STREETWALKING BEYOND THE STOA: DIOGENES THE CYNIC, MARÍA LUGONES, AND A TENTATIVE COSMOPOLITANISM

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Abstract: In this essay I argue that we should consider Diogenes the Cynic's claim to be cosmopolitan in light of his homelessness as a spatial and material reality. I do this in order to arrive at a concept of cosmopolitanism that is more politically and ethically substantial than its typical rationalist Kantian formulations. I consider passages from Diogenes Laertius' *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers* to clarify the relationship of homelessness to cosmopolitanism, and draw upon authors such as Emmanuel Levinas, María Lugones, and José Medina in order to demonstrate the fruitfulness of a reconsidered cosmopolitanism in our contemporary context. I ultimately suggest that Diogenes' cosmopolitanism offers a rich and politically charged alternative to rationalist cosmopolitanism insofar as he points us towards critically rethinking both the *cosmos* and *polis* as expressions of political agency in a world in which homelessness and social exclusion are a common feature. I argue that cosmopolitan political practice would therefore be best understood as fundamentally tentative, whether in the form of productive negotiation, or an interruptive displacement of hegemonic understandings of shared spaces.

Keywords: cosmopolitanism, homelessness, streetwalking, Diogenes the Cynic, María Lugones.

INTRODUCTION

> He was the first, according to some, to double his cloak, since he had to both wear and sleep in it; he carried a knapsack in which he kept his food; and he made use of every place for every purpose: breakfasting, sleeping, and conversing. He used to say, when pointing to the Stoa of Zeus and the Pompeion, that the Athenians had provided him with places in which to live.
> Diogenes Laertius, concerning Diogenes the Cynic (Laertius 2018: §22).

Diogenes the Cynic is frequently cited as the first to consider himself a "cosmopolitan" or citizen of the world, someone who bases their sense of moral agency not on local communal relationships, but to humanity as a whole. As many have recognized, cosmopolitanism presents a powerful counterpoint to the often-myopic political concerns of the West, where members of marginalized communities struggle against both xenophobia and a related insistence on the propriety of national wealth and resources.

In prioritizing such concerns, however, the material realities of Diogenes' homelessness[1], his precarity, his tentative grasp on his social world, are rarely given substantial philosophical recognition. This is likely attributable to the relatively little extant text we have from Diogenes, as well as the apparent irrelevance of his homelessness to any putatively global ethical or moral framework. In this paper, however, I will argue that a serious consideration of Diogenes' homelessness shows us that any rigorous concept of cosmopolitanism will center issues of place, inequality, and home. This consideration, I argue, is essential to understanding cosmopolitanism as a politically effective doctrine of critical engagement with the determinate senses of a given place, as a "homemaking", rather than an ornamental ethical theory for those "cosmopolitans" who are already confidently established in a world that is anything but shared. Such an approach, I will argue, is truer to cynicism itself as a philosophical movement of "Parrhesiasts"[2] who set themselves the explicit task of undermining the institutional power of established po-

litical and intellectual interests. Such a cynical cosmopolitanism resists its incorporation into an institutionalized or stoicized intellectual framework, and in so doing, is capable of revealing new possibilities for political engagement that are often obscured by its more abstract counterpart.

DIOGENES AND STOIC COSMOPOLITANISM

Diogenes was an exile for most of his adult life. He was exiled from his homeland of Sinope for defacing the currency, and then famously resided in Athens within a wine tub in the marketplace before later being abducted by pirates and living out the remainder of his life as a slave in Corinth. Diogenes' perspective serves as a counterpoint to other Greek philosophers because insofar as he was an exile, he was out of place, dislocated from his homeland of Sinope, and a perpetual outsider in Athens. Diogenes' marginal existence informs his cosmopolitan perspective, which as Martha Nussbaum writes in *Kant and Stoic Cosmopolitanism* is largely marked by his refusal "to be defined by his local origins and local group memberships, so central to the self-image of a conventional Greek male" (Nussbaum 1997: 5). With no access to the traditional markers of full Greek personhood, Diogenes is left to generate his own sense of self-worth. Nussbaum's reading of Diogenes, here, is an attempt to challenge thinkers who engage with Greek philosophy and its emphasis on the *polis* to center the importance of group membership to a complete picture of human ethical life[3]. For Nussbaum, Diogenes' life and attributed philosophy demonstrate that in Greek political thought there was already an inchoate cosmopolitanism that transcended the *polis*.

