasion for examining the principles of the new morality as they apply to states unequal in power, for unlike the relation between Athens and Sparta, and united Sicily and Athens, Melos clearly is an inferior city. Here then is at work the unvarnished right of the stronger, but also a determined effort to make this right compatible with the requirements of peace.

The Athenians are eager to reason with their adversary about utility and common advantage, to prove to the Melians that their respective interests are linked. Their purpose in talking is to prevent what they believe is unnecessary conflict. They propose that Melos join the empire as a tribute-paying subject. In exchange for surrendering their independence, the Melians will keep their country and avoid a war, which they will surely lose in any event; at the same time the Athenians will gain a useful ally and avoid the expense of a siege. If people attend to their true interests, a deal can usually be struck.

These are the terms, but the manner in which they are delivered is also important. The Athenians are honest even about the deceptiveness of rhetorical speech. Denied the right to
address the multitude, they acknowledge the seductive power of uninterrupted orations and implicitly compliment the Melian leaders on their decision to close the proceedings. The Athenians seem actually to prefer the straight talk of private negotiations, for they go the Melians one better and recommend question-and-answer in place of alternating speeches. The peace that is latent in the new morality depends on forthright communication between parties, not on deception of the weak by the strong. Candor is thought to be in everyone's interest. Like their counterparts at Sparta, the Athenians speak openly of their selfish motives because they suppose expediency to be a common language that overcomes differences of law and culture.

In keeping with this "enlightenment" ethic, the Athenians eschew all considerations of worth; they are brusquely dismissive of their heroic past. No one believes, they say, that Athens deserves its empire for having defeated the barbarians half a century ago. Athens is eminent because Athens is powerful. By the same token, the Melians are expected to dispense with their own pleas of righteous desert and admit the fact that "justice, as people believe, is at issue where there is equal necessity, but that the strong do what they can and the weak yield what they must" (5.89).

The Melians are reluctant to accept that justice is the preserve of equals, but they have been instructed to restrict their attention to matters of utility. This they do, in a manner of speaking, with three distinct arguments. First, they claim that justice, the forbidden subject, is useful. All states, they reason, have an equal interest in safeguarding justice, since over the course of time all states will experience the helplessness of the weak and will turn to justice as their last defense. Be it noted that the Melians here are attempting to make common cause with the Athenians, to connect their interest as a weaker state today with Athens's interest as a weaker state tomorrow. For after falling from power, the Melians caution, an unjust city will suffer punishment at the hands of its former victims. The Athenians accept that the day may come when they are at the mercy of others--their selfish realism does not depend on the fiction that they will always be on top. But they expect to be defeated by a rival empire, and they are confident that imperial cities act in accordance with natural necessities, meaning that they consult their interests more than they indulge their passions. Nicias maintains, on the occasion
of the Sicilian debate, that the Sicilians would be less dangerous to Athens if conquered by Syracuse than if allowed to continue as independent cities; for independent cities might heed the call of Doric brotherhood and come to the aid of Sparta, whereas a Syracusan empire would stay put in Sicily knowing that the Peloponnesians would target it for attack following the overthrow of Athens (6.11.2-3). Imperial cities have the routine experience of encountering other cities outside the protections of a common law, and quickly they come to learn the behavioral norms of this state of nature. They understand, in particular, that warfare is not "personal" but calculated. Accordingly, the Athenians believe that if conquered they can fit themselves into the calculations of the victor and by adjusting sensibly to the new reality minimize the damage of their defeat. Among rational people there are no permanent enemies.

The Melians try a second time to find common ground with the Athenians. They contend that indiscriminate war-making, against neutral islands no less than colonies and rebellious allies, is detrimental to Athenian interests since such a policy will force non-belligerents into the Spartan camp. The independence of neutral Melos is therefore perfectly compatible with the security of Athens. But, say the Athenians, the important distinction is not between neutrals and hostiles; rather it is between island cities and continental cities. As a naval empire, Athens has a certain reputation to uphold. It is expected to conquer all of the islands within its orbit, and failure to do so is taken as evidence of a weakness of resources or of will. Whether it wants to or not, Athens must subdue Melos in order to signal its allies that it is still capable of imperial rule. If Athens were not so anxious about the stability of its empire, perhaps it could deal with Melos on more generous terms. Secure and uncontestable sovereignty is insulated from the reactions of its subjects, has room for error, and can afford to experiment with a variety of relations. It is reported elsewhere, for instance, that Athens allows some islands their independence because of the strategic position they occupy around the Peloponnesian (6.85.2; cf. 5.108). But Athenian latitude in these and other cases merely points to the advantages enjoyed by all of superabundant power possessed by one.

