

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

A CRITIQUE OF THUCYDIDES' METHODS AND
TECHNIQUES OF HISTORIOGRAPHY

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BY

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Degree in Classics.

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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this University or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature: Date:

Name: Peter Kwame Womber

Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Signature: Date:

Name: Prof. Peter K. T. Grant

Co-Supervisor's Signature: Date:

Name: Mr. Jonathan Asante Otchere

ABSTRACT

The main thesis of this research has been that historiographical methods and techniques are not synonymous to accuracy of account. There has been series of criticisms and investigations concerning ancient Greek historiography both in ancient and contemporary perspectives. Apparently, many early Greek historians' accounts are inaccurate as we see in Herodotus' criticisms against Homer and Hecataeus. Thucydides, who wrote his account after Herodotus, equally criticized his predecessors of inaccurate accounts. Although criticisms were common with the Greek writers, Thucydides' criticisms are more serious in tone than his predecessors'. Among other criticisms, Thucydides believes that his predecessors' accounts are inaccurate due to their methods and techniques. As a result, I am motivated by Thucydides' criticisms to find out how Thucydides himself gave by his account, and how, generally, historiographical approaches and accuracy of account differ or otherwise.

In so doing, I have employed interpretative and analytical approaches which are inherent in normative research approach as a branch of the many methods under qualitative research. I conclude the research by stating that the accuracy of accounts does not necessarily come about through method and technique alone but by analysis and interpretation that is free of biases, and by available evidence that supports the account. Moving forward, criticisms of historical accuracy should focus on the analysis and evidence but not solely the approaches employed in writing history.

KEY WORDS

Approaches

Critique

Historiography

History

Methods

Techniques

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DEDICATION

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

The study of ancient Greek historiography and history is necessary for several reasons some of which include the furnishing of contemporary politics, leadership, governance, religion, philosophy, science and technological advancement, especially for westerners and those who support some western way of life which is not limited to African countries that practice democracy. Apparently, contemporary studies on/of Greek historiographical approaches and history are the studies of the issues (events) in the works of the Greek historians who wrote to preserve the vast of the Greek culture and political life, the Greek diplomatic relations and interactions with themselves (e.g. Athens-Sparta relationship), and with other states and cultures (e.g. Greek-Persia relationship). Nonetheless, no matter how authoritative some of the accounts such as that of Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon may appear, there are some subjective opinions and criticisms that emanate from both ancient Greek writers and contemporary scholars.

According to Livio Catullo Stecchini (n.d), many contemporary (and or medieval) scholars of ancient Greek history such as Niebuhr, Dovatur, Gobineau, Heinrich Stein, Alfred von Gutschmid, and Amedee Hauvette (Baragwanath & Mathieu de Bakker, edit. 2012; Stecchini, n.d) have raised series of criticisms and counter-criticisms concerning accuracy, truth, chronology and the likes about the facts or events presented to us by the ancient Greek historians such as Hecataeus and Herodotus. The criticisms

focus on the methods or the approaches used to collect the historical facts presented in the literature.

As some of the observations and criticisms are viewed from a contemporary perspective, some of the ancient Greek historians themselves held some doubts against each other. Examples are made of Herodotus' criticisms against his predecessors, Homer and Hecataeus, for presenting false account on the Paris-Helen affairs and on genealogy (Herodotus, Book II. 112-116; Austin, 1969: 5). Similarly, Thucydides also observed some inaccuracies in his predecessors' account in a few words without mentioning their names (Thucydides, I.21-22).

However, it must be admitted that the Greek historians who came before Thucydides did not seem to concern themselves much with what approach of historiography was appropriate or not. For this reason, it seems that there was no in-depth criticism raised by those ancient scholars in relation to historiographical approaches. Nonetheless, Herodotus seems to have [first] questioned and ridiculed the credibility of his predecessors' (e.g. Homer and Hecataeus) accounts. Herodotus believed that Homer presents a false account of the Paris and Helen's affairs in the *Iliad* (*cf.* Herodotus, Book II.116.1).

Per Herodotus' account, Helen never got to Troy, since, upon Paris' arrival in Egypt, at the court of Proteus, by a stormtossed, the warden of the mouth of the Nile named Thonis of Memphis, hearing the crime committed against Menelaus by Alexander (Paris), as reported to him (Thonis) by Proteus, drove Paris from his land (Egypt) but ordered that Helen should stay until the rightful owner (Menelaus) comes for her (Book II. 112-116). Herodotus in Book II.116 states that Homer's desire to twist the story was not

because Homer did not know the accurate or true account but just that Homer could not use the actual event for his epic narrative. As a result, he opted for that which will best suit his “epic-history”.

Unlike Thucydides whose criticism was directed towards historiographical methods and accuracy, Herodotus’ criticism was more of a mockery of what he read from his predecessors’ account. For Thucydides, his predecessors’ works cannot be accepted as accurate due to their approaches. But how different were Thucydides’ approaches and factual representation of events of the Peloponnesian War from his predecessors’? This is what the chosen research titled – “A Critique of Thucydides’ Methods and Techniques of Historiography” – seeks to do.

So far as historical writings of the Greeks are concerned, Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon are considered by most ancient Greeks (Marincola, 2007: 2; Morley, 1999) and contemporary alike as the three greatest historians whose works have preserved the socio-cultural and socio-political practices of the Greeks and non-Greeks. I have concerned myself with Thucydides’ methods and techniques of historiography since among the three mentioned historians, it is Thucydides who openly criticizes his predecessors, though not in many words, for using inappropriate approaches which have resulted in account inaccuracies. Now, the question is, can a method solely render an account accurate or inaccurate?

Notwithstanding, my main source of motivation for embarking on this research emanates from Thucydides’ criticisms levelled against his predecessors. Thucydides, upon embarking on his self-assigned task, appears not to have only concentrated on his research but also touched on how history

should be done or written; by way of direct and indirect disapproval of the methods of his predecessors (especially, Herodotus) for not using the proper approach (most probably, eyewitness) in their historical recordings as deduced from the long quotations below:

In investigating past history, and in forming the conclusions which I have formed, it must be admitted that one cannot rely on every detail which has come down to us by way of tradition. People are inclined to accept all stories of ancient times in an uncritical way – even when these stories concern their own native countries... (Thucydides, I.20.1-6ff, Trans. Rex Warner).

However, I do not think that one will be far wrong in accepting the conclusions I have reached from the evidence which I have put forward. It is better evidence than that of the poets, who exaggerate the importance of their themes, or prose chroniclers, who are less interested in telling the truth than in catching the attention of their public, whose authorities cannot be checked, and whose subject-matter, owing to the passage of time, is mostly lost in the unreliable streams of mythology (Thucydides, I.21.2-8, Trans. Rex Warner).

And with regard to my factual reporting of the events of the war I have made it a principle not to write down the first story that came my way, and not even to be guided by my own general impressions; either I was present myself at the events which I have described or else I heard of them from eye-witness whose reports I have checked with as much thoroughness as possible. Not that even so the truth was easy to discover: different eye-witness give different accounts of the same events, speaking out of partiality for one side or the other or else from imperfect memories. ... My work is not a piece of writing designed to

meet the taste of an immediate public, but was done to last forever
(Thucydides, I.22.1ff. Trans. Rex Warner).

It is obvious that Thucydides detests people who accept every story in an uncritical manner. He flouts account unsupported with evidence like the poets who merely exaggerate the importance of their themes and prose chroniclers who are not interested in telling the truth than seeking the attention of their readers. Thucydides also dislikes intensely accounts written from mythological sources since authorities of such accounts cannot be checked or traced.

Thus, although criticisms were something commonly identified with ancient Greek historians, Thucydides' comment was exceptional. As a result, it becomes necessary for this research to analyze Thucydides' *Peloponnesian War* to find out if, generally, his work had the best accuracy and right approaches.

Statement of the Problem

There has been a series of criticisms concerning ancient Greek historians' approaches to writing history. These criticisms are observed from both ancient and contemporary perspectives. Critics try to find out the reliability of the historians' accounts, sources and methods adopted in writing their narratives (Marincola, 2007: 2-3). These investigation of historical writing are particularly concerned with the *sources* and *methods* adopted for historical works. On the other hand, some accounts such as Thucydides' are considered accurate due to his historiographical methods as against Herodotus. There are some silent questions that have not been answered over the years when reviewers are discussing the accuracy in Thucydides. It should be noted

that there are some key issues that highly render historical account inaccurate. Since much attention has not been paid to those issues, there has been omissions, errors of judgement in the past, inadequacies, etc. so far as the *Peloponnesian War* and historiography in general are concerned.

Apparently, the difference between Herodotus' and Thucydides' criticisms is that the latter was more interested in the approaches than the former. As a result, the first problem we encounter is a confusion between what constitutes an accurate account and what best approach can render an account accurate (Marincola, 2007: 3-4). Although the facts, sources, and methods of history in general have undergone serious reevaluation, we should acknowledge that, since the historian is part of his account, especially where there are some level of preconceived notions, and biases of the writer, historical accounts, to some extent, are sometimes presented lopsided not on methods but biases and lack of enough evidence to support the account being narrated to us.

The second issue needed to be investigated is: are historical events in the *Peloponnesian War* synonymous to accuracy? The event can be obviously known but what actually happened in the course of the event may be quite altered by the historian to suite his narrative style.

The third problem is: was Thucydides able to rewrite the accounts he identified with his predecessors as inaccurate? Although these criticisms were directly or indirectly levelled against Thucydides predecessors, Thucydides himself could not reinvestigate to rewrite of what his predecessors had done in order to separate "facts of the past" (which Carr identified with the historical information which the historian deem unimportant) from "historical facts"

(information that the historian have decided as important). Just as William L. Burton popularly quotes: “If you do not like the past, change it” (Leslie, 2013). So on what bases then are Thucydides statements better than his predecessors? Should it be on the bases of his techniques, approaches, or accuracy?

The last issue we need to consider is: does Thucydides’ method or technique of writing synonymous with representation of the facts? It should be noted that there are no universal criteria or standards for analyzing all works of history on the basis of appropriateness of methods and techniques. As a result, patience and conscious efforts are needed when we want to criticize any historical account.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is aimed at investigating the extent by which Thucydides’ techniques, approaches, or methods are better than his predecessors’. The research aims to find out whether Thucydides’ superiority is based on his approaches, or accuracies.

Research Questions

Based on the criticisms that surround historiographical approaches and account accuracy, and Thucydides’ own approaches, the following questions come to play:

1. What methods or techniques of history were used by early Greek historians?
2. What methods or techniques did Thucydides employ in his *Peloponnesian War*?

3. Are the criticisms suggesting to us that accuracy of events (past or contemporary) is revealed solely through a method and technique used, or the ability to support an account with evidence, critical analysis, or both?
4. How different is what Thucydides says from what he does?

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this research seeks to discuss the methods and techniques of early Greek historiography before the time of Thucydides. It is to find out the methods and techniques adopted by Thucydides in the *Peloponnesian War*. The research is to explain how Thucydides' historiographical methods and techniques were distinct from or superior to those of earlier writers or Thucydides' predecessors. The research also aims at finding out whether methods and techniques are synonymous to accuracy.

Methodology

In order to address the research problem, questions, and objectives, I have used evidence from both primary sources in translation, as well as secondary sources on Greek historiographical methods and techniques in general. Key among the primary sources are Rex Warner's translation of the *Peloponnesian War*, Benjamin Jowett's translation of the *Peloponnesian War*, George Rawlinson's translation of the *Histories*, T. Griffith, and E. V Rieu's translation of the *Iliad*. Per the secondary sources, I have found very useful the works of Norman Austin, M. I. Finley, S. Hornblower, Donald Kagan, J. Marincola, and J. Ober.

The research ultimately employs normative, interpretive, and analytical approaches (McKee, 2013; Hardin, 2011: 1ff; Routio, 2007; Kothari, 1990: 3)

all of which are some aspects of qualitative research method. According to Tracy (2013: 28-29), qualitative research is an “umbrella concept that covers” document (paper or electronic or both) exploration, participant observation, and interviews in order to understand and describe meanings, relationships, and patterns. However, the research is devoid of any form of interviews since it deals with ancient Greek writers.

Therefore, the research has gathered facts from the existing literature that discusses Greek historians and their approaches of writing by pointing out the commonalities, differences, strengths and weaknesses in their approaches, and how meanings of social phenomena were revealed by the historians, and also to point out which aspects the object of this study can be improved.

I used interpretive approach since it centres on the way in which historians make sense of their subjective reality and attach meaning to it (Addae & Quan-Baffour 2015: 156ff; Cf. Albusaidi, 2019: 105-122); and recognize the individual historians’ interpretation and understanding of historical or past events and their own time (Shah & Al-Bargi, 2013: 256). Moreover, the interpretive approach supports the theory of *interpretivism* used for this research.

Qualitative analysis is also selected since it is noteworthy for understanding personal, relational, virtual contexts, etc. in a range of different ways (Tracy, 2013: 8). Qualitative analytical research method is chosen since it has the potential of finding the relationship between the historian’s (researcher’s) cultural background and his topic of research, his sources of information and the interpretation of such sources; his subjective opinion on ongoing critical societal issues and how his “self-reflexivity” may or may not

affect his analysis and findings (Tracy, 2013: 29). Moreover, this method is chosen since it supports the theories of *interpretivism* and *subjectivism*. In addition, it gives the researcher the room to operate freely by bringing out different interpretations and criticisms in the literature being engaged with.

Theoretical Framework

Since the basis of qualitative research lies in the interpretive approach to historical, social, cultural, economic, and political issues, and how issues are interpreted from perspectives, this research employs *interpretivism* in scrutinizing the Greek historiographical approaches in general and those of Thucydides' methods and techniques. *Interpretivism* is a theory which postulates that humans differ from one another and the material world, and the distinction between humans and matter should be represented in the approaches of investigation (Cf. Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017: 33-35). Both *interpretivism* as a theory and interpretive methods of inquiry began in the eighteenth century and is linked with Giambattista Vico who believed that social organization and social experiences form our perceptions of reality and truth as opposed to Descartes who argued that there is a distinction between the natural and social world (Ryan, 2018: 8-10).

