

**Egbert J. BAKKER**  
**Free Indirect Speech and Temporal Deixis in Thucydides**

In narrative, events may be represented "externally," i.e., from the point of view of a narrator (fictional or real) who is removed in time and place from the event recounted; events may also be presented "internally:" there is a point of view within the scene through which the narrator's speech in the present is relayed. In English such an internal point of view can be created with *imperfective verbal* aspect. Internal point of view is further characterized by a mixture of features of direct and indirect discourse (hence "free indirect speech") a subordinating verb of speaking, thinking, or seeing is often absent, and the deictics of time (e.g., *now*, *tomorrow*) are those of direct discourse. On the other hand, the concordance of grammatical person and of tense are features of indirect discourse.

When applying this perspective to Ancient Greek narrative, the historical, medial, and functional dimensions of narrative (often neglected in narratology) come to the fore. This paper centers on the following observations:

1. Vicarious viewing is not favored by epic, due to the performative nature of epic discourse: a story performed before a public is not likely to stray from the point of view provided by the narrator in his face to face interaction with the audience. In epic, viewing is real, not vicarious.
2. Vicarious viewing, and its grammar, begins to occur when narrative is cut loose from its performance context; this happens in historiography, especially in Thucydides. The deployment of the grammar of vicarious viewing in Thucydides, however, is restrained by the historian's specific goals and narrative techniques: there is much less interest in the presentation of a cognizing "self" than in the motivation for historical action.

Thucydides features an appreciable grammar of vicarious viewing. Unlike previous discourses in the Greek narrative tradition (Homer, Herodotus), Thucydides can abandon the deictic center of his own writing present: frequently *nun* 'now' applies to a present in the past as it figures in a subject's represented speech or thought. His free indirect speech, however, remains much more closely connected with "bound" indirect speech than that in modern English narrative: freely represented speech or thought is always conducted in the infinitive, the mode of indirectly reported speech. Infinitive sections in Thucydides and other prose narrators, furthermore, are often marked by the particle *gar*, which emphasizes the explanatory, subordinate, nature of represented speech and thought.

The grammatical category of verbal aspect, however, provides a case where Thucydides develops a mode of presentation unlike anything before him in the tradition: in some passages the almost exclusive use of the imperfect can be explained only by assuming that an experiential mode of narration is used. This vicarious viewing, however, is a collective experience enhancing the audience's experience of memorable past events. Unlike modern fiction, ancient historiography does not develop viewing "selves" for their own sake.