For a third time the Melians attempt to identify an alternate common good, although here they breach the strict limits of their agreement. They imply that spiritual likeness more closely
attaches people than material interests. The Melians are a proud nation imbued with a sense of honor. It would be a disgrace for them to surrender without a fight, especially since the Athenians sacrifice so much for imperium and their allies risk their lives to regain their freedom. The Melians feel that they should act in way as to win the admiration of Athens, and they hope that the affection born of spiritual kinship will protect them. But these ambassadors are rather different from their predecessors at Sparta who affirmed a community of shared values transcending the competitiveness of selfish interest. These new Athenians have no appreciation for the nobility of desperate causes. They can hardly account for, and indeed cynically reject, their own history of patriotic struggle against the Persians. With them life is but a calculation of probabilities. Because the Melians face impossible odds, there can be no dishonor in surrender. Freedom is like justice in that it belongs to equals. Self-preservation is the business of inferiors.

But the Melians refuse to concede their inferiority. They have resources. The gods, who dispense good and bad fortune, and the Spartans, with their army and navy, may together or separately come to assist them. The gods support justice and will favor the just Melians through the "chance" happenings of war; the Spartans have a reputation to think of and will not sit by as their colonists are destroyed. The Melians are not alone and thus not so defenseless as they appear. To the Athenians such hopefulness is vulgar superstition (5.103). From the very beginning the Athenians sought to deny the Melians the sanctuary of hope by making military defeat seem a foregone conclusion. The sight of the Athenian army beneath Melos's walls was meant to force the Melians to concentrate on their interests as a weaker state not on the justice of their position. But these maneuvers have been in vain; the Melians remain deluded by hope, by "danger's consolation" (5.103.1). They are counting on "invisibles" (5.103.2) and failing to reason clearly. Clear reasoning means acknowledgement of what the Athenians come close to calling a law of nature (hypo phuseos anagkaias ... ton nomon; 5.105.2), that those with power rule arbitrarily those without. The Athenians did not enact this law but found it in existence (onta de paralabontes); they were not the first to use it, nor will they be the last. And since the gods themselves obey nature's law, or so the Athenians believe, there is no higher justice ready to intervene on Melos. Nor do the Spartans represent an exception. On the contrary, they most
of all think that "the pleasant is the noble and the expedient the just" (5.105.3)—meaning, presumably, that the Athenians are less given to such reductionist equations. It is curious that while explaining the entire order of being in terms of crass self-interest, the Athenians still remember and insist upon their superior virtue. Perhaps the new morality is psychologically more difficult than the Athenians suppose it to be. For when they destroy Melos, they make nonsense of the very notion of a common good—if only that between victor and vanquished—and of an enlightened reasoning that reconciles interests. The Athenians always speak as if they are looking for partners with whom to negotiate, but sometimes it is they who are not up to the task.

The speech of Euphemus at the Camarinean conference offers a second account of how the strong and the weak can cooperate for the benefit of each. It must be allowed, however, that Athens’s relation to Camarina is not so clear-cut as its relation to Melos, in part because the balance of power is in flux and in part because Euphemus speaks euphemistically when describing the strength and intentions of Athens.

The background to the Camarinean conference is this: The peace of Sicily engineered by Hermocrates lasted less than ten years. By the middle of the next decade, some of the cities were again at war, mostly over petty matters, and one of them, Egesta, appealed to Athens for relief. Eager to assist, Athens launched its Sicilian Expedition in 415. During the winter’s suspension of hostilities, the Athenians sent an embassy to Camarina in hopes of winning that city to its cause. Hearing of Athens’s plan and fearing the defection of Camarina, the Syracusans sent an embassy of their own, led by Hermocrates.

Hermocrates speaks first, presenting to the assembly what he takes to be irrefutable evidence of Athenian perfidy. The Athenians, he observes, claim to be in Sicily in support of their beleaguered allies, some of whom are blood kin, such as the Leontine Chalcidians. But the Chalcidians in Euboea are kept in servitude by Athens, as are most cities in its empire. The Athenian empire is a tyranny, and Sicily is scheduled to be its next acquisition. He realizes that as the local power Syracuse is understandably suspect, envied and feared as dominant states must be, but any scheme of using Athens to humble Syracuse is certain to misfire. Syracuse instead
will be destroyed, and the Camarineans will face Athens alone. The only intelligent course then for Camarina to follow is to join with Syracuse in a united effort against the intruder.