I have used *interpretivisms* as a theory for this research since historians and writers believe and see things and interpret them differently (subjectively or constructively). Thus people, researchers, and historians consist of one entity with different experiences and attitudes towards the reality or their external world and how they construct and reconstruct the reality of past events (very past or contemporary). With the same theory of the *interpretivists*, I believe that the historical events and hard facts do not exist

independent of our knowledge of them and the individuals' interpretation; and that participation can influence the observed occurrences that the historians inquire (Shah & Al-Bargi, 2013: 257; Thanh & Le Thanh, 2015: 24-27).

Besides, facts, accuracies, truth, knowledge, and importance assigned to some events are all acts of interpretation. As a result, there are no objective approaches in information acquisition which are free of reasoning in and from perspectives. Thus, all historical researches are guided by the researchers' desire to understand sequence, accuracy, truth, and reality of events in subjective (Scotland, 2012: 9-11) and interpretive manner (Shah & Al-Bargi, 2013: 256-257). This also means that the approaches and study of events should not be done in a manner of following a set of defined rules or methods (Addae & Quan-Baffour 2015: 156ff). The theory also presupposes that historical accuracy does not come by as a result of the methods but by evidence, analysis, and interpretation that is free of biases.

Significance of the Study

This research aimed to bring to the fore some inaccuracies associated with the historiographical approaches in general, and specifically that of Thucydides. It is an important addition to the Greek historiographical and Thucydidean School of knowledge (the study of Thucydides) which emphasized that the methods of recording events of the "past" can help a historian come up with an accurate and clear picture of whatever transpired (in ancient Greece) in terms of politics and warfare. More importantly, this research provides the platform to argue that accuracy of an event goes beyond methods. The research emphasized the awareness that historical accuracy

should be assessed through both approaches and the historian's analysis, interpretation, and provision of supporting evidence that is free of biases.

Delimitation and Limitation

This research is mainly focused on the methods and techniques of Thucydides, and his treatment of sources so far as Greek historiography is concerned. However, the research has not, in context and content, discussed every event narrated in the *Peloponnesian War* by Thucydides. On the other hand, so far as the work has a direct link with Greek historiographical methods and techniques, some early Greek writers such as Hecataeus, Xanthus, Hellanicus, and Herodotus have been briefly looked at as a basis for measuring Thucydides' methods and techniques.

On one hand, since I am not proficient in the Greek language, I have used the translated versions of Greek historical works for this research. Ultimately, most of the Thucydidean quotations are from Rex Warner's translation of the *Peloponnesian War*. Other Greek texts cited are translated versions of Benjamin Jowett, E. V. Rieu, George Rawlinson, T. Griffith, and H. D. F. Kitto.

Organization

This research is organized into five chapters. Chapter One is an introductory chapter which locates the entire work into its actual structure. Chapter Two is a literature review which looks at some concepts associated with history and historiography, etc. Chapter Three has discussed the historiographical approaches of Thucydides' predecessors. Chapter Four critiques Thucydides' methods and techniques of historiography. Chapter Five is a summary and conclusion.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

In this chapter, I have highlighted the concepts or terms associated with historiography: the relationship between historiography and science, the meaning of history, the different schools of thought of the idea or philosophy of history, development of Greek historiography, historiography and factual representation in history, how historians attain facts of the past, historiographical biases and factual history, and how objective is the subjective nature of historical approaches and facts. Most importantly, this literature review is to demonstrate that, in the discourse of historical approaches, accuracy, and factual history, the inaccuracies or otherwise do not necessarily lean on the methods and techniques of historiography, although the methods and techniques may be necessary approaches to soliciting for facts of events. Ultimately, the chapter is to demonstrate that account accuracy goes beyond historiographical approaches.

The Concept of Historiography

In general terms, *historiography* could mean the writing of history or written history (Collins Dictionary of Sociology, 2000). Stated differently, historiography involves the processes of historical recordings or letterings, and the deliberation of the procedural queries upstretched by the production of past accounts (Collins Dictionary of Sociology, 2000). Thus, historiography is all about the approaches used in writing an account of past events. It also deals with the scientific and philosophical approaches of writing history. However, ‘historiography’ which also means history of the science of history as a whole

(Kumar & Karumakaran, 2014: 203) could mean the total body of investigation devoted to a specific subject or historical epoch, for instance, the historiography of the Athenian Empire, of the Roman Empire, of Pan-Africanism, of the British Empire, of the Ottoman Empire, etc. (The Great Soviet Encyclopedia, 1979). For the purpose of the study, I have used historiography as the ways historians write their accounts of the past.

Historiography as a Science

In the opinion of Špiláčková (2012: 23), historiography is historical research which means the investigation of elements from history. In this sense, since historiography involves an investigation into the past events, the term *investigation* makes any historical research scientific and sometimes as a basic qualitative research method. As a result, historiography which is also seen as historical research, as reiterated by Špiláčková, is a critical investigation of events, past or contemporary, development and experiences of the past, which involves cautious thought of past evidences from the standpoint of evidence sources, authority and succeeding analysis of the concerned proofs of investigation of events (Špiláčková, 2012: 23).

Thus, the term historiography involves itself with scientific approaches but it only differs from other purely scientifically systematic undertakings by the subject matter of history (past events) which is difficult to reverse or wholly capture, and sometimes is accompanied by difficult task of interpretation which is liable to relativity and subjectivity and especially by the influence of the nature of the unique subject matter, past or historical events and themes, and historical biases. However, *history*, whether being considered as *pseudo-scientific* (in terms of methods) or otherwise, the subject

matter of history [which is *ιστορια* – inquiry] makes history “scientific research” in its context, and by its nature, it is subject to the test of accuracy.

Conception of History

The term “history” in itself is a Greek word, *ιστορια*, (Liddell et al., 1940: 312) which denotes an inquiry or an investigation (Kumar & Karunakaran, 2014: 204). History, in its broader sense, basically deals with past human events which are not limited to politics, governance, culture, religion, and social practices.

In a more contemporary perspective and conception of “history”, E. H. Carr (1961: 32), gives a trendy definition of history as mutually the investigation piloted by the history writer and the facts of his inquiries concerning the events he engages in. I tend to side with this definition since history is the making of the historian. I agree with Carr that history is all about human activities or human past events which the historian, as a social being, involves himself as a communal being who understands his present from the past. As a result, there is a kind of reciprocal sort of relationship between the historian himself and his inquiries and the past events: a discourse stuck between humans but not divine. In this manner, Thucydides would be Carr’s favourite for his use of non-human abstractions as causal agents of events in history and outcome of events in his *Peloponnesian War*. In another viewpoint too, history is all about what the historiographer finds worthy, or that which has a direct effect on the present age.

With the same shared belief of Burckhardt, Carr states that account of a past event and how it is written is what one generation and the historian consider praiseworthy. The importance assigned to certain events by the

historian and one's age does not give priority to historiography approaches in the first place. This is because Carr believes that the dual function of history is to allow a man to appreciate the social order of the past and to upsurge his mastery over the social order of the present (Carr, 1961: 32-40). Thus, historiography does not only involve gathering data from the past by using a method(s) since the gathering of historical data by a historian is just only one aspect of historiography (Špiláčková, 2012: 23).

Different Schools of Thought of Philosophy (Idea) of History

Long before the idea of “history”, almost every society that had existed had some sort of historical antecedents to narrate to the current generation. These past antecedents or events were retold orally. When man gained the knowledge of arts and letters, people began to write down their past events which became known as historical recordings or writing. At this stage, it could be perceived that most writers in antiquity did not concern themselves with the accuracy and reliability of sources but tried to understand the meaning of the present from the past “stories” they have been told orally (Cf. Pasamar, 2012). The attempts in trying to understand the present from the past, and man's role in his society, how events began and progressed (or ended) – all culminated into what is termed as the idea or philosophy of history.

As history and the way it is done (historicism) became more interesting, theorists, philosophers, and scholars began to voice their individual perception of “philosophy of history” (Cf. Harris, 1957: 35-49; Collingwood, 1946 & 1961; Lebedev, 2015; Lemon, 2003). On this note, I have focused on the *cyclic theory of history*; *progressionists theory of history*

(of St. Augustine, Kant, etc.); *Hegel's idealistic concept*; and *Marx's concept*. These different schools of thought have not been discussed in their entirety since they are not the main focus of this research but to note that the idea of “history” is constructive and subjective, and it means something different from person to person. For example, whereas Thucydides considers mythical events as unhistorical and fictitious, Herodotus may consider it as historical (*cf.* Baragwanath & de Bakker (eds.), 2012).

Cyclic Theory of History

According to the cyclical idea of past events, “philosophy of history” is cyclical (Maduka & Otoide, 2010: 35). According to Maduka and Otoide, this means that events in history are just like the development of the plot of (Greek) drama. These events have a beginning, then rise to the climax, and finally undergo a degeneration. From the degeneration (denouement), then new one similar to the beginning of the just end “chains of events” begins again and continues in that cyclical manner. Thus, basically for this school of thought, nothing new really happens than past events moving in circles – from beginning to rising point to a fall – in that order, then back to starting point again.

Progressionist Theory of History

According to the progressionist theory, history is not cyclical but it progresses (Maduka & Otoide, 2010: 35-6; Rubinoff, 1968). This theory of history is popularly identified with St. Augustine who wrote in 1972. He believed that historical events do not go in circles as others would believe but straight. Augustine’s philosophy of history is linked to early Christian doctrines and the supernatural being, how life starts on earth and eternally

ends at the “heavens”. As a result, we cannot treat his philosophy under human interactions. Nonetheless, he has expressed his idea of history and what he finds praiseworthy.

Not only Augustine who considered history as progress but also historians like Gibbon, Acton, Dampier, and Bury. These historians believe that at each point in time people progress from one stage to another, and without progression, there would not be any development or advancement in human life and history in general (Maduka & Otoide, 2010: 36). Kant later in his discourse also believed that history progresses. However, he summarizes history as being the “idiotic course of all things human”, is, accordingly, not worthy of a sustained and coherent philosophical critique (Kent, 2015: 84; Wilkins, 1966: 172-185; Kain, 1989). Thus, whatever activity that involves human can be considered historical.

Idealistic Theory of History

Hegel (1977) is considered as the champion of the idealistic philosophy of history. For him, all history is ideas which we develop and generate in our minds. Hegel believes that the conscious man is he who can make or unmake events as historical and non-historical. As a result, he summarizes history as *nothing but the thoughtful consideration of it* (Hegel, n.d & 2001: 11ff; Sedgwick, 2015 Maduka & Otoide, 2010: 37).

Marx’s Theory of History

In Marx’s theory of history, there is no room for *Spirit* or *Ideas*. Karl Marx develops his idea of history from empirical supposition. He believes the way events happen, how a man behaves in the society is determined by the forces of productions and class struggle. And that within these factors of

production and class struggle determines how societies organize themselves and determine the character of their established institutions. In short, Karl considers history as nothing but class struggles (Maduka & Otoide, 2010: 37-38; Adamson, 1980: 186ff).

Development of Greek Historiography

For Jacoby, the development of Greek historiography (and sources) can be categorized under five different but interconnected genres. The first three which proceeds orderly include mythography which dwells on *mythology* as a source, ethnography which employs a scientific description of the culture of a society, and chronography. The last two of which Jacoby discussed include contemporary history and horography (or local history).

Contemporary history became the foremost sub-genre of all of Jacoby's five stages of the development of Greek historiography (Marincola, 2007: 7). By contemporary history (and historians) Jacoby refers to writers who did not restrict themselves to the writing of local history nonetheless recounted the over-all Greek past events concerning their own time (*cf.* Marincola, 2007).

The first glimpse of this sub-genre, according to Marincola (2007: 7), is identified or associated with the 7th to the 9th Books of Herodotus. This is due to the fact that in these Books, the descriptive element, which is the trademark of ethnographical account, turns out to incorporate with the ideas of history and the quest for causation in history. After Herodotus' works, the next historical work, in the next generation, where we see ethnographical research in its full development, is Thucydides' writings. It is believed that it is through

Thucydides' works that Jacoby's fourth sub-genre of Greek historiographical development comes into fruition.

The fifth and final grade of Greek historiography, according to Jacoby, is horography (or local history). In contrary to Dionysus, Jacoby did not see local histories as the most basic method of writing an account of the past but last among the stages in the development of Greek historiography as seen and exemplified in Herodotus' methods and accounts (Marincola, 2007: 7). However, both agree on the point that the *Histories* of Herodotus gives us the general idea of Greek historiographical development although his work is multi-disciplinary. It encompasses geography, ethnography, and monography, in that order, as respectively seen in Books II, II and IV, and VII-IX (*cf.* Marincola, 2007: 6).

Thus, for Jacoby, the development of Greek historiography started with the mythography and genealogy of the earliest writers, then to ethnography, chronography, contemporary, and horography. Although some doubts have been raised against the approach by which Jacoby addressed the development of Greek Historiography, Marincola however, believes that it will be unfair to discredit Jacoby of such steps or stages of the development of Greek history since we see some important features of Greek historiography in his (Jacoby) sub-genres of historiographical development.

Historiography and Factual Representation in History

Kumar and Karunakaran (2014: 203) state that, the methods or approaches of writing history are largely characterized by a number of modifications some of which include evolution, civilization, variations, and relativity of cultures in the countless phase of what people consider as

historical. Consequently, the act and art of writing the history of a specific era are, most often than not, noticeable with some key or important features that are brought to it by several causes such as human values, morality, and ethics. In line with these, the writing of history in a specific era becomes apparently unlike to another era, although there may be similar themes of these different periods in human history. The question that comes in mind is: How does the historian, per his methods and techniques, present the fact(s) to us in his historical (re)searches within a specific epoch?

It is believed that “History” involves a body of established facts. But not all facts are historical facts or are treated by a historian as established facts. For example, the Greaco-Persian War, the Lelantine War, and the Peloponnesian War have established facts but not everything that happened in the past becomes a historical fact. Thus, the basic principle in History involves a body of accurate evidence but not merely a method or technique. The Historian could get his facts from documents, or inscriptions (Carr, 1961: 3). But would that be enough to say that the account is likely to be factual or non-factual?

A good historian is the one who gets his fact(s) accurate and gets praised for providing factual evidence in his recordings or narrations (Carr, 1961: 4; Becker, 1955: 327ff). Thus, the facts (or basic facts) are set of raw data or materials of the historiographer rather than of history itself. And that, the most important thing for the historiographer and his source(s) of information (raw materials/facts) is not about how to get access to the facts but how a priori decision of the historian is set based on the information at hand supported with evidence. Consequently, the duty and aim of the

historiographer and what historiography seek to do is not just about the writing of past events but how, the historian, with the basic facts or materials at hand and with evidence, suggests the probable effects of a known cause or using a general principle to suggest likely effects.

