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# Herodotean Realism

Joel Alden Schlosser

## Abstract:

With the renaissance of political realism has come an insistence that the study of politics be historically located. While many political realists trace their conception of historical inquiry to Thucydides, this article shows how Herodotus can offer a more realist approach to political phenomena. Herodotus crafts a self-conscious form of historical inquiry that foregrounds the actual activity of the historian as intersubjective, reflective, and particular. Herodotus thus models a historical investigation that shows its own limits while demanding the evaluation of its readers, offering a way to address criticisms of political realism's singular and unacknowledged historical narratives. Moreover, Herodotus's *Histories* exemplify a disposition toward open inquiry among others — what Herodotus calls wonder — that can invigorate responsive curiosity as part of the project of historical understanding essential to both political realism and contemporary democracies.

## Keywords:

Political realism, history and politics, ancient political thought, Herodotus, wonder.

In recent years, political realism has experienced a renaissance in political theory. While related to the classic realist tradition of Thucydides, Machiavelli, and Hobbes, the new kind of realism, best represented by the work of Bernard Williams and Raymond Geuss, promises, in Geuss's words, to "start from and be concerned in the first instance . . . with the way social, economic, political, etc., institutions actually operate in some society at some given time, and what really does move people to act in given institutions."<sup>i</sup> Rejecting the focus on theoretical accounts of politics as they *ought* to be, today's realism, as Philp puts it, insists on being action-focused, on politics' being seen as historically located, and that political action "should be understood more like a craft or art rather than a process of applying theory."<sup>ii</sup> In this way, realism advances claims about the character, the object, and the method of political philosophy as well as about the distinctive features of politics itself. Realism promises to lead political theorists back to the political cave, towards "real politics" and engaged political theory.

This article focuses on one part of the interlocking claims of realism: the requirement that the study of politics be historically located. To explore this claim and offer both a modification and a deepening of the relationship between historical inquiry and political theory in the realist paradigm, I show how Herodotus models an approach to political phenomena that complicates the realist invocations of history and context by highlighting how much history depends on the observations and reflections of the historian, that is, on the historian's specific relationship to the political world around him. Few, if any, historians have been subjected to such widely divergent evaluations of Herodotus, who has been taken as the "father of history" by some and ruthlessly criticized for his inaccuracies and exaggerations by others. Recent scholarship, however, has come to recognize Herodotus's singular illumination of historiography as not merely a

straightforward and transparent activity nor a matter of merely recording unproblematic “facts”;<sup>iii</sup> building on this new emphasis, here I emphasize how the construction of Herodotus’s *Histories* elaborates invocations of “context” by today’s realists by showing how the seeing, hearing, comparing, and measuring that create a context in the first place depend upon the historian’s ongoing and never completed activity of inquiry. Herodotus’s inquiry thus builds understanding with its readers through the narrator’s own first-hand explorations of the historical context, creating a provisional and particular map that these same readers can take up, explore, and evaluate on their own terms. In this way, Herodotus models a kind of historical inquiry that extends the realist critique of “high theory” by making this inquiry a situated and revisable project rather than an objective buttress for broad-reaching (and often non-historical) claims about human nature and the nature of politics.

Moreover, Herodotus’s approach to historical inquiry also sheds light on how to bring self-awareness to the historical narratives of realism. As friendly critics of today’s realism have pointed out, realists often implicitly adopt a declinist view toward history. Herodotus helps to address this shortcoming by showing how to create a historical inquiry that leaves the audience to judge the reliability both of the historian’s claims and the reliability of the historian himself. Rather than taking history merely as information necessary to substantiate theoretical arguments, Herodotus shows how historical inquiry is constructed through stories yet leaves these stories open-ended and overlapping.<sup>iv</sup> This use of stories within the *Histories* prevents the surreptitious emplotting of a singular narrative, instead creating a contest among different narratives that the reader must adjudicate for herself. Herodotus thus extends the realist project by showing how historical realism can proceed without reifying a particular version of “the real.”

Telling stories and remarking on these stories requires a disposition toward open inquiry among others, what Herodotus calls wonder; the implicit account of wonder in the *Histories*, moreover, offers a way of expanding on the political edge of today's realism. By embodying a practice of inquiry that speaks to challenges of contemporary democracy, a Herodotean realism illuminates a possible connection between realist and democratic politics today. In his own time, Herodotus wrote to warn and inform the developing democracies of the Greek world, apprising them of how their enemies' flaws might soon become their own while modeling evidence-gathering and evaluation beneficial to democratic deliberation. In particular, Herodotus's form of inquiry exemplified and demanded of its readers a form of wondering that could inform democratic deliberations and decision-making. In light of Herodotus, then, the process of developing historical understanding can become a self-aware working through of empirical data and narrative, a process that not only promises to invigorate a bottom-up and open-ended historical inquiry with wonder, but to model how democracies might pursue understanding across lines of difference.

### **Realist History: Before Thucydides**

Realism today describes two different but often interwoven traditions: the "classic realism" that usually traces its origins to Machiavelli, Hobbes, or Nietzsche and emphasizes the reality of power to understanding all political situations, a reality often misunderstood or ignored because of moral codes; and, alternatively, a "moderating realism" that focuses less on the realities of power politics than on criticizing how "absolutist ethics, ideological certitude, and utopian schemes can threaten political order and lead to unrestrained uses of power."<sup>v</sup> While "classic realism" remains influential, the new call for realism that has recently emerged in political theory

stems more from the “moderating” version, focusing on excessive idealism and moralism with special attention to dominant strains of contemporary political philosophy.<sup>vi</sup> The realist turn to history thus emerges from a critique of the Kantian strand in political theory, exemplified in the work of John Rawls, which in its strongest sense posits that politics is not merely infused with value (a view that few would contest) but rather that one must begin from an ideal theory of ethics to start thinking about the human social world. Such an approach takes ethics as an object of research separable from politics, as understandable apart from particular historical contexts, and as the necessary preliminary subject of study prior to any evaluation of political realities. Only after attaining an ideal theory of how we should act can one apply such a theory to the action of political agents; only then do the empirical details of any given historical situation enter consideration.