Nussbaum's focus on cosmopolitanism emphasizes an alternative to polis-centered accounts of human life, and she finds in Diogenes' language of cosmopolitanism precisely such an alternative, which can then be traced from the Stoic philosophers up until Kant's famous work in *Perpetual Peace* and *Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View.* Diogenes, an exile from Sinope, and

unable or unwilling to become a citizen of Athens, would famously respond to those who asked when asked where he was from: "I am a citizen of the world [*kosmopolitēs*]" (Laertius 2018: §63). According to Nussbaum, who reads Diogenes as conforming to a rationality-centered "Stoic" Kantian cosmopolitanism, Diogenes' claim to be cosmopolitan suggests that "the first form of moral affiliation for the citizen should be her affiliation with rational humanity; and this, above all, should define the purposes of her conduct" (Nussbaum 1997: 5). Strategically speaking, Nussbaum wants to present an alternative to Polis-based accounts of the normative foundations of self-worth, and in so doing, challenge the contemporary nationalistic ideologies she equates with such thinking. While this is a laudable goal, her approach moves too quickly over the cynical account to draw a connection to stoicism and thereby obfuscates the distinctive philosophical and political possibilities it provides.

As Foucault, in *The Courage of Truth* argues, we can think of Diogenes as a *parrhessiast,* as a public truth-teller who speaks only for himself, as opposed to a sage or a prophet. That is to say, Diogenes neither speaks on behalf of a universal rationality that would ground subsequent truth-claims, nor does he speak on behalf of a transcendent God beyond the world of time and language. When Diogenes speaks the truth, he does so on his own behalf, without institutional support, and to indicate a material situation, rather than to reveal a universal or transcendent meaning. Lacking an established place in society from which to generate universal ideas, and no authority as a religious figure, Diogenes the Parrhesiast was much less concerned with the stable dialogic space of the *stoa* and more concerned with the unstable lived space of the streets. Consequently, the insights he has to offer for cosmopolitanism originate not in a detached perspective above or beyond his immediate community, but rather, from the perspective of one deeply immersed in and critical of it. Nussbaum tries to create a solid foundation out of Diogenes' rejection of *polis-centered* accounts of normativity, but in undergirding his account with "Reason" she situates him among the institutional backing of European enlightenment, whereas his parrhesiastic gesture is precisely the eschew the institutional backing of

the *stoa*, whether of the court or the academy. This understanding of cosmopolitanism is not just offered by those who are its strongest proponents, such as Nussbaum, Jason D. Hill[4], and (to a lesser extent) Kwame Anthony Appiah, but also by those who aim to cast a critical eye on cosmopolitanism, who challenge it to think of itself as not a unitary perspective (grounded in a common rationality or other human attribute), but as a primarily intellectual form of decentered and dislocated experience[5].

In Nussbaum's reading of Diogenes there is a tacit understanding of his homelessness as simply metaphorical. That is to say, that "homelessness" denotes a dislocation from the political and cultural life of both his current and home cities. The material realities of Diogenes' homeliness, however, deviate sharply from the kinds of images we typically associate with cosmopolitanism. Kwame Anthony Appiah, in *Cosmopolitanism,* tries to exorcise such images at the very beginning of his text. As he rightly notes, when we hear the term "cosmopolitan", we may "imagine a Comme des Garçons-clad sophisticate with a platinum frequent-flyer card regarding, with kindly condescension, a ruddy-faced farmer in workman's overalls" (Appiah 2006: 26). To be sure, some self-described cosmopolitans might fit this unflattering image, behaving as if they possessed some secret knowledge that the untraveled (because unmoneyed) person cannot afford to acquire. Rousseau, for his part, challenged the newly world-minded elite of his own time in precisely this way, in what David Mazella describes as Rousseau's specifically "modern" cynicism (Mazella 2007: 110-142). Such a person, we are left to assume, is not a cosmopolitan because he refuses to engage meaningfully with a stranger who might have a different perspective than his own[6].