Attaining the Facts of the Past Events

Some contemporary historians such as Carr have in mind that, ignorance should be the first requisite of a historiographer, and that ignorance must make things easier and make clear, to decide on that which is necessary and omits that which is not. By extension, it is suggestive that the modern historian should enjoy and cultivate the advantages of in-built ignorance necessary for himself in order to come nearer to accuracy of the facts and his own times. In other words, the inherent ignorance should help the historian to ascertain the rare noteworthy pieces of evidence, and reject the numerous unimportant proofs (Carr, 1961: 6). Thus, to get the true and accurate knowledge of an event – very past or contemporary – demands thorough investigation supported with concrete evidence. Here too, in talking about historical facts and accuracy, historiographical approaches do not come to play because whether one chooses to write a contemporary account by the use of eye-witness as an approach or writing a very past account by using oral traditions, the historian still needs to dig deep to find out what constitutes the real evidence and facts since people are more likely to exaggerate or tell about events in the manner that suits their taste.

It is believed that no material or document can talk for itself or be presented as a historical fact until the historiographer works on the material(s) and decodes it. This means that no matter where the historian gets his

information, with whatever approach, he needs to investigate the information at hand well, interpret it undiluted and unbiasedly. However, all these processes still abound the historiographical and historical biases of the historian. Therefore, in as much as we make all these observations, we are still likely to encounter alterations and weak spots in any historical account.

Historiographical Biases and Factual History

Ascertaining the hard facts of history is not necessarily about the methods or techniques employed just like Thucydides would want us to accept although some methods of writing history can be highly suspicious. The point is, whichever approach is used, there are some issues (biases) that may alter the hard facts of events. According to McCullagh (2000: 40), historical letterings can be biasedly done in four ways.

The first common way by which historical account can be written biasedly is when sometimes historians or researchers misconstrue evidence in order to warrant in stating that the interpretations given are the accurate occurrence of the past. The example that we can give is that, for instance, a historian might accept the evidence that puts forward that something actually happened in the past or has happened recently, but disregard those shreds of evidence that seems to them awkward based on their personal prejudices.

The second issue of bias that has been noted is when historians ignore important facts but accept what they think they can justify as accurate and credible. They can choose to present one aspect of the facts surrounding personalities, political figures, or historical figures and ignore other aspects which make their account unbalanced. For example, Herodotus and Thucydides, like any historian, might elaborate on the virtues of Solon and

Pericles respectively but ignore their vices, or elaborate on the vices of Croesus and Cleon respectively by consciously omitting their virtues which can be termed as the *censorship* of the historian and his historiographical methods. In other words, the historians themselves, their prejudices, and how they want to present the behaviour of their characters depend on what they consider important.

The third among the four biases has to do with when historians imply that some event happened without having the actual evidence that supports what they say. The fourth bias occurs when the historian, after gathering his data, presents some possible causes that accounted for the incidence and rejects other similar and important issues of causation.

So, we ask ourselves again, is factual and accurate history all about the methods and techniques of writing? The approaches of writing historical account can be considered as appropriate but not as an assurance of accuracy or truth since historical writing includes the historian and his biases. These are some reasons for which critics of history are more inclined to criticize some of the past events presented to us by some ancient Greek writers (and historians in general) as inaccurate and at times, quasi-historical (*Cf.* Bury, 1909: 13-15).

On the other hand, ancient Greek historiography, no matter the criticisms leveled against, whether it is true historical or quasi-historical, has stood the test of time (*Cf.* Bury, 1909: 13-15). To some, ancient Greek historiography did not follow the appropriate approaches; and that it did not involve a scientific approach and for that matter, do not present factual account. To others, it involved vast impersonal forces without paying attention to the individuals as the decisive factor of history. However, some

contemporary historians (e.g. Bury, Austin, and Carr) believe that ancient Greek historiography had the aspiration to hypothesize the desire to postulate single and individual mastermind as the innovative dynamism in history (*cf.* Burry, 1909; Austin, 1969).

For Carr (1961: 26), in all their attempts, strengths and weaknesses, ancient Greek historians portrayed their historiographical consciousness. By implication, Carr means that ancient Greek writers did not either know what historical writing was about or they were now gaining awareness of historiographical methods or recordings. And if this was the case, then it should be duly acknowledged that, no matter what methods and techniques they used, they made the concerted effort to make known to the world, the deeds of men from the past to present by focusing and emphasizing on personalities such as their archons or generals, Solon, Lycurgus, Themistocles, Leonidas, Pericles, etc.

The historians saw themselves, their heroes and their society as similar and did not draw any difference between themselves as individuals and society. This is why Carr states that the attempt to draw a distinction between the individual as a phenomenon and the individuals as members of a group or class becomes misleading since there is a kind of existing reciprocity between the two (Carr, 1961: 16 & 27). However, the danger is over emphasis and exaggerations, especially, if a historian is fond of a certain character or personality.

Objective-Subjectivity of Historical Truth

It is of the general knowledge that “history is what the historian makes”. In further developments, since history becomes what the historian

makes, Carr, with reference to Sir George Clark, stated that if we believe not to accept that historical accuracy or truth is subjective then we will be doing ourselves a great disservice since accuracy, facts, and truth are in perspectives. This is to say that, objectively, historical accuracy is subjective. However, it lies in the obligation of every historical writer to respect his facts although his facts may be subjected to criticisms or subjectivism. On this note, E. H. Carr (1961: 15) reiterated that the main responsibility of the historian is not to select what is considered as appropriate methods of writing but how he is able to come out with all the relevant known facts in his interpretations.

As a consequence, in the space of historiographical methods, scholars have suggested that it should be a necessary requirement for the historian to draw a relation between himself, his facts, and his theme (Marincola, 2007: 3-4). This will help the historian to present his facts accurately with careful scrutiny (*Cf.* Carr, 1961: 15-16). This does not necessarily mean that the approaches to be used should not be duly considered but it should be left with the type of history one wants to inquire and write about. Nonetheless, we should not confuse historical accuracy with historiographical approaches. It can, therefore, be considered that the historiographical approaches are pathway used by the historian to investigate and come out with the facts of the past events from the perspectives of others and his own interpretations.

Conclusion

The literature reviewed has disclosed what constitutes historiography, history, the idea of history, how facts are obtained, and how historical events and sources should be analyzed, and some biases involved in historical analyses. We can also deduce from the literature reviewed that, the actual

focus of history and how it is analyzed, and how historical accuracy is revealed are from the historians' perspective. This does not mean that there is no accurate or factual account of the past event, but the processes by which historians attempt to interpret and analyze the events are not free from biases. These biases and subjective view of events, to a large extent, render an account inaccurate than the methods or techniques in writing history. Although the methods and techniques are very necessary tools for historical writing, they cannot, however, be equated to historical accuracy since different perspectives are involved. Nonetheless, accuracy can always be achieved if the historian shields himself or herself from the events being investigated.

CHAPTER THREE

THE HISTORIOGRAPHICAL APPROACHES OF THUCYDIDES'

PREDECESSORS

Introduction

This chapter has discussed the various approaches used by Thucydides' predecessors in their works. Although the research focuses on Thucydides' historiographical approaches, it is, however, keeping in mind Thucydides' criticisms against his predecessors, indispensable to discuss Thucydides' predecessors' approaches in order to know some of their methods and inaccuracies of their works, and to determine whether Thucydides' approaches of historiography differ from his predecessors, and to also determine how consistent or practically inconsistent (Bassham et al., 2011: 4-5) is Thucydides with his approaches in the course of the discourse. In addition, this chapter has discussed the approaches of those early writers as a basis (foundation) of critiquing Thucydides' historiographical methods and techniques, and account accuracy.

This chapter also shows in the analysis that, in the absence of account accuracy and inaccuracy, the type of history (past or contemporary) influences the approach used and each writer used the approach to his own advantage; and that they were not obliged to follow a particular method or technique of writing. On this note, I have considered some methods and techniques such as prose writing, oral tradition (oral source), eye-witness, digressions or extended speeches, set-speeches and direct quotations, (extended) catalogue, dramatic irony, and mythology and divine interventions, etc. as used by ancient writers such as Homer, Hecataeus, Charon of Lampsacus, Dionysius of Miletus, and

Herodotus. Since the main objective of this thesis is to critique Thucydides' methods and techniques of historiography, it will suffice to clear the concept of methods and techniques in historiography in this chapter and then proceed with the analysis.

The concept of Methods, Approaches, and Techniques in Historiography

In general terms, and synonymously, the term method, technique (*technikos* in Greek), approach, methodology, style, way, tactics, etc. are the same. Although the differences in definitions of these terms are not wide or there is no clear cut, there is a, however, slight difference between methods and techniques depending on how it is used and for what purpose. In Edward M. Anthony's view, *techniques* carry out a *method* which is consistent with an *approach* (Anthony, 1963: 63-7). He places each term hierarchically, and thus, techniques come first, and within it, is a method, which in turns incorporates approaches. However, many at times, techniques, methods, and approaches are used interchangeably and can be used interchangeably in context.

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2019) provides some definitions for techniques: first is "the manner in which *technical* details are treated (as by a writer) or basic physical movements are used (as by a dancer); also the ability to treat such details or use such movements"; second is "a body of technical methods (as in a craft or in scientific research); or a method of accomplishing a desired aim." Methods, on the other hand, could mean: "a procedure or process for attaining an object such as a (1): scientific or systematic procedure, technique, or mode of inquiry employed by or proper to a particular discipline or art (2): a systematic plan followed in presenting material for instruction." A

method could also mean “a discipline that deals with the principles and techniques of scientific inquiry”.

For the purpose of this thesis, I have used methods, techniques, approaches, and style interchangeably to mean the procedures by which historians inquire about events (distant past or contemporary) and write about the events. As a result, the terms methods, approaches, and techniques shall be used synonymously.

Prose writing

To begin with, prose writing is highly appreciated to have been used at Miletus to treat subjects that related to history. For instance, it is acknowledged that Cadmus, contemporary with Anaximander and Pherecydes of Syros, who lived in the sixth century, did write a historical book titled the *Origins of Miletus* in prose (Bury, 1909: 14). Although the works of such figures (Cadmus, Eumelus or Eugammon) had been recognized, it is examined that Hecataeus became the most famous prose writer or logographer (writers of the ethnographical and the anthropological treatises) and the “founder” of historiography (Bury, 1909: 15). Hecataeus used *myth* and *prose* writing as a method and technique respectively in writing his genealogical accounts of the Greeks and the Egyptians by applying value judgment to it (Bury, 1909: 13; *Bill of Right in Action (BRIA)*, 2009).

The literature and Hecataeus himself did not point to us the reason(s) prose writing was adopted. Nonetheless, we can postulate that Hecataeus chose a method which was, in his own view, appropriate at the time and to his research. He did not use the methods of the poets (thus, the use of verses or poetry), but rather adopted a new method which he felt necessary and

appropriate in writing history (Austin, 1969: 22; Clay, 2009). Consequently, prose writing has since gained the recognition in the sense that, contemporary historians and critics of history believe that the beginning of prose writing necessitated the upsurge of historiography (Bury, 1909: 16-18; Usher, 1969). Prose writing was later to be adopted by successors of Hecataeus in their historical analysis.

It should be noted that the use of prose as a technique of writing is not the same as account accuracy. Either than that Herodotus could not have spotted inaccuracy in Hecataeus' account. Accuracy of an account is far beyond historiographical approaches. The actual problem to be identified with accuracy is the historian or writer himself. This is due to the fact that no matter what method or technique to be used, the writer's preconceived notions, his interpretations of the events, geographical background, etc. highly influence the accuracy or inaccuracy of his research.

Field Trips (Travelling)

It is evident that some early writers such as Hecataeus, Charon of Lampsacus, Scylax of Caryanda, and Herodotus engaged extensively in field trips to gather facts from the past events. For those writers who used eye-witnessed or wanted to write a contemporary history of their time necessarily depended on eye-witness. As a result, traveling became a must method used to get access to the events. Nonetheless, generally, there are instances where a historian who wants to inquire about the far distant past must travel, especially, when the events concern another locale, or those who are knowledgeable about the event lives in a different locale from the historian. In the same way, most ancient Greek historians traveled to see for themselves

and asked those who witnessed or were knowledgeable about the past events. This is evident in the travels of Hecataeus and Herodotus to other eastern Mediterranean and European regions and Egypt (*BRIA*, 2009).

On the other hand, such an approach could not serve as a guarantee of accurate account since the method in itself does not equal accuracy but as a tool to begin investigation or gathering of data. If not, Herodotus could not have again acknowledged that Hecataeus presented inaccurate account of his (Hecataeus') own generation although Hecataeus employed field trips as a method of sourcing for information.

Indeed, Herodotus related that Hecataeus, in his conversation with the priest of Thebes in Egypt, had traced his ancestry back to a god in the sixteenth generation, about 500 years. But it turned out that the Egyptian priest could count 345 generations high priests and still they did not trace their ancestry back to the gods (Austin, 1969: 5). It could, therefore, be assumed that, earlier on, Herodotus and other people may have accepted the account of Hecataeus as accurate in an uncritical manner as Thucydides flouts, but it was later found out that there was unwarranted truth in the account. Herodotus may or may not have rhetorically or literally critiqued his predecessor, but it turns out that there were some inaccuracies in Hecataeus' account. In this sense, field trip as a method of historiography did not warrant the accuracy of the historical account but as a necessary tool of research.

Eye-witness

Eye-witness, as a method of writing history, is mostly employed by those whose researches focus on contemporary events. History has it that Charon of Lampsacus composed a history of Persia (some 61 years before

Thucydides' account), in about 492, in which he tells us about a storm destroying Mardonius' fleet by a rainstorm off Mount Athos and also about Xerxes' invasions within the same year 492. It is believed that many of the events of his accounts happened during his time, as a result, he became a contemporary of the events and decided to write, out of his time, a contemporary discourse. By so doing, it is believed that he may have employed *eye-witness* approach (and *oral*) accounts in his writings. (Bury, 1909: 22).