The new realist alternative to these ideal theories seeks to reframe inquiry into politics around the constitutive elements of politics itself: the moral psychology of political actors; political conflict understood in terms of both values and interests; the institutions that mediate these conflicts; and the distinctiveness of the political sphere. As Geuss puts it, one should ask with Lenin: “who whom?”<sup>vii</sup> Political theory must concern itself with particular people doing concrete things to other particular people. Ideal theory cannot begin to answer these questions. Instead, realism proffers a political theory where inquiry is located in the world of contemporary politics, grounded in historical reality. If ideal theory seeks to identify an account of justice or the good abstracted from the motivations and situations of particular political actors, realism in contrast asks simply “what could make what work”: the causal conditions, the motivations, and the contextual basis for assessing success.<sup>viii</sup>

At the heart of realism's critique of ideal theory stands historical inquiry. Historical inquiry functions to contextualize political actors' motives, beliefs, and desires; any understanding of political reality depends on *locating* political actors. An account of an engaged realist history might begin with the implicit historical exemplar for realists such as Bernard Williams and Raymond Geuss: Thucydides. Williams identifies in Thucydides a commitment to the kind of truthful history necessary to combat modern delusions and Geuss describes Williams's project as inspired by the ideal of a "Thucydides who philosophizes."<sup>ix</sup> Geuss's account of what Thucydides teaches resonates with his own manifesto of realism today: Thucydides offers "unprejudiced theoretical sympathy" for a "wider spectrum of possible human motives"; Thucydides also rejects the dominant attitude of optimistic history, favoring not pessimism but rather a realistic approach to a world whose historical development is not, in Williams' words, "intrinsically shaped to human interests."<sup>x</sup> Finally, Thucydides's history is action-focused, aiming to instruct political actors about the true nature of their interests. Thucydides, in other words, anticipates the realist project of today: refusing to see history through the lens of ideology; facing the same complex reality faced by political actors; and engaging his own time rather than fleeing into the sunlit space of "pure theory."

Yet while Thucydides's *History* does offer one tradition for considering realism's historical project, Herodotus's openness about the actual work of the historian offers a richer resource for developing an account of realist historical inquiry. As Parry comments, Thucydides is reluctant to speak for himself; Herodotus, in contrast, is "objective about his relation to history":<sup>xi</sup> Herodotus is the more transparent of the two historians, the more willing to share his sources (or his skepticism), the more inclined to celebrate rather than ignore the inscrutable detail. As Collingwood writes: "What chiefly interests Herodotus is the events themselves; what

chiefly interests Thucydides is the laws according to which they happen.”<sup>xii</sup> As I show in what follows, Herodotus’s history is made by mapping the human world from a situated and reflective human perspective; in doing so, Herodotus appears more concerned with how different elements of the world are constellated into significant patterns, as well as with his role in assembling these webs of significance. Herodotus’s approach thus emphasizes concrete particular actors, events, and situations, modeling a “bottom up” approach to historical reality more consonant with contemporary realism’s intentions.<sup>xiii</sup>

One of the notable moments when Thucydides and Herodotus have slightly overlapping accounts helps to highlight the difference between them.<sup>xiv</sup> As Thucydides contextualizes the Peloponnesian War, he describes how cities were built inland in order to avoid pirates; islanders, by contrast were great and successful marauders. These islanders, Thucydides concludes, were Carians and Phoenicians, a conclusion for which Thucydides adduces this piece of evidence as proof (*marturion*): During the purification of Delos by Athens in the Peloponnesian War, all the graves in the island were taken up; half the inhabitants were found to be Carians, identified by the fashion of the arms buried with them and by the method of interment, which was the same as what the Carians follow today (1.8). Thucydides then proceeds to describe the naval force of Minos.

Herodotus also has a discussion of the origins of the Carians in the first book of his *Histories*. When Harpagos, the general of the Persian forces, marches against the Carians, Herodotus reports the following: the Carians came to the mainland from the Cyclades islands, but “as far back as I have been able to trace them by hearsay, they paid no tribute to Minos but did provide the manpower for his ships whenever he needed them” (1.171).<sup>xv</sup> Herodotus notes that the Carians “became by far the most famous of all peoples at that time,” as shown by the

Hellenes' adopting three of their inventions: tying plumes to their helmets, decorating shields with devices, and attaching handles to shields. Herodotus continues:

Many years later, the Dorians and Ionians expelled the Carians from the islands, and so they came to the mainland. At least that is what the Cretans say happened, but the Carians themselves say they are indigenous to the mainland and have always had the name they do now. As proof [*apodeiknusi*], they point to the ancient sanctuary of Carian Zeus in Mylasa, which the Mysians and Lydians share with them as kinsmen of the Carians, since Mysos and Lydos were brothers of Car. These, in fact, are the only ones who share the sanctuary; no one belonging to any other group is admitted to it, not even those who speak the same language as the Carians. (1.171)

This treatment of the Carians' origins distinguishes itself from Thucydides's in a few important ways. First, Herodotus puts on display the "bottom up" approach foundational for the new political realism. Herodotus notes without explicitly judging the different stories: the Cretans and the Carians still disagree, despite the available facts. Herodotus's display of contending stories or pieces of evidence contrasts with Thucydides's invocation of evidence that solely supports his conclusion. This contrast appears in their respective languages of evidence. Thucydides uses the common word *marturion* to describe the evidence or proof given by the exhumed bodies, half being Carians. The root of *marturion*, *martus*, translates as witness; if we were to witness these bodies, Thucydides's claim would be validated. But while Herodotus frequently uses the language of *marturion*, such as during his discussion of the flooding of the Nile River, he does so in a way that puts different pieces of evidence on display. In the passage quoted above, for example, Herodotus describes the Carians' pointing as proof (*apodeiknusi*), as a display of sorts. Herodotus's word here is a close relative of the word he uses to describe the entirety of his

*Histories* — an *apodeixis*, or demonstration, of his inquiry. Whereas Thucydides has sorted the evidence for us — “behind his *History*,” Arlene Saxonhouse writes, “is the evaluation of the evidence he has acquired”<sup>xvi</sup> — Herodotus puts evidence on display for his audience to evaluate. *Apodeixis* has a sense of live performance, of competing to persuade an audience, that elicits the judgment of its readers or auditors.

Second, Herodotus offers an open form of historical inquiry that acknowledges his sources, noting his varying reliance on hearsay as well as on the fact of having observed or learned of the customs of the sanctuary. Herodotus is always present in the *Histories*, acknowledging his particular role as the historian; Herodotus’s narrative always appears with the fingerprints of the historian still visible. Herodotus’s first-person statements on his collecting and evaluation of evidence combines with his “they say” references to create what Nino Luraghi calls a “meta-discourse” running parallel to the narrative surface of the *Histories*, a veritable commentary on how the inquiry actually proceeded.<sup>xvii</sup> Herodotus puts on display his synthesis of oral information, personal eyewitness testimony, and his own reasoning; his readers thus see “the social surface of such knowledge,” that is, its origins in the kinds of real politics Geuss and Williams praise. Herodotus returns us to the political cave and details the kind of inquiry that might allow one to understand the cave’s realities: the particular people doing concrete things to other particular people that form the basis for any realistic answer to the question “who whom?”. In contrast, history for Thucydides, according to Adam Parry, “is in fact movements of power.”<sup>xviii</sup> While Thucydides overlays events with a theory about historical development driven by war and conflict, Herodotus not only puts “the events themselves” there for his audience to judge but also unveils his historical spelunking — what enabled him to discover and describe these events in the first place.