Euphemus is the Athenian ambassador on the scene. Since the justice of Athens's empire has been impugned, he rises proudly to its defense, recounting the glory days of combat against the Persians. He delivers in effect two speeches: one about justice, honor, and freedom, the other about utility and power. The Athenians at Sparta also spoke from two perspectives, but whereas they were simply confused, Euphemus is consciously deceiving, since his "second" speech contains a point-by-point refutation of the arguments of the "first." In this first speech he contends: (1) that the Dorians are eternal enemies of the Ionians; (2) that Spartan supremacy is might unsupported by right; (3) that the subjection of Ionian cities is just punishment for their collaboration with the Persians; and (4) that Athenians deserve their empire for having contributed the most to the common defense. But Euphemus then changes his tack and explains Athenian expansion in terms of fear--fear of Sparta and fear of Syracuse allied with Sparta. This second approach allows Euphemus to reconcile the contradiction in Athenian policy toward the Chalcidian people, that Athens enslaves some while permitting freedom to others. It suits Athenian interests, he explains, to strengthen the Leontine Chalcidians since their strength is a hindrance to Syracuse; a strong and independent Euboea, on the other hand, endangers Athens, and so the Chalcidians there are held in subjection. The central principle driving Athenian actions is that "nothing is unreasonable which is profitable nor kindred which is without trust; in each case one must be enemy or friend as the occasion demands" (6.85.1). In making this rather brazen announcement, Euphemus connects the motives of empire with those of tyranny. He thereby abandons any claim of Athenian desert (#4 above) as well as the reproach to Sparta for ruling without right (#2). And the assertion that kinship depends not on blood but on faithfulness (pistis) effectively cancels the distinction between Dorians and Ionians (#1); it also happens that Camarina, the former and prospective ally of Athens, is a Dorian city (3.86.2). When Euphemus next unMASKS the hidden designs of Syracuse, the last of these moral pretensions falls away. Syracuse, it seems, is in the same position as Athens at the start of the century--resisting assault, expecting help from its neighbors, and set to become an imperial power itself with the defeat of
the invaders. Euphemus stresses the outcome, that Syracuse will emerge as the new empire, without conceding fully the parallel, that Athens is to Sicily what the Persians were to Greece. Euphemus wants Camarina to recognize that its interests are best served by assisting the Athenians. But if Camarina is permitted to help Athens, then the Ionian cities were permitted to help Persia, and Athens had no cause for feeling itself injured and for enslaving the Ionians as punishment for their offense (#3).20

It has been said that enlightenment and candid speech follow from the new morality of emancipated interest. Perhaps not surprisingly, this candor is more consistently practiced by the strong in their ultimatums to the weak than by equals looking to take advantage. Hermocrates spoke as an equal at Gela and was not completely honest. Euphemus comes as an equal to Camarina and is not honest either,21 for he depicts the Athenian invasion force as an auxiliary (epikouria; 6.86.5) to the Camarineans. Athens, he says, poses no threat to Camarina since Athenians are far from home and since Camarina is virtually a continental city. By utilizing the Athenians, he continues, Camarineans can forever keep their natural enemy, the Syracusans, at bay. But what Euphemus does not disclose is that this auxiliary relationship would certainly change once Syracuse was defeated. International affairs are fluid; he said so himself. Imperial cities consider their interests; this, too, he said. With Syracuse out of the way, Athens would have an interest in solidifying its base in Sicily (i.e., in subduing Sicilian cities) in order to set its sights on more distant prey, such as Italy, Carthage, and the Peloponnese (6.90.3). The problem for Camarineans is that Hermocrates is right in warning of Athens, and Euphemus is right in warning of Syracuse. Their choice of neutrality, therefore, is probably the best that they can do.

In his closing remarks, Euphemus makes one point which says clearly that Athens is the stronger power. He declares that Athens's interventionist policy, its meddlesomeness (polupragmosune; 6.87.3), is beneficial to most Greeks. "For everyone in every country, even if we are not at hand, both he who anticipates suffering injustice and he who plots to do it, because of the immediate prospect before him--in the one of assistance from us with which to strike [his enemy] in return, in the other that if we come he will not feel secure to run risks--are both constrained, the latter to be moderate against his will, the former to be saved without effort of his
own" (6.87.4). Athens is a kind of Panhellenic policeman supervising the peace among states, a Hobbesian sovereign on an international stage. Like the ancient king Minos who crushed the pirates and brought prosperity to the Cyclades and the coastal cities (1.4.8), Athens protects the quiescent by deterring the ambitious. Previous events in Sicily were an example of this, and Hermocrates was a witness, for he explained that fear of Athenian intervention was the reason why Syracuse opted for peace (4.61-64). Without Athenian pressure keeping Syracuse "moderate against its will," Syracuse very likely would have proceeded apace with the conquest of its neighbors (4.61.5; 4.64.1). Where Hermocrates was dishonest was in pretending that all cities have an equal interest in Sicilian unity. They do not. They have an equal interest in freedom, and what preserves their freedom is not unity as such, but a combination of solidarity and divisiveness that holds the Athenians and the Syracusans each in check.

III. The Rise and Fall of States: Diodotus and the Mytilenian Rebellion

The sophisticated reasoning of the new morality, if put into practice, should prevent wars between the strong and the weak and confine those between equals to short-term testings of the balance of power. But it cannot go unnoticed that in most cases this reasoning is a rhetorical failure: Athenian spokesmen fail to persuade the Spartans, the Melians, and the Camarineans; and even though Hermocrates is successful at Gela, temporary peace (4.63.1) gives way to total war. In several of the cases the problem lies with the understanding of the spokesmen. The Athenians at Sparta, for instance, confound the picture of a uniform human nature by claiming a special dignity for themselves based upon occasional freedom from psychological compulsions. Hermocrates relies too heavily perhaps on the efficaciousness of fear. And at Melos the Athenians are unable to dispel the delusions of hope or to accommodate their adversary's love of freedom. Euphemus represents a somewhat different problem; while he is still blunt and forthright about the new morality, his circumstances require that he lie about its application to Athens.
The oscillation between old and new morality; the power of fear, of hope, and of freedom; the use of deceit to disguise one’s intentions—these are all elements and stumbling points in the speeches advancing the ethics of sophistic rationalism; these also are the main lines of Diodotus’s analysis of democratic politics and imperial governance. Diodotus is the most thoughtful adherent of the new morality and the most optimistic regarding its prospects for peace. But his account of human behavior, while more sophisticated than that of others, holds a surprise or two for Athenian imperialists.

