CHAPTER TWENTY

LYSIAS

M.J. EDWARDS

The central importance of the narrative in Lysias' speeches is well established.¹ He had a talent for writing vivid, fluent, self-consistent and plausible narratives, primarily in a simple, flowing style. Narrative is therefore the key element in Lysias' persuasive technique. It is then interesting to observe that his narrative method, in terms of temporal structure, is entirely unspectacular. Two characteristics also found in Antiphon (→) recur in Lysias, viz. the telling of the story in its temporal sequence and the inclusion of additional details in other, non-narrative sections of the speech.

Thirty-one speeches are preserved in the medieval manuscripts of Lysias, with three more extended fragments in Dionysius and one speech, the *Eroticus*, in Plato's *Phaedrus* (230e–234c). The authenticity of many of these is disputed, in the sense both of whether they were actually written by Lysias and of whether they were delivered on the occasion on which they purport to have been delivered. Of the forensic speeches that have the best claims to be genuine in both senses,² several are fragmentary or are secondary speeches delivered in support of a main speech.³ Among the remainder, the employment of a discrete, extended narrative section is clearly Lysias' preferred method: in speech 1 (§§6–28), 3 (§§5–20), 7 (§§4–11), 10 (§§4–5), 12 (§§4–23), 17 (§§2–7), 19 (§§12–16), 22 (§§2–4), 30 (§§2–6), 31 (§§8–23), 32 (§§4–18). Speeches 16 and 25 have no clear narrative section, which is partly dictated by the nature of these speeches;⁴ and it is perhaps only in speech 13, *Against Agoratus*, that we have significant mixing of narrative and proof

¹ Cf. e.g. *SAGN* 1:333.

² Numbers 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32; following the discussion of Usher 1999: 54–116.

³ Numbers 4, 5, 14, 15, 18, 21, 26, 27, 28, 29.

⁴ Cf. the comments of Usher in Edwards & Usher 1985: 252–253, 269–270. Speech 25 has the air of a political pamphlet.

elements, though even here one might argue that there is a discrete narrative section, punctuated by proofs (§§5–42). Again, this is not to say that narrative and proofs are separated in a regimented sense: elements of one regularly occur in the other, as in the example below. But the basic fourfold structure in Lysias of proem, narrative, proofs and epilogue is clear.

A representative example of Lysias' skill in narrative is found in speech 32, *Against Diogeiton*,⁵ where an unnamed speaker acts as an advocate (*sunēgoros*) on behalf of the elder son of the deceased Diodotus.⁶ The son, on reaching maturity, is prosecuting Diodotus' brother Diogeiton, who has been the guardian of Diodotus' three children (two sons and a daughter), and the case is delivered for him by the husband of his sister.⁷ The narrator therefore is internal, playing a role himself in the events.

Frequency

As usual in oratory, the narrative is mainly—though not completely (see below)—singulative. It is recounted in two main stages. In the first (§§4–8), the narrator gives the earlier background to the case in three parts: the relationship between the two brothers Diodotus and Diogeiton, Diodotus' shipping business, and his marriage to Diogeiton's daughter (§4); Diodotus' preparations for military service—his will and details of the estate—and his departure (§§5–7); and after Diodotus' death, Diogeiton's deception of his widow (concealing her husband's death), and the arrangements he made for the widow and her children (§§7–8).

In the second and longer stage of the narrative (§§9–18), the narrator recounts Diogeiton's abandonment of the boys when the elder one reached maturity and how they turned for help to the speaker (§§9–10), their mother's intervention and in response to her pleas the speaker's calling of a family conference (§§11–12), at which she attacked Diogeiton (her own father), demonstrating his embezzlement of her chil-

⁵ For a commentary on this speech see Carey 1989. Cf. further Blass 1887–1898: I 608–615; Jebb 1893: 293–296; Usher 1999: 80–82.

⁶ The narrative occupies fifteen sections (§§4–18) of the 29 sections of the speech preserved by Dionysius of Halicarnassus in his essay on Lysias.

⁷ The case is presumably a *dikē epitropēs*, a private prosecution of a guardian for corruption. Cf. e.g. Osborne 1985: 57.

dren's estate (§§ 12–17), and finally how the members of the family were so devastated by her words that they could only weep and depart in silence (§ 18). The mother's accusatory story is voiced largely by herself as a secondary narrator in direct speech, a remarkable feature of Lysias' oration. Her embedded narrative serves to characterise herself—as a modest, Athenian woman, who nevertheless has to speak out to protect her family—and add to the characterisation of Diogeiton as avaricious and dishonest. It also, shrewdly, helps Lysias to get round the legal difficulty that women were not permitted to testify in court. Indeed, she even includes a kind of testimony, thus acting as a witness: 'I offer to swear to the truth of this ...' (§ 13).