Third, Herodotus's explicit foregrounding of the process of inquiry keeps the question of what constitutes historical reality open. Herodotus anticipates the use of evidence, the theoretical bases of evaluation, and the elicitation of an audience seen in subsequent historiography, but by showing the scaffolding of the inquiry itself — its basic elements of investigation, observation, the sifting of evidence, and so forth — Herodotus displays how “the real” comes to be constructed. In this way, Herodotus anticipates Hayden White's insight that “there are no apodictically certain theoretical grounds on which one can legitimately claim an authority for any one of the modes [of history] over the others as being ‘realistic.’”<sup>xix</sup> Herodotus's self-reflexive realism does not claim absolute authority for its account of reality. Instead, his approach remains close to the events themselves (and the stories told and retold about these events) while putting the onus of authority on the reader. As the example of the origins of the Carians suggests, Herodotus reports what he has heard, combines it with what he has seen, and reserves judgment when facts and stories do not provide a sufficient basis. Herodotus does not pretend to hide his judgments or the bases for these judgments. Indeed, his remark about the influence of the Carians over the Hellenes indicates his own situation, speaking knowingly as he does — and not feeling the need to provide more specific evidence — about the customs that have made the Carians famous in Hellas. Still, what counts as real is not presumed but rather raised as a question.

### **Herodotean History: Seeing, Hearing, Measuring, Comparing**

Through this “bottom-up,” open, and self-reflexive approach, Herodotus's inquiries offer a form of historical inquiry more consonant with the realist project. Turning to the *Histories* as a whole, we can see how this approach seeks to integrate the particular into the general without effacing

the specificity of the former or diminishing the force of the latter; Herodotus thus avoids the blinkered view of theory while educing the gritty facts of real politics. Inquiry itself, as a process, constitutes the overarching argument in the book. While previous scholarship has called attention to the content of these inquiries and the coherence of their apparently disparate subjects,<sup>xx</sup> the form of Herodotus's inquiry, in particular how it proceeds through seeing, hearing, measuring, and comparing illuminates how Herodotus's text elaborates the development of understanding through its most basic elements. Herodotus displays the "social surface" of his inquiry, attempting to bridge different instantiations of human community rather than reinforcing his particular perspective. In doing so, Herodotus calls attention to the particularity of his own position; he does not seek to buttress a single viewpoint but in fact does quite the opposite.<sup>xxi</sup>

Alongside this bottom-up approach, Herodotus maintains an open record of his own engagement with the material world. Herodotus "does not explain, he shows."<sup>xxii</sup> Other commentators have noted how Herodotus orients his inquiry around what was then the known world, or *oikeomenē*, the inhabited land, that provides the setting for all of his stories and descriptions.<sup>xxiii</sup> In fact, this cartographic approach to the cultures and civilizations around him shapes Herodotus's approach to historical inquiry as a whole; Herodotus creates a "map of knowledge" and gives his account authority by validating (or repudiating) oral reports through his own inquiry and verifications.<sup>xxiv</sup> When Herodotus contextualizes the Persian Wars by describing the rise of Persian power, this inquiry comes through intersecting lines of listening to others, seeing phenomena himself, and measuring and comparing these observations with his experience. Herodotus confesses that he cannot speak of things not reported (1.49); notes that "some say" one thing about the Delphic oracle given to the Spartans about their government while others say otherwise (1.65); that the Lydians offer conflicting reports about the lake near

the tomb of Alyattes (1.93); that the open discussions of the Persians have allowed him to acquire knowledge about their practices while those things not discussed openly he cannot recount (1.131, 1.140); that he can report what is said about the Massegetai although Herodotus does not say anything for certain (1.201). Rather than reducing these different observations to a single voice, Herodotus leaves the different accounts in play. We still have a full account of the Persians' rise to power, but this is accompanied by other stories, some whose relevance appears obvious to the overarching chronicle of the Persian Wars while the relevance of others remains less self-evident. Herodotus positions the reader to discern a deeper logic if there is one, recounting the stories he has heard as well as those he has experienced.

By comparing different phenomena without judging them, Herodotus holds open the distance between his own position as Hellenic observer and the basis for historical inquiry which he can never fully comprehend. As the example of the Carians' origins illustrated, Herodotus also compares lesser known customs and practices to those more familiar (both to himself and to his readers). This involves the explicit comparisons of customs to one another, such as Herodotus's comment that "unlike the Hellenes," the Persians "do not believe that the gods have human qualities" (1.131), as well as the implicit comparison of measurement and circumstantial judgment. Measurement is also everywhere in Herodotus: the golden bowl that holds 600 amphoras (1.51); Croesus's sacrifice of 3,000 of every kind of appropriate animal (1.51); the exactly 300 men on each side of the "Battle of Champions" between the Spartans and the Argives over Thyrea (1.82); the astounding dimensions of the Tomb of Alyattes (1.93): six stades and two plethra in circumference with a breadth of thirteen plethra (3,700 feet in circumference and 1,300 feet wide). Yet these measurements and comparisons do not occur in a vacuum; rather, they continually relate the unfamiliar and the strange back to the familiar and the

conventional. Herodotus asserts that the tomb of Alyattes is “the greatest structure ever built, apart from those of the Egyptians and Babylonians” (1.93), but he can offer evidence only in the terms his readers will understand. Thus Herodotus describes a “thirty day journey for a traveler without heavy baggage from Lake Maeotis to the River Phasis and Colchis” (all in Scythia); one must assume (and imaginatively recreate) the viewpoint of a conventional Hellenic traveler.<sup>xxv</sup> Inquiry proceeds through mapping one’s relationship to the world — observing, recounting, questioning, and comparing — while maintaining self-reflexive distance from the orienting assumptions of this mapping.