When the Athenians call a second assembly to consider again the fate of the Mytilenians, Cleon endeavors to revive the anger that produced the original condemnation. He reminds the Athenians that it is they who are the victims of wrongdoing, not the Mytilenians whom they have decided to punish. The rebellion of Mytilene was unprovoked, he observes, and is thus properly regarded as an act of wanton aggression. It was freely chosen, and the sad lesson of other rebellions was freely ignored. But not only is it just to punish the Mytilenians, it also is expedient; for unless voluntary rebellions are punished more harshly than involuntary—unless mercy is discriminate—all the allies will be encouraged to rebel. Cleon’s position includes then both retribution for past offenses and deterrence of future wrongs.

The key contention of Diodotus’s retort is that justice and expediency do not combine and that the Athenians would be wise to favor their interest over their fury. Diodotus makes a show of his indifference to the claims of justice, offering in the process one of the cruelest statement found anywhere in Thucydides, that the Mytilenians are nothing in themselves and assume meaning only in relation to Athenian concerns. He states that he will not advise punishment by death, even though he prove them guilty, unless it be expedient; nor will he recommend indulgence, even though they deserve it, unless it be good for Athens (3.44.2). Diodotus is tough, and the proof of his mettle, ironically, is the case he makes for leniency.

Cleon attempted in a portion of his speech to build a workable deterrent based on fear. Diodotus replies that fear alone cannot deter because other passions obscure the reality of harm or render a person indifferent to it. These passions are desperation, arrogance, cupidity, and hope, which Diodotus calls "incurable and master passion[s]" (3.45.4). Freedom and dominion
seem also to be of this ilk (3.45.6) and as social passions are especially extravagant since the support of the group magnifies the capacities of its members. Fortune, too, lends a mischievous hand, causing men to believe that chance events will happen again and, if good, will likely happen to them. Hope though seems to be main counterforce to fear, conjuring images of a beckoning future to stand against the repellent images of fear. The hopeful are fearless because unphased by threats which they suppose will never come to pass. In the case of civil law, for instance, only those apprehended for crimes committed suffer any punishment; those confident of escape have less cause to worry and so pay scant attention to legal penalties, no matter how terrible. To establish this point, Diodotus constructs a probable tale about punishment in ancient times, his own archeology, so to speak. He conjectures that in the beginning penalties were mild but little noticed, that they became progressively severe in the hope of making them more effective, but that even the death penalty liberally used has not been found to deter wrongdoing. Experience teaches that fear of punishment is an insufficient control. Diodotus concludes, therefore, that "it is entirely impossible and a mark of great simplicity for anyone to think that any hindrance restrains human nature, when actively bent on some undertaking, by force of laws or by some other terror" (3.45.7).

It would seem from this last remark that deterrence is an idle dream—nothing can alter the compulsions of human nature. Diodotus's true position though is not that deterrence is bound to fail, but that intimidation is a crude and ineffective instrument because hope is as powerful as fear. It makes no sense to slaughter the Mytilenians in order to prevent rebellions elsewhere. People elsewhere will discount the example as inapplicable to their case (Cleon observed that the Mytilenians had done just that) and proceed with their own plans anyway. More important is it to supply rebels with a reason to surrender once the insurrection has begun. Cleon regards the Mytilenian rebellion as a calamity which Athens can ill afford to have repeated. Diodotus regards the Mytilenian surrender as a lucky break which Athens should endeavor to have repeated by design (3.46.5-6) (but also as the intended outcome of prudent policy [3.46.2]). The intelligent governance of the empire requires of Athens that it respond to rebellions with just enough force to defeat the hope of independence, after which that it negotiate an acceptable
peace with its opponents. Nothing is gained if one master passion is replaced by another, if the hope of freedom which brought on the rebellion is succeeded by the fear of destruction which prevents its conclusion. People's lives are generally ruled by emotion, but from time to time the emotions are balanced and the voice of reason is audible. Diodotus is carefully calibrating actions and reactions in order to produce an emotional balance favorable to reason. His objective is not to train the emotions, to teach spiritedness the beauty of wisdom or appetite that deference is its duty, as in the case of Socrates and the citizens of Callipolis. Rather it is the more modest task of neutralizing one master passion with another, or, in the words of a modern practitioner of the art, of using "ambition . . . to counteract ambition." Diodotus's example of criminal justice bears further examination. Capital punishment, he states, will not deter the malefactor who is hopeful of success. Efforts to influence him before commission of his crime are therefore useless. Better to wait until after the crime, until he has been apprehended and fear of punishment is a palpable reality; then talk. Plea-bargaining, in other words, is the right approach because it reaches the criminal at a time when he is ready to act sensibly, when the passion of hope has lost its command.

