Communicating Cynicism: Diogenes' Gangsta Rap

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CHAPTER 5

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1 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been an upsurge of interest in ancient Cynicism, which has benefited in particular from renewed attention to the notion of rhetorical practice. It was recognised that even though the Cynics never formulated an explicit body of philosophical theories, their life-style could be analysed as the exercise of a philosophical rhetoric, intended to convey a particular set of ethical messages.

In this contribution, I will focus on Cynic strategies of communication, and on problems of the interpretation of Cynicism resulting from their communicative choices. First, I will look at the Cynics' use of transgressive non-verbal communication with the help of modern socio-linguistic theories of non-verbal communication and impression management. The Cynics scandalise their audience by their conscious use of the body and its processes for philosophical purposes; anthropological ideas about transgression will be helpful here (section 2).

In section 3, I will turn to verbal communication, and investigate the Cynics' characteristic use of language and literature, regarded as an aspect of their self-fashioning. Here, I argue that Cynic ideas on language correspond to a specific type of folk-linguistics, represented for us by a well-delineated literary tradition of *iambos* and comedy. I claim that the literary representations of Cynicism that have come down to us cannot be fully understood, unless their intertextual relations with other ancient transgressive genres are explored.[1] The literary representations of the Cynics acquire a fuller

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[1] Note that I do not use 'intertextuality' in the restricted sense of *Quellenforschung*, but in the wider sense of the term, i.e. to refer in general to the place of a text, regarded as a locus of absorption and transformation, in a network of other texts and genres, and more specifically to the relationship of that text and other specific texts, a relationship of which the partners in the literary communication are aware. Cf. Pfister 1985 and Broich 1985: 31.

meaning when they are seen to resonate within a web of comparable texts, notably the tradition of *iambos* and ancient comedy (section 3).

Finally (section 4), I will raise the question of the effectiveness of the consciously self-undermining aspects of Cynic communication, again by comparing them to other transgressive genres like satire and gangsta rap. Throughout, my main focus of attention will be Diogenes, supplemented with some Antisthenes and later Cynics.

My paper rests on the assumption that, since so much of what we know of the Cynics' performance is through the literary shaping of their lives in the form of telling anecdotes and narratives, we should be paying special attention to the essentially literary nature of the representation of Cynicism and particularly of its fountainhead, Diogenes; we must not deny the uncompromisingly literary and artistically contrived nature of our sources. This will be particularly relevant when we consider the impact of Cynicism on its audience: the experience of the primary, original audience, often represented as the internal audience in the narrative, differed considerably from that of the reading or listening external audience of the (semi-) literary versions of Cynicism. The embrace of the Cynics by the literary tradition must have had a thoroughly domesticating effect. The question whether and how far Diogenes himself actually lived his life as if he was 'writing' it as a text (see below, section 4), immediately endangers the value of the ensuing interpretation, because of the circularity it entails. While emphasising the socio-cultural *Sitz im Leben* of the representations of Diogenes, my interpretation does not intend to deny the real impact that Cynicism had especially on other philosophers. The Stoics in particular derived considerable inspiration for their ethics from Diogenes' life, regarded as an authentic attempt to embody a philosophy and distinguishable from fake imitators of its external aspect.

2 NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION AND THE ACTION-*CHREIA*

In this section, we will study some of the most salient points of Cynic communication: its theatricality, its use of non-verbal communication, its preference for transgressive forms of communication, and its preferred literary form, the *chreia*.

A naïve view of Cynic communication could have it that any conclusions drawn by the general public from observing the Cynic life-style and Cynic behaviour are just an unintended by-product of the Cynic way of life. This would entail that the Cynic has no programme and no didactic intentions, but that their natural life-style is indeed just that, natural, and

uncultivated;[2] if this is elevating to anyone, it is an epiphenomenon of the rule of nature. The didactic effect achieved by the Cynic performance is that of a role-model, who embodies a way of life without explaining it, but offers his or herself for imitation. Even a superficial reading of the sources on Cynicism reveals how untrue such a view would be to the representations we have. In spite of the Cynics' self-production as human beings who simply embody certain ideas and convictions without making any conscious attempt at propagating those ideas, their interaction with their environment is more often than not carefully stylised to invite observation and reflection, and to provoke quite specific reactions.[3] There is an unmistakable didactic stance (cf. βουλόμενος νουθετῆσαι 'wanting to admonish/rebuke').[4] The very theatricality and artificiality of this procedure – the combination of apparent artlessness and simplicity with a sly appeal to public attention – was a source of irritation to Plato,[5] who objected to Diogenes' studied naïveté and the puffed-up arrogance which he perceived underneath.[6] A Cynic needs an audience.[7] Plato's comparison of Diogenes to an 'out-of-control Socrates' (or a 'Socrates gone mad')[8] may suggest some similarity in the public interaction between both philosophers (i.e. Socrates and Diogenes) and the Athenian audience, while at the same time emphasising the totally different *modus operandi*. Socrates, Plato and their followers are happy to have one partner in dialogue – or not even that, since the consummate Platonist would be self-sufficient to achieve 'dialectical upward mobility' all by him or herself, in a dialogue with his or her own soul. The Cynic performance would be meaningless, however, without an audience, and consequently, the Cynic consciously chooses to be in the public arena; indeed, it would be hard to imagine a Cynic hermit.[9] It seems worthwhile to analyse this theatrical, self-dramatising didactic stance of the Cynics further.

[2] On their ideal of living according to nature, cf. Hoistad 1948: 39.

[3] For economy's sake, I will not always repeat 'the representation' (of their interaction, etc.) – *sapienti sat*.

[4] *SSR* v B 188 = D L. 6.35, see below, at note 38, cf. on the Cynic's missionary intentions, Moles 2000: 422, on Cynic pedagogy, Hoistad 1948: 15.

[5] For the competition between Plato and Diogenes, see e.g. *SSR* v B 55–67, e.g. 59, Branham 1996: 88–9, 98–9. The very emphasis put by Diogenes and the Cynics on the body and its processes seems a provocation to Platonism.

[6] Cf. D.L. 6.26 (*SSR* v B 55): πατῶν αὐτοῦ [= of Plato] ποτε στρώματα κεκληκότος φίλους παρὰ Διονυσίου, ἐφη, 'πατῶ την Πλατωνος κενοσπουδίαν' πρὸς ον ὁ Πλατων, 'ὁσου, ὦ Διογενες, τοῦ τύφου διαφαινεις, δοκῶν μὴ τετυφῶσθαι' (etc.), *SSR* v B 57 (= D L. 6.41), *SSR* v B 60 (Plato's remark ὡς χαρίεν αν ἦν σου το ἁπλαστον εἰ μη ἦν πλαστον'.

[7] Doring 1993: 340. [8] *SSR* v B 59 (D L. 6.54 et al.).

[9] Moles 2000: 429 points out that while we hear of occasional Cynics in the country, most of them lived in the context of a polis.

Classicists have become more aware of the various strategies that are available in the production of self (Goffman 1959: 248–51; cf. Branham 1996: 87), the way we constantly present a 'front' to an audience (Goffman 1959: 24),[10] the different roles we play in different contexts (on stage, backstage), and to different audiences (Goffman 1959: 49), and how we deal in impression management, developed as a form of game theory by Goffman (1970). The initial theory of self-production (Goffman 1959) was based to a large extent on the comparison with the theatre: the dominating metaphor is to see life as a theatrical performance. Now, as I said, the theatricality of the Cynics' public behaviour leaps to the eye,[11] not only because they force themselves on their spectators, but also by their careful self-presentation, e.g. through the use of certain fixed 'props'.[12] Therefore it should be possible to apply some of these insights of socio-linguistics to the analysis of Cynicism as a rhetorical (and didactic) practice.

Since I intend to concentrate on non-verbal elements in Cynic communication, I will also be using modern theories of non-verbal communication.[13] Of course, a well-articulated theory of non-verbal communication was available even in antiquity itself, in the form of the theory of *actio/pronuntiatio*/ὑπόκρισις, which dealt with the presentation of rhetorical speeches.[14] In modern times, ideas on non-verbal communication go back to the groundbreaking study of Hall,[15] who was one of the first to systematically regard culture as a form of communication,[16] and they have been applied to classical texts by e.g. Donald Lateiner.[17] Concepts that will be particularly useful here are, among the so-called 'Primary message systems' distinguished by Hall (1959: 62–81), e.g. the use of food and eating

[10] In the context of the Cynics, it is also important to distinguish (with Goffman 1959: 24, 27) between the 'personal front' developed by Diogenes, which turns into an 'established front' with the (yet) *more stylised Cynics of* e.g. *the second century* BC, see also Krueger 1996: 225.

[11] See also Branham 1996: 91.

