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Cultures and Traditions  
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Notes for October 23 2006

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Reading- Thucydides I: "Introduction," pp. 12-13; "Pericles' Funeral Oration," pp. 39-46; and  
"Plague," pp. 46-50; and "Civil War in Corcyra," pp.89-95 [Introduction in  
Readings Book V]

For this class discussion, the reading was broken up into three segments which will be labeled as follows :

I- pg. 12-13

II- pg. 39-50

III- 89-95

I- p. 12: Their attitude toward war

Why do people value the war that they are currently in?

Its human nature

The War in Iraq, it is a big deal because it is here and now

The way we are educated, the war today is directly effecting us, while the  
Older ones are indirectly affecting us

The war today affects you personally where as the wars of yesterday do  
Not

The situation of the war reversed society

p.13 "I make each speaker say what I thought the situation demanded"

What is history?

Thucydides is doing a different kind of history

Everything can be tested

Thucydides says everyone can trust his historical approach

There isn't unbiased history, it is all biased

Even though he says he researched, he is still hypocritical because

He says you cant trust his story

He is arrogant because he says he is the best, which is a red flag

As a historian Thucydides expects us to test his views and to be

Critical

II p. 49 During the Civil war, is it possible to have war during the plague?

The plague strips away the civilization of Athens

Lawlessness

Justified getting quick satisfaction and easy pleasures

His definition of civilization is Athens

Athens is the forefront of civilization but goes down with the  
Plague

Is Civilization possible during the plague?

Can order and civilization be maintained during a time of  
Desperation?

Not without martial law  
Supposed to look out for others at the beginning  
But it stopped

p. 42 The type of society they had was softer and easier so they were easier to overcome

Comparing Athens to Sparta

Sparta would not have done better

The disease can reverse a strong civilization, Athens or Sparta

Why did he discuss how great Athens was right before he talked About plague?

To show contrast

p. 42 Athenians rely on natural ability to do something rather than to do it by training

Why were they powerful?

Large numbers

Never concentrated forces

Large navy

Never fought well organized people

p. 40-42 Ideal Man

More dedicated so they are better

Is civilization as good as he describes it?

No

Was his description of an Ideal man realistic?

It was close because people responded to it well

Athenians are acting more closely to ideal men than we give them

Credit for

9/11 people were not jerks, same affect in Athens

III p. 92 Change in Good and Evil

Complete reversal of how people were trying to do good

Shows how people act when things are bad

People are evil

People are only good when it is convenient for them to be good

Which is human nature