Though it is tempting to leave this image behind, I find it difficult to do so. If we are speaking of "cosmopolitanism", and indeed, believe that cosmopolitanism implies at least some meaningful engagement with different cultures, then those without at least some wealth and privilege are likely to fall short of such aspirations. It is clear, for example, with even a cursory look at the results of the 2016 and 2020 elections in the United States, that those from more

rural areas were much more likely to vote in favor of Trump's xen-ophobic message of "America First" than wealthier Americans from the urban centers. Similarly, many of the cities we call "world-cities", often given as evidence of the soundness of cosmopolitan moral theories[7], are home to both obscene wealth and devastating poverty, of those who have institutional backing (like the citizens Diogenes so often harasses) and those who, like Diogenes, have no such privilege[8]. Indeed, the more wealth and capital flowing through a city and the larger and more cosmopolitan it becomes, the more it becomes unequal, and the more (as we will discuss be-low) those who call that city home risk homelessness, in both a met-aphorical and literal sense. The popular image of the cosmopolitan as a wealthy individual is therefore no mere conceptual misunder-standing, but is backed up by the realities of wealth, institutional power, and a tacit understanding of who has a legitimate (or legiti-mized) "claim" to the places of the city. Diogenes' refusal to par-take in material comfort (famously refusing to use a cup for water after he saw a poor child drinking from only his hands) shows us that a jet-set lifestyle is certainly not what he has in mind when he claims to be a cosmopolitan. Nevertheless, Diogenes' relationship to wealth is far more critical than intellectually bracketing it out as irrelevant; on the contrary, he actively challenges its importance and equates wealth with moral degradation.

   Diogenes was not simply a "stranger", an emblem of the for-eign in the heart of the familiar, not someone from a distant land and culture who demands moral recognition in the abstract. In-deed, when Diogenes was in Athens he lived in the marketplace, right at the heart of Athenian public and economic life, he routinely disrupted the daily routines of those around him. Thus, while Ap-piah's conclusion – that those of us in wealthier Western nations have a moral responsibility to help poorer nations[9] – are valuable, Nussbaum's reading of Diogenes as being beyond his immediate community seems to me misleading. Such a limited reading of cos-mopolitanism does not seriously contend with the deep social and economic divisions within our nations themselves, those who are in temporary housing or at risk of eviction, those who are homeless

living in tents at the heart of our global cities, if not staking out a shelter beneath the bridges which above them carry innumerable goods from distant countries making their way to our supermarkets and our homes. If we are to rigorously follow Diogenes' example, we ought to recognize that, for the cosmopolitan, it is not enough to call for respect or to recognize the humanity of those at a physical or cultural distance from us. On the contrary, it also demands us to recognize those who may be very close to us, even related to us in a direct economic way, who we often fail or refuse to acknowledge, those whose homelessness places them outside the *polis* as a political and dialogical place[10]. It is a call to pay attention to the precarity of these situations, and to recognize, perhaps, that in our emotional and intellectual attachment to the ultimately arbitrary institutional structures that perpetuate such iniquities, the Cynic is pointing out that we are not yet fully human in our engagements with political structures and our treatment of others. It is this call for a radical transformation, as Luis E. Navia points out in *Classical Cynicism,* that distinguishes the classical Cynic from "cynical" modern perspectives which have no such moral imperative (Navia 1996: 30-31).

DIOGENES THE DOG

To break with the Stoic-Rationalist reading of Diogenes, I would like to emphasize precisely his irrational or un-rational aspects. If we read his actual homelessness as an essential condition of his cosmopolitanism, we can understand his claim of being a cosmopolitan as a direct rebuke to what Aristotle would later argue in the *Politics,* that a man without a *polis* was either a beast or a god (Aristotle: 1253a28-30). Interestingly enough, Diogenes embodies both sides of this disjunction: as Nussbaum rightly emphasizes, he often stoically professed to be transcendent over his circumstances in his own mind and was therefore a little like a god. On the other hand, the citizens of Athens thought it much more appropriate to treat him as a beast, taunting him and frequently referring to him as a "Diogenes the Dog". Indeed, Diogenes Laertius even recounts

that "at a dinner some guests were throwing bones to him, as one would to a dog; accordingly, in the manner of a dog, he urinated on the guests as he was leaving" (Laertius 2018: §46). Reading Diogenes against Nussbaum, we should note well that while Diogenes was a proto-stoic in some ways, he was not above embracing his beastly inclinations and acting in a deliberate and grossly offensive manner. The cynic embraces such behavior as a kind of "performance art", and the very description of "cynic" (*kunikos*) is derived from the Greek word for dog (*kuōn*), one who is here wandering in and out of public and private places, and by so doing, challenging the illusory distinction we make between them.