[12] For these *Cynicae familiae insignia*, the knapsack and walking-stick, see *SSR* V B 152–71, Apul. *Apol.* 22. Other 'props' (used in a non-technical sense) include Diogenes' barrel, or the beards that are one of the hallmarks of the second century BC Cynics. Cf. Malherbe 1982: 49 on the use of dress and conduct in Cynic self-definition.

[13] For the terminology, cf. Lateiner 1995: 15 'the widest descriptor, *nonverbal behaviors*, has the virtue of including both intended nonverbal *communication* and the many unintentional acts or sounds, often out-of-awareness, that reveal so much of us. The term further comprehends tactemics, proxemics, and chronemics (the symbolic use of touch, distance, and time), strepistics (nonvocal body sounds like clapping and knee slapping), and paralanguage (vocal but nonverbal factors beyond lexemes)'.

[14] See in particular Cic. *De or.* 3.213–25 (222 *est enim actio quasi sermo corporis*), Quint. *Inst. Or.* 11.3 (esp. on *gestus*, 11.3.65–71). Of course, ancient theory is mainly prescriptive and deals with the delivery of speeches. Modern theory has been used here because of its wider scope.

[15] Hall 1959, 1966; see also Ekman and Friesen 1969, less important: Rutesch and Weldon 1972.

[16] Hall 1959: 51. The most influential representative of this view is now, of course, Geertz 1973.

[17] Lateiner 1987, 1995; see also Boegehold 1999, and Bremmer and Roodenburg 1991: chs. 1 and 2.

(Hall 1959: 62, 64), clothing and physical attributes to mark e.g. status, and the use of space (territoriality) (Hall 1959: 68, 187–209). In the latter context, it is important to analyse the so-called proxemics of a communicative situation, i.e. the social manipulation of space,[18] and to distinguish between intimate, social and public space. In intimate space, one is very close to the person one is communicating with (a lover, a child, a very close friend), in social space one keeps a certain, moderate distance as from e.g. acquaintances or colleagues;[19] in public space one is 'on stage', and has to raise one's voice to reach a larger group of people. The distance one keeps from other people, or inversely, an invasion of someone's personal space, may be a strategy of submissiveness or domination. It is more normal for a subject to approach a king – and then to keep a respectful distance – than for a king to approach a subject. Yet, the latter is what we constantly see emphasised in the anecdotes about Diogenes and Alexander.[20] It is Alexander who approaches Diogenes, who usually never even gets up from his *sitting position*.[21] The proxemics of other such stories are given a slightly different twist: when Diogenes was taken prisoner and led before Philippus (the direction of movement more in line with what one would expect from their respective status), he claimed to be there to check out what Philippus was doing, thereby reversing 'agency' (D.L. 6.43; *SSR* V B 27). And both Perdiccas and Craterus are said to have threatened to kill Diogenes, if he did not come to them (D.L. 6.44; *SSR* V B 50): again, the proxemics of the situation are abnormal. In other stories, it becomes clear that Diogenes refuses to distinguish between the territory reserved for public performance (the market-place) and the private space where one performs intimate tasks like eating or taking care of other biological needs (see below). And what is more, in ignoring this distinction, he forces the people he is interacting with to be 'on stage' with him. Nor does he recognise such a thing as 'sacred space'.[22] In Diogenes' view, one can use any space for any purpose (D.L. 6.22). On the other hand, his posing as a cosmopolite, while

[18] See Hall 1959: 187–209, Lateiner 1995: 14–15.

[19] Cf. Lateiner 1995: 49.

[20] On these anecdotes, see Branham 1996: 88 n. 23.

[21] See *SSR* V B 32 and 33. In Plut. *Vit. Alex.* 14.2–5, 671D–E, Alexander approaches Diogenes, who is lying in the sun and proceeds to sit up. Alexander is standing and is ordered to step out of Diogenes' sun, in Plut. *De exil.* 15, 605D–E, Diogenes is sitting in the sun, and Alexander approaches him (ἐπιστὰς). In Arrian *Anab.* 7.2.1–2, Diogenes is lying in the sun (κατακείμενον) and Alexander approaches him (ἐπιστὰς), cf. D.L. 6.38 (ἡλιουμένῳ ἐπιστὰς), cf. also *SSR* V B 34 (D.L. 6.60) Ἀλεξάνδρου ποτὲ ἐπισταντος αὐτῷ, *SSR* V B 39 (Epict. *Diss.* 3.22, 92) πάλιν Ἀλεξάνδρῳ ἐπισταντι αὐτῷ κοιμωμενῳ. For ἐπιστὰς and conjugated forms, see also D.L. 6.68 (*SSR* V B 40).

[22] Cf. Moles 2000: 429 on Diogenes' claim (D.L. 6.73) that there was nothing wrong in taking something out of a temple. Note, incidentally, that these anecdotes involving the provocative use of space seem to make it perfectly clear that Diogenes is aware of the distinctions between different kinds of space – or rather, of the mistaken societal conventions involving space.

suggesting that he should be 'at home' everywhere, in fact gives him an opportunity to operate as an 'outsider' everywhere.

Theatricality and conscious self-fashioning can work in any number of stylistic registers, and involve both verbal and non-verbal forms of communication.[23] Although the Cynics use both, I will be concentrating on the latter. Now, there is nothing particularly remarkable about non-verbal communication and symbolic action as such. We do it all the time. Among the many instances where action takes the place of words, we will just refer to the symbolic advice imparted by Thrasybulus, the tyrant of Miletus, to his young colleague Periander of Corinth, as described by Herodotus (*Hist.* 5.92f–g). In reaction to the (verbalised) question by a messenger, how Periander could govern his city best and most safely, Thrasybulus took the man for a walk out of town, and while he constantly kept asking why the messenger had come to him, he kept cutting off all the tallest ears of wheat that he could see and throwing them away, until he had destroyed the best and richest part of the crop. The messenger never understood what was going on, but Periander could read this advice perfectly well, and realised that he would have to destroy all potential competition. In fact, without realising it, the messenger is involved in a dialogue, a turn-taking situation like a game, and interestingly the messenger's bafflement is due to the fact that he believes Thrasybulus never takes his turn. As he says to Periander on his return: the man never gave him any advice at all (5.92f3 ὁ δὲ οὐδὲν οἱ ἔφη Θρασύβουλον ὑποθέσθαι). In fact, of course, at every renewal of the messenger's question, there is a symbolic answer – it is the messenger, rather than Thrasybulus, who never fulfils the next turn of confirming his understanding of his interlocutor's response. These forms of symbolic interaction are common, as are the concomitant risks of misreading what is communicated or even, as here, a failure to see that there is any attempt at communication at all (the messenger does not ask for clarification, he just does not see at all that this is a communicative situation). What is different in Cynicism, as in other forms of transgressive communication, is the conscious attempt to put bodily functions that are usually considered improper in company, to communicative use.

The Cynics' preferred mode of communication is a transgressive one, in that they defy commonly held cultural codes, values and norms,[24] but at

[23] On Cynic self-fashioning and impression-management, cf Branham 1996 86, on self-fashioning, Greenblatt 1980 (e g 9, and *passim*)

[24] I use Babcock's (1978 14) definition of 'symbolic inversion', which may be taken as a synonym of 'transgression': ' any act of expressive behaviour which inverts, contradicts, abrogates, or in some fashion presents an alternative to commonly held cultural codes, values and norms be they linguistic, literary or artistic, religious, social and political' See further Stallybrass and White 1986 ch 1

the same time they lay claim, implicitly or explicitly, to moral superiority for their behaviour, which can be construed as a return to a state of natural simplicity. In this context belongs the emphasis on bodily processes. It has been pointed out before that the Cynic uses his body as a trope.[25] Instead of being symptoms of a natural and uninhibited *laissez-faire*, bodily functions are turned into forms of symbolic action, a language either entirely unsupported by words, or, more frequently, a non-verbal medium used to strengthen the effect of language (while at the same time the linguistic utterance serves to reinforce and help interpret the non-verbal sign). Cynic non-verbal communication is incorporated into dialogues with non-Cynics: the non-verbal action often constitutes a regular 'turn' in the turn-taking of dialogue, and out of the whole scala of non-verbal communication available to any language user, there is a clear predilection for the transgressive forms.[26] Stories about Cynics often feature elements like eating,[27] spitting, farting, urinating or defecating, and masturbation or sexual intercourse,[28] and in fact the context of these stories never once allows for an interpretation of the transgressive action as the result of the coincidental and therefore meaningless call of nature. The Cynic clearly exercises his choice to either urinate or not urinate, for instance, as when at a banquet some guests had been treating Diogenes like a real 'Dog' by throwing bones at him, and he proceeded to urinate against them just before he left (D.L. 6.46). This is a clear instance where seemingly 'natural', yet transgressive behaviour is used in a well-considered non-verbal argumentative move. Diogenes himself exploits his nickname not only in a literal (and therefore non-verbal) way, as in the example just discussed, but also metaphorically (i.e. expressed verbally) as when he explained that he wagged his tail at those who gave him things, barked at the ones who didn't, and bit whoever was bad (D.L. 6.60, *SSR* V B 143).[29]

