

Dio Chrysostom

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Introduction

The study of characterization in the work of Dio from a narratological perspective faces two challenges. Firstly, while a brief glance at the *index nominum* of Dio's work suffices to highlight a multitude of characters (mythological, literary, and historical), their status as characters is not self-evident. Dio rarely creates characters,¹ instead borrowing pre-existing ones from epic, dramatic, philosophical and historical literature that he often presents in support of an argument, for example.² Such timely appearances impede the construction of these characters, formerly bestowed with a few fundamental traits that are directly stated or deduced from a singular action, whom Dio uses as a moral illustration, rather than dealing with them in depth by means of the tale.³ Dio is particularly interested in his characters' *ēthos*, or *tropoi*, but from a moral rather than literary perspective: he extracts lessons on human nature from this *ēthos* and even the texts dedicated to literary characters in the broadest sense (e.g. Nestor, Agamemnon, Socrates) first try to understand the construction of the characters in relation to a moral aim, either borrowed from the author or asserted by Dio.

Secondly, narration does not have a central role in Dio's orations and we can even sense 'a degree of reticence' on his in part in this regard.⁴ These *orationes* are composed of speeches (of varying lengths and on varying subjects) or dialogues, and often comprise a mix of genres and forms.⁵ The speech can be a tale, moral lecture, diatribe, eulogy or (more often) criticism, while the dialogue,

1 Theophilus (32); Charidemus (30; but the matter is debated: see Moles 2000: 199), perhaps Melancomas (28 and 29; also in this case, not without uncertainty: see König 2005: 146), various anonymous characters (a hunter, an old woman, a king, a tyrant), particularly the interlocutors in dialogues (whose characterization is mostly inexistent).

2 E.g. a large number of Homeric heroes, Socrates, Diogenes, Cyrus, Alexander the Great, Nero.

3 The Libyan king who confronts the monsters of the desert in 5.18–20 is deprived of a name and all psychological depth, in a tale to which Dio nonetheless assigns allegorical value (5.2).

4 Anderson 2000: 143.

5 On this matter, see Desideri 1991.

sometimes inserted into a tale, can develop into a veritable speech in which the conversation (or otherwise the interlocutor) disappears. With Dio, we find ourselves on the edge of narration and, in order to analyse the narrative means of character construction, we need to not only find our bearings in generically multiform texts, but also note, in particular, the co-existence of narrative and rhetorical techniques.⁶ However, in order to avoid diluting narratological concepts by applying them to literary forms in which they have not been employed, we have chosen to study characterization processes in texts where the strictly narrative sections are relatively identifiable. We are thus interested in speeches that include large narrative sections⁷ or shorter narrative fragments in the form of anecdotes, fables, myths, and *khreiai* that present characters.⁸ We will also take into account narratives used as a framework for a speech or dialogue, or that introduce a new development.⁹ With a few exceptions, in particular when Dio engages in general observations of epic and tragic characters, the *Bithynian speeches*, the great Speeches addressed to cities and which are sometimes called *Parva Moralia*, will not be considered, as their strictly narrative sections are extremely limited.

Direct Characterization

In the non-narrative sections of his work, Dio regularly resorts to the direct characterization of the characters he discusses: Melancomas is 'a very tall and beautiful young man' (28.2), Heracles was 'self-reliant, zealous of soul, and competent in body' (1.63). A character that appears in support of an argument and then disappears quickly must be immediately defined in the interest of clarity and efficacy. However, in narrative sections, this technique is less common; if a character is defined by the narrator, it is often to signal the importance of a theme that is then developed in the text. From the beginning of *Oration 4*, Alexander is qualified as *philotimotatos kai malista doxēs erastēs* (4.4), a fundamental characteristic, as it is the flaw that Diogenes intends to confront next, and that masks, perhaps, a criticism or warning addressed to Trajan.¹⁰

6 Whitmarsh (*SAGN* 1: 451–454) recognizes regarding the *Kingship orations* that, due to the inextricable link between dialogue and story, orator and narrator, audience and narratee, he 'adopted generous definitions'.

7 *Orations* 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.

8 *Orations* 1, 3, 32, 43, 55, 58.

9 *Orations* 1, 2, 4, 13, 15, 19, 36, 52.

10 Moles 1983.

Equally, in *Oration* 7, when Dio speaks of himself and evokes his own poverty (9), he anticipates the theme of happy poverty¹¹ that is one of the underpinning threads of the speech. The characteristics he assigns to characters are, of course, at the heart of his interests: when Dio retells an anecdote also told by Pausanias (6.11.5) about the statue of an athlete, he mentions civic virtues not found in Pausanias' version, but that give the anecdote a political and moral resonance, essential for Dio.¹² In this regard, *Oration* 11 presents us with a unique case: in this substantial refutation of the Homeric tradition, Dio defines certain characters in order to correct a version of the Trojan War that he considers to be dishonest and assert the truth of his own version. He thus defines Hector as 'experienced in discerning the critical moment in a fight' to justify his claimed victory against Achilles (11.95). Here, characterization is at the service of argumentation.