It is the job of reason to find common ground. Master passions are selfish and isolating; reason unites people through mutual interest. In the case of Mytilene, the besieged ally is eager to save itself; this much is clear. But has Athens any cause for restraining its power? Is there common ground? Athens could reject the Mytilenians' conditions of surrender (3.28.1), press on with the siege, and render the city ever more pliant; it could even eliminate resistance entirely by waiting until the Mytilenians had all starved. Athens has the power to do with Mytilene whatever it likes. But to push besiegement this far is patently foolish because it fails to recognize that at an earlier point the Mytilenians were prepared to cooperate, to work with Athens instead of against it. Mytilene is not the eternal enemy of Athens; there are no eternal enemies, only temporary antagonists under the dominion of some master passion. It is then in Athens's interest to negotiate a surrender because a depopulated city is worthless and because a record of rational behavior on Athens's part will encourage other rebellious cities--when the time comes--to search for solutions which are mutually advantageous, for a common ground.
Diodotus's speech is a lesson in the science of "making friends and influencing people." His method, as applied to the allies of Athens, is to identify their ruling emotion, check it by another, then bargain over interests, taking account of alterations in the balance of power. Other allies are watching the Mytilenian affair, and it is their behavior that he means to influence. But more directly, if less visibly, he means to influence the behavior of the Athenian assembly, using presumably the same techniques of rhetoric and psychology. With the Athenians, the master passion is anger. Yesterday they expressed their anger in voting to put to death the men of Mytilene. But today it is pity that moves them, and they have reassembled to debate anew the matter of punishment. Noteworthy is it that the Athenians are brought to deliberation and reason by the checking of master passions, even though Diodotus's manipulations seem not to have been needed. But the situation has again changed: Cleon has managed to rekindle the citizens' initial anger, destroying the emotional balance so essential to rational discourse (3.38.1; 44.4). Pity has come and gone and will not soon come again; thus Diodotus does not depend on it to restore Athenians to their senses. Nor does he suppose that reason can govern desire without the accompaniment of a strong emotional appeal. His speech is filled with arguments about utility, but its persuasiveness lies in the compliment it pays to Athenian pride, specifically pride of intellect. He presents the Athenians much like Tocqueville does the Americans, as a people who plume themselves on their enlightened pursuit of self-interest. Any fool can be angry and impetuous and even successful for a while; but better is it to get one's way intelligently, with the least amount of trouble and for the longest period of time. This is the emotional stroking that counters Cleon's fulminations. It is a bit of flattery which promises to work because intellectual pride is as characteristic of the Athenians of Diodotus's description as of the sophist Thrasymachus of Plato's, who would not credit a ruler powerful who failed to know his own true advantage.

In addition to rebellious allies and assembled citizens, there is present a class of orators whose motivations Diodotus also considers. Those who address the city must be encouraged to give sound and honest advice; they too have emotional buttons which it is the business of the citizens to push. But if advisors are dishonored when their advice is rejected and suspected of
bad faith when their advice is accepted, a city deprives itself of the wise counsel that it needs. As Diodotus examines the do's and the don'ts of advice-taking, three distinct political situations become discernable. The best situation is that of a city where malicious men are mysteriously tongue-tied and where good orators are duly honored but no additional respect is paid to successful speech and no disgrace is attached to failure; it seems also to be a city in which orators and citizens share equal responsibility for the consequences of decisions taken (3.42.5-6; 43.5). In the second-best situation--though one far removed from the first--the good orator disguises his counsel in order to gain for it a favorable hearing; this is a community where rulers and ruled are fairly distinct and where the ruled desire good policy but must be addressed deceptively because jealousy impedes their comprehension. Worst of all is the city which suspects the motives of those whose counsel is accepted; in such a community even deceit is unavailing because rhetorical success brings distrust and distrust the rejection or neglect of the advice just taken (3.42.3). Here is a community paralyzed by alienation, and no one would or could advise it; only a tyrant can rule. On the other hand, anyone would or could advise the first city, and indeed with everyone encouraged to speak there is little difference between those who give advice and those who receive it. But who would undertake to counsel the second city of jealous and overly clever (perinoos) people? Diodotus has represented cities, assemblies, and individuals as emotional puppets whose strings are manipulated by others: Athens manipulates the emotions of its allies; orators manipulate the assembly; and the assembly in turn manipulates the orators. But is anyone manipulating the good orator who lies to be believed? Who pulls his strings, and what strings direct his motions? Honor is the basic motivation, but the good orator must employ the same deceptions as the malevolent demagogue--Diodotus must sound like Cleon, which at times he does, for just as Cleon impugns the integrity of Mytilene's defenders, so Diodotus calls stupid or interested those who oppose the resumption of debate (3.42.2). But is there honor in this stooping to conquer where even success risks injury to one's reputation? In place of the chase for hollow distinctions, the good orator, Diodotus says, is moved to act by the magnitude of public affairs (ta megista kai en toii toioide axioun ti; 3.43.4). In this he seems unique, a free agent and selfless servant of the city's good. For what we find elsewhere are
realpolitik and private compulsions, psychological necessities which excuse people their selfishness but at the cost of making them controllable like puppets. And as we work our way from the puppet’s limbs to the strings which move, from the allies abroad to the assembly at home, we come finally to the puppeteer himself, the good orator, whose motivations seem as mysterious as those of Rousseau’s founder and whose objectives seem as noble as those of Aristotle’s magnanimous man.29