[25] Branham 1996 100, who points out that the use of the body becomes a visible expression of Diogenes' exemption from social control

[26] See Krueger 1996 225–7 An example of non-transgressive non-verbal behaviour, a compelling silence illustrating the moral superiority and authority of the Cynic comes from Lucian's *Life of Demonax* 64 there was civil discord in Athens (and apparently people were having it out in the *ecclesia*) Demonax entered, and by his very appearance made the Athenians fall silent He saw that they were remorseful already, and left 'without having said a word himself either' (ὁ δὲ ἰδὼν ἤδη μετεγνωκοτας οὐδεν εἰπων και αὐτος ἀπηλλαγη), cf note 51

[27] Eating is, of course, strongly regulated by societal convention in any period or place For transgressive eating, see e g *SSR* V B 60, 147, 186–7 (eating in the wrong place, namely the market), 93–5 (eating of the wrong (uncooked) food)

[28] E g D L 6 46 (*SRR* V B 146), 69 (*SSR* V B 147)

[29] Cf *SSR* V B 149 The anecdote about Diogenes' death being the result of his eating raw meat may also be a reference to his dog-like behaviour (*SSR* V B 93–5), as is, of course, the version that he was bitten by a dog (*SSR* V B 96) Tail-wagging and biting are also metaphorically connected with a description of Cynic style by Demetrius (*On Style* 261)

The conscious use of transgressive non-verbal behaviour rewards further analysis. Take the anecdote about Crates (D.L. 6.94; *SSR* V L 1), who comforted Metrocles after an embarrassing incident in the middle of a philosophical training session with Theophrastus: Metrocles had broken wind and was so mortified that he proceeded to lock himself into his house ὑπ' ἀθυμίας ('totally despondently') with every intention of starving himself to death. Note that the farting was unintentional and meaningless, and led to a traditional and socially conditioned (if slightly excessive) response.[30] No message was involved in the bodily process.[31] Of course, to a Cynic, the embarrassed reaction is misplaced and shows a lack of philosophical sophistication. So when Crates was asked to help, he took it upon himself to comfort Metrocles. To that end he *purposely* ate lupins (θέρμους *ἐπίτηδες* βεβρωκώς), which are known to produce gas. D.L. continues the anecdote as follows (= *SSR* V L 1):

ἐπειθε μὲν αὐτὸν καὶ διὰ τῶν λόγων μηδὲν φαῦλον πεποιηκέναι· τέρας γὰρ ἂν γεγονέναι εἰ μὴ καὶ τὰ πνεύματα κατὰ φύσιν ἀπέκρινετο. τέλος δὲ καὶ ἀποπαρδὼν αὑτὸν ἀνέρρωσεν, ἀφ' ὁμοιότητος τῶν ἔργων παραμυθησάμενος. τοὐντεῦθεν ἤκουεν αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐγένετο ἀνὴρ ἱκανὸς ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ.

He tried to persuade him first by verbal argument that he had done nothing base. For it would have been an abnormal phenomenon if gas was not passed the natural way. Finally, he also broke wind. And that comforted him, a consolation derived from the similarity of their actions. From that time onwards he was his student, and became a competent philosopher.

Crates' breaking wind mirrors that of Metrocles, but it is an entirely contrived action intended to reach a certain effect. The non-verbal communication does not stand by itself but follows on verbal attempts, which were not effective (the imperfect suggests that no result has been reached as yet, or better, that the narrative sequence has not been completed, but that another, and more important step in the narrative is yet to be expected (ἀνέρρωσεν)). Crates must have anticipated that words alone would not do the trick – hence the lupins taken well in advance. If he intended to produce a situation mirroring the original and embarrassing one, this also

[30] Cf Goffman 1959 52 on the problems created when meaningless elements in non-verbal communication are interpreted as meaningful ones

[31] Although in this case, too, there was always the risk of the fart being construed as meaningful, e g as a sign of disrespect, or (only marginally less bad) a lack of self-control and a sign of having indulged in the wrong kinds of food before a lecture According to Radermacher 1953 235 this was one of the reasons the Pythagoreans abstained from beans To the Stoics, farting was theoretically acceptable, but they did not go so far as to make it a part of their philosophical repertoire as the Cynics did (Radermacher 1953 237) Among non-philosophical Greeks, farting could be construed as a sign of being startled, feeling joyful or to convey disrespect (Radermacher 1953 237)

necessitated the combination of words and then the farting in the middle of it, cf. the description of what had happened to Metrocles as . . . ποτὲ μελετῶν καὶ μεταξύ πως ἀποπαρδών. But the non-verbal action also confirms by example what had already been communicated verbally, and it produces not just a consolatory, but also a protreptic effect:[32] Metrocles gives up his self-imposed house arrest and takes up philosophy again. Note how there is a clear element of competition between the various philosophical schools: Crates succeeded where Theophrastus failed.[33] There is no indication of whether or not Metrocles realised that Crates' action was planned – and one wonders whether it would have made a difference? In any case, what we have here is protreptic,[34] although maybe the non-Socratic, or the crazed Socratic way.

Yet, there is a gap between farting to show someone that it is all right to do so, and farting to get across a message of disrespect or independence or similar sentiments.[35] In the latter case, this particular form of body language is a choice of stylistic register, in the former, it is almost self-referential in nature: the farting refers to farting, and it is the unruffled demeanour of the agent that is the vehicle of the lesson that the process is a natural one.[36] We have already seen an example of the use of non-verbal communication as a conscious choice of a transgressive stylistic register in Diogenes' urinating on his attackers, although it was hard for them to argue with this behaviour in someone they had been treating like a dog – they had, as it were, forced a transgression of human behaviour on him. A more shocking version is reported in D.L. 6.32 (*SSR* V B 236):

εἰσαγαγόντος τινὸς αὐτὸν [sc. Diogenem] εἰς οἶκον πολυτελῆ καὶ κωλύοντος πτύσαι, ἐπειδὴ ἐχρέμψατο, εἰς τὴν ὄψιν αὐτοῦ ἔπτυσεν, εἰπὼν χείρονα τόπον μὴ εὑρηκέναι.

[32] Although consolation and protreptic may be considered separate philosophical genres, the two are fairly close together here παραμυθέομαι seems to refer to the kind of comforting encouragement also present in Pl *R* 450d–451b The kind of consolation offered here is that of similarity, the *consolatio* ἀφ' ὁμοιότητος

[33] Cf the anecdotes about Plato and Diogenes, *SSR* V B 55, and the one involving Aristotle discussed below

[34] Cf Döring 1993 on the need for an audience and the effect of advertising and promoting the Cynic lifestyle

[35] This is also a form of behaviour attributed to Crates, this time capped wittily by Stilpo (D L 2 117 = *SSR* II O 6, in an argument to prove that Stilpo was unaffected and good with ordinary people) Κράτητος γοῦν ποτε τοῦ κυνικοῦ πρὸς μεν τὸ ἐρωτηθεν οὐκ ἀποκριναμένου, ἀποπαρδοντος δε, 'ἤδειν', ἐφη [sc Stilpo], 'ὡς παντα μᾶλλον φθεγξῃ ἢ ἃ δεῖ' Note that Stilpo takes Crates' non-verbal behaviour as an act of communication On Diogenes' view of farting as a social comment, equal to outspokenness, see Krueger 1996 233

[36] Note, incidentally, that the fact that Crates remains undisturbed by his own bodily processes is not commented on in the anecdote

Someone had invited Diogenes into his luxurious house. This man tried to prevent him from spitting when he had cleared his throat. Diogenes then spat into the man's face, stating that he couldn't find a worse place.

This is clearly transgressive behaviour, something that may have begun as a natural urge to clear one's throat, but that was quickly turned into an action *chreia* (see below) accompanied by a verbal explanation: Diogenes' host took better care of his surroundings than of himself. Even here, though, one cannot help but feel suspicion of how natural the action was even at the beginning. Diogenes' behaviour is a punitive insult, with the verbal *chreia* thrown in as an exegetical move.