Indirect Characterization

Dio extensively exploits various indirect characterization techniques. However, the use of these techniques is also associated with a desire to explain: on the one hand, as orator/narrator, Dio uses characterization techniques on the characters he discusses. On the other hand, as an (notably Homeric) exegete, he analyses these processes, the way in which the characters have been constructed and presented by the poet. In this regard, we can refer to instances of meta-characterization, an example of which can be found at the beginning of the *Chryseis* (*Or.* 61).¹³ This dialogue is an examination (cf. *skepsōmetha*, 1) of the way in which the eponymous character is represented. This analysis is contradictory, however, insofar as Homer did not specifically try to emphasize her 'character' (*tropou*, 3), as Dio's interlocutor reminds us, as 'he did not represent her speaking or acting' (*prattousan ē legousan*). In response, Dio states that her mental faculties (*dianoia*) can be divined 'from what happened in connection with her.' Although this attempt at exegesis is a borderline case, as it is almost entirely based on reading between the lines of the text, the interlocutors mention three major traits of metonymical characterization: speech, action and setting. In the same way, Alexander, rounding off, to a certain extent, this initial theorization, states that Homer 'often describes clothing, home,

11 Brenk 2000: 270–275; Krause 2003: 68–69.

12 Anderson 2000: 144–145.

13 On this text, see Kim 2005.

and way of life according to the character (*ēthos*) of men' (2.40). Dio does much the same for his own characters.

He describes his characters' physical attributes: Callistratus, Greek citizen of Borysthenes, is tall and handsome; most importantly, he has Ionian features, but Scythian clothing. This paradoxical juxtaposition reflects the situation of a city on the borders of the Empire, attacked by its Scythian neighbours and at risk of falling prey to barbarity (36.1–8). In this way, Callistratus is a symbol more than he is an individualized character.

Way of life is also regularly described. The places frequented by characters, for example, reflect their *ēthos* and principles. In this way, Dio attributes thoughts on the way in which Homer matches scenery to characters to Alexander (2.37–39) and explains that, while Homer represented the palace of Menelaus as an oriental palace, it was to be 'in line with the character (*tropon*) of Menelaus, [...] the only one of the Achaeans to be faint-hearted in battle.' In the same way, describing when Diogenes and Alexander meet, he notably presents the philosopher through the places that he frequents and says jokingly that the king will not attend 'Diogenes' court,' as the philosopher does not have a court, house or foyer, living instead in public buildings (4.12–14). He thus incidentally highlights the similarity between his way of life and Cynic doctrine. The hunter and his family's way of life (7.10–21) is also carefully described in order to highlight the simplicity and honest poverty of the character, close to the philosophical ideal of *autarkeia*.¹⁴ In addition, the feast Dio enjoys with the family follows the Platonic model, asserting the text as part of the tradition of the philosophical utopia.¹⁵

In the same vein, body language and actions are also an indication of *ēthos*. By hiding his arm under his coat, Callistratus demonstrates his respect for Hellenic good manners (36.7). In contrast, by embracing a citizen, the hunter reveals (and discovers himself through the amused reaction of the public) his ignorance of the city's customs (7.59), all of which constitute elements of indirect characterization. The hunter's hospitality and humanity are evident through the help he offers to shipwrecked sailors on many occasions (7.52). Additionally, actions are sometimes at the service of a biased character portrayal, for example, when Dio describes Achilles in the *Troikos* (11.77–78). After having evoked Troilus' death, Dio provocatively states that 'Achilles was very skilful in laying ambushes and making night attacks.' Here, factual information is combined with a sarcastic tone to highlight the character's cowardice. This is

14 Brenk 2000: 271–275.

15 Bost-Pouderon 2008: 113–116.

then confirmed by actions that are hardly heroic, as Achilles 'captured [only] forts that were poorly guarded'. This characterization contradicts the entire epic tradition and yet Dio goes further, using an episode from the *Iliad* to belittle the character: 'Homer accuses him directly of cowardice' (11.101) for having stayed in his tent instead of going into battle due to a prediction of his death. Not only is the invention of an episode attributed to the poet, but also the negative conclusion that Dio himself draws, in a particularly sophistic way, from sparse information. Rewriting Homer, commenting on the Homeric text and judging the character are inextricably linked.

Speech, as the *Chryseis* suggests, is an important technique of characterization, which, when concerning an orator, is hardly surprising. Naturally, all of Dio's speech is used to characterize the speaker, as, according to the principles of *ēthopoia*, words reflect *ēthos*, and this fact allows the orator to build his own *ēthos*. In this regard and following the framework of a collection devoted to narratology, we are interested in the speeches that interact with narrative structures. From this point of view, the hunter is a paradoxical case: his answers to questions at the assembly reveal his unfamiliarity with certain customs (7.41), constitutive of the *ēthos* of someone unaccustomed to public speaking. However, as Ma notes, 'our rural Candide is capable of accurately recalling unfamiliar events, surroundings, and words,'¹⁶ revealing himself to be an experienced orator (7.59).