The good orator is said to lie, but it is not revealed what the good orator lies about? Are his deceptions preliminary and emotionally therapeutic, or do they reach all the way to substance? Other commentators have argued something of the former, that Diodotus takes a hard line because his audience is angry and will not entertain overt appeals to justice; or rather, that he makes justice out to be the concern of the soft-hearted and the soft-headed, while subtly interweaving the just and the useful.30 But he states that he is addressing a political assembly, not a court of law, and that the subject of his speech is the preservation of dominion (3.44.4; 47.5). Is Diodotus to be viewed as an intelligent imperialist whose advice aims at the better management of empire, or is he a closet confederalist with an agenda he is careful not to disclose? His policy recommendations are four in number: that Athenians can forestall revolution (1) by careful administration of subject cities (apo tōn ergōn tēs epimeleias; 3.46.4), (2) by surveillance of the most forward citizens (sphodra phulassein kai prokatalambanein; 3.46.6), and (3) by favoring the democrats against the oligarchs and making of the former partners in imperial rule; and that Athenians can bring insurrections once begun to a speedy conclusion (4) by confining punishment to actual conspirators. Diodotus is imprecise, and thus it is possible that "careful administration" means repression and that "surveillance" means luring into the open the most freedom-loving citizens and then effecting their demise, as the Spartans once did with the Helots (4.80.3-4). But the burden of Diodotus’s remarks is to advise against such ruthlessness on grounds that heavy-handed tyranny engenders desperation and desperation neutralizes fear. He also forgives the freedom-loving their ambitions because of the compulsory quality of their love. Hence it is a better reading of "careful administration" that it means good government and of "surveillance" that it means cooptation of the local leadership. Beneficence, gentleness, and inclusiveness appear to be the preferred tactics for managing the empire.
Diodotus further explains that punishing the demos for a rebellion they did not instigate would have the effect of driving the people of other cities into the hands of their native oligarchs who could plausibly argue that both classes were fated to succeed or fail together. It is injurious to the cause of Athenian rule, he states, for the world to know that Athens punishes the innocent many along with the guilty few (3.47.3); he even recommends that culpable democrats be spared punishment, that Athens assert their innocence against evidence of their guilt (and the Mytilenian people are guilty since their initial demand, when armed by the Spartan commander, was for food and not for surrender [cf. 3.27.3 and 3.47.3]) in order to avoid alienating the class most friendly to its empire.31 But if all of these tactics are designed for the better maintenance of dominion, how is it not noticed that the cause of Athenian rule is also injured if the word goes out that guilty democrats are immune from prosecution? In point of fact, the argument of Diodotus that severity prolongs resistance gives insufficient credit to the argument of Cleon that leniency fosters rebellion. Diodotus’s reply to Cleon does not add up to a perfect strategy of imperial rule but instead forces a choice between few rebellions meticulously planned because failure is fatal (Cleon) and numerous rebellion thoughtlessly chanced because the hegemon is wont to rationalize and excuse the attempt (Diodotus). Every rebellion though is the action of a freedom-loving people, and the love of freedom is a master passion whose "victims" are innocent of wrongdoing. It is usual for the no-fault plea to be made on behalf of conquerors and tyrants; Diodotus makes it for allies— they too desire their freedom.32 There seems to be some special honor paid to free men, a certain status reserved for them alone (3.46.5). Perhaps not all peoples at all times desire equally to be free. But it is a mistake to suppose that rebellion is a temptation confined to a select few, with the majority of subjects contentedly, and eternally, servile; for the sight of some cities asserting their independence and suffering no harm from the attempt can only result in the love of freedom spreading like a contagion across the empire. Their example, combined with the opportunity for self-government accorded allied democrats, is likely to bring steady challenges to Athenian rule, and the habit of forbearance urged upon Athenian imperialists is likely to bring a steady erosion of Athenian power. Surely this is not a strategy designed to make Athens the international sovereign of Euphemus’s description.
Diodotus recognizes that cities rise and fall and that nothing substantial can be done to make their relations permanent. His purpose is not to effect a political escape from the commotions of the world, as might be said of Plato, but to contain and manage the inevitable collisions of master passions and rival states. Now certain it is that when the strong, the weak, and equals each know who they are, the relations among states are predictable and little the cause of war. But times are dangerous when the strong grow tired and the weak grow bold, or when an equal aspires to superiority. The war between the Athenians and the Peloponnesians is just such a time of dangerous transition. Peace is not impossible, but the makers of peace require the maximum in statesmanlike finesse. For Diodotus statecraft requires that he bring Athens down gently from the heights of imperial eminence. Athens is a city in decline not because Athens has begun losing its power but because other cities have begun mobilizing theirs. Power is relative, and as weaker cities ascend the hill of military might, make independence or imperium their national purpose, Athens invariably becomes less their master and more their equal. Either Athens adjusts to these new circumstances, draws down its empire while it can, or the future is implosion the moment the empire ceases to expand (5.95-99; 6.18.6-7).