In order to understand the dog-like character of the cynic, we should turn to Emmanuel Levinas, who was one of seventy Jewish captives held by Nazi Germany protected from the extermination camps as prisoners of war. In this situation, he suffered similar humiliations to Diogenes in Athens, uprooted from his home and being subjected to dehumanizing judgments by those who were in a position of power over him. In *The Name of a Dog, or Natural Rights*, Levinas begins his reflections by considering the following biblical verse: "You shall be men consecrated to me; therefore you shall not eat any flesh that is torn by beasts in the field; you shall cast it to the dogs" (Exodus 22:31). This image at first seems to distinguish the dog from the human being; the dog eats what is not fit for the human to put in their mouth insofar as the human being is capable of using that same mouth for reason, language, and speech. Levinas suggests, however, that the figure of the dog arises during the night of the "death of the first-born" of Egypt. It is noted in Exodus 11:7 that the dogs of Egypt were struck by light and would not growl on that night, and to Levinas this means that "with neither ethics nor *logos*, the dog will attest to the dignity of its person. This is what the friend of man means" (Levinas 1990: 152). The dogs that do not growl are a friend to the dignity of humankind, the recognition that "Man's freedom is that of an emancipated man remembering his servitude and feeling solidarity for all enslaved people" (Levinas 1990: 152). Levinas reinterprets the image of the dog to serve not as an image of what lies outside decent
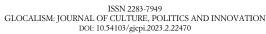
human society, but rather serving as an image of the elementary and artless acceptance of slaves as human beings precisely because dogs lack the specifically human ability to generate abstract concepts of ethics, and morality.

This analysis, however, is caught up in a great deal of theological interpretation, which leads Levinas to clarify by explicitly reflecting upon his internment, noting that:

we were beings entrapped in their species; despite all their vocabulary, beings without language […]. Social aggression, itself, merely imitates this model. It shuts people away in a class, deprives them of expression and condemns them to being 'signifiers without a signified' and from there to violence and fighting (Levinas 1990: 153).

Corresponding to physical internment, there is, on Levinas' account, a symbolic or psychical internment[11]. As Levinas emphasizes, being reduced to less-than-human meant being unable to communicate, no longer being "a part of the world" (Levinas 1990: 153). Excluded from the *cosmos* itself, this symbolic internment of the prisoners is established by pre-judging everything that could be said in their defense, anything that might attest to their humanity. As Levinas continues "how can we deliver a message about our humanity which, from behind the bars of quotation marks, will come across as anything other than monkey talk?" (Levinas 1990: 153). It is in this way that they were mere *signifieds*, objects of categorization, rather than human beings fully capable of signifying for and by themselves. In such moments, the dog shows itself to be capable of recognizing the very humanity that human reason can deliberately obscure. While Kantian reason, as the capacity to make universal judgments, may not be a sufficient condition for such dehumanizing judgments, it is nevertheless a necessary one. It is only because I can make universal judgments (however falsely) that I can claim an entire class of people are inhuman. Similarly, while we ostensibly all possess reason, it is clearly not sufficient for recognizing the full humanity of others we consider to be foreign. Kant himself proclaimed the importance of cosmopolitanism and world peace

while at the same time claiming that Indians, Muslims, and Hindus did not have the moral maturity to participate in a leadership role in such endeavors (Mignolo 2000: 734).

As Levinas recounts, the only creature who greeted him and his fellow prisoners as a part of a shared world was a stray dog they affectionately named "Bobby" (interestingly enough, a foreign-sounding name to the French-speaking people interned at the camp) who would wait for them to return from their forced labor and would greet them by jumping up and down and barking happily. "For him," Levinas writes, "there was no doubt that we were men." This leads Levinas to ask:

perhaps the dog that recognized Ulysses beneath his disguise on his return from the Odyssey was a forebear of our own. But no, no! There, they were in Ithaca and the fatherland. Here, we were nowhere. This dog was the last Kantian in Nazi Germany, without the brain needed to universalize maxims and drives (Levinas 1990: 153).

The perspective of the dog, in other words, is the perspective of one without reason, without the higher faculties to generate the maxims required by Kantian moral theory, without any confidence or back up to his claims. It is because of this lack, however, that a dog can nevertheless recognize that there is an immediate ethical relationship. With no appeal to universal reason or higher intellectual faculties[12] Bobby nevertheless recognized that he and the prisoners shared the same world. To be sure, Bobby likely greeted the Nazi guards in a similar manner, recognizing oppressed and oppressor equally. While this is therefore not a final or considered ethical stance, the recognition that we inhabit a shared world nevertheless provides the foundation for any further ethical considerations. For Levinas, the comfort of this recognition is cut short with the realization Bobby was alone in this, where Ulysses was gradually recognized by his subjects and family. Ulysses was home, whereas Levinas and his fellow prisoners' homes had been destroyed. As opposed to typical cosmopolitan theory, which so often denigrates the importance of local attachments and the need for home, it here

remains important precisely in the moment of its greatest absence; we need a place where we are recognized and welcomed, even if this is not or can no longer be the place of our birth. No abstract recognition of our humanity will substitute for this[13].