Her report on what has happened partly repeats events which had already been recounted by the primary narrator (we are dealing with a *repeating analepsis*), thus adding emphasis and—even more—pathos: 'when you are their father's brother, and my father, and their uncle and grandfather' (§ 12); cf. '[Diodotus] summoned his wife ... and her father, who was also his father-in-law, and his brother, and grandfather and uncle of the little ones' (§ 5);⁸ 'you received from him, when he went on the expedition, five talents in deposit' (§ 13)—cf. 'he then gave him a will and five talents of silver in deposit' (§ 5); 'And you thought fit to turn these ... out of their own house, in worn-out clothes, without shoes or attendant or bedding or cloaks; without the furniture which their father bequeathed to them, and without the money which he had deposited with you' (§ 16), a detailed and visual version of the earlier 'the poor wretches, turned out of doors, wept aloud and besought me not to allow them to be deprived of their patrimony and reduced to beggary' (§ 10). At times, on the other hand, her version supplies details not mentioned in the version of the primary narrator: for example, 'she [the widow of Diodotus] convicted him [Diogeiton] further of having recovered seven talents and four drachmae of bottomry loans ... for she showed that in the course of his removal from Collytus to the house of Phaedrus the children had happened upon the register, which had been mislaid, and had brought it to her' (§ 14). This whole event and the specification of the places are lacking in the primary narrator's version and we are dealing with a *completing analepsis*.

⁸ Since Diodotus married his brother's daughter, his wife was also his niece, his brother was also his father-in-law, and his children were his brother's grandchildren and nephews.

As is customary, the proof section repeats parts of the narrative: for example, the long list of expenses the uncle allegedly made on behalf of his orphaned nephews (§§ 20–24) works out his earlier words, as quoted by the narrator in the narrative section: ‘Now I have spent a great deal of my own money on your support’ (§9). Since the primary narrator is now giving a list of expenditure, the details are not told in chronological order.

Speed

Like Antiphon (→), Lysias tends to adopt a simpler style in his narratives than in the remainder of his speech, and his main manipulation consists in accelerating or slowing down the narrative speed. The narrative opens ‘at the beginning’ (§3), the birth of the two main characters (§4). As so often in ancient narrative, no date is given. The narrator spells out that they were brothers with the same father and mother (*homopatrioi kai homomētrioi*)—a piece of information that is intended to put the later behaviour of the brother Diogeiton in an even darker light—and that they had divided up the invisible property (i.e. money and other valuables) and shared the visible property (i.e. land and buildings), which will have been a regular occurrence when two or more brothers inherited an estate. The next event is recounted again without an exact time-marker: ‘when Diodotus had made a large fortune in the shipping business’, Diogeiton persuaded him to marry his daughter (another regular occurrence), by whom he had three children (§5). An equally vague time-marker adds the next event (‘some time later’), which takes us forward to the time when Diodotus was preparing for his military service.

Now the narrator slows down, giving a detailed account of how Diodotus summoned his wife and brother to a meeting, set out to his brother his financial affairs and his will, and left duplicate deeds in his house. The next set of events is again told quickly: Diodotus went off to serve with Thrasyllus and died at Ephesus. The members of the jury will have recognized that he dies in the year 409 BC. Diogeiton ‘for a while’ (vague time-marker) concealed his death from his wife and took possession of the deeds. When he eventually informed the family of Diodotus’ death, the sons performed the customary rites, lived for a year in Piraeus and then, when their provisions ran out, were sent up to the city, while their mother was married with a dowry considerably

less (one-sixth) than Diodotus had provided for her (§§ 7–8). We see how the narrator deals with these relatively unimportant events in summary fashion. He even leaves out an event (*implicit ellipsis*): the men who died at Ephesus were buried at Notium (cf. X. *Hell.* 1.2.11), and so the burial rites referred to here will have involved the dedication of a cenotaph (a tomb is mentioned at § 21).⁹

We now enter the second stage of the narrative, which begins ‘seven years later’, the intervening period being left out (*implicit ellipsis*). The vital point of the elder boy reaching adulthood and Diogeiton abandoning his care for the children is, of course, told in great—and incriminating—detail and scenically, including the indirect and direct quotation of speeches. Diogeiton summoned the boys and told them what their father had left them (indirect speech). The indirect speech mode is then abandoned in favour of the direct one, which allows the narratees to check Diogeiton’s words for themselves (which will later be revealed to have been incomplete and incorrect): he has spent a large amount of money in supporting them, but is now himself in difficulties and so the elder boy must henceforth provide for them himself (§ 9). The boys left Diogeiton in tears and went to their mother, then brought her to see their uncle (the narrator), who takes ample time to describe the impression the boys made on him at that moment (§ 10).¹⁰ His clichéd promise not to dwell too long on one subject (‘of the mourning that filled my house at that time it would take long to tell’: *explicit ellipsis*) in fact adds to the pathos of his story, suggesting as it does that there would be much to tell. The events leading up to the final meeting are told in quick strokes, whereby there are hints of iterative narration, which are suggestive of the (negative) reluctance of Diogeiton and the (positive) insistence of the narrator: ‘I called upon this man to allow his handling of the money to be investigated. Diogeiton at first refused, but finally he was compelled by his friends’ (§ 12).