This contradiction is not noted by Dio, who, elsewhere, highlights the correspondence between *logos* and *tropos* by commenting on the words of his characters. He does so either directly, notably within the narrative framework of a dialogue, or by attributing this commentary to another character; such commentary concerns the words, content and tone employed by the interlocutor and used to characterize the speaker. For example, recounting a discussion between Alexander and Philip about Homer, Dio specifies from the beginning that Alexander takes part in the discussion 'in a manly and lofty strain' (2.1). The narrator's observation is supported by that of Philip, who, according to Dio, is delighted with his son's *megalophrosunē* (2.7). The narrator's judgements are thus superimposed on those of the character to highlight the nobility of the young man. In more complex situations, the judgement of the character may not necessarily be correct, reminding us that, in the case of indirect characterization, we could draw false conclusions from body language or speech. In *Oration* 4.18–20, for example, Diogenes questions Alexander on the legitimacy of his birth. This provokes anger in Alexander, who, however, controls himself

16 Ma 2000: 110; cf. Anderson 2000: 147–148.

and judges the philosopher to be an ill-mannered man. Diogenes then states 'his embarrassment' (emotion being a characterization element) and changes his tone, evoking Alexander's filiation with the god Ammon. This is so successful that the king, in a full reversal, believes that Diogenes, far from being 'rude,' was 'the only one who really knew how to pay a compliment' (as if Diogenes were in the habit of doing so). However, the philosopher's tone is more sarcastic than Alexander realizes. Indeed, Diogenes asks him:

'Why, I hear that your own mother says this of you. Or is it not Olympias who said that Philip is not your father, as it happens, but a dragon or Ammon or some god or other or demigod or wild animal? And yet in that case you would certainly be a bastard.'

4.19

In reality, Diogenes' words confirm his rudeness and Alexander's misinterpretation highlights his obliviousness as well as his tendency to take a remark as flattery.

Coherence

The principle of metonymical characterization is, in theory, contradicted when characters' actions go against their character. In practice, this is a literary issue rarely faced by Dio for two partially linked reasons. On the one hand, his characters are integrated into mainly short narratives, in which their character, their potential personality, is not explored in depth and rarely over time. On the other hand, as we will see, the *ēthos* of the characters is often condensed into an essential trait, which can be illustrated in various ways and have various implications, while remaining fundamentally stable. This stability of character can even lead to a certain degree of predictability, as a single passage of a dialogue entitled *Achilles* illustrates with a literary device. This dialogue, which features Achilles as a child refusing to learn archery, finishes with a prediction by his tutor, the centaur Chiron, who recounts what will become of his pupil:

Yet because of your audacity and fleetness of foot and physical strength men in flattery will call you most valiant of men. However, they will prefer to be ruled by other princes, while as for you, they will compel you by gifts and empty praises to do battle and risk your life for them until you finally meet your death. But I fancy you will not even keep your hands off the dead; on the contrary, you will even stab the corpses and trail

them in the dust, as if, in sooth, you were doing something grand, just as foolish youngsters drag round and round whatever they kill. But for all your arrogance, you will meet your death, not at the hands of some man of nobility, as you imagine; on the contrary, while you will find it easy to slay those who are like you, brave but stupid, you will be slain by a man of sagacity and military science, and, what is more, without ever having seen him.

58.5–6

From Dio's point of view, this predictive and allusive episode naturally took place *post eventum*. However, from the perspective of the dialogue, it happened while Achilles, presented in a Lucianesque way like a spoilt child,¹⁷ 'was still a lad' (*eti pais*), not yet an adolescent (2). Chiron announces that he will be killed 'by a man of sagacity and military science'—he is provocatively referring to Paris, the archer—as a punishment for his current stubbornness. He also states that Achilles' attitude is the result of the way in which his mother, Thetis, is raising him, as 'she corrupted him by swelling his pride upon his birth,' while his father does not have the time to attend to his education (3, 5).¹⁸ Achilles' personality is already deeply anchored within him and his actions only confirm it.

This requirement for consistency is particularly respected by Dio, for rhetorical purposes, when it comes to correcting Homeric character construction in *Oration* 11. In this vast *anaskeuē*, Dio relies on the argument of plausibility and possibility (*eikos* and *dunaton*), common to courtroom rhetoric, historiography and literary criticism,¹⁹ to reconstruct the personality, mental faculties and actions of epic characters. Dio therefore believes that there is no 'likelihood' that Hector did not protest when his brother Paris brought Helen back to Troy, while he 'afterwards reproach[ed]' him in *Iliad* 3 (11.56). These different attitudes, separated by many years, constitute a moral inconsistency proving that, in reality, Hector had no reason to reprimand Paris as his marriage to Helen was legal.

In this case, for rhetorical purposes, Dio neglects the issue of possible character evolution. Indeed, characters are, in contrast, defined by a globally stable *ēthos*, of which they are sometimes the paradigm. Thus, the 'improper' behaviour of Ajax the Lesser during the horse race of *Iliad* 23 is linked to his later attitude, as this is the same character

17 Anderson 2000: 154.

18 *Paideia* is an important theme in Dio's thought, although little exploited regarding specific characters. However, for the positive effects of Heracles' good education, see 1.61.