Although historiographical methods and techniques were not the concern of Charon, he, however, consciously or unconsciously, applied the methods which he thought and deemed necessary in his narratives. Unfortunately, an eye-witness, which is supposed to be the best method always has a potential ability to render an account inaccurate since the historian's analysis, interpretations, and biases can negatively alter the accuracy of an account. Nonetheless, we can witness an accurate account with the use of eye-witness method when these weaknesses are controlled or eliminated.

Scylax of Caryanda (the Carian Greek), is also believed to have adopted eye-witness as a method of writing. King Darius, as we are told, is said to have hired Scylax to study the passage and course of the Indus River which Scylax did under his own observation. Scylax is also credited with publishing an account of his exploration based on his own *eye-witness*. He is also credited for writing a contemporary history which focused on the personality or biography of his colleague country-folks, of Prince Heracleides of Mylasae. According to the account of Scylax, Heracleides, instead of

supporting his countrymen and Persia, decided to champion the Greek course by abandoning Xerxes and his attempt of invading the Greek land (Bury, 1909: 24).

Directly or indirectly, Scylax's historical method (*eye-witness*) and the *technique* of concentrating on individual figures had a great impact on Greek historiography and historiographers, as their methods also took account of and modeled around individual personalities such as Pericles in Thucydides' *Peloponnesian War*, and many individuals such as Darius, Xerxes, Themistocles, etc. Thus, Scylax's account of Heracleides made an individual the pivot of historical narrative which influenced subsequent historians' themes and methods (Bury, 1909: 25). With the same subject, method, and aim of Charon employed by Dionysius of Miletus, he likewise wrote histories concerning the Persian invasions which descended to the death of the Persian king, Darius (Bury, 1909: 25).

Oral Tradition/Source

The oral method of writing history is largely influenced by long distant past events. By context, according to Bury (1909: 38-41), and Kumar and Karunakaran (2014: 206), it is believed that it was Herodotus who began to use systematic and scientific approaches in historical analysis by trying to question and find answers as to why people do what they do, culturally, and what made the Greeks confront the non-Greeks in the wider subject areas of historical discourse, geography, ethnography, etc. Although his methods have been also met with criticisms by Thucydides due to, perhaps, Herodotus' oral approach or technique; nonetheless, it is common knowledge that since

Herodotus was not contemporary of the events he narrated, he immensely depended on oral accounts and methods for his histories.

Professor Turab-ul-Hassan Sargana of the Bahauddin Zakariya University noted in his *Oral History: Scope and Significance* that, oral account (or history), as a historical method, is as old as history itself, and as a result, it cannot be entirely considered as an inappropriate method of historical research. In the absence of direct or vicarious eye-witness, historians fall on oral accounts (Pasamar, 2012: 166). Nonetheless, it it stated that in the absence of writing and written records there is no objective evidence against which a man is telling of the past. The only way to find the accuracy of the past is to compare one man's memory with another (Austin, 1969: 3). But since memory varies, when oral transmission becomes the only method of writing history, the conclusion that can be made is that the account is liable to inaccuracies since it can be assumed that the past has inevitably undergone a transformation.

Chronology and Chronicling

Although Thucydides is credited as the first and foremost Greek historian who wrote a scientific and political history as well as contemporary history, Antiochus, a mid-fifth century historian, was the earliest to break the grounds. According to Bury (1909), the great impact of Antiochus in the domain of historiography emanated from his (Antiochus) primary aim of investigating the early history of Italy, Sicily, and other Greek lands in a chronological manner (Bury, 1909: 26-27).

Nonetheless, the historian who paid much attention to chronology than Antiochus is his contemporary, Hellanicus of Lesbos (Marincola, 2007: 6). It

has been examined that Hellanicus specified and set the way of chronology aimed at historiographical research in a more improved strand (Bury, 1909: 27). He dedicated his time and research chronologically, on the Persian history; Asia cities of the Greeks, and of Athens (Bury, 1909: 26-28). Standing on the same scale with Jacoby and Bury, Marincola takes to mean that in writing local history, one must begin from a fixed period and narrate the events upwards or downwards, in ascending or descending order and try as much as possible to avoid digressions. But since Hellanicus could not write every event concerning his own land in chronological approach, he decided to focus and start his narratives from the year of office of the priestess of Here at Argos and other places in that chronological manner (Marincola, 2007: 5).

Ultimately, genealogical data is said to have had a great influence on chronicling events and roughly served and supplied a research method of calculating periods of time by generations. With reference to Greek historiographical methods in the early and mid-fifth century, genealogy and chronicle of history became the new approach. Hellanicus tried and reconstructed history of Greece by similarly relying on genealogies, names of important historical and political figures such as the Athenian archons, and not avoiding the oriental dates of yearly generals from about 683/2 and thereafter, and finding its way as far as 411 as well as 404 when the Peloponnesian wars came to an end (Bury, 1909: 29-30).

Myths and “Theocratic” Methods of Writing

Before Herodotus wrote the *Histories*, “history” was regarded as the story of the events that were precisely intended and utterly supplied by deities and political figures such as rulers or monarchs who represent the respective

deities on earth. It is therefore considered that those who lived in the mythical periods of the years gone by considered causations as a divine affair and that their account cannot be accepted by contemporary critics as historical, but an account only accepted by those who believed in that mythic events. It also meant that the first-ever sources of history emanated from the gods, and at the same time as a method of writing the history of both the gods and men alike. Although such events can be said to be inaccurate so far as human activities are concerned, it becomes quite challenging to consider such accounts totally unhistorical since history, in context, means something else to some individuals and group of people (Kumar & Karunakaran, 2014: 205).

With reference to myth as a source and method of history, Collingwood (1946: 14ff) assumes that this kind of past event and its source was not wholly measured as “true” or history proper, but close to history (or quasi-history). As a result, the history of this kind may heavily contain inaccuracies and cannot be considered as a scientific history since it is devoid of real human causations and rationalism. However, Herodotus, who also criticized his predecessor Hecataeus, heavily depended on myths for his researches. Knowingly or unknowingly, Herodotus’ decision not to leave out anything he had learned about the people he investigated made his account not always reliable and accurate (BRIA, 2009).

On the other hand, just like Kant summarizes history as the “idiotic course of all things human” (Kent, 2015: 48), divine activities and myth cannot be considered as pure human history but as the history of gods of a group of believers. As a result, to give new definitions to this very ancient type of history: its sources and methods, the term *theocratic history* was proposed

for it by Collingwood. In this sense, the expression “history” becomes facts of the gods believed and accepted by the worshipers (Collingwood, 1946: 14-5; cf. Lemon, 2003: 16).

Digressions/Extended Speeches

Digression simply means the act of leaving the main subject under discussing which sometimes leads to an extended oral or writing expressions of thought (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2019). As techniques of writing, digressions and extended speeches had been earlier used by poets and dramatists in their works. For example, Homer in his *Iliad* employs the device of delayed action. His readers know what is coming, but not how or when. Achilles is introduced at the beginning of the poem, but only to be withdrawn into the background until we reach Book IX (Rieu’s trans., 1950: X). This technique did not rest on the poets but was also employed by ancient Greek historians. This is evident in Herodotus’ Book II: 35 – 96 where Herodotus openly states that “*Concerning Egypt itself, I shall extend my remarks to a great length because there is no country that possesses so many wonders,...*” (Cf. Austin, 1969: 82; Rawlinson, 1996).

According to David Pipes, at first glance, from a contemporary perspective, Herodotus’ technique of digression places his narrative materials in a disorganized way, and sometimes accurate. It should, however, be acknowledged that the use of digression as a technique for historical narratives is not a problem but the problem is its overstretch which may distort the actual issue being narrated.

Set-speeches/Direct Quotations

Like the epic of Homer, Herodotus makes his characters speak in direct quotations, conversation and also set-speeches at the council (*Cf. Histories*, III.80-82 & VII.8-14; Zali, 2009). In the debate on the best form of government, Herodotus presented his account as if he had witnessed the events by himself. We learn that some of the speeches are obvious inventions often used to express ideas that belonged to the mere intellectual revolution of Ionian Greece and later sophistic movement than to the Barbarian personages to which he sometimes attributed them. An example is the constitutional debate of the Persian nobles and the conspiracy of Darius and his accomplices (Herodotus, Book III, 72).

Herodotus informs us that after King Cambyses had passed on to his grave, the remnant Persian nobles met to decide on the form of government they should adopt; whether oligarchy, democracy, or still the monarchy of their predecessors. Herodotus concludes that the Persians, after listening to the argument of Darius, were convinced to continue to use monarchy as the best form of government since their great empire came to existence based on monarchical rule and ideas of King Cyrus alone. Whatever the case may be, Herodotus was never present when these debates took place. So if he was told of the actual events or otherwise, we cannot tell except when the historian himself says that the account was given by the Persians (*Cf. BRIA*, 2009).

Extended Catalogue

It is evident that, there were some fundamentals of/in epic narratives which gave foundation to Greek historiographical elements or techniques. The extended catalogue is one of those epic or poetic elements found in

historiography as we see in Book II.484-759 of the *Iliad* where Homer starts to list his ships. Homer gives a catalogue of all the Greek ships and the various cities that took part in the Trojan War (Cf. Rieu's translation of Homer's *Iliad*, 1950; Blogs, 2014.). Parallels of this style of writing have been identified with Herodotus listing of Xerxes' invading forces, of the Greek fleets, list of Ionian cities, etc. Although Herodotus had earlier challenged his predecessor on the issue of Helen's abduction/elopement, and had presented different versions to the story as he inquired from the priest in Egypt (Book II. 113-121ff), he (Herodotus) could not desist from using some techniques such as the catalogue of Homer as model for his *Histories*.

Dramatic/Tragic Irony

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2019), dramatic or tragic irony is unsuitableness trapped amid a situations recognized in a spectacle/scene and the attending confrontations or actions that is understood by the spectators or readers but not by the characters in the performance or composition. Most ancient writers, both poets and historians such as Homer, Aristophanes, and Herodotus adopted dramatic ironies. Dramatic irony is a technique used by writers to represent events in dramatic manner to affect readers' or audience emotions by attracting attention to the writers' narratives. In reporting the results of his researches, Herodotus probably decided to use this technique to emphasize a point, or to embellish it. We cannot tell exactly why Herodotus used such dramatic technique in his researches. But we cannot decline that this technique has not raised some suspicions about the *Histories*. Examples of such style of Herodotean presentation that can be compared to the dramatists are seen in the *Histories*, III.118-119.

In Book III, paragraphs 118 and 119 of the *Histories*, Herodotus discusses the fate of one of the seven Persians called Intaphernes, who stood against the Magnus. To us, it becomes ironic that Interphanes, thinking himself to deserve better for serving Darius, found himself (Interphanes) at the persecution of the king. In paragraph 119, we are told that Intaphernes' insolence caused Darius to lay hands on his properties including his wife, children, and his brother-in-law. Darius had mercy on Intaphernes' wife and told her that he (Darius) can grant her the choice to pick only one member of her imprisoned family. As we are told, there was the hope that the wife will rescue the husband per the chance given her by Darius. Unfortunately and ironically, Intaphernes' wife chose her brother over the husband and children. This is probably the reason why some believe that this narrated event given by Herodotus is the adoption of Aristophanes' style of narratives in the *Antigone* line 905ff (*Cf.* Herodotus, Book III, 119), the choice of a brother's life over that of a husband as we read from the *Antigone* lines 905-913 as:

... My husband dead, I might have found another;
Another son from him, if I had lost
A son. But since my mother and my father
Have gone to the grave, there can be none
Henceforth that I can call my brother"

The story of Gyges, the forebear of Croesus, was also used by dramatic authors of Athens. The end of Sophocles' *King Oedipus* must be well noted, 'Seek not to have your way in all things: Where you had your way before, your mastery broke before the end' (*Antigone*, lines 1524-1526). This can be compared to Herodotus' Book I. 33ff. Herodotus stated that when Solon had

gone from Croesus' palace, terrible retribution was sent by a god to visit Croesus, to castigate him for possibly considering himself the wealthiest and happiest man on earth (*Histories*, I.34, Trans. Rawlinson, 1996; Finley, 1959: 44ff). Here, causation is attributed to divine intervention but not human. This may be one of the reasons why we can criticize Herodotus for account inaccuracies since we cannot actually tell whether a cause is really a divine affair. Thus, for those historians who attributed causation to the divine may have likely committed false cause fallacy (Bassham et al., 2011).

Divine Interventions/Causation

As part of their early history, ancient writers believed that the supernatural being has a great impact on human affairs. So, in writing any kind of past human account, whether fictional or historical, the immaterial being was always factored in. This may be one of the many reasons why the works of Homer, Hesiod, Herodotus, etc. are full of divine interventions. Herodotus, in particular, believed in divine interventions – vengeance, hubris – “wanton violence, arising from the pride of strength or from passion, insolence” – (Cudjoe, Grant & Otchere, 2011: 2ff.; Ronfeldt, 1994: 1ff), and nemesis – the dynamics of retribution; “impersonation of divine retribution”; “distribution of what is due, especially righteous anger aroused by injustice” (cf. Cudjoe, Grant & Otchere, 2011: 6; Ronfeldt, 1994). Nonetheless, to set the record straight, in dealing with history and reasoning, any inclusion of the supernatural being renders an account suspicious.

Conclusion

So far, this chapter has discussed the various methods and techniques used by the Greek writers who came before Thucydides. It is acknowledged

that although the individual historian applied a method or technique to a particular type of history (past or contemporary) and to his own advantage, how he wanted to please his readers and listeners, the approaches were never free from account inaccuracies. As a result, they have been faced with criticisms of inaccurate account and inappropriate approaches by contemporary scholars and among some Greek historians themselves. The discussion done in this chapter, as I have stated earlier is used as a basis of measurement to assess Thucydides, to know how different Thucydides' approaches from his predecessors' is; and how consistent or inconsistent are his criticisms (what he says) from what he does.

CHAPTER FOUR

A CRITIQUE OF THE HISTORIOGRAPHICAL METHODS AND TECHNIQUES OF THUCYDIDES

Introduction

This chapter is focused on the different approaches employed by Thucydides in writing the *Peloponnesian War*. By methods and techniques, this chapter explores the extent by which Thucydides' methods and techniques of historiography differ from his predecessors' approaches. Also, keeping in mind the criticisms levelled against Thucydides' predecessors' approaches and account accuracy, this chapter analyses how Thucydides' approaches differ from his criticisms. It seeks also to find out whether Thucydides' methods are superior to his predecessors' or otherwise. Moreover, this chapter finds out if we can render the *Peloponnesian War* as accurate or otherwise based on the idea of historiographical approaches, contemporary history and eye-witness approach. Since the work is pinned down to Thucydides approaches of historiography, I have briefly looked at the aim of Thucydides, his criticisms and accompanying biases then moved on to, simultaneously, examine and critique his approaches.