For the final meeting the narrator slows down again, making the scene dominated by the attack of the mother on her own father Diogeiton. After a brief introductory section in indirect speech (‘when we held our meeting, the mother asked him what heart he could have, that he thought fit to take such measures with the children’), he ‘gives the floor to’ her, and the narratees can hear her demolish Diogeiton’s case

⁹ Cf. Carey 1989: ad loc.

¹⁰ They are described as weeping by two different participles in quick succession (*dakruontes* and *klaontes*).

herself. She begins by recalling her and her sons' relationship to him, how he received five talents on deposit from Diodotus (which he had not mentioned to the boys, §9), and how she would swear to the truth of this on her children's lives (§§12–13). Such an oath would normally have been the only way that a woman's testimony could be heard in court, and the direct speech comes to an end here so that its effect is not reduced. For a brief while the narrator changes to representing the woman's words in indirect speech, which allows him to speed up a little: we hear about Diogeiton's other financial misappropriations, with the persuasive detail that the boys had by chance found the register of them. It may also be the case that such a full description of monetary matters would have seemed less effective if put directly in the mouth of a woman who had professed her modesty in §11.

As the narrator returns to direct quotation again, it is the money that directly concerned the mother, her dowry, that she focuses on—the very same sum that Diogeiton had told the boys their father had left to them (§§15–16). She does not spell out the implicit wrong done to her (as the primary narrator had already informed the narratees, the money Diogeiton provided for her had been much less than her husband had given her, §8), but immediately turns to an emotional description of the destitute state her sons were left in by the guardian's actions, in contrast to the affluence in which Diogeiton's children by his second marriage were living (§§16–17).¹¹ The theme of Diogeiton's avarice brings the mother's speech to an appropriate climax, as the powerful tricolon of fearing the gods, feeling shame before her, and remembering his brother counts for less in Diogeiton's eyes than money (*khreḿatōn*)—the very last word of her speech (§17).

The mother's speech naturally had a profound effect on her audience, whose reaction and thoughts are presented in the form of embedded focalization by the primary narrator: how they recalled the children's treatment and remembered the dead man, how unworthy was the guardian he left in charge of the estate and how difficult it was to find somebody trustworthy to look after one's affairs. The reaction of Diogeiton is suppressed by the narrator, who effectively ends his narrative by recounting how the relatives wept 'as sadly as the sufferers' and went away in silence (§18).

¹¹ She naturally says 'the children you have had by my stepmother', playing on that commonplace prejudice against stepmothers highlighted in Antiphon 1.

Order

The narrative of the *Against Diogeiton* speech is relatively straightforward and chronological, with no noticeable examples of anachrony.

One possible example of an actorial prolepsis is contained in the embedded focalization of Diodotus in the opening stage of the narrative: ‘thinking that because of these bonds nobody would be more bound to treat his children justly’ (§5). It is this expectation which the ensuing narrative and entire speech will show to have been false, thanks to the depravity of the brother. The expectation has been carefully prepared for by the narrator in the preceding section of the narrative, with its stress on Diodotus and Diogeiton being brothers born of the same father and mother, dividing their property and sharing their estate, intermarrying, and the one brother, when he was enrolled for military service, giving his will to the other. All of this would naturally lead to the well-founded expectation that Diogeiton ‘treat his brother’s children justly’. The emphasis placed on the brothers having the same parents (§4) also carries the double implication that Diogeiton was the natural choice of guardian for Diodotus’ children and therefore his alleged behaviour was all the worse because of that.¹² Diodotus being cheated in his expectation is later noted several times: the boys beg their uncle/the narrator not to allow them to be ‘abused by those who ought least to have done so’ (§10); the mother opens her accusation against her father by ‘you are their father’s brother, my father, their uncle and grandfather’ (§12); and finally the members of the family at the end of the story all recall ‘the dead man, how unworthy was the guardian he had left in charge of his estate’ and what is more ‘reflected on how hard it is to find somebody who can be trusted with one’s affairs’ (§18).

Conclusion

Lysias’ narratives are mainly told chronologically and singulatively. Repeating narration is confined to the argument sections, which repeat in larger or smaller detail parts of the narrative. The main temporal device employed to great effect by Lysias is speed: the careful alternation of scene, for important parts, and summary, for unimportant parts

¹² Cf. Carey 1989: ad loc.

or characterizing sections. Ellipsis can both be employed for the skipping of uneventful or unimportant episodes or, in the case of explicit ellipsis, to suggest a multitude of facts, which perhaps in reality could never have been substantiated.