Other examples of Diogenes' non-verbal communication confirm his consistent use of transgressive behaviour in a self-conscious and theatrical bid for attention,[37] as when he was walking around in the Stoa backwards, inviting the mockery of the bystanders, to whom he could then point out that they were living their lives the wrong way around (Stob. 3.4, 83, *SSR* V B 267). Walking backwards in public may not look as offensive as spitting or farting, but it is clearly an inversion of the social code. Sometimes transgressive behaviour is explicitly associated with a didactic intention as in D.L. 6.35 (*SSR* V B 188), where Diogenes is dragging around a wine-jar through the Kerameikos by a piece of string tied around its neck, because he wants to admonish (βουλόμενος νουθετῆσαι) someone who had dropped a piece of bread and was ashamed to pick it up again.[38] Diogenes' refusal to distinguish between the accepted social usage of the index and middle finger is a last example of self-consciously transgressive behaviour used to provoke someone to show their true colour: Diogenes pointed out a sophist using his middle finger, and when the man threw a fit, he said: 'There you have him! I showed him to you!' Epictetus, who tells the anecdote, explains that you can't point out a man the way you would a stone or a piece of

[37] Cf. Branham 1989: 52, 'The portrait of Diogenes preserved by tradition is of a self-dramatizing iconoclast who lived in the streets and taught anyone who would listen by paradox, subversive wit, and hyperbole.'

[38] The exact point of the admonishment is not altogether clear, although some points can be made. The text runs (D.L. 6.35, *SSR* V B 188) ἐκβαλοντος δ᾽ αρτον <τινος> και αἰσχυνομενου ἀνελεσθαι, βουλομενος [sc. Diogenes] αὐτον νουθετῆσαι, κεραμου τραχηλον δησας ἐσυρε δια τοῦ Κεραμεικοῦ. The story is reminiscent of the several props used by Diogenes to test whether his would-be followers had sufficiently managed to put aside their sense of misguided shame: he would ask them to follow him while carrying a fish or a piece of cheese (these anecdotes follow immediately on the one discussed here, D.L. 6.36, *SSR* V B 367). Clearly, Diogenes is demonstrating a form of 'correct' *anaideia* as a lesson, by doing something potentially equally or even more embarrassing. There is certainly a sense of climax: quickly 'picking something up' could count as a quick solution to the problem and is not nearly as bad as 'dragging something behind you' – which takes longer and is more conspicuous. Of course, the Kerameikos must have been littered with pieces of pottery like the *keramos*, which must have made the action seem more absurd: at least for the piece of bread there may have been some true need.

wood. You have only 'pointed out' a man as a real man, when you have shown his ideas – and the sophist's reaction showed him up for what he was (*SSR* V B 276).[39]

Branham (1996: 102–3) offers a good analysis of the physical peroration Diogenes adds to his praise of Heracles, as represented in the eighth oration of Dio Chrysostomus: after having ended his speech by referring to Heracles' cleaning of the stables of Augias, Diogenes sat down and defecated (8.36 καθεζόμενος ἐποίει τι τῶν ἀδόξων, note the euphemism). This is a very clear example of his refusal to acknowledge a separate 'backstage' area, where biological needs are supposed to be taken care of.[40] For Diogenes, public and private space are collapsed into each other. This action *chreia* serves as a signature under the speech; it is an allusion to the stable of Augias, a transgressive move mirroring the outrageous comparison between Heracles and the Cynic philosopher, a dramatic enactment of the Cynics' beliefs and thereby a validation of Diogenes' role as a Cynic preacher, and an empowering form of self-mockery all at once (thus Branham 1996: 102–3).

The anecdotes, whether involving sayings or actions, that we have studied so far, belong to the most typical form in which the Cynics' interaction with their environment was stylised in the literary tradition: the *chreia*, a pithy saying or telling action attributed to some definite person, as the definition in the rhetorical tradition has it.[41] There are several issues that should be mentioned in this connection. First of all, the *chreia* is a *literary* form, the written reflection of a philosophy that was primarily supposed to be communicated orally.[42] The form of the *chreia* is stylised, but it is supposed to capture the essence of the Cynic life-style in particularly telling moments. This suggests that the *chreia* should lend itself to 'thick description', i.e. 'an account of the intentions, expectations, circumstances, settings and purposes that give actions their meanings'.[43] And, in fact, that is what I have been trying to do with them.

[39] Cf. D.L. 6.34 (*SSR* V B 502).

[40] Cf. Goffman 1959: 121, 128, Krueger 1996: 227 (no separation between public and private space).

[41] Cf. Hermog. *Prog.* 3–4, p. 6–8 R., Theon, *Prog.* 5–6, p. 96–100 Spengel, Aphth. *Prog.* 3–4, p. 3–10 R. See further Kindstrand 1986, Hock 1997: 764–9, 772, Branham 1989: 54, 58, 1996: 86.

[42] Cf. Branham 1996: 83, 'Cynicism remained the most orally oriented of all the ancient philosophical traditions. This is not to say that the Cynics did not produce written work: they did, extensively so, see the list of titles in D.L. On the *chreiai*, see Kindstrand 1986. Collections of *chreiai* centred around the Spartans, 'wits', kings and rulers, and philosophers, esp. Socrates and the Socratics (Kindstrand 1986: 231).

[43] The term is derived from Geertz 1973, the quotation comes from Greenblatt 1997: 16, who emphasised that the 'thickness' is not a characteristic inherent in the object, but rather one that belongs to the interpretation. New Historicism as embodied by Greenblatt, focuses precisely on the 'petit recit', it uses anecdotes, not as a simplistic miniature version of the cultural phenomenon that is being interpreted, but as a 'scene' – the analysis of different scenes highlights a culture's internal diversity.

However, not only is the *chreia* the literary stylisation of a way of life, there is also some evidence that the way of life itself is stylised: not everyone believes that these sayings, i.e. the material itself out of which the *chreiai* were formed, were always the happy result of Diogenes' wit combined with the accidents of life. D.L. 5.18 (*SSR* V B 68) shows a carefully controlled and monitored interaction between Aristotle and Diogenes (incidentally, another illustration of competition between philosophical schools).[44]

Διογένους ἰσχάδ' αὐτῷ [sc. Aristoteli] διδόντος νοήσας ὅτι, εἰ μὴ λάβοι, χρείαν εἴη μεμελετηκώς, λαβὼν ἔφη Διογένην μετὰ τῆς χρείας καὶ τὴν ἰσχάδα ἀπολωλεκέναι.

When Diogenes offered him [sc. Aristotle] a fig, it occurred to Aristotle that if he didn't take it, Diogenes would have a *chreia* ready. So he took it and said that on top of the *chreia* Diogenes had lost the fig.

The anecdote is framed in the traditional way: Diogenes creates a dramatic setting (he offers a fig to Aristotle), which can serve as a context for the *chreia* which is to follow. In this particular little story, Aristotle suspects this, i.e. he reads Diogenes' offer as a first move in a turn-taking event. This is an almost perfect demonstration of Goffman's ideas on impression management in terms of game theory (1970): there is a contest of assessment between the participants, and the moves are calculating ones.[45] Like a chess-player, Aristotle anticipates Diogenes' ultimate intention (to express a certain pre-conceived and well-practised witty thought (μεμελετηκώς)), and also second-guesses what move of his own this *chreia* could be meant to be a reaction to. He suspects he is meant to decline the offer.[46] Instead, he accepts, and thereby robs Diogenes both of the fig and his chance of proffering his *chreia*. In fact, not only does Diogenes lose the opportunity of stating this particular *chreia* of his, he also loses the whole '*chreia*-slot' in the turn-taking event. For it is Aristotle who accompanies his non-verbal move (acceptance of the fig) with verbal wit. If anything, this anecdote reveals the ritual aspects of the *chreia*-scenes, rituals which can be perceived and consciously manipulated by the participants. This also undermines the notion that the Cynic reacts spontaneously and naturally to whatever

[44] Cf. above on Plato and Diogenes, and Theophrastus and Diogenes. The anecdote featuring Aristotle is one of the few in which Diogenes 'loses', cf. also *SSR* V B 62 (against Plato). Crates 'loses' in a similar incident involving figs against Stilpo, D.L. 2.118 (= *SSR* II O 6).

[45] Goffman 1970: 14, 85, cf. Goffman 1959: 6.

[46] Why does Aristotle think he is supposed to reject the fig? Because that would be a civilised person's instinctive reaction to the approach of Diogenes? Because of the sexual connotations of figs?

events cross his path: in this case, it is suggested, the scene is laid quite carefully, and a script had been prepared.[47] Self-dramatisation is therefore part of the literary representation of Diogenes.