Yet mapping knowledge does not entail a complete reduction of the world’s complexity; rather, Herodotus approaches phenomena as potentially transformative of the very categories of mapping in the first place. Indeed, Herodotus overlays previous mythic maps with his own more empirical accounts; changes are not merely indications that earlier knowledge was deficient but become the basis for new points of orientation to counter or be held in tension with previous ones.<sup>xxvi</sup> This account of how Herodotus maps reality complicates the typical view. Hartog, for example, has rightly called attention to Herodotus’s development of a “grid” that maps non-Greeks while also making Greeks the implicit model; however, Hartog ignores the degree to which by calling attention to his own judgments Herodotus shows the provisionality of his evaluations.<sup>xxvii</sup> (This provisionality is again emphasized through Herodotus’s use of narrative, which I treat in the following section.) In other words, maps can be more or less open to revision, more or less explicit about their provisionality and particularity. Herodotus’s historical inquiry illuminates an approach toward understanding past and present phenomena that works through the open, first-hand experiences of the historian himself (or herself) while preventing these experiences from entirely determining what the map of these phenomena might contain.

## **Herodotus the storyteller**

Not only does Herodotus's open and reflective form of historical inquiry offer a new approach to the historical study of politics demanded by realism; Herodotus's distinctiveness as a storyteller also suggests how Herodotus might speak to a criticism leveled at realism concerning its lack of self-scrutiny about historical narratives. Bonnie Honig and Marc Stears point to this limitation of Williams and Geuss (as well as James Tully) in their critique of realism, detailing how each focuses on some historical actualities to the exclusion of others, narrating and emplotting in partial and thus contestable ways.<sup>xxviii</sup> By not allowing for any dissonance to emerge from their accounts, each thinker effectively silences what does not fit the narrative arc. For Williams and Geuss's historical pessimism, this means leaving out moments of hope and collective change. For Tully's more optimistic view, this means omitting the many failures of treaty constitutionalism that might chasten his enthusiastic embrace of them. An unreflective historical narrative blinds us to events that do not fit our paradigms and robs of us a nuanced and complex understanding of political reality that might inform our judgments.

These criticisms of today's new realism echo debates within historiography about the relation between narrative discourse and historical representation. The presumption that historical reality requires narrative and that narrative is unproblematic has come under fire in the past thirty years. As Hayden White writes, "narrative is not merely a neutral discursive form that may or may not be used to represent real events . . . but rather entails ontological and epistemic choices with distinct ideological and even specifically political implications."<sup>xxix</sup> While Croce could write that "where there is no narrative . . . there is no history,"<sup>xxx</sup> criticisms in twentieth-century historiography have suggested the contrary: social-scientifically oriented historians, with

the French *Annales* group playing an exemplary role, have questioned narrative historiography as nonscientific and perhaps an ideological representational structure; semiologically oriented literary theorists and philosophers (including Barthes, Foucault, Derrida, Todorov, Kristeva, and others) have viewed historical discourse as simply one discursive code which may or may not be appropriate for representing reality; and hermeneutically oriented philosophers such as Gadamer and Ricoeur have argued for an understanding of narrative as manifesting a specific consciousness of time.<sup>xxxii</sup> Narrative historiography requires a defense today in a way it did not when Herodotus invented it.

Contemporary criticisms of narrative historiography force us to give up, in White's words, "the fiction of . . . a world, capable of speaking itself and of displaying itself as a form of a story,"<sup>xxxii</sup> but this does not render narrative impossible or irrelevant. Historical inquiry without narrative would simply confront us with information, the very same facts and non-facts we face in quotidian life: chaotic and unorganized, unconsidered and thus not yet meaningful. Yet narrative can also limit our inquiries and the provisional and circumstantial lessons we draw from them. Herodotus's *Histories* avoid this quandary in a way that anticipates Honig and Stears's argument: different narratives contend with one another within his history; the coexistence and essential contestability of these different narratives prevents any partial or ideological employment. With his narrative presence undeniable, Herodotus does not deny his role as the shaper of the *Histories*; anticipating Barthes, Herodotus represents history in multiple modes borrowed from his interlocutors as well as from the contexts he inhabited. Lacking any singular narrative, Herodotus avoids what Honig and Stears call "the misleading reassurances" of realism's "pictures of the real."<sup>xxxiii</sup> Rather than pretending to capture the real with a single vision of "the way things are," Herodotus instead conjures the political reality of multiple, often

overlapping and contradictory stories. Readers of Herodotus's *Histories* must construct their own account of the real, their own narrative that might connect the disparate and compelling stories on display in the text.<sup>xxxiv</sup> Herodotus thus anticipates many of the twentieth-century criticisms of narrative historiography and offers a mode of response.

The frequent “flashbacks,” or what have come to be called “digressions,” in Herodotus's text help to show how he constructs a narrative of narratives that calls attention to the contingency of every narrative and his role as a historian. Herodotus's *Histories* do contain a “main narrative”: the overarching story set in motion by Herodotus's stated intention to describe the origins of the conflict between the Persians and the Hellenes. Yet many sections arise within the main narrative that may or may not be necessary to the single story: details of particular circumstances, a rousing story, descriptions of the relevant geography, the backstory for how or why a given actor became involved in the conflict. In Norma Thompson's language, Herodotus leaves the edges rough; Herodotus's free-running style, without any natural stopping places, is a “subtle and realistic view of the tentative quality of any theorizing.”<sup>xxxv</sup> Rosalind Thomas recounts a straight-forward example in the narrative of Croesus's expansionist plans. As king of Lydia, Croesus inquires about possible allies as he prepares for war (1.56). This inquiry leads Herodotus to describe the major Greek ethnic groups, the Dorians and the Ionians (1.56 - 58). Croesus soon learns that the Athenians and the Spartans are foremost. Herodotus then inserts the stories of these cities' development: factional strife in Athens and Peisistratos's three periods of power; the Spartans' good governance under Lycurgus. As Thomas explains:

We thus have an explanation within another explanation, a description hanging from another description, all of which are in fact important to our understanding of the train of

events. In the form of a “ring composition,” Herodotus returns neatly at the end of this main narrative and clearly signals the end of the section on Athens . . . <sup>xxxvi</sup>

What appears as digression to the modern reader in fact functions structurally to show how narratives nest in one another. Thomas may note that the main narrative continues, but these sub-narratives will prove no less important as Athens and Sparta regain prominence in the *Histories*’ later books. The priority of one narrative over another does not present itself as obvious; readers are left to discern which stories are salient for understanding which plot lines.