It is with this recognition that we can return to Diogenes, who can be seen in a similar light. On the one hand, despite lacking the typical signifiers of humanity that the Athenians value, he insists upon demonstrating his capacity to reason and communicate. He insists upon signifying rather than being trapped by the signification that others have given him. On the other hand, however, in a city where owning land was essential for citizenship, Diogenes stubbornly stakes out his own shelter where everyone can see it, eliding the distinction between the public space of the market and his private living space. Moreover, Diogenes routinely enacts the outsider-identity that the Athenians have given him in crude and unsavory ways, even actively terrorizing his fellow citizens as when, "on one occasion, after shouting, 'Come this way, fellows', and people had gathered, he attacked them with his staff, saying, 'It was men I was calling for, not trash'" (Laertius 201: §32). At the heart of the city, where the average Athenian carried out their daily routine, where they felt most comfortable and at home, Diogenes made it his role to inject discomfort, bringing considerably more bite to the Socratic metaphor of the gadfly and showing himself to be a parrhesiast *par excellence,* insofar as it requires a great deal of courage on Diogenes' part, a willingness to expose himself to not just social inclusion, but violent reprisal. Instead of calling for an abstract recognition of humanity, he called for them to become human for the first time by tossing away their uncritical attachment to illusory institutionalized ideals that mark one group as more or less important than another.

Diogenes' perspective on the world, then, is a homeless one, not simply because he was transcendent over his locality on account of reason but because he was actively and symbolically excluded from his community and made to live like a dog. Cosmopolitanism is worth pursuing because it carries within it the promise of a home for the homeless, not because it is an accurate account of the nature

of human intelligence and the abstract "community" of such intelligence. To read him as a rational cosmopolitan is to miss the "view from below"[14] that Diogenes embodied, his recognition that, as a homeless person, he was in solidarity with all homeless people, if not the Athenians who mocked him, lacking as they did the necessary autarky to properly be called "men", as opposed to "slaves", having based self-worth and their privilege on illusory social norms. Diogenes' unique perspective today can contribute to theories of cosmopolitanism by showing us that the *cosmos* and the *polis* are perhaps not as unitary or monolithic as they might first seem, and that broad, high-minded, and well-intentioned frameworks of "equality" or "rationality" often hide within them tacit understandings of who is permitted entry and who must remain outside with the dogs (or rats, as the case may be). To complicate the cosmos and the polis in this way, to unsettle their settled meanings, is to open the space for a genuinely political account of cosmopolitanism. As Jacques Rancière reminds us, any *polis* that is political and therefore worthy of the name always involves contestation over unsettled meanings and open questions (Rancière 2010: 27-45).

DIOGENES THE STREETWALKER

We have seen how Diogenes presents us with a theoretical opportunity to pursue an alternative strain of cosmopolitanism, one that does not purport to range over its circumstances from above but to critique them from below. He eschews the plane-window detachment of rationalism for a dog-like wandering through both public and private spaces. In noticing the spatiality of such approaches in Diogenes' case, we should now turn to the work of María Lugones who creates a concept that captures the nuances of Diogenes' perspective: the concept of "streetwalking."

In *Piligrimages/Peregrinajes,* Lugones elaborates on the concept of the streetwalker as integrating a *tactical* form of resistance to oppression with a strategic form[15]. In political theory, Lugones argues, one often imagines oneself as a strategist "perched up high, looking

at or making up the social from a disengaged position" (Lugones 2003: 207). When we think strategically about society, in other words, we tend not to implicate ourselves in social relationships. The strategist is like a chess player overseeing a board, deliberating upon the best course of action to solve a problem within a set of pre-determined rules. This strategic perspective is precisely the perspective that Nussbaum adopts and describes Diogenes as occupying; it is because he is an exile that he is beyond the immediacy of Athenian cultural mores and thereby able to critique them from a cosmopolitan perspective, to "make up" a new theory of society from a privileged detached position, unmuddied with either local normative values or the stuff of the streets. Such a perspective, however, is one that arises from the security of home, the sense of oneself being established, rather than engaged or pulled in multiple directions across a multiplicity of social spaces (characteristic of Latina experience, as discussed by Lugones herself as well as Gloria Anzaldúa in *Borderlands/La Frontera*).