19 Kim 2010: 97; Hunter 2009: 54.

who also was guilty of impiety toward Athena at the capture of Troy and on that account was himself smitten with a thunderbolt and thereby caused the storm and shipwreck that befell them all.

32.80

The principle of plausibility advocated by Dio is also based on a correspondence between the emotions, thoughts and actions of a character and those that can be observed in everyday life. It is for this reason that, in the *Chryseis*, Dio relates Agamemnon's attitude towards the young girl to that of 'lovers' (*erōntas*, 61.3). In this dialogue, Dio reminds us that Homer is distinguished by his ability to know 'the passions of men,' (*ta pathē tōn anthrōpōn*, 1). In contrast, in the *Troikos*, such passions are almost completely brushed aside. For example, after having spoken of the legitimate marriage between Paris and Helen, he denounces the 'foolish[ness]' of 'the opposite story':

Can you imagine it possible for anyone to have become enamoured of a woman whom he had never seen, and then, that she could have let herself be persuaded to leave husband, fatherland, and all her relatives—and that too, I believe, when she was the mother of a little daughter—and follow a man of another race? It is because this is so improbable that they got up that cock-and-bull story about Aphrodite, which is still more preposterous.

11.54

Dio refutes the idea of a couple enslaved to the passion of love by using the argument of *dunaton*. However, this argument contradicts a fundamental idea of Dio the Cynic: that men are driven by their passions. This characterization of Paris thus involves an extreme rationalization of the epic subject matter²⁰ that betrays the artificial, sophistic and partly playful nature of this rewriting.

Metaphorical Characterization

Metaphorical characterization in Dio's work relies on, above all, the approximation between or the comparison of characters, according to sometimes complex mechanisms. In *Oration* 54, Dio provides some facts from the life of Socrates and reminds us that even poverty did not lead him to make others pay

20 Kim 2010: 174 speaks of 'psychological and naturalistic realism'.

for his teachings. The tone is close to that of a fable,²¹ with the expression ‘there was also Socrates’, that is incidentally borrowed from the *Apology* (18b), albeit altered: when Plato calls Socrates ‘wise’, Dio calls him ‘poor’ (54.3). In this way, Socrates contrasts with the sophists evoked just previously in the speech, who make others pay handsomely for their lessons. While the comparison in this case is explicit, it can sometimes be less direct. In *Oration 7*, Dio describes the hunter easily carrying the deer on his back that he has just killed: such strength, suggested by body language, opposes Dio’s physical weakness, recognized by the hunter who guesses he is ‘a man from the city’ (7.8). As Krause highlights,²² it is not a matter of using these observations to draw conclusions on the real health of Dio at the time. Instead, such observations are more useful for establishing, between the lines of the speech, the contrast between rural and city life that is fundamental to Dio’s social and philosophical thought in this oration.

Oration 4, the tale of a meeting between Diogenes and Alexander, offers a complex mechanism on an enunciative level. The first sentences are mostly devoted to describing Alexander, but the narrator also reveals the sentiments of the king towards Diogenes, based on a comparison between their respective actions, ways of life and glories.²³ The direct characterization elements pronounced by Alexander contribute to his own indirect characterization as he is aware of a ‘moral gulf between himself and Diogenes’,²⁴ demonstrating that he is becoming wise. In *Oration 1*, the comparison functions on two levels: the speech opens with an anecdote according to which Alexander was poised to throw himself into combat following a battle hymn played by the aulist Timotheus (1). This anecdote demonstrates the ‘passionate’ character of the king, which opposes Sardanapalus’ depravation (1.2–3). However, Dio draws out the message by vowing that the words he will address to Trajan will charm the king as much as Timotheus’ music charmed Alexander. By way of this comparison, he highlights what Whitmarsh calls the ‘paideutic’ relation that he tries to establish with Trajan, great admirer of Alexander.²⁵ This comparison is quickly hijacked by the virtues that Dio attributes to the ideal king, of which Trajan must be the incarnation, and that are a far cry from Alexander’s kingship. This initiatory and seemingly programmatic anecdote is also a lure, a way of seizing the attention of his illustrious audience and introducing a moral *protrepsis*.

21 Nesselrath 2009: 113.

22 Krause 2003: 67.

23 On the presentation of the two characters, see Moles 1983: 264–267.

24 Moles 1983: 267.

25 Whitmarsh 2001: 200–216.

The comparison reinforces the characterization of each individual character, which above all functions on a moral level in Dio's case. In *Oration 55*, which comprises the development of various Homeric characters, Dio evokes disobedience in reference to Pandarus and Asius (15–18), who he contrasts with the figure of Polydamas (19). However, Dio does not intend to indulge in a literary-based observation of epic *personnel*²⁶ here: he aims to show that Homer's characters are in fact incarnations of specific virtues ('wisdom, ability to lead', 19), that is, they are, primarily, character types.