The Aim of Thucydides, Criticisms, and His Biases

The main aim of Thucydides was to write down the events of the war that ensued between the Spartans and their allies and the Athenians and their allies. Thucydides believed that the war was going to be greater than any other war that has happened before (Thucydides I.1.1-17). However, he made a quick conclusion and overrode the difficulties he encountered in relation to the remoteness of the war to say that the evidence he has gathered led him to

conclude that his account of the war “shall be better” than bygone events narrated by predecessors. Thus, he had, from his introductory statement, perceived such notion and openly declared that his account surpassed any other account in relation to warfare.

Thucydides, after informing us about his intended reason and aim of writing about the war, went further to create a sharp distinction between his work and that of his predecessors by criticizing their approaches as inappropriate and then moved further to tell us of the appropriate historiographical methods which he has used for his work as quoted in chapter one.

Simply put, because poets, storytellers, and prose writers exaggerate, lie, accept any information that comes to them without “critically” assessing the credibility of their sources, and mostly rely on myths that denounce factual reporting of events, Thucydides believed that their accounts and approaches should not be taken seriously, but his. On this note, the methods and techniques of Thucydides to be analyzed include prose writing, scientific approach, eye-witness accounts (direct and vicarious), field trips, archaeological and primary approach, the use of chronology, set-speeches/direct quotations, rhetoric/persuasion, dramatic irony, catalogue, digression, and exaggeration.

Prose Writing

As already discussed in chapter three of this work, prose writing had earlier been adopted by Cadmus the Milesian, Heracleitus and Sophron, and Hecataeus, the famous prose writer or logographer, for historical analysis (*cf.*

Corcella, 2006: 37-8; Bury, 1909: 14-5). However, writers who came after Hecataeus, including Thucydides, continued to write in prose.

Thucydides, after his exile in 424 (*BRIA*, 2009; Grant, 2008: 247) adopted no different narrative style than his predecessors. Prose writing had become so popular for historical analysis to the extent that, although it was something new, writers and critics who came after Hecataeus could not void it. Granting the idea of prose narrative was something new, and like Herodotus, it is believed that Thucydides stood at the point of transition to discursive prose. According to some scholars like Norman Austin, what Thucydides did was to create a new *mythos*, the *mythos* of Athens, but just that, as it became obvious to us in his criticisms, Thucydides claimed the superiority of his work over those of the poets and his predecessors (Austin, 1969: 63; Ober, 2007 & 2009: 6; Kagan, 2009: 56).

Scientific Method

Like the Ionian Greeks who started demanding answers from human perspective about the continent, heavenly bodies, metals, matter, scientific method about the allegedly well-known truths (Finley, 1959: 2; Kagan, 2009: 5), by relegating myths, religion, tales, etc. in their rational thinking, Thucydides did not incorporate centuries of religious ideas, gods, rituals, etc. as seen in Homer's and Herodotus' accounts. Thucydides, as we read, did his researches in a logical and scientific approach. Unlike Homer and Hesiod who attributed causation to the gods, Thucydides saw causation(s) as a human affair. Nonetheless, his scientific mode of research was prototypical of the Ionian writers of Miletus, Asia Minor (Kagan, 2009: 5-6).

It is believed that there were two major factors or development ideas that shaped Thucydides' scientific historical research: (1) the sophistic movement, the temper of which was established by the dictum of its founder Protagoras – 'Man is the measure of all things'; (2) the growing science of medicine (thus the school of medical writers surrounding Hippocrates of Cos) (cf. Kagan, 2009: 9; Ober, 2006: 133; Thomas, 2006: 92-93). According to Usher (1969: 27), the teachings of the Sophists aimed, in general, to encourage men to have confidence in their own mental powers, even to the extent of throwing back the frontiers of Zeus' Olympian kingdom.

On the other hand, the substantial bulk of therapeutic writings that were in circulation in Thucydides' time incorporated a wide-ranging of themes that concerned with the physical and psychological state of man. With the same methods of the Hippocratic (an anonymous body of medical writers), Thucydides' conclusions as to the identity of diseases (about the great plague of Athens) were reached by the careful observation of symptoms; comparison with previously observed cases was followed by treatment where this was known, and a prediction of the patient's likely future health was made; and most relevant to the study of history, particular attention was paid to the conditions and environment in which different illness occurred (Usher, 1969: 27-8, Mitchell-Boyask, 2009).

The possibility of applying such methods to history was not lost to Thucydides' predecessors, but they never used them systematically as seen in chapter three. But for Thucydides, the attainability of practically useful knowledge by empirical means gave him a sound foundation on which to build an entirely new conception of historiography as we see in his description and

analysis of the great plague which ravaged Athens for two summers in 430 and 429 (Kagan, 2009: 9-11; Usher, 1969: 28-9).

On the basis of what Thucydides did – his description and analysis of the plague – we can say that Thucydides deserves praise for that. Although the society in which he found himself may have influenced his thoughts, however, he was able to apply such influence in historical interpretation and analysis of events. In addition, one can see a sort of accuracy in what Thucydides does and what he says about his own method: “... either I was present myself at the events which I have described or else I heard them from eye-witnesses whose reports I have checked with as much thoroughness as possible” (*cf.* Book I.22.1ff). We also see a relationship between his scientifically systematic method and accuracy of the plague.

Conversely, it is not on every occasion that we see a relationship between what he says (“systematic analysis of events”) and what he does. Thucydides’ exclusion of some data subjects his narratives to criticisms which suggest that he might have presented lopsided account. It is noticed, for example, that, Thucydides, in his attempt of writing a detailed and lengthy analysis of the internal crisis in Corcyra and afterwards ended up omitting or ignoring some key issues of fifth-century Greece incomplete since he did not discuss a series of other events at all (Finley, 1959: 11), which likely subjects some of such account into criticisms. However, we can consider this style of presentation as *Thucydidean censorship*: whereby he deprives us of other information pertaining to the events of the Peloponnesian War.

Whatever the case may be, according to Finley (1959), we do not see the likely scope in which Thucydides judges the archons or political figures at

the time of his writing. It is obvious that Thucydides paid attention to only a few of them in the analysis. Of the famous leaders in the city of Athens, and after Pericles had passed on, only Cleon receives attention in Thucydides' account; the rest do not come into the picture. Although historians are allowed to censor, to select what is best or considered as important for their narratives, they are also expected to present a balanced account when dealing with important characters or state officials.

Based on what Thucydides says about his methods and his predecessors', we expected to see Thucydides presenting a balanced account of his characters but we look in vain. Nonetheless, generally, since history is what the historian considers important (*cf.* Chapter two; Carr, 1961), Thucydides decided to play value judgment in his account of individual personalities. This is where I agree with Finley (1959: 11) that, in general terms and so far as the writing of history is concerned, this style of presenting a lopsided history should not be dismissed as carelessness of the historian since it has the potential of rendering an account suspicious and inaccurate.

On the other hand, we can agree with Austin, that, Thucydides tried as much as possible to adapt the methods of his predecessors in a manner of active commitment to ideas and attempts that subjected history and historiography to a scientific analysis based on ideas that gave his *Peloponnesian War*, inconsistent as it may seem, a vividness and an impact more direct than we find in his predecessors (Austin, 1969: 45-6).

In addition, Thucydides' account is more realistic than his predecessors; he portrays a real-world, vivid and dynamic. Nevertheless, it is obvious that, at times, Thucydides' statement about historiographical

approaches and accuracy are consistent with his systematic analysis, and other times too practically inconsistent with what he does. On the other hand, we notice that historical criticisms, whether literally or a rhetorical ploy, were common among ancient Greek historians as seen in Herodotus' comment about Hecataeus' account. However, their comments and their own style of writing were not free from inaccuracies.

Eye-witness

According to Shrimpton (1999: 351), the actual work of putting together a major history may have heroic dimensions itself, especially since it often involved the trials and expense of travel. Travel, according to Shrimpton, was advisable if only because of the ancient propensity to value autopsy. It is believed that "eyes are better than ears" (this was also the saying in Greece when historiography was becoming more interesting and more evolving in ancient times) as testified in the dictum of Thucydides. This meant and means that the best source is eye-witness (Shrimpton, 1999: 351). However, it is not every history that one can depend on the eye-witness as a method. If the event being inquired is as old as creation itself, then one cannot employ eyewitness except oral traditions and methods. Since Thucydides tasked himself to write about events in his own time, there was no way that he would have left out eye-witness (both direct and vicarious) as part of the methods he used in writing his *Peloponnesian War*.

It is common knowledge, from Thucydides' own words, that he did not write about events of the literally dead past, but contemporary: the issues he himself witnessed under his own observation and that of other people's observations who he thoroughly examined when receiving their version of the

events (Finley, 1959: 9). Thus, only contemporary and an eye-witness account, in Thucydides' sense, can one get to know what actually happened, the facts and the causes of domestic instabilities of one's own period.

With reference to a vicarious eye-witness account, since Thucydides could not travel to all parts of the battle arena, and especially since his exile prevented him from getting the direct facts particularly from the camp of Athens, he, to a large extent, depended on those who witnessed the events of the war in both Spartan and Athenian camps. For Austin, Thucydides recorded many events at which he had not been present at all. Thus, he relied on other witnesses, some of whom may have been leaders who played decisive roles, others probably ordinary hoplites who hardly even understood the events which Thucydides asked them to recall for him (Austin, 1969: 46-7).

In many instances, apart from Thucydides saying that he gathered some of the information from his informants, he presented his accounts as if he was a direct witness to all the events (typically akin to the omniscient narrator). In such a situation, we do not exactly know which account was observed under his own eyes or his informants since he did not explicitly tell us from which source(s) he used in a particular event. Examples can be found in his military account of the affair at Pylos between the Athenians and the Spartans and his account of the Athenians' disastrous expedition to Syracuse.

Thucydides presented the account like a writer who was at the scene and also on a high enough level of command to see the pattern of the whole event. It has been noticed, for example, that, Thucydides described the combat at Pylos as a sea battle fought from the land and a land battle fought on sea, and that, this kind of observation strikes us as one made by Thucydides to

himself as he listened to various accounts and visualized the scene for himself. Thus, some of the events narrated in his histories were just a report from secondary observers who may have reported the events in a manner which matches their preference. What can be credited to Thucydides on this issue is that, after hearing from his reporters whom he never mentions by name for a reason only known to him, he tried to create the whole scene down to its last details in his own mind and then tried to project that same visual accuracy into his narrative (*cf.* Usher, 1969: 26; Austin, 1969: 47; Sears, 2011: 157-168). But in this attempt, we can still spot some weaknesses such as omissions, additions, and probable exaggerations and imaginations.

In the view of Usher, Thucydides gave his readers virtually no access to his workshop and no insight into his methods of research or the criteria on which he chose his final version of any particular episode, overlooking that he had earlier criticized his predecessors' methods of historiography. No informant is named in his *Peloponnesian War*, and no reasons were given for choosing one version of a story rather than the other just like his predecessors. Moreover, up to the time of his exile, as Usher reiterates, we may assume autopsy of much that Thucydides narrated, but he never told us when he was an eye-witness and when he was not. Even in the narrative of an event in which he is known to have participated, as we read his work, the sack of Amphipolis, there is no perceptible increase in vividness or detail.

Nonetheless, we can say that this style of Thucydidean presentation is akin to omniscient narrator whereby Thucydides presented the events like that which he had witnessed all by himself and had known everything that happened in every zone of the conflict.

With the use of his vicarious eye-witness account, Thucydides leaves us in suspense. After his exile (*cf.* Book V.26.5; Tsakmakis, 2006: 162; Grant, 2008), as he informs us, Thucydides had enough time and access to a wider selection of sources, but while admitting he obtained information from the Peloponnesians, he completely remains silent as to their individual identity. It could be assumed that Thucydides did not want to endanger himself and his informants by revealing their true identity and decided to employ what is termed as *Thucydidean censorship*. If this was the case, what did he care about? After all, he has been exiled and had devoted himself to write an account different from his predecessors. Also, since his work was not to serve the immediate and popular taste for the readers of his own time but for future generations and beyond, he should have at least been clearer about his sources and evidence. If this had been done, and in line with his criticisms, Thucydides would have gotten an additional point of the credibility of account source.

Besides, the manner in which Thucydides discussed the size of the Spartan army in the Battle of Mantinea (Book V, 68.2) raises doubt about his account. Thucydides stated that he could not record the actual number of soldiers, but he had provided a formula according to which one can make a reasonable estimate (Bakker, 2006: 117). What formula? There is no formula here since any historian can say the same or make an estimated number of casualties of war. On the other hand, it sometimes becomes quite difficult to exactly know the exact number of casualties. As a result, historians would want to estimate which one likely gives an inaccurate figure. But if a historian is so interested in numbers of casualty in wars, he can probe further to know the accurate number. Nonetheless, accuracy and inaccuracy, appropriate and

inappropriate approaches, and what is considered historical is the historian himself since his beliefs and biases influence his judgment and analysis.

Field Trips (Travelling)

Just like some early writers such as Hecataeus, Charon of Lampsacus, Scylax of Caryanda, and Herodotus, Thucydides engaged extensively in field trips to gather facts from both the Spartan and Athenian camps. Since the war did not take place at only one battle arena, and since he decided to write a contemporary account of his time, Thucydides had to include traveling as part of his historiographical methods (Finley, 1959: 10). Thus, it could be said that curiosity, a desire to know from current events, of “eye-witness”, must necessarily involve field trip(s). By this, one’s curiosity, the combination of eye-witness and travelling as methods, will lead to understanding and reporting of factual events as they happen.

Not only in the field of eye-witness or contemporary accounts must travelling be featured. Exploratory research could be done to find the facts of the distant past. We become aware of how Thucydides travelled to read inscriptions of Peisistratus (Book VI. 54) to prove a point, the *stèle* – standing stone slab – of the injustice of the tyrants, and the private inscription of Pausanias on the tripod dedicated from the spoils of the Battle of Plataea (Book I.55.1 & VI.54), which, according to Bakker (2006: 116-7) did not even exist at the moment of writing since the Spartans erased it (*cf.* Smarczyk, 2006: 518; Jowett, 1900: X).