Lugones contrasts strategic thinking with tactical engagement. Whereas the theorist pores over theories of society from the enclosed space of her study or office, the streetwalker must "hang out", experiencing the reality of the social, relating to both the *cosmos* (world) and *polis* (city) as a contingent and porous space. "Hanging out", according to Lugones,

permits one to learn, to listen to transmit information, to participate in communicative creations, to gauge possibilities, to have a sense of the directions of intentionality, to gain social depth. Unlike enclosures of the social that are conceived as less permeable, hangouts are highly permeable. That is why it is possible to move from hangout to hangout without betrayal (Lugones 2003: 209).

In other words, the perspective of the streetwalker is one in which the world one walks is not constituted by series of established meanings, of marble-pillared structures with a delimited set of meanings and purposes, but rather a malleable social construction that is always subject to change because it is also open to others, a part of a

shared world, if only for a short while. Tactics, therefore, involve concrete body-to-body engagement in pursuit of opening up new liberatory possibilities. Unlike the strategist who navigates established meanings, the streetwalker reveals the permeability of the social world and the spaces we inhabit. This allows us to consider changing this world and these spaces, rather than simply presenting alternative concepts of social life, opposing "cosmopolitanism" to local citizenship.

Lugones' description of the streetwalker is mirrored in the description of Diogenes' homelessness with which we began this essay, specifically how "he made use of every place for every purpose: breakfasting, sleeping, and conversing" (Laertius 2018: §22). This is a necessary consequence of not having a home; that is, of not having established personal spaces within which we can organize (or rationalize) the human rhythms of our lives in reliable patterns. Diogenes' practice is critical because he refuses to accept the established nature of the city in which he lives. The constructed limits of the city, and the intentions with which they were constructed do not matter to him, clearly indicated when he said, while "pointing to the Stoa of Zeus and the Pompeion, that the Athenians had provided him with places in which to live" (Laertius 2018: §22). Diogenes sees clearly, as Lugones puts it, the "directions of intentionality", the ways in which Athenians invest their subjectivity into contingent social structures which then take on the valence of permanent or objective facts. The Pompeion and the Stoa of Zeus organize and rationalize bodily movement, investing Athenian subjectivity with a particular direction, just as our universities, courts, and workplaces do today. Diogenes reveals and undermines such investment as a "pedestrian, *una callejera* [*un callejero*]*, en compañía,* in the midst of company" while "obliterating the theory/practice distinction" (Lugones 2003: 210)[16]. At the center of Athens, Diogenes makes not only universal philosophical claims, but also disrupts Athenian cultural life, such as conspicuously eating beans out of his toga while a self-important young man is making a speech (Laertius 2018: §48). He does this as *un callejero,* a stray.

If we think of Diogenes as a streetwalker – that is, if we under-
stand him to be revealing the porosity and fundamental arbitrari-
ness of social structures rather than attempting to theorize beyond
them – then cosmopolitanism, at least in his understanding, is not
best understood as a wide-ranging theory of moral personhood
grounded in an account of human rationality. Let us therefore re-
turn to Diogenes' cosmopolitanism with a fresh perspective. One
passage which seems at first glance to support Nussbaum's ration-
alist reading is the following, recounted by Diogenes Laertius: "he
would make fun of good breeding, reputation, and all such things,
calling them the vulgar trappings of vice, and held that the only true
commonwealth was that which was commensurate with the uni-
verse" (Laertius 2018: §72). At first, this seems to be a straightfor-
ward endorsement of typical cosmopolitanism. In fact, it is a great
deal more aggressively asserted than most other formulations. It is
not simply that I, Diogenes, happen to be a citizen of the world, but
rather, that those of you who consider yourselves citizens of Ath-
ens, Corinth, or Sparta are no true citizens at all. Indeed, if citizen-
ship is understood as a relationship to private property, as being a
"property owner", the cynics' dog-like intrusion upon private
space, and his conducting of his private affairs in space, undermines
the very foundations of Athenian "citizenship" at its most funda-
mental level. This characterizes what H.C. Baldry describes as the
"negative cosmopolitanism" of Diogenes, who "does not unite the
human race, but draws a single great dividing line across it, sepa-
rating the few wise men from the many fools, whom Diogenes de-
scribed as one finger removed from lunacy" (Baldry 1965: 110).
This negative approach doesn't provide an alternative to polis-cen-
tered citizenship, but is rather meant to break down the illusions
that sustain it, and thereby allow us to return to a more natural re-
lationship to the world and the others with whom we share it.