Narrative and Typification

The moral purpose behind the majority of Dio's speeches and dialogues means that the evocation of a character often has the goal of emphasizing a particular characteristic, illustrating an aspect of human nature. Take, for example, the anecdote according to which Nero 'not only castrated the youth whom he loved, but also changed his name for a woman's, that of the girl whom he loved', is an illustration of the idea that 'unlimited power is lawless' (21.6). By giving his characters a fundamentally illustrative value, Dio adopts and adapts a mechanism that he attributes to Socrates—who would have, in his turn, taken it from Homer—that consists in presenting a specific character type to evoke the 'passions and maladies' of men, for example, a 'boastful man' to speak of 'boastfulness' (55.13). Indeed, he believes that such passions and maladies are spoken of more clearly 'by those men who were afflicted' rather than 'if he were using the words by themselves'. The character in the dialogue is thus meant to incarnate a flaw, a vice that literally gives him substance. The consequence of subordinating the character to a didactic and ethical aim is the elimination of the individual traits of the character, who has become a moral or psychological type, and is gradually abandoned alongside the narrative (in the broad sense) to the profit of a dogmatic lecture. This is particularly evident in the overall development of *Oration 4*. Dio starts by recounting a meeting between Alexander and Diogenes (1–15), followed by a dialogue (16–81), recounted by the narrator, that ends with an attack on Alexander's 'demon'. This attack leads to a more detailed development in the last section (82–139) on the three fundamental types of lives adopted by the crowd and that Diogenes

26 I have taken the word '*personnel*' from Hamon's study on *Le Personnel du roman* (Genève 1983) dedicated to Zola's Rougon-Macquart novel cycle.

assimilates to ‘demons’ (83).²⁷ Among them features the ‘demon’ of ambition (116–132), a flaw that directly concerns Alexander. This is not explicitly stated, however, as the initial narration, accompanied by the characterization of a well-identified character, gives way to an anthropological take on the vice, in which all individuals disappear.

This idea that a character does not exist for himself but as an illustration is fundamental in the elaboration and aim of the *Euboikos*.²⁸ In this speech, the first principally narrative section (cf. *diēgēsomai*, 1) recounts the existence of an Euboean hunter and, in particular, his quarrels with the neighbouring city. Yet Dio states in the preamble that he wants to describe ‘a type of man’ (*hoiois andrasi*), and his ‘life’ (*bion*): this tale of a supposedly true adventure²⁹ has a broader purpose and illustrates a poor way of life, for which the hunter is a social and moral *paradeigma* (81), a statement that justifies an ideological reading of the speech.³⁰ The speech then becomes more theoretical with a lecture dedicated to ‘the life of the farmer, hunter and shepherd’ (103).

This speech is characterized by an elaborate construction: two major sections, three narrative levels, and a multiplicity of enunciative voices.³¹ This complexity contrasts with the fixity of the hunter’s character (despite a sycophant trying to tarnish his reputation: 7.27–32), because this stability ensures that the theory defended by Dio remains clear. Dio presents a character that embodies a *bios*, implying a certain number of social and moral characteristics. Each element of the speech is thus meant to align with the *bios*: his good health (4, 20), financial independence (16), which refers to the Cynic ideal of *autarkeia*, and his honesty and generosity, notably evident in the welcome extended to the tax collector (21–22), and above all in the rescue of shipwrecked sailors (Dio himself in 2–7; Sotades in 52–53 and 55–58). However, this repetition illustrating the virtue of the poor people living in the countryside is excessive and means that the hunter’s life is marked not by events, but by the actualization of a certain number of limited characteristics (goodness, naivety, etc.). The hunter’s story does not evolve: the partially narrative form hides the absence of a veritable narrative development,³² which impedes all in-depth psychological and/or moral study of the character. He is a socio-moral type

27 See recent analyses in Pernot 2013: 163–166.

28 Russell 1990: 207–209.

29 On the blend of (supposed) truthful and fictional elements, see Anderson 2000: 146–148; Krause 2003: 64–72.

30 Desideri 2000: 100.

31 See *SAGN* 1: 460–461 (Whitmarsh).

32 See Anderson 2000: 147: ‘It is an engaging sketch, but is it really an action?’

rather than an individual and this has a radical consequence on the structure of the speech: the narrative is discarded in favour of a dogmatic lecture. This change in form accompanies the abandonment of the characters, whose destiny is left totally unresolved.³³

Consequently, although this tale is distinguished by its elegance and naturalness, the character of the hunter is totally deprived of individuality (and those who surround him share the same qualities): he is, quite significantly, deprived of a name and is thus definitively the Hunter identified by the title.