Archaeological and Primary (Accounts) Methods

Directly linked to field trips as methods of historiography are archaeological and primary accounts. As part of Thucydides' travelling activities, he used what we call **archaeological evidence** – burial remains on Delos that were dug up during the Peloponnesian War (Rood, 2006: 233), which in turn constitutes a primary account. In his narrative on piracy, naval power of the past, and King Minos of Crete in the *Archaeologia*, Thucydides states:

Piracy was just as prevalent in the islands among the Carians and Phoenicians, who in fact colonized most of them. This was proved during this present war, when Delos was officially purified by the Athenians and all the graves in the island were opened up. More than half of these graves were Carian, as could be seen from the type of weapons buried with the bodies and from the method of burial, which was the same as that still used in Caria (Book I.8.1-9).

The quote suggests or presupposes that Thucydides travelled to see for himself what was excavated at the burial site at Delos. However, Thucydides leads us into anonymity. He says nothing about whose report he depended on. Whether his own eye-witness or vicarious, or even oral tradition, we do not know. It could be the case that he never travelled to those sites, or even if he did, he got his source not from the site but oral tradition especially when he linked the issues in Book.I.8 to King Minos of Crete whose account is heavily known to Thucydides by hearsays or oral account.

Grounded in what Thucydides says in Book.I.4.1 (Minos, according to tradition, was the first person to organize a navy), we can say, that,

notwithstanding the fact that Thucydides engaged in contemporary history, he may perhaps have depended on oral accounts in narrating the issues at Delos. If this was so, then the weakness that accompanies oral tradition can be identified in this sort of account given by Thucydides.

Nonetheless, Thucydides' use of archaeological evidence and other inscriptions represents the use of a **primary method** of writing history. According to Bakker (2006: 116-7), Thucydides cites the inscription of Peisistratus in his analysis to prove a point. However, we cannot see clearly how Thucydides provided evidence to support his version of the account apart from stating his version of the story as seen in Book I.20:

*... People are inclined to accept all stories of ancient times in **an uncritical way** – even when these stories concern their own native countries. Most people in Athens, for instance, are under the impression that Hipparchus, who was killed by Harmodius and Aristogiton, was tyrant at the time, not realizing that it was Hippias who was the eldest and the chief of the sons Pisistratus, and that Hipparchus and Thessalus were his younger brothers. What happened was this: on the very day that had been fixed for their attempt, indeed at the very last moment, Harmodius and Aristogiton had reason to believe that Hippias had been informed of the plot by some of the conspirators. Believing him to have been forewarned, they kept away from him, but, as they wanted to perform some daring exploit before they were arrested themselves, they killed Hipparchus when they found him by the Leocorium organizing the Panathenaic procession.*

By comparing what Thucydides does with criticisms and his own method, with respect to the quotation above, Thucydides just criticized his

predecessors as a mere rhetorical ploy, as in Herodotus' criticism against his predecessors Homer and Hecataeus. But on a more serious note, if we consider some of Thucydides' approaches of historiography and narrative style with reference to the quote above, we clearly see that Thucydides never provided any evidence to support his version of this "Hipparchus-Hippias" account. For this reason, it is flawless for one to say that there are some inaccuracies to this effect and that there is no difference between what Thucydides said about his own methods and his predecessors' and how he went about his account. On this note, it could be said that just like his predecessors, Thucydides was mimicking the rhetorical tactic to draw his readers' attention to how his account will surpass any other account.

Chronology

According to Norman Austin (1969), the chronology of events was not all that serious business for the ancient Greek writers, and that chronological writing in the early periods, most probably in the classical age, had to be invented. In Austin's opinion, a chronological approach and innovation was Thucydides' most serious concern. We are told that Thucydides' attempt to establish an accurate and systematic sequence of events out of the haphazard systems of his day must have seemed as obscure to most of his contemporaries as it seems essential to us today.

Finley (1959: 13), on the other hand, after pointing out some flaws in Thucydides' assembly debates, also acknowledged that in the *Peloponnesian War*, Thucydides indeed tried his possible best to put his narrative in a more refined chronological manner than his predecessors whose chronology

sometimes seems haphazard with a lot of digressions (*cf.* Ober, 2007 & 2009: 155; Kagan, 2009: 14; Austin, 1969: 40).

For the benefit of the doubt, we must commend Thucydides for his insistence on chronology. Nonetheless, we must evaluate the account accuracy of Thucydides from how he analyzed and treated his sources. It appears that, in terms of chronology, Thucydides did not even think of his predecessors coming close to it, except Hellanicus who Thucydides mentions with yet another criticism on chronology. Hellanicus, as already indicated in chapter three, is said to have included chronology as part of his historical techniques. But, according to Austin (1969: 48), Thucydides thinks of Hellanicus as the historian who was confused about dating systems. For Thucydides himself, it is suggested that he used the official archives of cities such as Athens to date his events, and on occasion, he seemed to quote verbatim the text of important inscriptions, though he did not tell us that he is quoting (Corcella, 2006: 51; Austin, 1969: 49).

In addition, it is acknowledged that Thucydides' commitment to ascribe events to the period in which they happened was something quite overlooked by Herodotus but accepted by Hecataeus, whose concern with genealogy (Corcella, 2006: 39-41) rendered some chronological framework essential, and later by Thucydides' contemporary Hellanicus. In Usher's view, Hellanicus was indeed more chronicler than a historian and therefore has no place in the study of Greek historians. This is so since Hellanicus used the year as his unit of time, and identified each according to the name of the annual Athenian *archon eponymous* (Usher, 1969: 25-6).

The difference Thucydides created was that, he chose to refer the reader to a fixed point in time – the beginning of the war – and to count the solar years from that point, dividing them into seasons and referring to shorter periods with such descriptive phrases as ‘when the corn was ripe’ and ‘when the summer was at its height’ (Thucydides, Trans. Rex Warner: 1954:22; Usher, 1969: 26). Within such chronological analysis and interpretation of events are Thucydides’ innovation and improvement of his predecessors’.

Set-speeches/Direct Quotations

Just like his predecessors, Thucydides used set-speeches as a technique of historical narratives (Thomas, 2006: 90; Usher, 1969: 45). Whereas some of the assemblies’ debate in Thucydides’ account are considered accurate, others are suspicious and considered as fabrications, especially, the Melian Dialogue, and the Mytilene deliberation (*cf.* Usher, 1969: 45).

According to Donald Kagan (2009: 3 & 4ff.), what resulted in the debate is as a result of the attempted rebellion of some members of the city of Mytilene. Thucydides makes us understand that in 428 B.C., the situation in Athens grew worse after the plague of 430/9 B.C. And that the major city on the island of Lesbos, Mytilene, rebelled against the Athenians, raising the fear of a general revolt in the empire. It took until the following summer to crush the rebellion. In their panic and fury, the Athenian assembly agreed to slay every single man of Mitylene after which the Athenians will trade the women and children of Mitylene into captivity (Book III.36.3-8). The Athenians, as we are told, changed their minds overnight and decided to kill the men who were the instigators of the rebellion. The Spartans soon followed suit for such

atrocities by killing all that was left at the garrison at Plataea upon their surrender.

Finley (1959: 11-13) noticed that set-speeches, often antithetical pairs, were Thucydides' favourite device, and at the same time his most problematic one. It is well noted that despite Thucydides' categorical proclamation of his use of set-speeches and how he had made the speakers say what was appropriate for the occasion, we are left in a confused state (*cf.* Finley, 1959: 12). One cannot, since then till now, tell which speech was delivered by the true speakers or Thucydides'. It is obvious that whereas some of the speeches and remarks were Thucydides' own, others were possibly not his words but he would not let his readers know which one is coming from his own insights (Rood, 2006: 226).

In the Mitylene debate, for example, inaccuracies and fabrications of false speeches have been observed. The observation is that one cannot tell whether Cleon, the son of Cleaenetus or Eucrates' son Diodotus was accurately reported or actually delivered such speeches. The whole tone of the debate presented by the two speakers is likely to be what the author inserted and the way he wanted to express his feelings for tyranny and democracy. It becomes quite surprising that Cleon will speak against Athenian democracy as weak than tyranny (Book III.38), and Diodotus expressing his liking for democracy and reproaching and suggesting to the whole assembly that: "Haste and anger are, to my mind, the two greatest obstacles to wise counsel – haste, that usually goes with folly, anger, that is the mark of primitive and narrow minds" (Book III.42.4-7).

Thucydides' attempt to present only two speeches out of the many has indeed distorted the real issues discussed in the meeting. We cannot accept that only two people met at the assembly to debate on whether to kill the revolted Mitylenians or not [another instance of Thucydidean censorship] (*cf.* McCullagh, 2000: 40). Historians at times ignore important facts but accept what they think they can justify as accurate and credible. It can be observed that Thucydides chose to present one aspect of the facts surrounding the Mitylene debate and personalities of political figures, but ignored other aspects which make the account unbalanced. In this manner, we can say Thucydides allowed his general ideas to prevail over historical or account accuracy.

Not only did Thucydides ignore facts of great significance for the histories of the wars as the epigraphical or literary evidence demonstrates, but he has also been identified for his usage of the dramatic device of the speeches which he has composed for certain climatic points in the narrative (Austin, 1969: 63). Besides, it can be observed that Thucydides admitted that those speeches were not verbatim transcripts but assured that the speeches express the over-all logic of what the speakers said on a given occasion, as he himself recalled it or was told by others, or that they gave the kind of argument which was appropriate to the particular occasion which he has recorded (Book I.22.1ff).

From his own comment, we see the same but two different Thucydides – Thucydides who says “I heard the speeches myself”, and Thucydides who says “I did not hear it myself”. This is where we encounter practical inconsistency of the historian. For Austin (1969: 64), in spite of

Thucydides' assurance that he has written no entirely fictional speech but has recreated, if somewhat freely, a speech which was actually uttered, his technique is open to much criticism. And, indeed, the technique is opened to criticism since we are at times confronted with Thucydides who says but does not do exactly what he says about appropriate approaches and account accuracy.

Like the predecessors, it is noticed that most of the speeches seen in Thucydides were presented in pairs stating opposite points of view. However, this arrangement which satisfied the literary tastes of the day no less than historical reality, though antithetical mode of expression was also a characteristic of the Greek language; and that, according to Ober (2006: 133), even the Sophists whose methods influenced Thucydides, also made it a central feature of their teaching, and that Thucydides had to adopt and adapt the sources of the language and his own training to his special purpose and to his own advantage (*cf.* Kagan, 2009: 56-68; Usher, 1969: 48).

An example of such pairs of speech is seen in the assembly debate of Athens, between the Corcyraeans and the Corinthians, in Book I.24ff: "The representative of Corcyra spoke as follows: 'Athenians, in a situation like this, it is right and proper that first of all certain points should be made clear... Now Corcyra has sent us to you in the conviction that in asking for your alliance we can also satisfy you on these points...'" (Thucydides, I.31ff). Thucydides continues by stating: "After this speech from the Corcyraean side, the representative of Corinth spoke as follows: 'These Corcyraeans have not confined their argument to the question of whether or not you should accept their alliance...'" (Thucydides, I. 36ff).

In the first pair, the Corcyraeans urged the Athenians to accept their offered alliance, the Corinthians to reject it. For Usher, both speeches obey the canons of contemporary deliberative oratory in their employment, the themes of justice and expediency. The Corcyraeans, as we read, lay the greater stress upon the proposed alliance by saying that the alliance would produce an invincible combined fleet.

On one hand, too, Kagan (2009) states that apart from the rare direct statements that Thucydides quoted, he put his own opinion into the mouth of his characters. Which means that some of the speeches may have truly been given by the actual men who spoke them, or they were Thucydides' own imagination. If this was so, then Thucydides' account is definitely not free from inaccuracies as we also deduce from what he says and what he does:

In this history, I have made use of set speeches some of which were delivered just before and others during the war. I have found it difficult to remember the precise words used in the speeches which I listened to myself and my various informants have experienced the same difficulty... (Book I.22.1-5).

Obviously, there is no doubt that either Thucydides or his informants, or both may have exaggerated or created some of the speeches by themselves. Here, it could be said that Thucydides was more or less an orator than a historian who wanted to persuade his readers to believe his account as accurate as opposed to his predecessors.

On the other hand, Kagan would accept that, for the fact that Thucydides made mention that he is "adhering as closely as possible to the general sense of what they really said" (Book I.22.5-8). From this statement, however, we should acknowledge that it represents a claim to reporting

speeches that were actually spoken, not invented by Thucydides, and to the attempt to record them as accurately as possible. But are we to accept that such a technique is free from errors? Whatever the case may be, the technique of set speeches should not be conceived as inaccuracy, but the way it is used. Just like his predecessor Herodotus, Thucydides' use of set-speeches highly contains errors such as inaccuracy and misrepresentation of facts, either fabricated by himself or his reporters.

Although Kagan somehow defends Thucydides on this issue of fabricated speeches as not by design, he [Kagan] however admits that “if Thucydides fabricated speeches or inserted his own ideas rather than trying to report the topics addressed by the speaker in the manner he expressed them, then Thucydides has lied to his readers” (Kagan, 2009: 17). Nonetheless, just like the ancient Greek writers had done, if Thucydides just criticized his predecessors for rhetorical technique purposes, then one can say that Thucydides was both an astute orator and a historian. He tried as much as possible to persuade his readers that he is giving an accurate account, and in fact, in the absence of any other version of the Peloponnesian War, some of the speeches and events should be accepted as historically accurate.

Notwithstanding, when we assess what Thucydides says and does with respect to his Corcyraean and Corinthian assembly debate in Athens, his use of set-speeches as a technique of historical narration gives us no clue as to how some conclusions and or decisions were made, as we read in the *Dispute Over Epidamnus* (Book I.24-30), and in the *Dispute Over Corcyra* (Book I.31-61ff.). In these debates, Thucydides informs us that a decision was reached by the assembly to send only ten *triremes* (warships) as reinforcement to operate

as a defensive strategy against the enemies (the Corinthians to be specific) in Corcyra (Book I. 43, paragraph 4.1-4).