Exiled from his homeland, settling into homelessness in Ath-
ens, mocked by the Athenians for being a dog, and then later en-
slaved and relocated to Corinth, Diogenes was no citizen according
to those with whom he shared a space, much less a "citizen of the
world", unless being a citizen of the world meant specifically being

homeless, of being exposed to the cosmos. But this would be a troublingly glib reversal that falls well short of a morally responsible cosmopolitanism, even less a politically effective one, insofar as it overlooks the tragedy of actual homelessness. After all, what would Diogenes' position be in the world today? I cannot imagine even the most devout tradition of cosmopolitan theorists claiming that a contemporary stateless refugee is in an enviable position because she is free from having to identify with the mores of her past homeland. Neither can I imagine that they would claim a homeless person subjected to routine public humiliation somehow gained a knowledge and stoic dignity that compensated for it.

It therefore seems to me that when Diogenes claimed to be a citizen of the world his goal was specifically to deflate the value of citizenship that the Greeks held to be crucial to self-identity and human moral worth. It was not to provide them with an alternative cosmopolitan model of such worth, a new strategic play. One can almost imagine Diogenes saying: "You think you're so special, being a citizen of the great city of Athens, but I'm a citizen of an even bigger *polis*; it's called the universe, maybe you've heard of it?". If we are to read Diogenes as the philosophical progenitor of cosmopolitanism, perhaps we should not read him as offering a robust endorsement of a cosmopolitanism grounded in human reason, but rather as demonstrating through his actions the importance of the truly cosmopolitan individual being out of their element, or out of place. As Suzanne Husson argues in *La République de Diogène,* the gap (*écart*) between a human being and their nature, created by our commitment to illusion, is an obstacle for the Cynic to overcome in order to achieve self-rule or autarky, and he envies the animals who have no such illusions to overcome (Husson 2011: 10-11). Cosmopolitan political practice, then, would then have to be seen as a tactic of displacing hegemonic narratives and oppressive cultural norms to make a home for those who remain outside of the social structures to which we so stubbornly cling, despite their ultimate contingency, porosity, and malleability[17].

Just as Diogenes is exposed to the elements, being forced to seek shelter and to double his cloak around himself, he is similarly

exposed to his *polis*. It is because Diogenes is homeless that he is engaged with social practices at the ground level, exposed to the injustice of a society that symbolically places him on the outside, refuses him a place, even as he stubbornly persists in physically occupying the center of the city. This critique does not, however, result in a new cohesive concept or theory of society in the same way that Rousseau's engagement with social contract theory presents an alternative to Hobbes' or Locke's, or we might debate in the abstract the pros and cons of liberalism or autocracy, capitalism or communism. On the contrary, Diogenes is tactically disrupting the value of citizenship that informs the stubborn arrogance and self-satisfaction of a landowning Athenian man. This of Diogenes' political practice, I would argue, would equally apply to the concept of "Whiteness", where the tactical-strategic approach would be to critique the ways in which whiteness establishes certain people as "inside" and others as "outside" the community that matters, as opposed to simply including previously non-White peoples within the privileged group (as was done in America with the Italians and Irish)[18].

Someone who hangs out, and Diogenes is decisively such a person, understands that human forms of political identification are fundamentally fungible, that they are as precarious and ephemeral as his own existence, much more so than those who gain self-worth (and economic advantage) from them would like to believe. This does not result in a theoretical or critical perspective from above, as at least Nussbaum's account of cosmopolitanism implies, but rather a perspective on the ground, one which recognizes the essentially contingent and permeable nature of social practices and spaces and aims to subvert them, to unfold their alternative possibilities. While Diogenes and Lugones have different realms of concern, and Lugones more clearly articulates what is at stake in such practices, Diogenes' dog-like antics can and should be read in the same genre of challenging the self-evidence (and therefore the imperialism, the oppressive self-confidence) of hegemonic social and cultural structures. This is a tactical-strategic approach, to use Lugones' terminology, which is specifically aimed at undermining the self-satisfaction, decadence, and cultural arrogance of Athenian citizens.