While some of Herodotus’s flashbacks follow the kind of structural logic that Thomas’s account suggests, this does not explain every “digression.” Some irreducible distance persists between the many *logoi* and the overarching *logos* of Herodotus’s *Histories*. Some detours from the chronological narrative seem entirely random while others appear to have treatments disproportionate to their importance. Most famous among the latter category is Book II’s treatment of Egypt, occasioned by Darius’s conquest.<sup>xxxvii</sup> In these sections, Herodotus goes beyond the necessary context-setting to explore (among other wonders) accounts of the flooding of the Nile, the Egyptians’ reverence for animals, and the far-lying lands where the most beautiful human beings in the world, the Ethiopians, live. Yet Egypt has a place in the “main narrative”: it becomes relevant in relation to Darius, whose own relevance lies in being the first of the Persians to attack the Hellenes directly. Other flashbacks and parenthetical comments seem much less relevant: Herodotus’s remark that the Athenians were awfully silly to believe Peisistratos’s scheme to retake power in the city (1.60); noting the different words for “bitch” in Greek and in the Median language (*kunō* and *spakō*, respectively) as well as the unique ecology of Median territory, apropos of nothing (1.110); or simply pausing to wonder at particular marvels, such as circular boats made of leather that float down the river to Babylon (1.194).

These moments of extra-narrative comment or diversion serve to resist collapsing Herodotus's inquiry into a single story, a history about which one could say "history instructs us." Instead, Herodotus's *Histories* are polyvocal, in Peter Euben's term,<sup>xxxviii</sup> speaking with multiple voices and emplotting multiple narratives.

At still other times in the *Histories*, Herodotus notes his presence as the creator of the narrative by commenting on a particular omission or inclusion without explanation. Discussing Gyges, the first king of Lydia whose curse Croesus would later inherit, Herodotus remarks how he came to power but then omits the rest of his regime, saying that "since no other great deed was done by him during his kingship of thirty-eight years, we shall bypass it, having mentioned so much already" (1.14). Readers are left to wonder what counts as "great" for Herodotus, a question that persists throughout the narrative. Similarly, when describing two jars, of silver and gold, for sprinkling sacred water that Croesus sent to Delphi as gifts to please the god, Herodotus notes that the golden jar was inscribed as coming from the Spartans, which a Delphian added later to ingratiate the Spartans. Herodotus observes about this fellow: "I know his name but I will not mention it" (1.51). Or later, describing the agriculture in Babylon: "I know how large the returns from growing millet and sesame are but will not mention them" (1.93). In these moments of apparent non-sequitur, Herodotus marks his own limited perspective while staying within the confines of his own experience as the basis of any historical narrative.

Displacing the main narrative — through structural ring-composition features, disproportionate or disruptive flashbacks and insertions, and narrator-interpolated pauses and commentary — Herodotus's *Histories* show how historical inquiry can offer narratives while neither reducing historical complexity to a single conclusion nor passing off narrative as a unproblematic representation of historical reality. These moments all introduce reflexivity into

the narrative as well as into the reader's response: Herodotus both calls attention to his own emplotting while also forcing the reader to recognize this feature of the inquiry, positioning the reader to make her own judgments about the historical narratives on offer. Herodotus thus undermines the authoritative narrator that would otherwise tyrannize the reader. As Carolyn Dewald writes: "The *histōr* seems to join us in the audience and respond as we might to what unfolds before our eyes."<sup>xxxix</sup> The first-hand experience of historical inquiry, now shared with others, affects the historian's craft, the historian himself, and how we interpret and understand both.

### **Imagination and the Practice of Wondering**

It bears restating here that realism is not simply a historical enterprise. Contextualization forms just one of the new realism's planks, alongside its commitment to analyzing actors' motives, being action-focused, and taking a craftsman's view of political activity.<sup>xl</sup> As Honig and Stears write, the object of realism lies not solely in understanding but in doing, preparing readers for the messiness of the political cave, what they call "the often violent contestations of political life."<sup>xli</sup> Political realism is concerned with action. Perhaps Herodotus can supplement the historical work that functions as a preliminary and evaluator of these actions, but to call him a "realist" he would need to have a function beyond *merely* chronicling. As Philp puts it: "We are not simply historians or sociologists (with descriptive or explanatory agendas) . . . we engage with what it is that politics can and should achieve."<sup>xlii</sup> *Pace* these criticisms of history and sociology, however, Herodotus has something to contribute to the realist project above and beyond being "simply" a historian. As Hayden White has argued: "the politics of interpretation . . . turns upon the question of the political uses to which a knowledge thought to be specifically historical can or ought

conceivably be put.”<sup>xliii</sup> Herodotus’s *Histories*, open-ended and provisional as they may be, entail practices of wonder that both challenge the political communities to which his historical inquiry speaks and open up new grammars and spaces for political understanding.

Wonder has an important place in Herodotus’s *Histories*. Drawing on the discourse of wonder that inspired contemporaneous inquiries into the natural world,<sup>xliiv</sup> Herodotus often describes his responses to the inexplicable, the surprising, those facts and non-facts that overwhelm his descriptive apparatus and simply astound him in terms of *thauma* (or *thōma*), wonders or marvels. The practice of wondering entails an open comportment toward the material and human world, an ability to marvel without being constrained by judgment. By “telling wonders,” in Rosalie Munson’s phrase, Herodotus attempts to communicate, in the human terms he knows, what is a wonder precisely because of its incommunicability. Naming these as wonders, however, Herodotus marks the actual fact or non-fact as non-identical to his description. Wondering creates a relationship between familiar and unfamiliar while leaving the otherness intact.<sup>xlv</sup>

Herodotus’s wondering appears strikingly in his descriptions of Babylon. From the beginning, Herodotus notes that Babylon is “designed like no other city known to us” (1.178), marking its unfamiliarity and surprising strangeness. He describes Babylon’s dimensions, offering highly particular examinations of Babylon’s extraordinary walls, its 100 gates of bronze (including the pillars and the lintels), its three- and four-story houses, and its royal palace. Herodotus notes that Babylon survives up until his time, but that he himself did not see it and only reports what is said by the Chaldaeans (1.181, 1.183). Still, Herodotus revels in the “marvels” (*thōma*, 1.194) to be found in Babylon’s construction, both the physical impressiveness of its buildings and the ethical force of its customs.