A unique case of typification is found in the portrayal of philosophers, in particular in the *Diogenian orations* devoted to the figure of Diogenes (6 and 8–10). These texts, including tales, dialogues, and speeches are close to what Whitmarsh called, regarding Philostratus, ‘paradigmatic narrative’, that is, ‘selected anecdotes [...] relayed in order to exemplify aspects of Apollonius’ wisdom’ according to a rather flexible, or indeed, non-existent chronology.³⁴ On a more modest scale, Dio proposes various vignettes providing a kaleidoscopic portrayal of Diogenes through speech and action. In particular, he attended the Isthmian Games, led there by his habitual interest in observing gatherings of men (cf. 8.6; 9.1) and his usual behaviour (9.7) is illustrated by a series of *khreiai*, some more developed than others.³⁵ These micro-tales of meaningful but redundant words or actions, reveal his thought and, more generally, Cynic doctrine: the importance of *parrhēsia*, scorn for convention, resistance to passions, the *autarkeia* ideal.³⁶ The characterization of Diogenes, heir to an entire doxographic tradition, is thus inseparable from the dogmatic message, making him the character type of the Cynic philosopher.

Dio’s Masks

In various ways, Dio’s thought, as a student of Musonius, was inspired by Cynicism, an influence that can be seen in the sometimes very lively tone of his speeches when he criticizes cities or the vices of men more generally. Consequently, attributing some remarks to Diogenes, but within the framework of his own speech, Dio makes the Cynic his spokesman³⁷ and characteristics of

33 The tale ends with the decision to celebrate a wedding the following day (80)—a future without textual existence.

34 *SAGN* 2: 418 (Whitmarsh).

35 Jouan 1993: 389.

36 Brenk 2000: 266–269.

37 Moles 1983: 255.

Diogenes are thus also attributable to Dio. Whitmarsh goes as far as creating the name ‘Dio/genes’³⁸ in order to highlight the superimposition of the orator on his character.³⁹ Identifying with an illustrious character is sometimes completely implicit (although the audience must be sensitive to the message that Dio delivers to them from Diogenes’ mouth), and other times more direct. It is even comically unveiled when an anonymous interlocutor reproaches Dio for comparing himself to Pythagoras, Homer and Zeno (47.6). Dio, not hesitating to introduce a criticism of his supposed vanity into his own speech, manages to place himself midway between pride, modesty and self-mockery. He retells an anecdote, taken from Xenophon (*Memorabilia* 4.4.5), according to which the sophist Hippias lost his temper with Socrates under the pretext that the latter would always repeat himself: in the same way, Dio intends to deal with the same subject, namely, the issue of power, before the emperor each time (3.27–28). Yet the reference to Socrates goes further, as Dio, far from speaking words of his own creation, ‘will endeavour to set forth the views of Socrates’ (29), before launching himself into a lecture that truly belongs to him. The initial anecdote justifies Dio’s choice of subject matter and allows the orator to then walk in the footsteps of the illustrious philosopher.

This kind of metaphorical characterization, in which Dio as orator builds his *ēthos* with reference to other characters, sometimes leads to numerous tales in the form of *khreiai* or apologues, notably to symbolize his relationship with his audience.

In a *Political address in his native city* in which Dio defends himself against certain accusations and professes his love for his city, he employs a *paradeigma* and recounts an episode in the life of Epaminondas almost in the form of a tale:⁴⁰

There was a certain man in Thebes called Epaminondas; he loved his country above all else; and, seizing such opportunities as existed at that period, he performed for it many great services. For, instead of the craven, helpless, subservient people they had been, he made them foremost among the Greeks and contenders for leadership. [...] However that may be, the famous Epaminondas was hated by those who were not like him, and there were some who maligned him, and the common people—as common people will—did not understand and were misled. And on one

38 Whitmarsh 2001: 108.

39 See also *SAGN* 1: 458 (Whitmarsh).

40 On this speech, see Schmidt 2013.

occasion one of the desperate, disfranchised group, a fellow who had done any and every thing to harm the city when it was in slavery and ruled by a dictator, abused Epaminondas in a town meeting and said many harsh things [...]. Now when Epaminondas himself in turn took the floor, he did not speak regarding the other matters, nor did he defend himself against a single charge, but he merely said to his accuser, speaking in his own Boeotian dialect, 'May Damater be wroth wi' ye!' But the Thebans on hearing that were delighted and burst into laughter, as well they might, recalling, I suspect, the friendliness of Epaminondas toward the people and the scurvy conduct of the man who was trying to vilify him.

43.4-6

This short narrative, interrupted by some general political observations, is a valuable example because of its conclusion, in which Dio returns to his own situation: 'Well then, me [...]'. Its literary form, which is that of a *khreia*, as Epaminondas contents himself with a very brief word to silence his enemy, also serves as an example. However, while *khreiai* are often self-contained and finish with a striking word or gesture, the Theban hero's one-liner is accompanied with the characterization of both the character and the slanderer as well as a maxim on lying. The often implicit message of *khreiai* clearly brings out the qualities that Dio shares with Epaminondas, and that distinguish him from his political opponents in Prusa, that is, his pursuit of the truth and devotion to his city.