Per Thucydides' account, we understand that the decision was taken at Assembly meeting as Thucydides happened to be there and narrated to us. But, just like Hornblower (2010: 70) has observed, at the meeting, Athens had actually inclined to favour the Corinthians, but the pro-Corcyraeans decision was the last decision we were told about, and we were also told this modest commitment of forces was the result of a very conscientious desire not to break the Thirty Years Peace. But then again in the ensuing battle narrative, we are suddenly confronted with a fresh Athenian squadron of twenty ships approaching up over the horizon, which, according to Thucydides, the Athenians had sent out in addition to the first ten, fearing that the ten ships would not be sufficient.

The sending of additional twenty ships is the implication that there had been another debate in the assembly, a debate "totally and biasedly unrecorded by Thucydides", at which decision was taken. For Hornblower (2010: 72), it cannot be conceived that some executive authority like the *boule* or the *stratego*i (or Pericles alone, as Plutarch apparently thought) daringly took the sole decision without the Assembly's authorization. We can therefore believe and conclude that there are some important things we are not told by Thucydides as he employed set-speeches as a technique of historiographical narration and that some of the narrations may be a mere guess, exaggeration, inaccurate, and perhaps anachronous just like his predecessors (especially of Homer's and Herodotus').

According to Simon Hornblower (2010:72), some apparent anachronism in Thucydides perhaps attempts to solve the linearization problem, like the important scene-switch..., though perhaps the better analogy, for the understanding of the Thucydidean passage, is with the archaic use of delay as an effective narrative device. And it is believed that Thucydides was faced with a problem of presentation. Thus, having got the Athenians to Corcyra he was reluctant to go back to Athens to describe the assembly meeting at which decision to add an additional twenty ships to the ten was taken.

Rhetoric/Persuasion

Directly linked to Thucydides' set-speeches is the technique of rhetoric and persuasion. It has been viewed that, since epic and drama still had an influence on historical narratives, the issues of rhetoric (the art of persuasion), artistry, imagination, and one's ability to create something, took precedence over those scientific demands of historical writings (Usher, 1969: ix; Foster, 2009: 367-399). At both quick glance and critical analysis, one will notice that above all in Thucydides' *Peloponnesian War*, abounds speeches like the Homeric and Herodotean approach of the narrative (*cf.* Thucydides, Book III.53-68; Rutherford, 2005:86ff.).

One of the obvious speeches that fall under Homer-Herodotean and literally convention was the speech delivered by Pericles (Thucydides, I.140-46). The entire funeral oration, as delivered, did not have anything to do with historical analysis than to praise and acknowledge the deeds of the dead after the first year of the Peloponnesian War. From Rutherford's (2005: 86ff.) perspective, we also understand that the funeral speech was a model of epic

features of old which falls under the category of epideictic which aims not at historiographical purposes. For this reason, such a technique of persuasion in political speeches which form a large part of Thucydides' history should be considered as a mere literary convention which was also common with the sophistic movement (McKay, 2010: 27).

Moreover, we also see another instance where historians consciously and unconsciously present unbalanced account or analysis. Thucydides creates the impression that it was only the Athenians who lost soldiers at the battlefield since we do not hear how the Spartans also celebrated their dead. Thucydides was more focused on his countrymen probably due to his cultural background and how he wanted to present his narrative. As I keep on re-emphasizing, this is a clear case that historical accuracy, truth, etc. is not the same as appropriate or inappropriate methods since the historian forms part of his analysis.

Dramatic irony

The development of Greek historiography, for many centuries, had suffered in the hands of epic techniques and dramatic influences. According to Usher (1969: ix), during the time of Thucydides, historiography was still not free from dramatic techniques. For Usher, Thucydides' work was "tragic drama in disguise, and another, with equal conviction, that it was written in the same spirit as contemporary Hippocratic and other scientific tracts" (Usher, 1969: ix). Further, Thucydides' second main opening (at Book I.24), is examined, in itself, as purely Homeric in style (*cf.* Rood, 1998: 231-232; *cf.* Thomas, 2006: 92; Simon Hornblower, 2010).

This style of dramatic irony can be observed in the Sicilian expedition. The irony is seen when the Athenians had already presumed an overwhelming victory over the Sicilians, but had a misfortune of failure. In the very beginning of Thucydides' narration, he had suggested that the more the Athenians think of gaining power and greed, the more they approach their doom (Book III.82.4.13-14; BAI, 2016). Thucydides used the Sicilian expedition as the declining stage of the Athenians and change of fortune of some generals of Athens e.g. Nicias' hope for the future came to an end when he was ceased and killed by the Spartans (*cf.* Niedzielski, 2017: 37; Austin, 1969: 62.).

In the final sea battle of the Sicilian expedition at Syracuse (Book VII.71), we note that it is not just that there are many passages of detached narrative where the story appears to tell itself that has no tragic effect. It is also that Thucydides did occasionally intervene at the end of vivid narratives to make pathos statements about the scale of suffering – statements that recall the summaries found in tragic messenger speeches which goes: “The city of Mycalessus lost a large portion of its population during the ensuing war” (Books I.30 & III.113). Thus, in Book III. 133, *End of Sixth Year of War*, Thucydides described the tragedy as: “In fact, this was, in all the war, certainly the greatest disaster that fell upon any single Hellenic city in an equal number of days”. He continues by saying “I have not recorded the numbers of the killed, because the number said to have been destroyed is incredible, considering the size of the city.” This is where we also encounter Thucydides' viewpoint in the events he narrates and how he treats his account.

Catalogue

As discussed in chapter two, it is evident that in Book II of the *Iliad* (II.484-759), Homer gives us the number of Greek ships, the cities the warriors came from, etc. This epic style is paralleled by Herodotus' list of Greek and Persian fleets that engaged in the war. In reviewing his predecessors' account in the *Archaeologia*, Thucydides used the technique of cataloguing and the *Iliad* to calculate the participants of the Trojan War (Book I.10). In addition, we also encounter the same narrative style in the account of the Sicilian expedition. Just like Agamemnon instructing Menelaus to summon the Achaeans to council by addressing the men by their names and fathers' names in the *Iliad*, Nicias in the Sicilian expedition, the final sea battle at Syracuse, addressed the Athenian armed forces by their fathers' names, their own names, and by ethnicity (*cf.* Rood, 1998: 321; Austin, 1969: 40; Finley, 1959: 224; Blogs, 2014).

The issue I want to bring out so far as this technique is concerned is, even though Thucydides critiques his predecessors, he could not avoid some of the techniques used by his predecessors. Due to this, we need ask ourselves on what bases is Thucydides critiquing his predecessors' accounts? Is it on the bases of evidence or approaches? In this circumstances, we see similarity and adaptation of those predecessors' methods by Thucydides.

Digression/Flashback

Although Finley has pointed out that Thucydides might have used information from Herodotus and also started exactly where Herodotus breaks off just to prepare the grounds for his (Thucydides') eye-witness account, he did, however, whether by design or default, use the technique of digression.

Thucydides' account of Hippias-Hipparchus is all digression and (*cf.* Kallet, 2006: 340; Bakker, 2006: 116; Kagan, 2009: 31). Also, in Book VI. 54-59, Thucydides digresses at greater length before he comes back to the story of Alcibiades whose "enemies attacked him even before he set sail, now renewed their attacks, and the Athenians took a serious view of the matter."

It is obvious that Thucydides' famous digression in Book VI of his history which talked about the fall of tyranny in Athens is similar to Herodotean digressions. It is believed that Thucydides engaged not only with the small section about the tyrannicides of Herodotus' history (Herodotus, V.55-65) but rather with the whole Herodotean narrative about the liberation of Athens from the tyranny which extended up to Aristagoras' speech (Herodotus, V.55-97). Thus, in treating the fall of tyranny in Athens, both Herodotus and Thucydides treated the topic in digressions (*cf.* Tamiolaki, 2015).

Nonetheless, although Thucydides' subject was the Peloponnesian War, he did digress on Greek prehistory and another on the period between the Persian and the Peloponnesian Wars. On the other hand, in Corcella's view, with reference to recent history, Thucydides selected on a part of it. Herodotus, unlike Thucydides, started from Croesus and emphasized the continuity in the historical process from Darius down to his times. It is assumed that it is likely that Thucydides' initial project was a wider Greek history, but that he chose to isolate the Peloponnesian War as his sole and "splendid" subject (Corcella, 2006: 51). Thus the history of the fifty years (*Pentekontaetia*) after the Persian Wars (Book I. 89-118), which starts at the

point where Herodotus left off, is confined to a digression supported with little or no evidence.

For Raaflaub (2006: 194), the *Pentekontaetia* constitutes the most obvious digression in the Peloponnesian War. Dionysius of Halicarnassus has also discerned some of the issues in Thucydides Book I as inappropriate. In his treatise *On Thucydides*, Dionysius of Halicarnassus criticizes Thucydides of the arrangement of the first book of the *Peloponnesian War* by claiming that the work would have been much improved if Chapters 2-20 had been left out, and Thucydides rewriting the passage by first citing Chapter 1.1 and then immediately move on to Chapters 1.21-23 by avoiding unnecessary digression and lengthy narration (*cf.* Casper C. de Jonge: 2017: 4ff.).

Exaggeration

It is well acknowledged that Thucydides used the accounts of his predecessors to retell actual events that might have happened rather than accepting whatever stories that were told and believed by the Greeks. But in his attempt to revise the events of old led him to exaggerate the points that he wanted to prove. It is nowhere clearer than where, Thucydides, after narrating the issues after the Trojan and Persian Wars, informed us about the tyrannies of Greece and how the Greeks gradually developed their naval force. Thucydides tells us that the period after the Trojan War, no action, in terms of war, was produced in a great size.

According to Thucydides, quarrels in the cities drove the losing factions into exile, where some of them founded new cities, and new migrations caused further disruption. In addition to this era, the ensuing growth of wealth and power enabled the emergence of tyrannies in many

cities, which appeared in association with the first important navies since those of Minos of Crete. The Corinthians at the isthmus followed suit and they built the first triremes (Book I. 13), which became characteristic Greek warships. Many tyrants such as Cypselus of Corinth and Polycrates of Samos became interested in *thalassocracy*, naval empire.

Tyrants in Sicily and Corcyraeans in the Ionian Sea also acquired triremes before the Persian invasion, so says, Thucydides (Book I.13). In addition, he stated that during these periods, no serious battles were fought except the Lelantine War which became the first example of a conflict involving multiple states. The Lelantine War, we are told, was named for the plain that lay between the chief combatants, the cities of Chalcis and Eretria on the island of Euboea. The actual date of the war is lost to Thucydides and us but it is assumed that it ended in about 700 B.C. (Donald Kagan, 2009: 29). Apart from this event, Thucydides states that the rest of the Greek tyrants and cities were minding their own individual business (safety and prosperity) and that no impressive achievement could be attained either in common or by individual states (Book I.17). After this narration arose Thucydides' exaggeration on the Spartan constitution.

According to Thucydides, the Spartans, overcoming a long early period of internal conflict, adopted a good constitution and were always free of tyrants. For him, this excellent and uniquely stable form of life and government lasted for more than four hundred years, dating back before the end of the Peloponnesian War (404). Thucydides went ahead to say that because of their constitution, the Spartans became powerful and established control of other states too (Book I.18). The way Sparta exercised this authority

was not detailed but Thucydides suddenly concludes that the Spartans finally succeeded in putting down tyranny throughout Greece.

Thus, with respect to the undetailed manner by which “the Spartans succeeded in putting down tyranny throughout Greece”, the evidence which Thucydides put forward is no better evidence than that of the poets, who exaggerated the importance of their themes, or of the prose chroniclers, who were less interested in telling the truth. This is why in dealing with methods and accuracy of the account, the concentration should be on the ability to support an account with evidence. The style or approach can be considered but not as holistically rendering an account accurate since historical events are written in one’s perspective. As a result, we can anticipate some errors since we cannot check the authority of Thucydides’ account of Sparta putting an end to tyranny.

Although he was dealing with contemporary events and for that matter, Thucydides could not have openly exposed his reporters to the public. Nonetheless, events of this matter deserve proof of counter-evidence for readers to know how accurate Thucydides’ account from his predecessors’ accounts since he was also dealing with past events. It, therefore, becomes obvious that sometimes there is no consistency in what the historians say and what they do as discussed. For this reason, we can assume that the account on “tyranny” is likely inaccurate and quite exaggerated. For Kagan, tyrannies rose and fell at Argos, within the Peloponnesus, and at Corinth and Megara, just outside it, without any record of Spartan intervention.

Donald Kagan believes that no doubt the anti-tyrannical reputation Sparta enjoyed in his days and its crucial role in bringing the down the

Peisistratid dynasty in Athens in 510 B.C. influenced Thucydides in his assessment and judgment (Kagan, pg. 30). It has been also examined that there is the possibility that those who informed Thucydides about the issues of the Sicilian expedition, and especially how they reported the activities of Nicias and how he ended up dying were exaggerated or biased for or against Nicias (See Niedzielski, 2017:50).

Here, I reckon Thucydides' account not based on his technique since he had the right to select what was appropriate to his work but on his analysis, interpretation, and lack of provision of evidence to some of the events narrated as against his claim of account accuracy.

Conclusion

It can generally be observed that Thucydides made a concerted effort by employing systematic, empirical or scientific approaches in writing his history and that his methods and techniques seem a Thucydidean innovation and contribution to historiographical methods. Nonetheless, that in itself could not entirely render all his accounts accurate. It is so obvious from the analysis that there are many instances we can point out some loopholes as in his predecessors' accounts. Thus, in dealing with criticisms of Greek historiographical methods and techniques, whether past or contemporary history, the issue of accuracy should be examined not solely on the approaches but on the basis of analysis, interpretation, and the provision of evidence.

We can, therefore, establish that: (1) a historian's choice of selecting a method against the other is highly influenced by the type of history and that the approaches remain subjective, (2) an "appropriate" method does not mean accuracy of an account, (3) historiographical methods are just a means, tool, or

passageway to get close to the past events, and (4) in dealing with accuracy, the focus should be on the historian, what he does and not what he says, his analysis, interpretation, preconceived notions and biases, and most importantly, evidence that supports his account or claim.