Herodotus's commitment to telling stories offers a starting point for understanding the political edge of his historical inquiries but adding wonder changes this interpretation. Norma Thompson has suggested that "the process of self-definition and description by storytelling" is the theme of Herodotus's politics: Herodotus's story-telling makes his readers aware of their own stories and thus the foundations of their political communities; Herodotus's greatest accomplishment lies in understanding these stories without destroying them.<sup>xlvi</sup> Working through his own first-hand experiences allows Herodotus to place himself in the middle of the story-telling enterprises of diverse human communities, not judging from an external position of authority but rather illuminating a particular community's substance from within. Yet how Herodotus assembles and tells stories further illuminates the more basic openness to others characteristic of Herodotus's approach — the necessity of wonder. Understanding and telling stories requires gathering these stories from the concrete practices and objects that form a community's life. While Thucydides obscures his practice of historical inquiry, Herodotus shows us its basis in seeing, hearing, measuring, and comparing; moreover, Herodotus calls attention to the different stories that cast significance on varied aspects of political life. Yet if Herodotus simply evaluated the stories of others on the basis of his perspective, these stories would reduce to a single narrative; Herodotus's own terms and stories would dominate the different terms and stories he encountered. To succeed in mapping the world's complexity without completely reducing it, then, inquiry requires a certain kind of relationship toward the material and human world, an openness to difference. This openness to difference is best characterized as wonder: a way of displacing the narrator's categories of understanding — or at least holding them in abeyance — and inviting others to do the same. While Herodotus leaves his narrative with fingerprints and his maps with remainders, wonder elicits others to participate in the bottom-up

and open-ended construction of knowledge he puts on display.<sup>xlvii</sup> Wonder is essential to the project of Herodotus's inquiry.

The political implications of this wondering become clearer by contrast with today's realism. One of realism's shortcomings, as Raymond Geuss has noted, concerns its deficit of imagination. Because realism attends so closely to what has come hitherto, it overlooks the power and the force of the new, what Nietzsche called the unhistorical or Arendt would reframe as the miracle. Geuss confesses as much in the preface to his most recent collection of essays, *Politics and the Imagination*, admitting that he and "every knowledgeable person he knew" thought they could clearly see the American- and British-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 as a disaster, yet none of them could understand why Blair could not see this for himself. Later Geuss comes to see what was missing: "My initial state of puzzlement about the rationale of the invasion," Geuss writes, "has been a result of my own lack of imagination."<sup>xlviii</sup> As we have seen, realism needs reflexivity, an ability to self-assess, to see the limits of its own judgments and the inadequacies of the conceptual apparatus it has applied. Yet realism also needs imagination to go beyond its preconceptions and the narrative of "the real" which circumscribes these preconceptions. Wonder can play this role.

For Herodotus, wondering has an important imaginative function, supplementing the reflexivity of his historical inquiry in a way that allows for the expansion of its world of values and concepts. Herodotus's inquiry underscores the need for reflexivity by self-consciously describing the historian's approach to the world, as we have seen. Yet while reflexivity adds an ability to assess the basis of one's particular approach, it still confines the boundaries of the imagination to the existent structures of human perception. That is, even if Geuss had reflected on the assumed values and concepts that prevented him from imagining Blair's logic, this would

not have provided him the basis for supplying new values and concepts for understanding Blair. Geuss might have seen the limits of his judgment but he would not have expanded the very criteria of judgment to develop a more responsive or resonant evaluation.

Describing Babylon, for example, Herodotus does not attempt to comprehend the unity of Babylon's many wonders. Instead, he catalogs them in known proportions: the measurements, the particular details, the animals and substances and ideas that make up the whole. While doing so, Herodotus does not pretend to be an objective, opinion-less historian. Some of the Babylonian practices Herodotus considers wise (1.197), some disgusting (1.199). Herodotus interjects stories about details and events he regards as most noteworthy without explaining any greater connection to the narrative at hand (1.177). Herodotus leaves Babylon as something that merits wonder without delimiting possible responses. To a certain extent Babylon remains ineffable, just beyond our intellectual grasp but moving and alluring all the same.

The practice of wondering thus has a politics in at least two ways. First, by pushing the limits of the extant political grammar, wondering opens a more capacious understanding of what is politically possible. In Carolyn Dewald's terms, telling wonders "point[s] to" reality without entirely reducing it to words.<sup>xlix</sup> Wondering thus calls attention to the limits of our language and brings us to scrutinize our conventional categories of evaluation. By explicitly wondering, Herodotus interjects a new layer of reflexivity into the language of description while at the same time introducing the possibility of new modes of understanding. For realists committed to political action, practices of wondering can help to prevent the blinkering effects of outmoded or inadequate terms of understanding while also eliciting more imaginative engagement with political possibilities.

Second, by pushing the boundaries of extant political grammars, Herodotus's practices of wondering de-authorize the privileged observer perspective, thus opening deliberations to varied and differently situated participants. Communication across difference can become more possible with the awareness of that which exceeds our categories of understanding.<sup>1</sup> In this way, the example of Babylon further shows how this practice of wondering is fundamentally communicative: By "telling wonders" Herodotus attempts to bridge the divide between the familiar and the unfamiliar, between what seems easily described and encompassed and what resists accounting. Herodotus does not conform the vibrant and multiform objects of his inquiries to one mode of understanding; rather, he sets up his text as a conversation between located historian, variably different objects, and audience. The text is "circumscribed by the relation between the narrator and his addressee," as Roxanne Euben writes;<sup>li</sup> yet the logic of wondering opens up the text to new voices by virtue of its inclusive entailments. Herodotean inquiry thus elicits a disposition towards others that develops responsive and communicative relationships: the realist depends on this disposition to map reality around her lest she fail to see the limits of her own categories and not actually grasp reality; wondering opens up historical reality to include all sorts of potentially salient phenomena and persons.

### **Conclusion: On Understanding and Judgment in Democracy**

Herodotus's example of first-hand, reflexive, and wondering inquiry not only deepens and extends the contemporary realist project's concept of contextualization but also connects the practice of inquiry to an action-focused, engaged political theory with implications for democracy today. Put simply, a Herodotean realism can offer, as Herodotus did in his own time, "a model of the value of openness for the democratic grounding of deliberation."<sup>liii</sup> Herodotus

models the value of openness first of all in the context of the Mediterranean world in the fifth century BCE; seen in this setting, the *Histories* seem to have spoken directly to nascent free governments in the Greek world, warning Herodotus's fellow Hellenes about the flaws of the autocratic Persians, perhaps out of a general sympathy toward democracy.<sup>liii</sup> In other words, Herodotus sought to intervene in the “the civic conversations” of the ancient political world, injecting inquiry and its practices of wondering into political deliberations.<sup>liv</sup> By extending Herodotus's potential audience to contemporary problems identified by realism, we can assess how the *Histories* can hold a similar function vis-à-vis today's political regimes, in particular with respect to the concept of wonder. Here lies the political promise of a Herodotean realism.