It is interesting to note that even in ancient theory there was room for the possibility that a *chreia* would take the form of an action. The standard example, very suitable for the classroom, was Diogenes' (or Crates') spotting a poorly behaved boy, and proceeding to strike the boy's pedagogue.[48] Characteristic for the action *chreia* is that there has to be a context, which would reasonably give rise to an opinion and can be construed as the stimulus. The action can always be replaced by a statement of opinion: as Theon puts it, action *chreiai* indicate a certain meaning without using speech (αἱ χωρὶς λόγου ἐμφαίνουσαί τινα νοῦν). The equivalence of the action to a speech act is made clear in Hermogenes' example of a mixed *chreia*: On seeing a poorly behaved boy, Diogenes struck the pedagogue (action *chreia*), saying (verbal *chreia*): 'τί γὰρ τοιαῦτα ἐπαίδευες;' The γάρ-sentence motivates the prior action of striking, treating the action as a piece of text; and indeed it could well have been replaced by a statement like: 'you deserve to be struck', or 'I should strike you for this'. A similar phenomenon can be observed in the anecdote which has it that when Diogenes saw a clumsy archer, he sat down right beside the target saying 'so that I won't be hit' (ἵνα μὴ πληγῶ, D.L. 6.67, *SSR* V B 455). The ἵνα-clause modifies the 'main clause' expressed in the action.

Non-verbal communication as a replacement of speech acts is also in evidence in the cases where in the turn-taking of philosophical debate an action fills the slot of one 'turn' (D.L. 6.39, about Diogenes):[49]

ὁμοίως καὶ πρὸς τὸν εἰπόντα ὅτι κίνησις οὐκ ἔστιν, ἀναστὰς περιεπάτει.

Similarly, in reaction to the man who claimed that there is no movement, he got up and walked around for a while.

Here, the effect derives in part from the relative cultural value of verbal argument and mute 'natural' acting. This is not simply a case where empirical

[47] Kindstrand 1986: 224, notes the implication of this anecdote that Diogenes was not averse to the 'conscious fabrication of a cutting reply'.

[48] See Quint. 1.9, 5 *Etiam in ipsorum factis esse chriam putant ut Crates, cum indoctum puerum vidisset, paedagogum eius percussit*; Heimog. *Prog.* 6, 10 'πρακτικαὶ δέ, ἐν αἷς πρᾶξις μόνον, οἷον Διογένης ἰδὼν μειράκιον ἀτακτοῦν τὸν παιδαγωγὸν ἔτυπτησε,' Theon, *Prog.* 98, 29–99, 2 πρακτικαὶ δὲ εἰσιν αἱ χωρὶς λόγου ἐμφαινουσαί τινα νοῦν e.g. *SSR* V B 386, 388.

[49] Cf. *SSR* V B 481 (Simplic. *in Ar. Ph.* 1012, 22–6) τέτταρας εἶναι φησι τοὺς περὶ κινήσεως τοῦ Ζήνωνος λόγους, δι' ὧν γυμνάζων τοὺς ἀκροωμένους ἀναιρεῖν ἔδοκει τὸ ἐναργέστατον ἐν τοῖς οὖσι, τὴν κίνησιν· ὥστε καὶ Διογένη τὸν κύνα τῶν ἀπορίων ποτε τούτων ἀκούσαντα μηδὲν μὲν εἰπεῖν πρὸς αὐτάς, ἀναστάντα δὲ βαδίσαι καὶ δια τῆς ἐναργείας αὐτῆς λῦσαι τὰ ἐν τοῖς λόγοις σοφίσματα.

evidence is used to invalidate a logical argumentation: in highbrow culture, that should still have taken the form of a (verbal) debate between the empiricist and the rationalist. In this case, though, the sophistication of the counter-intuitive position defended in debate ('there is no movement') is unmasked as philosophical pretentiousness by the down-to-earth everyday action of walking around.[50] In the version of the anecdote reported by Simplicius, the fact that Diogenes' communication is non-verbal is underlined by the explicit addition of the fact that 'he did not say anything'.[51]

The force of physical ἐνάργεια is exploited in combination with a verbal utterance in Diogenes' riposte to Plato's proposed definition of 'a human being' as a 'featherless biped creature'. When the proposal met with applause, Diogenes plucked a chicken, brought it with him to the lecture and said: 'here you have Plato's human being'. The turn-taking effect is underlined by the third move, Plato's emendation of the definition by the addition of 'with flat nails' (*SSR* V B 63 = D.L. 6.40).[52] These examples indicate that there are more philosophical genres that can be covered non-verbally: not just consolation and protreptic, but also elenchus.

3 THE CYNICS ON LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE?

Although in the preceding sections I concentrated on the non-verbal aspects of Cynic communication, it is clear that the majority of stories about the Cynics involve their use of language. Cynic rhetoric has been studied and analysed very well by Branham (1989, 1996): it is a 'rhetoric of laughter' (Branham 1989), although it is laughter with a sting; a rhetoric of 'paradox, subversive wit and hyperbole' (Branham 1989: 52), and one, as we have seen, that teaches by example (Branham 1989: 58). It is characterised by improvisation and humour (Hock 1997: 763). The one-liners which we find in the literary version of Cynicism probably did form a preferred mode of communicating a philosophical life-style.[53] Similarly, the choice of genre fits

[50] For the use of the body in rhetorical exempla/enthymemes, see Branham 1996 98. For the relative value of words and deeds, see section 3.

[51] *SSR* V B 481 (see note 49), cf. Lateiner 1995 13 on the use of silence.

[52] Oddly, Navia 1998 56 interprets this as, 'A concrete featherless chicken was, therefore, *all* that Plato would have needed to define the human species' (*sic!*).

[53] For the anecdote (the literary version of the one-liners delivered in real life) as a vehicle for the propagation of philosophy, see Branham 1996 86 n. 17. Long 1996a 31 submits that 'in the case of Diogenes anecdote and aphorism should be construed as the essential vehicles of his thought', although at the same time it remains necessary to complicate this picture by insisting that it primarily conveys the literary *representation* of that thought. On Long's attempt to anticipate this problem by depicting the Cynic lifestyle as a 'studied attempt to construct a life that would breed just the kind of anecdotal tradition D.L. records' (ibid.), see below, section 4.

the contents of Cynicism perfectly.[54] Interestingly, Cynic use of language was felt to be characteristic enough to deserve the label κυνικὸς τρόπος (Dem. *On Style* 259–61), and Demetrius links it in one breath with the style of comedy (ibid. 259). Throughout, the apparent unconventionality of the Cynics' beliefs also characterises their forms of expression, in accordance with their attempts to 'deface the currency'.[55]

Beside the fact that the Cynics *used* language in a certain way, did they also theorise about it? Can we distinguish a Cynic philosophy of language? Antisthenes was obviously interested in questions of language and logic, although his status as a logician is a matter of some dispute – however that may be, his work is fairly technical in nature, belongs in the sophistic tradition, and as far as we can tell has no direct link to the main concerns of Cynicism, so I am leaving him out of account here.[56] Both Antisthenes and Diogenes did take an interest in the literary use of language, and produced literature, but again no theory has come down to us, if there was any. Typically, they appear to have been mostly interested in the parodic genres.[57] With good justification, there is no chapter on the Cynics in the section on Logic and Language of the *Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy*.

However, three points about Diogenes' views on language deserve special mention (for the relationship between Diogenes and literature, see below). First of all, as illustrated by some of the action *chreiai* discussed above, there is a clear preference for deeds over words. This attitude is documented e.g. in *SSR* V B 283 (Stob. 2.15, 43), where it is related how Diogenes was praised by the Athenians for a speech he had made about self-control. His reaction was 'May you perish miserably, since you are contradicting me by your deeds.'[58]

[54] Branham 1996 85 speaks of the 'expansion of the domain of literature through the transformation of oral, quotidian, and utilitarian forms of discourse'.

[55] On 'Defacing the currency', see Branham 1996 90 n. 30.

[56] Some of his works which must have been relevant in this respect are, e.g. (D.L. 6.17), *On Names* I. V, *On the Use of Names a Controversial Work*, *On Questioning and Answering*. Antisthenes' main contention on the impossibility of contradiction is transmitted through Aristotle, *Top.* 104b20, *Met.* 1024b32–4 is the main source for his view that for any A there is only one *oikeios logos*. On Antisthenes' views on language, see *SSR* IV, 240–1, 248–9, Decleva Caizzi 1966, e.g. nos. 36, 38, 44–9, p. 78, 81, Biancacci 1990. Epictetus' remark (1.17.12) ἀρχὴ παιδεύσεως ἡ τῶν ὀνομάτων ἐπίσκεψις is in the Antisthenic tradition, Hoistad 1948 157, this is opposed to the anti-intellectualist stance which Hoistad 1948 158 also detects in the Cynic tradition, see D.L. 6.103.

[57] Cf. Adiados 1999 542 'in their [= the Cynics'] hands, the epic became parody, the Socratic dialogue diatribe, they developed the *chreia* and created all kinds of jokes, anecdotes, romances, they obtained new shades from the ancient iambi and choliambi, wrote biographies of their heroes, into which they introduced all these elements, used in the way that interested them'.

