

## The Hair of the Dog: Re-reading the Diogenes Orations

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Dio's *Orations* 6 and 8–10 form of a cluster associated with the figure of Diogenes the Cynic (who appears also as a speaking character in *Or.* 4, and in 72 and two fragments of the *Chreiai*). The four orations present Diogenes challenging mainstream opinion on topics like property-owning, pleasure and the nature of virtue, either implicitly or via the explicit use of the dialogic form. Scholars have quickly seen that Diogenes functions (paronomastically) as a figure for the wandering Dio (as presented e.g. in *Oration* 7, sandwiched in the midst of the Diogenes orations in the transmitted MSS); Dio's Diogenes also evokes comparable 'outsider' figures such as Odysseus (one of whose epithets is *διογένης*) and Socrates. What are less well understood than the mechanisms of persona construction, however, are the literary and philosophical techniques that Dio himself employs so as to replicate for his readers and audiences the shock tactics that he attributes to Diogenes. This paper will argue that Dio's emphasis upon homeless wandering (introduced at the start of 6 and running through all of the orations) points programmatically to the central strategy of the orations: the ability suddenly and unexpectedly to shift position and perspective on a topic, to invert the humorous and the earnest, to switch without compunction between high-minded virtue ethics and bodily functions, to treat humans like animals, and to switch in and out of roles. This is the logic of the wanderer: whereas the sedentary view from the *polis* generates forms of commitment resulting in fixed moral categories, valuations and hierarchies, the simple wisdom that springs from rootlessness can manifest itself (to urban onlookers) as a disruptive, disconnected, recklessly accelerated series of revaluations and rescalings. The aim of the Diogenes orations is not to produce a philosophically coherent ethics; nor, however, is it self-deconstructive humour (as, arguably, in the writings of Lucian, to which these texts have at least a superficial affinity; though humour is certainly part of Dio's plan). Rather, it is to locate philosophy within the very *action* of dislocating and uprooting; to set us on the move. It is, therefore, precisely in those joins (or disjunctions) in the *logos* that the true argument lies.