Among recent democratic theorists, Iris Marion Young and James Tully have both invoked wonder as a form of respectful relationship toward otherness necessary for democratic deliberation. Tully describes how “the sense of being at home in the multiplicity yet at the same time playfully estranged by it awakes an attitude of wonder.”<sup>lv</sup> As Young elaborates, “a respectful stance of wonder toward other people is one of openness across [*sic*], awaiting new insight about their needs, interests, perceptions, or values.”<sup>lvi</sup> Both ideas of wonder attempt to go beyond basic respect to require openness and responsiveness toward others. Participants in deliberations cannot assume the basic motivations, beliefs, and desires of one another; as Young points out, because each participant is “a subject-in-process,” that is, a shifting and still developing human being, “I cannot assume that because last week I understood her standpoint, I can do so today.”<sup>lvii</sup> Wonder addresses difference by infusing relationships across difference with openness and attention. For both Tully and Young, if wonder could animate deliberations across difference it could prevent the reduction or subordination of different perspectives and play an important role fostering a fairer, more inclusive polity.

A Herodotean realism can connect today's discourse of wonder to a realist project of reflexive inquiry. In the eyes of Herodotus, wonder is not merely an ethic to be preferred for its consequences; it is the basic attitude necessary for understanding. Without practices of wondering our imagination will be impoverished and our grammars of politics will ossify; Tully and Young describe practices necessary not just for deliberation but also needful for the more foundational task of understanding self and other. Herodotus thus roots wonder in a practice of ordinary political life: citizens need to understand one another as well as their political world; wonder is necessary to enlarge this understanding as well as to chasten judgments that might follow from it. Understanding will remain rooted in one's particular perspective, as Herodotus shows; still, recognizing one's own story as one story among many takes a step away from provincialism. Moreover, as inclusivity is Herodotus's first principle of evidence,<sup>lviii</sup> Herodotus's inquiry also opens up citizens as inquirers to the different kinds of terms and stories that others might use for their own identities and self-understanding.

A Herodotean realism can thus extend the realist project while connecting it more directly to productive political practices. As William Galston points out, realism's emphasis on the autonomy of the political has led realists to identify the need for an account of judgment.<sup>lix</sup> Standards of judgment must be drawn from within the inherent structures of political relationships; as Philp puts it, "judgment must calculate what it can, but that judgment must be receptive to facts in the world, and to claims, values and norms."<sup>lx</sup> Williams, Geuss, and others all invoke a realist assessment of context (and thus of historical inquiry) precisely to nuance, complicate, and ultimately enlighten the actions of political actors. This explains realism's focus on action and its consequences, the evaluation of which depends upon deep and searching historical inquiry. The example of Herodotus supplements this discussion of judgment with a

realist project of historical inquiry. While realists invoke particular and concrete historical contextualization, judgment and evaluation need the counterbalancing force of precisely the kind of messy inquiry within the political cave that Herodotus exemplifies. While judgment will remain a necessary part of political life, open-ended and wonder-imbued projects of understanding are no less real and no less necessary for the kind of “politics-first” political theory — and political practice — promised by contemporary realism. The openness and attentiveness stressed by Tully and Young can be integrated into realism’s commitment to politics with a Herodotean realism.

A Herodotean realism reminds the realism of today of its own fallibility by focusing on the provisional bases for all judgment. Given that effective action depends upon an understanding of the context, because this context is constructed through the limited, situated observations of an imperfect human inquirer, one can never speak with certainty about “what history teaches” or the inevitability of historical events. Historical inquiry must remain an ongoing and provisional project of partial revelation; the promise of comprehensive history only encourages precisely the flight from reality realists criticize. Such an approach to history treats the insights won through experience as information to be utilized rather than stories to be told and retold, considered and perhaps integrated into one’s view of the world. In contrast, a Herodotean realism might not only lead us back into the cave but convince us to stay awhile, enjoy a wineskin or two, swap a few stories and, in the process, actually learn something about the realities of politics.

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- <sup>i</sup> Raymond Geuss, *Philosophy and Real Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 9.
- <sup>ii</sup> Mark Philp, "Realism without Illusions," *Political Theory* 40, no. 5 (2012): 629 - 649, 630.
- <sup>iii</sup> Carolyn Dewald and John Marincola, "Introduction," *The Cambridge Companion to Herodotus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 2006.
- <sup>iv</sup> Norma Thompson has detailed how Herodotus's story-telling mimics and thus illuminates the process of identity formation and re-formation carried out in the political sphere: Thompson, *Herodotus and the Origins of the Political Community: Arion's Leap* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996).
- <sup>v</sup> Karuna Mantena, "Another Realism: The Politics of Gandhian Nonviolence," *American Political Science Review* 126, no. 2 (May 2012): 455 - 470, 456.
- <sup>vi</sup> This "realism" remains eclectic, a "community stew," as William Galston puts it: "Realism in political theory," *European Journal of Political Theory* 9, no. 4 (2010): 385 - 411, 385.
- <sup>vii</sup> Geuss, *Philosophy and Real Politics*, 23.
- <sup>viii</sup> Philp, "Realism Without Illusions," 7.
- <sup>ix</sup> Bernard Williams, *Truth and Truthfulness: An Essay in Genealogy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 151 - 171; Raymond Geuss, *Outside Ethics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 233.
- <sup>x</sup> Geuss, *Outside Ethics*, 220 and 223; Bernard Williams, *Shame and Necessity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 163.
- <sup>xi</sup> Parry, "Thucydides' Historical Perspective," *Yale Classical Studies* 22 (1972), 48.
- <sup>xii</sup> R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946), 30.

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<sup>xiii</sup> “Bottom up” comes from Mantena, “Another Realism,” 457. My treatment of Herodotus’s *Histories* focuses on Book I as the primary site for Herodotus’s approach to emerge. I presuppose that this approach to historical inquiry pervades the *Histories*, although I also acknowledge that once Herodotus begins to treat more contemporaneous events in Book V and subsequently, the need to deploy and show his methods lessens. On the shift beginning with Book V, see Michael Davis, *The Soul of the Greeks* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 100 - 1.

<sup>xiv</sup> Williams discusses an adjacent moment to support his criticism of Herodotus’s “mythological” approach; here I offer a specific counter. Cf. Williams, *Truth and Truthfulness*, 149 - 171.

<sup>xv</sup> All quotations of Herodotus come from Robert Strassler, ed., *The Landmark Herodotus* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2007). All Greek citations come from Carolus Hude, ed., *Herodoti Historiae* (Two vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990 [1908]).