[58] *SSR* V B 283 (Stob. 2.15, 43) Διογένης λόγον τινα διέξῃει περὶ σωφροσύνης καὶ ἐγκρατείας καὶ ὡς ἐπῄνουν αὐτὸν οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι, ὁ δὲ 'κάκιστα ἀπόλοισθε' εἶπε, 'τοῖς ἔργοις μοι ἀντιλέγοντες'.

Of course, this was a widespread idea,[59] but one that gained pregnancy by Diogenes' life-style, which could be seen as an illustration of the principle.

The second point is that the value cherished most by the Cynics was freedom of speech, παρρησία.[60] According to Diogenes, it is the best thing there is;[61] for the Cynic Demonax it equals freedom and truth (Lucian, *Life of Demonax* 3, 11). As we will see, Cynic promotion of παρρησία puts the Cynics in the tradition of ancient comedy. It looks as if their *licentia* included a claim to the right to express themselves non-verbally in the scandalous stylistic register discussed above.[62]

A final point was made by Tony Long (1996 and 1999) and illustrated by among other things D.L. 6.27 (*SSR* V B 280) 'Asked where one might see good men in Greece, he said: "Men nowhere, but boys in Sparta"': in apophthegms such as this one, Diogenes shows that he accepts the normal connotation of Greek words (in this case 'man'), but has original insights into their correct denotations. His demands on the relationship between connotation and denotation are stricter than the conventional ones. There is nothing and nobody in Greece to which the label 'good man' might be said to refer appropriately, but if a boy is taken to be a budding man, the grown men of Sparta (as we would normally call them) can be said to be on their way to becoming 'real' men even in Cynic eyes. In a similar way, the Athenians are really 'women' to Diogenes.[63] Of course, the theoretical notions remain completely implicit, but the concerns about evaluative language expressed by Diogenes in apophthegms like this one, can be paralleled in serious intellectuals like Thucydides and Plato.[64]

On the other hand, it should be pointed out that such play on the gap between connotations and conventional denotations of words is also at the basis of much humour in comic genres. To give but one example: when the women in Aristophanes' *Ecclesiazusae* are rehearsing to be men because they want to attend the *ecclesia*, one of them accidentally addresses her men-impersonating colleagues as 'women'. 'Are you calling these men "women", you fool?!', says Praxagora. And the woman explains apologetically, 'It's

[59] The distinction between words and deeds can be found already in Homer, cf. Buchholz 1884: 120–2, Heinimann 1965: 43–6. Heinimann points out the original complementarity of the two, without either one being valued above the other. Later, the notions became polar opposites (esp. in the dative ὀνόματι vs ἔργῳ), and deeds came to be valued higher than (mere, empty) words (Heinimann 1965: 53).

[60] Cf. Sluiter 2000. [61] D.L. 6.69, *SSR* V B 473. [62] Cf. Krueger 1996: 233.

[63] E.g. D.L. 6.59, *SSR* V B 282.

[64] Cf. Plato *R.* 474d3–475a2, 493b3–c6 (esp. c), *R.* 560e–561a, Thuc. 3.82.4 (see on all these passages, Sluiter and Rosen 2003). In all cases, we are dealing with words that express a certain evaluation (ἀξίωσις). Mostly, they are words that are in general use, but whose specific application serves a particular evaluative purpose.

because of Epigonus over there [in the audience]: I happened to look in his direction and thought I was addressing women . . .' (Ar. *Eccl.* 165–9). The passage is hilarious for its utter confusion about the applicability of the labels 'men' and 'women'.[65]

The conclusion must be that the Cynics live a certain rhetoric, but that whatever linguistic ideas are at the basis of that rhetoric (notions about the hierarchy between words and deeds, the ideal of παρρησία, ideas about the match between meanings and referents) can be readily paralleled in 'popular linguistics', the folk-linguistic counterpart to 'popular morality'; they are especially prominent in comedy. And that in turn has consequences for the evaluation of the Cynic enterprise as a whole.

4 DOES SHOCK THERAPY WORK?

There is an inherent problem with transgressive artistic genres that rely for their effect on a sense of scandalised shock in their audiences. As Ralph Rosen has shown (with Donald Marks), biting satire shares with e.g. gangsta rap a combination of cultural sophistication and the suggestion of raw power. The latter is mainly the product of the scandal of transgression, trademark of the genre. The sophistication consists in the conscious allusion and intertextual connectedness to cultural traditions: the self-fashioning of the Aristophanic comic poet evokes a tradition of long-suffering critics of society, who adopt a didactic or quasi-didactic tone, but whose project is inherently self-defeating. They need to be lone rangers, comically isolated in their outraged sense of what needs to be done, without any serious hope of convincing anyone.[66] Similarly, the gangsta rapper shocks and scandalises completely only those members of his audience who miss or refuse to appreciate the embeddedness of the genre in African-American traditions of doing the dozens (a game of verbal virtuosity and one-upmanship) or the 'signifyin' monkey' (a trickster figure, again singled out by his verbal wit and agility), while those who focus on those tamer (?) aspects of the genre, fail to connect with the raw message that is also contained in it. Although it is still possible to relate to both these aspects, one somehow always fails

[65] No doubt compounded by the fact that male actors were playing women who were trying to look like men, but whose 'true' gender kept intruding – while according to the joke, not even the gender of the audience was reliable and stable.

[66] This reading of ancient comedy presupposes (as I believe is the case) that the comic poet does not have a serious programme which he tries to sell to his audience – and this in spite of the phenomenon of the parabasis. The comic poet is reconciled to the effect of his persona, in much the same way that at least many representatives of the gangsta rap genre must also be, highly aware as they are of the artificial and indeed artistic nature of their creations.

to do so *simultaneously*: gangsta rap is like one of those drawings that can be interpreted as two different three-dimensional objects, but never at the same time. The mental image one construes keeps flipping back and forth between the different options. The self-defeating nature of the satirical genre, doomed to a success that can never be more than partial, looks like an interesting parallel for the Cynic enterprise. So the question arises: is Cynicism an art form? And if so, does that preclude it from being a serious philosophical enterprise? And did it ever work?

From the aspects we have studied so far, it would certainly look as if the Cynic owes a major debt to the comic buffoon, the persona of the comic poet, and the iambic tradition. Transgressive verbal and non-verbal behaviour is, of course, the stuff of farce and high comedy. Remember the opening of Aristophanes' *Frogs*, where the slave Xanthias is complaining bitterly to his master Dionysus that he is carrying heavy luggage without being permitted any of the usual jokes: he can't say that he needs to take a shit, or that he will start farting if someone doesn't take his load off him (vs. 8–10). In the same comedy, Dionysus himself cannot control his bowel movements, when he is scared to death by the doorman of the Underworld (v. 479 ἐγκέχοδα). In the *Ecclesiazusae*, the heroine's husband Blepyrus comes out of bed, looking for a quiet place to relieve himself, and thinks that, since it's night, any place will do: 'οὐ γάρ με νῦν χέζοντά γ' οὐδεὶς ὄψεται' ('for now nobody will see me when I take a shit', v. 322) – of course, this is never really true when one is on stage. The comic effect depends in part on the double-edged use of space. The very public sexual discomfort to which the men in *Lysistrata* and *Ecclesiazusae* are reduced again shows us the use of the same stylistic register for (comic) effect. Obviously, the list of examples can easily be expanded.

Of course, although in all these cases bodily processes are deployed to entertain the spectators, one cannot maintain that they are used to convey any ulterior messages. But there is more comic material that goes into the making of a Cynic. The typical persona projected by the poets in the iambographic tradition and in Old Comedy is one of a boastful, self-righteous, socially minded, but also grumpy and dyspeptic figure with a fundamentally didactic presence.[67] The Cynic's self-fashioning is definitely in this tradition, and reinforces the idea that the Cynic's stylistic means stem from this same tradition – remember that Demetrius connects the style of comedy and the Cynic style (κυνικὸς τρόπος, *On Style* 259). Note, incidentally, that the didacticism of the comic poet ('I'm doing this all

[67] Rosen 1988 18–21, Sluiter and Rosen 2003

for the common good and in your best interest, even if nobody seems to appreciate it . . .') ultimately remains powerless and ineffective, and in fact, this is in part why the texts are comic to begin with (see below). Moreover, apart from the choice of stylistic register and the comparable process of self-fashioning, resulting in the projection of the persona of an isolated, buffoon-like, unheeded teacher, the ideal of παρρησία is also one that is shared by the Cynics with the iambographic and comic traditions.[68] All of this suggests that there is some form of intertextual connection between representations of the Cynics' performance and that of the iambographic tradition and the comic theatre.[69]

However, Cynicism's intertextual background is more complicated than that. Diogenes had relatively well-documented literary interests and felt that his life could be described in the terms of high tragedy.[70] The fact that Diogenes thinks of himself in tragic terms (and turns those labels into claims to pride and happiness) again demonstrates the theatrical aspect of his self-fashioning. He can see himself as a dramatic character, and may have modelled his life partly on examples derived from literature. This was certainly a feature that became part of the Cynic tradition. Later Cynics also appropriated certain literary predecessors, with Odysseus, Thersites, Heracles and Telephus especially prominent in the Cynic imagination.[71] Theoretically, this could be said to add epic and tragic elements to the creation of the Cynic persona, although never in a straightforward way.