In *Oration* 32, at the end of a series of criticisms and pieces of advice intended for Alexandrians, Dio suddenly stops speaking and justifies doing so with an anecdote that reads like a fable:

For the story goes that the deity once told that musician in a dream that he was destined to sing into an ass's ears. And for a while he paid no heed and gave no thought to the dream, as being a matter of no consequence. But when the tyrant of Syria came to Memphis, since the Egyptians admired the artist, he summoned him. So the musician gave a performance with all zest and displayed the more intricate phases of his art; but the tyrant—for he had no appreciation of music—bade him cease and treated him with disdain. And the musician, recalling that forgotten dream, exclaimed, 'So that was the meaning of the saying, "to sing into an ass's ears"'. And the tyrant, having heard from his interpreters what the musician had said, bound and flogged the man, and this incident, they say, was the occasion of a war.

32.101

The musician, who is only characterized by his art, is completely unknown; the tyrant, probably Antiochus IV Epiphanes,⁴¹ is not named as he serves to embody the character type of the uneducated tyrant. This anecdote serves as a comparison with Dio's situation facing the Alexandrians: he, too, addresses an uneducated public, which is compared with the tyrant at the beginning of the speech, and risks unpleasantness by reprimanding his audience, as he has done since the beginning. This idea of the orator of sound advice who is nonetheless despised was already sown with the evocation of a sage named Theophilus, who 'preserved silence toward you' because the Alexandrians were not intelligent enough to heed his advice (97). Theophilus has an evocative name that recalls the preferential relationship between sages and the gods: a name, in this case the bearer of characterization, is also a means of individualization. Yet Theophilus' individuality is in fact immediately refuted, as he is merely the fleeting reflection of Dio, who has come to Alexandria 'by the will of some deity' (12) to speak with people who will likely not listen to him. Consequently, this illusory character, completely unknown elsewhere and undoubtedly fabricated, is merely the symbol of the difficult relationship between the philosopher and the public.

Dio as Character

While Dio gives speeches and write dialogues, he does not hesitate to directly intervene and allow elements from his own life to interfere.⁴² This is particularly the case for the crucial moment that he calls his 'exile'. It is well-known that the causes and manners of his exile are discussed at length, to the extent that, far from presenting one version of this event that was a key moment for him, Dio gives many partial, indeed, contradictory pieces of information. This broad issue is beyond the scope of this article, instead we are interested in certain narrative self-characterization methods that build the *character* of Dio in a given context. We reiterate, following Krause, that the 'T' of Dio is a rhetorical construction that should be analysed independently from the biographical T.⁴³

41 Lewis 1949.

42 I will say no more regarding oration 7, for which Whitmarsh provides a detailed analysis of the figure of Dio, simultaneously orator, narrator, narratee (internal) and actor: see *SAGN* 1: 460–463.

43 Krause 2003: 31 in particular.

The beginning of *Oration* 13 is thus Dio's philosophical autobiography, in which he talks about the exterior events (exile, consultation with the Oracle of Delphi) and interior development (questioning how to evaluate his exile) that led him to what he was precisely in the process of doing (9): leading a nomadic life and answering the moral questions that men put to him. Different elements participate in Dio's characterization and prepare what is to follow in his speech. Inspired by the Socratic tradition, Dio claims to be made of the stuff of heroes⁴⁴ and have the *ēthos* of a wise man by evoking the following: his friendship with a man of virtue (1), the memory of Odysseus (4), mythical figure of roaming and endurance, thoughts on the trials capable of testing 'strength and will-power' (3), and the consultation with the Oracle of Delphi (9). In this way, he also justifies the philosophical speech that he gives next, taken and adapted from Socratic teachings. The web of epic and philosophical allusions suggests that the supposedly autobiographical story is a reconstruction of reality.⁴⁵

Dio recounts episodes relating to his exile several times in his work, without elucidating the immediate link with the subject matter of the speech that follows. *Oration* 36 starts with the tale of a brief trip to Borysthene, during Dio's exile,⁴⁶ allowing for a historical-ethnographic excursus. This is followed by a discussion with a citizen of the town, and then, to finish, a lecture on the 'divine government' of the world (26). The narrative introduction presents a Dio that is keen to make '[his] way through Scythia to the Getan country, in order to observe conditions there': like Solon, he adopts the position of a sage eager to explore and know the world. Dio's self-representation achieves a high degree of notably intertextual sophistication: in the middle of *Oration* 1, he recounts when he met an old woman in the Peloponnesian countryside, who told him a revised version of Prodicus' *Choice of Heracles*, inviting him to repeat it to the emperor; Dio does exactly that at the end of the speech (58–84). The two characters are subject to careful characterization, in which various techniques are employed. Dio explains the circumstances of his arrival: exiled, nomadic, disguised as a beggar, he adopts the way of life of the Cynic philosopher. However, he also identifies with Odysseus, to whom he indirectly compares himself by means of a Homeric quotation (50). He travels through the lands of the Greeks and Barbarians, his route taking him away from cities and into the heart of Greece, into the middle of the countryside: the *khōra*, which houses a sanctuary, is a place conducive to revelations. The portrayal of the old woman,