<sup>xvi</sup> Arlene Saxonhouse, “Democratic Deliberation and the Historian’s Trade: The Case of Thucydides,” *Talking Democracy: historical perspectives on rhetoric and democracy*, G. Remer and C. Nederman, eds. (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004): 57 - 85, 58.

<sup>xvii</sup> Nino Luraghi, “Meta-historiē: Method and genre in the *Histories*,” *The Cambridge Companion to Herodotus*, C. Dewald and J. Marincola, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 76 - 91, 76 - 77.

<sup>xviii</sup> Parry, “Thucydides’ Historical Perspective.”

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- <sup>xix</sup> Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), xii.
- <sup>xx</sup> Seth Benardete, *Herodotean Inquiries* (South Bend: St. Augustine's Press, 2009 [1969]), 4.
- <sup>xxi</sup> Cf. François Hartog, *The Mirror of Herodotus* (J. Lloyd, trans. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).
- <sup>xxii</sup> Thompson, *Arion's Leap*, 5.
- <sup>xxiii</sup> John Gould, *Herodotus* (London: Duckworth, 1989); James Romm, *Herodotus* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 77.
- <sup>xxiv</sup> Luraghi, "Meta-historiē," 83; John Marincola, "Herodotean Narrative and the Narrator's Presence," *Arethusa* 20, nos. 1 & 2 (1987): 121- 137, 135.
- <sup>xxv</sup> Marincola, "Herodotean Narrative," 132
- <sup>xxvi</sup> A good example of this approach to mapping appears in Herodotus's account of the origin stories of the Scythians in Book IV. Cf. Max Horkheimer's discussion of mapping in "Traditional and Critical Theory," *Critical Theory: Selected Essays* (M. O'Connell, trans. New York: Continuum, 1975): 199 - 243, 224.
- <sup>xxvii</sup> Hartog, *The Mirror of Herodotus*, passim but especially 356 - 360.
- <sup>xxviii</sup> Bonnie Honig and Marc Stears, "The New Realism: from *modus vivendi* to Justice," *Political Philosophy versus History?* J. Floyd and M. Stears, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011): 177 - 205, 198.
- <sup>xxix</sup> Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), ix.
- <sup>xxx</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

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<sup>xxx</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>xxx</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>xxx</sup> Honig and Stears, “The New Realism,” 204.

<sup>xxx</sup> Thucydides is also a narrative historian, in the sense that he emplots his account of the Peloponnesian War in an over-arching story of the tragic fall of Athens. However, Thucydides does not call attention to his narrative as Herodotus does; this makes him subject to the criticisms of Honig and Stears and less realistic insofar as Thucydides excludes other narratives when developing his singular one.

<sup>xxx</sup> Thompson, *Arion’s Leap*, 12.

<sup>xxx</sup> Rosalind Thomas, “Introduction,” R. Strassler, ed., *The Landmark Herodotus*, ix - xxxvi, xvii.

<sup>xxx</sup> On the importance of Book II for understanding Herodotus’s *Histories* as a whole, see especially Benardete, *Herodotean Inquiries*, and Marincola, “Herodotean Narrative.”

<sup>xxx</sup> J. Peter Euben, *The Tragedy of Political Theory: The Road Not Taken* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990). As Euben points out, this polyvocality characterizes other Greek texts such as those of tragedy (and Thucydides).

<sup>xxx</sup> Carolyn Dewald, “Narrative Surface and Authorial Voice in Herodotus’ *Histories*,” *Arethusa* 20, nos. 1 & 2 (1987): 147 - 170, 155.

<sup>xl</sup> Philp, “Realism without Illusions,” 18.

<sup>xli</sup> Honig and Stears, “The New Realism,” 203.

<sup>xlii</sup> Philp, “Realism without Illusions,” 18.

<sup>xliii</sup> White, *The Content of the Form*, 60.

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<sup>xliv</sup> Rosalind Thomas, *Herodotus in Context: Ethnography, Science, and the Art of Persuasion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 135 - 167.

<sup>xlv</sup> This is not to say that all uses of “wonder” in the *Histories* play this function (see, e.g., 6.121); however, its prevalent function consists of what I describe here. Cf. Rosaria Vignolo Munson, *Telling Wonders: Ethnographic and Political Discourse in the Work of Herodotus* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001). Thanks to John Lombardini for this point.

<sup>xlvi</sup> Thompson, *Arion’s Leap*, xi and 167.

<sup>xlvii</sup> I owe this formulation to David McIvor.

<sup>xlviii</sup> Raymond Geuss, *Politics and the Imagination* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), xi.

<sup>xlix</sup> Dewald, “Narrative Surface,” 159.

<sup>1</sup> This is not to ignore how wonders might also disable communication. To take one example, wonders could also be terrifying, as is often the case in Greek tragedy; terror could provoke flight and avoidance. Yet the language of tragedy differs from Herodotus’s, perhaps suggesting the latter’s distinct approach to wonders. Whereas Sophocles writes of *ta deina* (in the “Ode to Man” of his *Antigone*), Herodotus focuses on *ta thauma*.

<sup>li</sup> Euben, *Journeys to the Other Shore: Muslim and Western Travelers in Search of Knowledge* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 55.

<sup>lii</sup> Saxonhouse, “Democratic Deliberation,” 85.

<sup>liii</sup> Kurt A. Raaflaub, “Herodotus, Political Thought, and The Meaning of History,” *Arethusa* 20, nos. 1 & 2 (1987): 221 - 248; Thompson, *Arion’s Leap*, 84; Sara Forsdyke, “Athenian Democratic Ideology and Herodotus’ ‘Histories’,” *The American Journal of Philology* 122, no. 3 (Autumn 2001): 329 - 358; Sara Forsdyke, “Herodotus, political history and political thought,”

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*The Cambridge Companion to Herodotus*, C. Dewald and J. Marincola, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 224 - 241.

<sup>liv</sup> Gerald Mara, *The Civic Conversations of Thucydides and Plato* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2008).

<sup>lv</sup> James Tully, *Strange Multiplicity: Constitutionalism in an Age of Diversity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 206.

<sup>lvi</sup> Iris Marion Young, *Intersecting Voices: Dilemmas of Gender, Political Philosophy, and Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 56.

<sup>lvii</sup> Young, *Intersecting Voices*, 56.

<sup>lviii</sup> Thompson, *Arion's Leap*, 142

<sup>lix</sup> Galston, "Realism in political theory," 391.

<sup>lx</sup> Philp, "Realism without illusions," 638.