In the second sophistic, Thersites, the one buffoon-like figure in the *Iliad*, was praised for his παρρησία and made into a Cynic demagogue

[68] There are several sources detailing cases in which comic licence was restricted. Mostly, these sources are unreliable reflections of Hellenistic ideas about the genre. The one certain case is a measure taken between 440 and 437, whose extent and range is unclear. In addition, Aristophanes was sued by Kleon, and there is a fragment by Eupolis (99, 29) which indicates some juridical restriction. It is probable that legal action was only undertaken when it was felt that due democratic process was threatened by poetic παρρησία (as was felt to be the case when Kleon was mocked in the presence of non-Athenians). On these political considerations, see Wallace 1994 esp. 123. For a careful weighing of the sources, see Halliwell 1991 esp. 63–6, Csapo and Slater 1995 165–85, Sommerstein forthcoming.

[69] Cf. Adrados 1999 605: 'The Cynics consciously placed themselves within the tradition represented by the ancient iambic poets, scathing paupers, by the Aesop of legend, piercing, witty and persecuted, by Socrates, poor and acting against the values of "normal" society' – Adrados does not distinguish here between the Cynics themselves and literary representations of Cynicism.

[70] D. L. 6.38 (*SSR* V B 263): 'εἰωθει [sc. Diogenes] δε λεγειν τας τραγικὰς ἀρας αὐτῷ συνηντηκέναι εἶναι γοῦν "ἄπολις, ἄοικος, πατρίδος ἐστερημενος, | πτωχος, πλανητης, βιον εχων τοὐφ' ἡμεραν" ' This is an adaptation of E. *Hipp.* 1029. The term πτωχος does not occur in Euripides, only in Aeschylus and Sophocles (*OR* and *OC*, the only tragic occurrence of πλανητης is in Sophocles *OC*. The suggestion of possible identification with the dethroned vagrant king who fully knows his destiny is interesting.

[71] On Heracles and Odysseus, see Hoistad 1948 22–73, 94–102. On impression management on the basis of literary examples (literary stereotyping), Branham 1989 14.

(Κυνικόν τινα δημηγόρον, Lucian *Life of Demonax* 61). Diogenes wrote a work called *Heracles*, and Herculean πόνος remained a Cynic ideal. The wanderings and patience of Odysseus, who returned to his own palace dressed as a beggar, equally struck a chord. Again, the figure of Telephus gave ample scope for Cynic theatricality and self-dramatisation. Euripides' *Telephus* told the story of the king in rags, who had been wounded by Achilles' spear, suffered from a festering wound, and had been told that what had wounded him, would eventually also heal him. The tragedy was parodied endlessly by Aristophanes, who focused on the miserable way the king-beggar looked,[72] and apparently that was one of the most striking aspects of the play. Crates from Thebes in particular was so inspired by seeing the tragedy *Telephus* performed that he sold all his possessions and devoted the rest of his life to philosophy (D.L. 6.87–8; *SSR* V H 4).

One important thing to note about all these tragic and epic heroes, however, is that without exception they lend themselves quite readily and regularly to comic distortions. Heracles can be a figure in comedy as well as in tragedy, Odysseus features in satyr-plays, Telephus is parodied in the comic theatre, and the presence of Thersites in Homer's *Iliad* was a reason in antiquity to consider Homer the father of comedy as well as tragedy. The intertextuality and literary imitation that goes into the self-fashioning of the Cynics has a streak of buffoonery *throughout*. The conscious play with and resonances of the literary tradition make Cynicism definitely at least partly into an art form.[73]

Before dealing with the question of whether this precludes (literary) Cynicism from being a real 'philosophy', and considering its effectiveness, this is probably the place to take issue with a very seductive looking proposition by Tony Long, who considers the Cynic lifestyle as a 'studied attempt to construct a life that would breed just the kind of anecdotal tradition Diogenes Laertius records' (1996: 31). The question is whether we can ever penetrate the merciless literarity of the tradition to get to the unmediated Diogenes and his projects, without resorting to propositions which

[72] Cf the list of Aristophanic references in Rau 1967 217, e g Ar *Nub* 921–4, *Ach* 440–4 (Dicaeopolis models himself on Telephus extensively), *SSR* V B 166, V B 564 Apart from his beggarly appearance, it was mostly Telephus' stratagem of holding baby Orestes hostage in order to get a hearing that was much parodied

[73] For reasons of space, I do not go into the intertextual relationships with other philosophers, although they are undoubtedly there The figure of Socrates must have influenced Diogenes both in person and perhaps also through his literary representation as a character in Plato however that may be, in Socrates' case, too, there is clearly a potential for caricature – in fact, Socrates is also a good example of philosophical theatricality (cf his alleged satyr-like qualities) That Plato is somehow considered a foil as well is clear from the provocative insistence on the body, and from the anecdotes showing overt competition (see above, at notes 33 and 34)

must remain caught up in circularity. In the virtual absence of independent sources,[74] it seems preferable to me to reconcile ourselves to the fact that we basically have nothing but literary sediments of Cynicism, the literary representation of a tradition, which rewards literary analysis.[75] The literary shape of philosophy may be quite far removed from the lived experience of the Cynics, and it can teach us nothing about how close a match there is between Diogenes' intentions and the actual tradition we have. In fact, in view of the use to which some of these literary representations of Cynicism were put, it is likely that we are dealing with a highly stylised and domesticated version of Diogenes' performances.

Is it possible for a 'life-style', and an artistically and intertextually stylised one like Cynicism at that, to constitute a 'real philosophy'? This was a question raised already in antiquity, and I do not think it is a very productive one.[76] However, the question of whether this particular way of life would be the result of, lead to or equal a philosophically consistent programme, does seem a legitimate one. Could Cynicism in its literary representation ever be taken seriously? Could it work?

As I said in my introduction, there is no denying that (historical) Cynicism had some effect on the philosophical tradition: later philosophers acknowledged Cynic formative influences and students of the philosophical tradition recognised and incorporated a Cynical contribution without trouble. The Stoics in particular bear witness to this fact.[77] It is possible, therefore, to study the philosophical contents of Cynicism through its

[74] See below on the Stoa as heirs to the Cynical tradition

[75] On the literary shaping of philosophical subject-matter, cf Doring 1993 337–8, 341, Branham 1996 82–3

[76] Moles 2000 420–2 argues, not unconvincingly, that it is a way of life with philosophical claims and that the opposition between the two is false The way of life shows that the philosophical programme, based on the desirability of a 'life according to nature', can in fact be executed The way of life becomes both the test for the philosophical programme and a way to teach it to others

[77] There is an acknowledged Cynic streak within Stoicism, which is responsible e g for the Stoics' predilection for blunt directness in their speech, cf *FDS* 243–6, e g *FDS* 244 = Cic *Off* 1 35, 128 *nec vero audiendi sunt Cynici, aut si qui fuerunt Stoici paene Cynici* The Stoic school tradition traces its lineage from Socrates over Antisthenes, Diogenes the Dog and Crates to Zeno, Cleanthes and Chrysippus (*FDS* 118–29), although there are also groups within Stoicism trying to distantiate themselves from the Cynics The Cynics also share their philosophical *telos* with the Stoics, and according to some, the similarity between the schools makes Cynicism into a kind of short-cut to virtue (*FDS* 138 = D L. 6 104–5 Ἀρέσκει δ' αὐτοῖς [sc. the Cynics] καὶ τέλος εἶναι τὸ κατ' ἀρετὴν ζῆν, ὡς Ἀντισθένης φησιν ἐν τῷ Ἡρακλεῖ, ὁμοίως τοῖς Στωικοῖς ἅπερ καὶ κοινωνία τις τοῖς δυο ταυταις αἱρεσεσιν ἐστιν ὅθεν καὶ τον Κυνισμον εἰρηκασι συντομον ἐπ' ἀρετην ὁδον) Cynic influence on Stoic political theory is also clear (LS 67 A–H) But although Chrysippus may have praised Diogenes for publicly masturbating and then commenting that he wished he could satisfy his hunger just as easily by simply rubbing his stomach (*SVF* 3 706 = Plut *De Stoic repugn* ch 21, 1044B), Chrysippus never went as far as to engage in this kind of behaviour himself or to recommend it to would-be Stoics

effects on other philosophers. The effects of historical Cynicism are also visible in the distinction made in the (Stoic) tradition between 'authentic', and clearly much appreciated Cynicism, and perverted forms, in which all that remained was the transgressive self-production without there being any 'genuine' content.[78] What I am *not* arguing, therefore, is that literary analysis is the only valid approach to the whole phenomenon of Cynicism, and that philosophy plays a minor part, if any, in our study of it. However, the philosophical arguments have to be made in a fairly indirect way, precisely because of the form the literary tradition on Diogenes takes. And whereas the Stoic reactions to Cynicism may confirm that the literary tradition was based on some historical reality, this does not mean that the literary tradition should not constitute an object of research in its own right. In fact, the approach advocated here, where the stories about Diogenes are considered to form part of a web of texts and references, shows how unlikely it is that we can use them as straightforward historical evidence.