44 In a general way, as is underlined by Saïd 2000: 167, Dio 'impersonates various mythological characters.'

45 See Moles 2005, for a remarkable discussion on this.

46 On the circumstances of this travel, see Bost-Pouderon 2011: 107–113.

‘strong and tall though rather advanced in years, dressed like a rustic and with some braids of grey hair falling about her shoulders’, states her proximity to the divine, which is subsequently confirmed by her predictive powers (53–54). It has been noted many times that this narrative framework echoes that of Plato’s *Phaedrus*, while the woman’s tale reminds Dio of Diotima’s speech to Socrates in the *Banquet*:⁴⁷ in both cases, the orator and the philosopher are called to listen to a lesson that they then teach others. Dio thus adopts the *ēthos* of the philosopher who learns prior to teaching. Yet, it is not ‘without divine intervention’ (55) that Dio met the old woman: he is also under divine protection and, therefore, the message that he delivers to Trajan is sanctioned by the gods.

A much more anecdotal self-representation contrasts with this grandiose presentation. Far from the personal myth that he constructs when evoking his exile, and equally far from his political quarrels in Prusa, Dio recounts an apparently banal morning in the introduction of *Oration 52*, devoted to the stark comparison of the tragedies on Philoctetes by Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides.

Having risen about the first hour of the day, both on account of the feeble state of my health and also on account of the air, which was rather chilly because of the early hour and very much like autumn, though it was mid-summer, I made my toilet and performed my devotions. I next got into my carriage and made the round of the race-course several times, my team moving along as gently and comfortably as possible. After that I took a stroll and then rested a bit. Next, after a rub-down and bath and a light breakfast, I fell to reading certain tragedies.

52.1

We can rightly question the purposes of this brief tale and self-representation, which recall Aelius Aristides recounting his large and small ailments in the *Sacred Tales* more than the Dio’s usual thoughts, as they immediately precede a speech devoted to a considerably literary issue. The strictly informative value of this side of Dio’s private life is of little interest. Yet Dio must have amused himself by playing on the contrast between the literary concerns that feature in what is to come and this tale of daily activities, creating the portrait of a relatively wealthy person of note preoccupied by banal concerns—the weather, health, and so on. The abrupt and unexpected end of this micro-tale also comically demonstrates that Dio has introduced the theme of the speech by creating

47 Anderson 2000: 150.

the portrait of orator as reader. By presenting the reading of tragedies as a relief to illness (*paramuthia*, 3), he also subtly defines himself as a philosopher that finds consolation to his (small) miseries in books—tragedy is, from a different angle, the ultimate cathartic genre. We thus come across a fundamental aspect of Dio's thought: the importance of culture.

Conclusion

Dio, orator and moralist, uses a large number of characters in various discursive situations and often on the border between different genres. Yet these characters are systematically subordinated to moralizing, which imposes an elucidation of the character of characters, paradigms of *ēthē*. Dio relies on characters from the literary tradition, insofar as not only does he evoke their story or retell it highlighting a fundamental trait, but, in taking the same ethical concern that drives him from certain authors, he simultaneously deciphers the principles that supposedly guided such authors in their character construction. We can thus observe the simultaneous development of characterization and meta-characterization, in which narration and exegesis are inextricably linked.

This principle of creative exegesis supposedly teaches a lesson, although the use of such a principle is apparently part of the sophistic game: for example, the anonymous interlocutor of *Oration* 60, after having recalled that Dio tends to take the opposite view of the *doxa* regarding myths (1)—which is abundantly illustrated in the *Troikos*—recognizes that philosophers, like makers of figurines (*koroplathoi*), mould myths in their own way to make them useful and adapt them to philosophy (9). This thus presents us with a new version of the story of Heracles, Nessus and Deianira that is based on a new characterization of the protagonists: Nessus as a corrupting figure, Deianira as the incarnation of female cunning, and Heracles, the fallen hero, who decides to commit suicide from the shame of the *truphē* to which he is resigned. The story of the death of Heracles becomes a moral adventure, in which Dio, while breaking away from the traditional myth, respects the figure of Heracles as a Cynic hero, which has also become traditional.

While Dio demonstrates that he exercises a certain amount of freedom in his reinterpretation of characters, his character reconstruction is simultaneously restricted by the point of view he adopts. Dio's approach, though leading to literary observations,⁴⁸ is more ethical than literary, and requires the elimination

48 For example, his thoughts on *Chryseis* approach certain remarks of the scholia: cf. Kim 2005: 616.

of a certain complexity of character, which accompanies the gradual elimination of the narrative in certain speeches. *Oration* 36, for example, presents the meeting with Callistratus, who is subject to a careful depiction. Yet Callistratus is only the first of Dio's interlocutors, a pretext for a discussion on Homer and Phocylides, before, at the request of a certain Hieroson, Dio launches into a lecture on the 'divine city'. Therefore, by neglecting the immediate context, which serves as a narrative framework, and completely forgetting his Borysthenic audience, that is, the characters of his story, Dio stays on the edge of narration, and his characters, on the edge of veritable characterization.