Diodotus’s lie is a noble lie designed to teach Athens the ethics of equality. It represents new-morality rationalism applied to the changing relations of states, which in Athens’s case requires confederal rather than imperial policies. But there may be more at work here than refined calculations of national self-interest, and more to Diodotus’s egalitarianism than the exigencies of the moment; for peace between equals is always difficult to maintain, and rejecting one unpalpable future, that of empire, does not guarantee the success of its alternative, that of confederation. Diodotus is a supporter of constitutional government, balanced power, and the equality of states—he is, in a word, a republican—because these are the political equivalents of that well-ordered psyche in which emotional stalemates furnish the opportunity for rational deliberation. If reason is nothing more than a servant of selfishness, supplying security together with aggrandizement, then no defection from the ranks of sophistry occurs. But Diodotus’s defense of honest oratory in the first half of his speech suggests that reasoning has a value and integrity all of its own. Diodotus imagines a city, the “first city,” where citizens prove
themselves better speakers not by frightening their opponents but by employing fair arguments (2.42.5). Intelligence is nurtured in this city, whereas in all others it is corrupted by blandishments and the imperatives of persuasion. Moreover, Diodotus himself, or the good orator for whom he speaks, is the puppeteer of psychological determinism, the necessary terminal point of emotional manipulations. As such he is master of his own soul, and it is difficult to comprehend how his reason can be master and servant at the same time.

Nothing has been said about Thucydides, about his assessment of the right of the stronger and its effects upon peace. Thucydides' opinions are largely concealed behind the reticence of his speech. Scholars disagree as to whether Thucydides accepts or condemns the grim realism which several of his speakers express, to say nothing of the optimism which it has been argued arises from it. They disagree similarly as to whether Thucydides is an ancient like Plato or a modern like Hobbes. I do not propose joining this debate except to remark that Thucydides holds in reserve a surprise of his own, namely his judgment late in Book 8 that the government of the Five Thousand was the best to rule in Athens during his lifetime. He describes the Five Thousand as a mixed regime, a measured blending of the few and the many (8.97.2). Like Diodotus, then, Thucydides prefers separated and balanced power to concentrated and limitless power. He does not explain why, but stability is probably not the answer, for the regime of the Five Thousand lasted only nine months. Again, equality is a precarious state and not properly valued if valued mainly for its contributions to peace. Might it then be true that Thucydides values the mixed regime because it is home to reason and because reason is productive of justice? The History ends abruptly, and no one can say for sure.
NOTES

1 Translations from the Greek are my own. Citations are given by book, paragraph, and sentence.


5 Parts I and II of this essay can be read as a reply to James Boyd White's study of the "culture of argument" in Thucydides (*When Words Lose Their Meaning* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984], 59-92). The end of Part III, however, suggests areas of agreement.

6 Hobbes' first published work was a translation of Thucydides. On the indebtedness of *Leviathan* to Thucydides, see David Grene, "Hobbes' Translation of Thucydides," in David Grene (ed.), *Thucydides: The Peloponnesian War* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press,
These same three desires appear in Hobbes, and along with the condition of equality they account for the war of all against all in the state of nature. Hobbes' prescription for peace is the subordination of honor, called vain-glory, to fear and interest, called diffidence and gain. Leviathan, says Hobbes, is "King of the Proud" (Leviathan, ed. by Michael Oakeshott [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, n.d.], chap. 13, 80-82; chap. 28, 209). See William T. Bluhm, "Causal Theory in Thucydides' Peloponnesian War," Political Studies 10 (1962), 19, for a similar statement on the right ordering of these desires; also Schlatter, Introduction, xxi.

See Marc Cogan, The Human Thing: The Speeches and Principles of Thucydides' History (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 25-27. Cogan also argues that the Athenians attempt to pacify tempers by conveying the limited character of their ambitions. His focus, however, is on the record of Athenian action during the Thirty Year truce and on the claim by the ambassadors that Athens treats its allies more generously than is required.