Besides, apart from Thucydides telling us about his approaches, he did not tell us how he got his information when he was dealing with the past histories of Greece and that of his predecessors. In this direction, apart from his major contribution to historiography, can't we say that Thucydides may have imagined, fabricated, added, omitted, and exaggerated his accounts and that some of the accounts are inaccurate because of lapses in his analysis and methods too? Can't we also acknowledge that Thucydides wrote a Peloponnesian War instead of the Peloponnesian War? We can since historical writing is the making of the historian and his worldview which has no bearing on a particular seemingly perfect method.

It should be reiterated that there is no universal method for analyzing historical works on the basis of the appropriateness of methods and techniques but on the basis of interpretation would be appropriately considered. This is also not to refute that Thucydides did not apply rationalism and scientific approach in his researches. In fact, as discussed in chapter three and in this chapter, there is quite a difference between Thucydides' methods and techniques and his predecessors'. Thucydides improved his predecessors' approaches but that alone cannot be used as a justification for the claim of account accuracy in every instance since the analysis has revealed that there is a difference between what the historian says about his approaches of writing and what he does with his approaches and analysis.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY/ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

This chapter discusses the results of the discussions in the preceding chapters based on the study's objectives, statement of the problem, and research questions. It summarises and highlights how the study's key objectives were achieved and draws out some strengths and weaknesses associated with historiographical approaches. In doing this, it provides answers to the research questions presented in the chapter one. It then ends with a conclusion where my suggestion, with reference to historiographical approaches and account accuracy, is disclosed.

Summary/Analysis

This sub-theme deals with the findings, summary and analysis of the preceding chapters. As discussed in chapter one, ancient Greek writers investigate and approach their predecessors most often with a view to determining how reliable they were, in relation to factual accuracy and neutrality. Thucydides, a contemporary historian, relying on eye-witness account, criticized his predecessors just like Herodotus did with Homer's and Hecataeus' accounts. Thucydides has been the concentration of the research since he was more interested in both historical approaches and account accuracy as compared to his predecessor Herodotus. Thucydides' investigations were particularly concerned with what *sources* his predecessors used; what *methods* and *techniques* they had employed in putting together their works. He did not hide his dislike for exaggerations, and acceptance of stories in an uncritical manner without looking for evidence.

However, the preceding chapters three and four have revealed to us that historians in general use an approach suitable for their research. Nonetheless, the approaches used were not synonymous to accuracy. In fact, the chapter two of the research has proved that account accuracy goes beyond historiographical approaches. There are silent issues that should be considered when we want to examine accuracy of events. As revealed in chapter two, issues such as how people perceive history, how facts are attained and presented, historiographical biases, and subjective-objectivity of historical truth should be carefully considered when we are discussing accuracy of historical accounts.

It is obvious from chapter three that the early Greek writers who came before Thucydides such as Hecataeus, Herodotus, Charon, etc. did not follow one approach in their writings. The instance where we see two or more writers using the same method in their works may be considered as coincidental. There were no prescribed or objective (historiographical) methods which they had to strictly follow or adopt in their works. Most of those authors examined in this work therefore, knowingly or unknowingly, used the method(s) they considered appropriate. Nonetheless, this does not mean that all they wrote constituted accuracy of their various accounts.

However, with reference to issues discussed in chapter four, Thucydides cannot be denied the credits of paying attention to careful analysis, interpretation, the use of eye-witness, and re-counting in a chronological manner, etc. With the use of the scientific method for a historical account, Thucydides was superb. In addition, one can see a sort of accuracy in what Thucydides does and what he says about his own method –

“... either I was present myself at the events which I have described or else I heard them from eye-witnesses whose reports I have checked with as much thoroughness as possible” (*cf.* Book I. 22. 1ff). We also see a relationship between his scientifically systematic method and accuracy of his observation and analysis of the plague. However, Thucydides was not always consistent with what he said about historical approaches and how historical methods should be done. This is revealed in the way he went about some of his analysis. As a result, we are able to identify some hitches in his account. In other words, Thucydides himself is guilty of some criticisms levelled against his predecessors.

It is not on every occasion that we see a relationship between what he says and what he does. We noticed, for example, that, Thucydides, in his attempt of writing a detailed and lengthy analysis of the internal crisis in Corcyra and afterward, ended up omitting or ignoring some key issues of fifth-century Greek political history incomplete since he did not discuss a series of other events at all, which likely subjects some of such account into criticisms.

When it comes to his judgment of his characters, we do not see the likely scope in which Thucydides judges the archons or political figures at the time of his writing. It is obvious that Thucydides paid attention to only a few of them in the analysis. Of the famous leaders in the city of Athens, and after Pericles had passed on, only Cleon receives attention in Thucydides' account. This is where one can find possible inaccuracies and biases in what Thucydides does and what he says about historiographical approaches. Nonetheless, just like E. H. Carr (1961: 32-40) reiterated since history is what the historian considers important, Thucydides decided to play value judgment

in his account on individual personalities which leads to what we can term as Thucydidean censorship.

On the use of eye-witness and field trips, we can see and acknowledge how well Thucydides adopted the approaches for his contemporary history. But, when we come to his methods of archaeological and primary sources, we do not clearly see the accuracy of accounts which Thucydides talks about in every aspect of his narratives since some of the accounts which dealt with the very past history of the Greeks were unsupported with evidence as seen in the burial site at Delos and analysis on the Cretan Minos (Book I.8.1-9 & I.4.1-20).

On the part of Thucydides, he never provided any evidence to support his version of the “Hipparchus-Hippias” account apart from starting his version of the story as “this was what happened...” (Book I.20). We do not know whether the account formed part of his vicarious eye-witness approach or something else.

With the use of chronology, no ancient Greek historian used it effectively other than Thucydides himself as discussed in chapter three and four. Nonetheless, we see another Thucydides when it comes to the use of **set**-speeches and direct quotations. We have pointed out in chapter four that in the Mytilene debate, there are possible inaccuracies and were evident in his accounts. For instance, one cannot tell whether Cleon or Diodotus was accurately reported or if they actually delivered such speeches. The whole tone of the debate presented by the two speakers is likely to be what the author inserted and the way he wanted to express his feelings for tyranny and democracy (*cf.* Book III.38-42). Nonetheless, this is where we spot one of the

biases of “historians” as discussed in chapter two (*cf.* McCullagh, 2000: 40) that historians at times ignore important facts but accept what they think they can justify as accurate and credible.

It can be observed that Thucydides chose to present one aspect of the facts surrounding the Mitylene debate and personalities of political figures, but ignored other aspects which makes the account unbalanced. In this manner, we can say Thucydides allowed his general ideas to prevail over historical or account accuracy. We also observed that Thucydides admits that these speeches are not verbatim transcripts but assures that the speeches express the over-all logic of what the speakers said on a given occasion, as he himself recalled it or was told by others, or that they give the kind of argument which was appropriate to the particular occasion which he has recorded (*cf.* Book I.22.1ff). This is also where Thucydides’ technique is open to much criticism.

In addition, we have seen that his use of set-speeches as a technique of historical narration gives us no clue as to how some conclusions and or decisions were made, as we read in the *Dispute Over Epidamnu* (Book I.24-30), and in the *Dispute Over Corcyra* (Book I.31-61ff.). Here too, we also encounter another instance of Thucydidean censorship. We are not privy to how decisions were made to send the additional twenty ships to the ten which had earlier been agreed on by the Assembly’s decision.

On the issue of rhetoric or persuasive technique, in Book III.53-68, the funeral speech ascribed to Pericles – a spoken burial speech to commemorate the dead – was just oratorical “show-piece” which has nothing to do with a contemporary historical account but mere literal convention which most ancient writers, both poets and historians alike, used as a technique of writing.

Another technique which is almost seen in all writings of the Greeks is cataloguing as exemplified in Book II of the *Iliad*, and in Book I.10 of the *Peloponnesian War*. There was the need to discuss the technique of cataloguing to show that upon all Thucydides' criticisms of his predecessors' methods, he still adopted some of their style of writing. Since we see similarity in the use of this technique by both Thucydides and his predecessors, we need to reiterate that on what bases is Thucydides critiquing his predecessors' accounts? Another literary convention commonly used was digression and flashback. It was popular with Homer and Herodotus. In his attempt to prove that some of his predecessors' accounts were false with respect Hippias-Hipparchus' account, Thucydides ended up in extensive digressions and led his readers into the state of flashback as seen in his *Pentekontaetia*, and in Book VI. 54-59 [which is similar to Herodotean digressions in Herodotus' Book V.55-97].

In fact, so far as Greek historiography and history are concerned, Thucydides' innovation, style, technique, causes of war, his understanding of the human psychology, and etc. raised the art of writing history into perfection. Nonetheless, it is not in every aspect of Thucydides' narration that we encounter perfections. It is nowhere clearer than where Thucydides informs us about how Sparta put an end to tyranny in the whole land of Greece (Book I.13-18). We do not see any detailed discussion and evidence but Thucydides suddenly concludes that the Spartans finally succeeded in putting down tyranny throughout Greece.

All the same, Thucydides was classic not necessarily with his historiographical approaches but his analysis than his predecessors.

Nonetheless, the discussion done in chapters three and four and this summary has shown and answered the research questions: (1) What methods or techniques of history were used by early Greek historians? (2) What methods or techniques did Thucydides employ in his *Peloponnesian War*? (3) Are the criticisms suggesting to us that accuracy of events (past or contemporary) is revealed solely through a method and technique used, or the ability to support an account with evidence, critical analysis, or both? (4) How different is what Thucydides says from what he does? The research has shown that upon all his attempts in documenting an accurate history, Thucydides still adopted some of his predecessors' approaches for his historical analysis.

We can also say that Thucydides just criticized his predecessors for the sake of rhetorical ploy. But if he literally meant his comments about his predecessors, then this work has shown that we do not see much difference between Thucydides' approaches and his predecessors'. Notwithstanding, we also see that each historian was not obliged to use perceived specific appropriate historiographical methods. They used the method subjectively for their analysis and to their own advantage. Besides, the approaches used were highly informed by the type of history (contemporary or far distant past). On the other hand, although there are no universal criteria for analyzing all works of history on the basis of appropriateness of methods and techniques, the research has shown that whether appropriate or inappropriate methods of writing, accuracy, and facts of events should be sought on both the "methods", and the historian's interpretations and evidence-free of biases.

Conclusion

The central theme of the work, from chapters one to four, has been a critique of Thucydides' methods and techniques of writing. The main thesis is that historiographical methods and techniques are not synonymous to accuracy of account. This research has discussed the methods and techniques of early Greek historiography before the time of Thucydides. It has found out the methods and techniques adopted by Thucydides in the *Peloponnesian War*. The research has explained how Thucydides' historiographical methods and techniques were distinct from or superior to those of earlier writers. The research has demonstrated that methods and techniques are not synonymous to accuracy. In effect, the main objective of this research has been achieved in a sense that it has discussed the methods and techniques of early Greek historiography before the time of Thucydides. It has also pointed out the methods and techniques adopted by Thucydides in the *Peloponnesian War*. The research has analyze and explain how Thucydides' historiographical methods and techniques were distinct from or superior to those of earlier writers. The research has found out whether methods and techniques are synonymous to accuracy.

By analyzing the four chapters, it becomes obvious that historiographical methods and techniques cannot be equated to historical accuracy. The facts of events are independent of the methods and techniques. Both historical methods and techniques are necessary tools to get close to the events one wants to inquire or investigate but they are not a guarantee for an accurate and factual representation of the events (either past or recent past). That is why I believe that we cannot wholly accept every account as

accurately narrated based on usage of “eye-witness” or “oral traditions”. After all, we have seen in chapter two that the way a historian comes by his fact is not all about the methods or techniques but his interpretation, analysis, inferences, and evidence which supports his claim.

On the grand scale, it appears to me that, those criticisms levelled by Greek writers against one another concerning “inappropriate approaches” were not necessary when we are dealing with the accuracy of historical account. Nonetheless, for the benefit of literary convention and rhetorical ploy at the time, we can leave the criticisms as they are. But then, when we consider some of their criticisms such as those of Thucydides, we can equally consider them to mean serious business. Be that it may, an approach cannot be equated to account accuracy although it can influence the outcome of the analysis.

Apart from Thucydides telling us about his methods, he never tells us anything about his informants or makes the reference of some of his accounts to his reporters. He gives us no evidence except those that come from himself and his anonymous reporters. This is where we are confronted with “Thucydidean censorship” and a style akin to the omniscient narrator. This does not necessarily mean that some of the accounts are false, but the point that I am making here is that whatever method or technique adopted for historical analysis, we are likely to encounter some inaccuracies so far as the account is written from the historian’s perspective and what he considers important. But notwithstanding his claim of “eye-witness” account, either coincidental or design, Thucydides ended up using the methods, and narrative styles of his predecessors as a model and polished them well.

However, so far as historical writing and its related concepts matter to historiographical studies in general, whether accurate or inaccurate, the many historians of antiquity who came before Thucydides created their accounts of the past by responding in some measure to the needs of their own times. They felt that the present had a link with the past. As a result, it becomes more problematic to use one's own era, events, and his methods of historiography as the only yardstick to criticize the method of others. After all, history is what one considers important. That is why Kant summarizes history as being the "idiotic course of all things human" (Kent, 2015, 84; Wilkins, 1966: 172-185); for Hegel, history is nothing but the thoughtful consideration of it (*cf.* Hegel, 2001: 11ff); and in view of Karl Marx, "all history was (and is) the history of class struggles" (*cf.* Adamson, 1980: 186ff). In other words, history can mean different thing to different people in different times and conditions.

Thus, basically, history is what one considers important but not a method and technique which one considers appropriate. So, approaches alone (strict and introverted view of what constitutes historiography and how history should be written) should not minimize the vast alternatives and collections of different approaches to the past since historiographical methods and techniques vary from one historian to the other. Nailing it down, although the appropriate method can influence the accuracy of an account positively, however, in critiquing or criticizing an account, we should look for evidence that supports the narrative but not solely of "appropriate" approach since with or without appropriate method and technique, historical accuracy depends on a more logical interpretation of the account sources supported with evidence.

For me, the criticisms Thucydides levelled against his predecessors' methods were not necessary since he used most of their methods. On what bases then are Thucydides statements better than his predecessors? Is it on the bases of his techniques, approaches, or accuracies? His criticisms would have been appropriate if he had questioned the interpretation of his predecessors' accounts and the evidence they gave to support their narratives. So, moving forward, as we keep historiographical approaches in check, I suggest that criticisms of the nature of Thucydides' should focus on the interpretations of the accounts and evidence that support the accounts.

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