That Thucydides’ narrative of the war shows no examples of this circular, echo-type of reasoning is only to be expected, since events move inevitably forward, but it may well be that the chief value of having separated out this Thucydidean way of dealing with ideas rather than events will be found in examining the speeches he has recorded, that is, in determining the extent to which in assigning to various speakers the views and judgments demanded by their particular situations he can be found using his own thought-pattern of circularity and echo.

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Derketes’ Poor Little Bullocks  
(Aristophanes, ACH. 1018-1036)

ΔΕΡΚΕΤΗΣ οièmei tâlaç. ΔΙΚΑΙΟΠΟΛΙΣ ο ‘Ηράκλεις, tîs òûtôsî;  
Δ. ánîr kacodoáîmîn. Δ. kата sêavtôn vûn trêpôu.  
Δ. Ô fîlîtate, spondai gâr eîsi soî mûnôf,  
mêtrîson eîrînhes tî moî, kân pênt’ êtî.  
Δ. tî d’ êpabêc; Δ. êpetribêhûn ápôlêsaç tûv bôe.  
Δ. pôthên; Δ. âpô Phulîês êlâbôn oî Iovîtûi.  
Δ. Ô trîskakôdaîmîn, eîta leuîkôn ámpêcheî;  
Δ. kai taurîa mèntoi nê Dî’ âpêr ì’ éterefêtîn  
eîn pûsî bôlîtoç. Δ. eîta vunî tûî dêêî;  
Δ. ápôlôla toîfîbîlmî ðakrîwûn tûv bôe.  
âll’ eî tî kîhêi Derkêtôu Phulásîou,  
úpæleîpsôn eîrînhe me toîfîbîlmî tachû.  
Δ. âll’â, Ô pûnhr’, ûû dêmôsiêûwv tuχhánôa.  
Δ. Í’ê, ântîbolô s’, õn pûsî kômîsômai tûv bôe.  
Δ. ouk êstîn: âll’â klîde prôs tûs Pîttâlou.  
Δ. su d’ âll’â moî stâlaxîmôn eîrînhes Ñna  
eîs tôv kalâmîskôn ènstoiâlaxôn toutôvî.  
Δ. ou’d’ ân stribîlîkîhîz: âll’â ápîwv oîmôçê pôi.  
Δ. oîmîi kacodoâîmîn tôvî gëwrhôin boidîôîn.

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“There seems to have been something quaint about the dual τὸ βόε, since in this little dialogue of nineteen lines Aristophanes introduces it thrice, each time at the termination of a line.” So wrote B.B. Rogers in his commentary on Ach. 1018,\textsuperscript{1} drawing attention to the repetition (italicized above) of τὸ βόε at Ach. 1022, 1027 and 1031.\textsuperscript{2}

As far as I am aware, no recent commentator has followed up this comment, nor has any translator yet attempted to reproduce an equivalent repetition in translation, at least in English. Yet this is a repetition which spreads further than the threefold τὸ βόε. The same sound is re-echoed another three times (also italicized above) in this passage, also at line- or sentence-end: Βοιώτοι, 1023, βολίτος, 1026, βοιδίων, 1036. There is also the question of the striking number of dual forms in this passage: τὸ βόε (1021), ὑπερ μ’ ἕτρεψεν (1025), τῷ φθαλμῷ (1027), τὸ βόε (1027), τῷ φθαλμῷ (1029), τῷ βόε (1031), τοῖν γεωργοῖν βοιδίων (1036).

Starkie suggested that the character’s name Derketes, ‘Bright Eyes,’ formed from δέρκομαι, may have been intended to poke fun at the fact that his eyes were very far from bright.\textsuperscript{3} So perhaps the repeated β- sound was meant to raise a laugh in a similar way by comically mimicking the character’s incessant blubbering (‘boohoo’, ‘boohoo’, ‘boohoo’)? If so, the joke is rather weak.

Another possibility is that we may be dealing with the comic traits of a real person known to the audience, possibly someone who had spoken in the ἐκκλησία at some time in favour of the war, as D.M. MacDowell has recently suggested.\textsuperscript{4} The name Derketes is otherwise rare in Attica, yet a Derketes of Phyle is actually known from two late 5th/early 4th century inscriptions.\textsuperscript{5} So maybe the Athenians knew a bleary-eyed Derketes who actually lived up at Phyle and who was mocked for his rustic over-use of dual forms in his speech and/or for lugubriously exaggerating his comparatively trivial losses at a time when others, like the Acharnians of the play’s title, had suffered much worse. Again the joke would be rather flat.

Certainly, as Rogers also noticed, the allusion to the Boeotians serves as a link to the following scene (Ach. 1071 ff.) in which generalissimo Lamachus is called out in mid-winter to repel a rumoured incursion by Boeotian raiders. Yet it is very unlikely that the Derketes scene is to be read in this realistic way. The strategic importance of Phyle would become clear later in the war when it was garrisoned against the Thirty by Thrasyboulos and the exiled democrats in 404/3 B.C. (perhaps referred to in Plutus 1146), and against the Athenians in the next century by Cassander (Plutarch, Demetrius 27). Certainly too the fall of Plataea in 427 B.C. had now made Attica vulnerable to Boeotian raids in that area. But ever since the time of the first Peloponnesian invasion in 431 B.C. the Athenians had taken precautions to remove all farm animals out of harm’s way, by shipping them across to Euboea and the neighbouring islands (Thuc. II 14). Although never mentioned again by Thucydides, we may assume that this had become regular practice by 426 B.C. and that the