I might add that Archidamus's estimation of Athenian strength is in full agreement with Pericles' and anticipates the latter's speech (cf. 1.80-81 and 1.141-142) and that like Pericles Archidamus seems more interested in establishing and maintaining equality than in striving for supremacy (cf. 1.82 and 1.144.2). Cogan (The Human Thing, 31-33) does not quite accept that Archidamus is working to keep the peace or that he is persuaded that continued peace with Athens is possible. War will come, but its initiation, Archidamus believes, lies with the Spartans, and it will be a war like all other wars. Even if Cogan is correct on the point of future war, his overall assessment of Archidamus suggests that he is a man with whom the Athenians can deal.

The Thebans offer a similar justification of their feelings toward the Plataeans (3.67.2). See A. E. Raubitschek, "The Speech of the Athenians at Sparta," in Philip A. Stadter
11 De Romilly remarks: "Moreover, how could one pretend that Athens is asking for too much? She is asking only for what she has actually been given; and she certainly seemed worthy of the hegemony, since the others immediately entrusted her with it. The historical account of the beginnings of her empire . . . evokes a consensus, whose existence Thucydides himself admits in the Pentecontaetia (I.96.1: ἰκοντὸν τὸν χιλιακόν)" (Athenian Imperialism, 249).


13 See Plato, Republic, 358e-359b. David Hume contends that justice exists where it is useful, that equality is the condition which makes it so, and that justice is missing from the poetical fictions of a golden age or the philosophical fictions of a state of nature because too little necessity in the one and too much necessity in the other render it a useless thing (An Inquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals [Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1957], 19-23.)

14 Thucydides states that the intentions of the Athenian envoys were not to respond to specific charges but to dissuade the Peloponnesian league from deciding hastily for war and to impress upon it the might of Athens (1.72.1). The Athenians themselves speak directly of the first of these intentions (1.73.1) but obliquely of the second, associating it with their account of Athens's rise to imperial hegemony (1.73.3). In other words, they choose to communicate the power of Athens by inference alone (See Leo Strauss, The City and Man [Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1964], 170-72; and Clifford Orwin, "Justifying Empire: The Speech of the Athenians at Sparta and the Problem of Justice in Thucydides," Journal of Politics 48 (1986), 80).

The Athenians seem to commit two mistakes, both of which were avoided by Themistocles at the time of the construction of the Long Walls of Athens. Either the Athenians must convince their adversaries that they have no desire to disrupt prevailing power relations (Themistocles' procrastination and subsequent denials that the walls were being built [1.90-91]), which they might do by answering the charges against Athens, or they must present their adversaries with evidence of overwhelming force (Themistocles' revelation of a fait accompli [1.91.4]), perhaps by enumerating Athenian assets. But the envoys do neither; and with their
disquieting talk about the right of the stronger, they manage only to excite enough fear to alarm but not enough fear to cow, causing the Spartans to conclude that an enterprising equal--though not yet a superior--has designs upon their empire.

15 Blaming the weak for their subservience is no more appropriate than blaming the strong for their imperiousness. Hermocrates’ mistake is an indication that even to these "new men" freedom is intrinsically noble.


17 *Leviathan*, chap. 13, 84; chap. 14, 84-86; see note 7 above.

18 See Plato’s *Protagoras* on the subject of sophistic candor (316c-317c); also Patrick Coby, *Socrates and the Sophistic Enlightenment: A Commentary on Plato’s Protagoras* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1987), 37-44.


22 Briefly: Cleon is inconsistent in describing his proposal as just and useful; hope conquers fear, and freedom is irrepressible; good orators lie in order to be trusted.


26 *Republic*, 340c.

27 It is certain that at least two situations are intended, that of an imaginary city, which
Clifford Owen calls utopian ("Democracy and Distrust: A Lesson from Thucydides," American Scholar 53 [1983-84], 320), and that of contemporary Athens. But I suggest that there are two Athenses indicated as well, one that survives if Diodotus is successful and one that emerges if Cleon prevails. In the former it is still possible for a citizen to have influence, and the city is a republic; in the latter only one demagogue is trusted, and the city is a tyranny.

28 The relative moral health of the community is attested to by the fact that "the most terrible measures" (ta deinotata; 3.43.2) cannot be presented openly.


31 Thucydides' judgment is that the empire was hated by all allied peoples (2.8.4-5). But see G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, "The Character of the Athenian Empire," Historia 3 (1954), 1-41; and A. Andrewes, "The Mytilene Debate: Thucydides 3.36-49," Phoenix 16 (1962), 78; also pseudo-Xenophon, Constitution of the Athenians, for a discussion of Athenian policy toward allied democrats (1.14-15; 3.10-11).


33 The speech of the Athenian ambassadors at Sparta provides an indication of how far Athens must go in order to learn this lesson (1.77.1-5).

34 For Hobbes, equality is so dangerous a condition that it makes little difference to him how people effect their escape, whether by "institution" (election) or "acquisition" (conquest) (Leviathan, ch. 17, 112-13). See Brown, "Derivation of Anarchy," 49-57.