So, although there are some indications that historical Cynicism influenced the philosophical tradition, this does not settle the question about the status or reliability of our literary tradition. And in fact, if we look at the societal effects, i.e. the reception of Cynicism, there are several indications that the performance of the Cynics was viewed in much the same light as that of the comic poets or the satirists. And it is worth noting explicitly that the transgressive aspects of *those* genres had been so encapsulated in a 'safe' and confined space – e.g. the performance in the theatre – that they had effectively been turned into 'appropriate' behaviour, since it was expected and even required from the genre and the occasion. In the case of the Cynics, we see that the *chreia* was rapidly turned into one of the subject-matters of choice for primary education – which would be certain to remove any serious stinging effect it might have had. Choice bits of Diogenes were incorporated in the curriculum of the grammarian and were rehearsed to death in all the various commutations of grammatical form, cases and syntactical embedding that the school teachers could think of. The content of the *chreia* was felt to be both entertaining and moralising

[78] Cf. in particular Epictetus' diatribe 3.22 *On Cynicism*. Cynicism without god' will easily turn into nothing but public displays of indecency (3.22.2), being a true Cynic is not just a matter of getting the right props (3.22.10). An authentic Cynic must have *aidōs* (3.22.15), in fact, the true Cynic turns out to be something of a super-Stoic (cf. e.g. 3.22.19 on the quality required of the Cynic ἡγεμονικόν). The true Cynic is a man with a divine mission (3.22.23) etc. – this is the ideal, but reality often falls far short of it (3.22.50). Notice that there is some tension between the notion of authenticity and the artificiality of some of the communicative strategies attributed to Diogenes by the literary tradition.

enough to help shape the minds of future citizens – surely not future Cynics.[79] As Krueger remarks (1996: 238): 'The meaning of the stories of Cynic shamelessness was not the same as the acts they described.' And while several anecdotes featuring Diogenes registered the scandalised shock of the audience,[80] we should remember that the reaction of the internal audience of the narrative does not necessarily constitute an accurate reflection or prediction of that of its external audience, i.e. of the people who would hear or read the anecdote in question. Indeed, the external audience's relish at the story may well have been considerably increased by their sense of superiority to those actually or allegedly present at Diogenes' performance. In this sense, the supposedly transgressive Cynics were used to preserve and strengthen the establishment by their incorporation into educational practice. Their transgression is bridled and in a sense robbed of its effect by being turned into a 'licensed release' of carnivalesque expressions.[81] We should also take into consideration that the actual presence of the Cynic philosophers must at best have been minor and marginal most of the time, in most of the places of the Greco-Roman world. However, in this case as in so many others, 'what is socially peripheral is often symbolically central'.[82] The symbolic role of the transgressive Cynic in the public imagination is far greater than any actual social importance they may have had,[83] while the nature of that role seems to be the domesticated reinforcement of a fairly moderate, not to say trivial, public morality.

In fact, there is at least one story in Diogenes Laertius which suggests that the Athenians had managed to integrate the eccentric Diogenes into their image of their society to such an extent, that no serious sense of scandal could still attach to him; rather, they were apparently fondly regarding him

[79] Cf. Morgan 1998: 185–8. She notes how the student is supposed to identify with Diogenes as a typical powerful Greek male (ibid. 188). It is true that Diogenes has a certain rugged maleness and self-sufficiency to offer for imitation, and therefore *selective* identification is possible and in order – in that sense he definitely has more school-appeal than the run-of-the-mill comic hero. His moral seriousness must have been recognised. However, Morgan does not comment on the fact that the school version of Diogenes also constitutes a denial and inversion of important aspects of his self-constructed persona. For Diogenes in school, see also Krueger 1996: 224.

[80] E.g. *SSR* V B 236 (Gal. *Protrept.* 8) (somebody whose face Diogenes had spat in) ἀγανακτοῦντος δ' αὐτοῦ, *SSR* V B 279 (Theodoret *Graec. affect. cur.* 12.48–9) μεμψαμένου τινος τὸ γινόμενον, *SSR* V B 269 (D. L. 6.63) πρὸς τὸν ὀνειδίζοντα ὅτι κτλ. *SSR* V B 186 (D. L. 6.58) ὀνειδίζομενος (sc. Diogenes). Diogenes being laughed at by the bystanders: *SSR* V B 267 (Stob. 3.4, 83). On the role of the internal audience, see also Krueger 1996: 237–8.

[81] Cf. Stallybrass and White 1986: 13. [82] Babcock 1978: 32, cf. Stallybrass and White 1986: 20.

[83] Cf. Babcock 1978: 32: 'The carnival, the circus, the gypsy, the lumpenproletariat, play a symbolic role in bourgeois culture out of all proportion to their actual social importance. However ahistorical this may sound, it is an insightful illustration of the role of the 'other' as a foil for one's own sense of identity. For 'imaginative sustenance', cf. Stallybrass and White 1986: 21.

as their pet eccentric. For when some boys had harrassed Diogenes and damaged his barrel, the Athenians punished the boys, and gave Diogenes a new barrel. A new barrel. They did not offer him a house, or any other kind of 'normal' shelter, but simply accepted the fact that Diogenes would need a new barrel, without coming to the conclusion that they should all abandon their houses and follow Diogenes' example. In that sense, they showed themselves quicker students than Plato, who, according to several anecdotes, on more than one occasion sent to Diogenes as a gift much more than he needed or had requested.[84]

5 CONCLUSION

So what, on balance, is the effect of Diogenes' apparently consciously self-undermining rhetorical and performative strategies?[85] In the literary representations we have, he seems to be happy to align himself with the 'warners' whose fate it is that they are not listened to seriously, who, in fact, cannot be listened to seriously without losing their status. He contented himself with the status of a marginal figure, who needs a society with a clearly recognisable nucleus, or he would lose his footing and orientation. Cynic behaviour is essentially parasitic on a society with rules and norms. The preferred stylistic register is a transgressive one, both when communication is verbal and non-verbal. In the latter case, it fully exploits the communicative possibility of the philosopher's body. The Cynic's role goes with a strongly self-fashioning attitude, with conscious role-playing and constant performance, with turning life itself into an intertextually readable form of art. The Cynic belongs in the literary tradition of *iambos* and comedy, he embodies the didactic but ever unheeded voice of the comic poet, while the polis is the theatre in which he performs. The Cynic engages in a form of impression management that turns what for anyone else would be the calm and relaxation of 'back-stage' into the spot-lit stage itself, by refusing to separate the private and public realms. The undeniable theatricality of the Cynics' performance is reinforced by their literary representation as

[84] Cf *SSR* v B 55 (D L 6 26 etc.) Diogenes' reaction that Plato is sending him too much stuff, just as he never replies to the actual question asked, may be a criticism of Plato's long-windedness (apophthegms are a lot shorter than dialogues), but it also replicates the reproach constantly made by Socrates to his sophistic interlocutors

[85] Philosophers may 'not succeed' (i e not persuade, not convert) for any number of reasons the audience may be unwilling to receive the message (perhaps the norm) and any message may be coopted by the dominant culture and be trivialised The question raised here is whether the Cynic strategy is inherently self-defeating (even though there may be success stories even here cf the anecdote about Metrocles) I owe these observations to James Allen and Julia Annas

self-fashioning and quasi-literary figures, who consciously play with literary and mythical examples, and evoke epic and tragedy, but always with an undermining and satirical twist.

The scandal of the philosophical use of the body is made harmless by Diogenes' domestication (a fate he shares with most dogs) and his incorporation into the pedagogical practice of the Greeks. A systematically self-undermining and artistically allusive philosophy, conveyed in a scandalous stylistic register, goes the way of all satire: it can never be more than partially successful. Either the sting is removed, or the artistry.