CYNICAL LESSONS FOR A COSMOPOLITANISM OF THE PRESENT

Were we to embrace our inner cynics, what would be Diogenes' cosmopolitan lesson to us today? What are the political possibilities of cosmopolitanism if we refuse to adopt the strategist's perspective and instead commit ourselves to a tactical-strategic approach of dis-placing those who are complacent in finding themselves at home in a *cosmos* shaped by millennia of exclusion structured by social domination and inequality?

In *Cosmopolitan Ignorance and "Not Knowing Your Place"*, José Medina elaborates on one such possibility. In this article he argues that there is a widespread "cosmopolitan ignorance" wherein some people (usually white, and especially wealthy, Americans) either intentionally or unintentionally overlook the politically fraught histories of placement and displacement of a given place, and in so doing, elide responsibility for their own role in the perpetuation of that history. Those of us who are wealthy and confident are the beneficiaries of a certain "epistemic comfort" with the world, the sense that we have already got it right. Unfortunately, such comfort, as Medina writes, "typically signals that one has failed to interrogate one's ignorance/knowledge and to take responsibility for it. What is needed in order to disrupt this problematic comfort and to start taking responsibility is a process of self-estrangement, which can be prompted by experiences of perplexity" (Medina 2017: 111). While the missteps of tourists in foreign places comes immediately to mind, the examples of cosmopolitan perplexity are often most egregious in one's own country. Medina gives the example of his hometown of Seville, which is often imagined to be a "white" city even though it has a significant history of black and Arabic inhabitation. Today, the non-white people residing in the outskirts of Seville are seen to be a "new" phenomenon, a recent anomaly in the history of a white city. Who gets labelled as an "invader" or "immigrant" in Seville, therefore, is often portrayed as black or Arabic, despite their long history of inhabiting and shaping the city. One can also think, here, of the results of the massive influx of wealthy

(mostly) white professionals to parts of Brooklyn that were traditionally occupied by less affluent non-White residents. The specific instances of cosmopolitan ignorance that inform and have resulted from this migration are far too numerous to list, but one particularly egregious example is that of Summerhill, a sandwich shop in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, which proudly advertised a bullet-ridden wall (preserved in the renovation, supposedly) and forty-ounce bottles of rosé served in paper bags to monetize on the gritty cultural caché of the neighborhood (Bklyner 2019).

Both the whitening of Seville and the whitening of Brooklyn are instances of uninterrogated understandings of a place, instances of cosmopolitan ignorance and even willful racism or neo-colonialism. Such ignorance, as Medina argues, can be overcome or at least mitigated by making space for an experience of perplexity, of admitting that one does not already understand what that place is, that one does not already belong there even if one has the money to afford the rent. In the case of Summerhill, for example, the white business owner might have stopped and asked herself some questions about her role in the gentrification of the neighborhood, her right to profit off of the violence of its history (of which she was not a part, as a white Canadian woman), or even how her marketing decisions might be understood by the (at that time) primarily black residents of the immediate area.

The danger that rationalist or stoic cosmopolitanism poses is the possibility of a frictionless elision of such realities. Of claiming that, because our rational nature transcends a given space, that there is nothing particular or special about the many places[19] of the world, which are simply part of a singular *cosmos*. It is not wrong to say that anywhere is a possible space of inhabitation, but it should not already be such a place for those with money. Such cosmopolitanism does not grapple with the way there are islands of belonging within foreign places or how such spaces are remade in our own image. The first case is clearly evident in the resorts of Mexico or Thailand, which are specifically designed to shelter tourists from anything too challenging about life in either place. The second case can be seen in cities which are increasingly becoming

tourist destinations, such as Barcelona, where due to the massive influx of tourists, entire neighborhoods are being made into temporary residences through Airbnb and the necessities of daily life (like cheap bakeries and laundromats) are being replaced by more lucrative businesses catering to tourists (like bars and expensive restaurants). As Alan Quaglieri Domínguez, a researcher at Rovira I Virgili University, reports, "this consistent demographic of tourists, interchangeable with one another in their cosmopolitan tastes and habits of consumption, expects to find wherever it goes the café culture of Melbourne, the industrial lighting of Brooklyn, and the Internet speeds of Stockholm" (Mead 2019: 34). A consistent demographic demands consistent spaces. It subjects the world to the parameters of its desire. Moreover, in the specific case of Barcelona we can also see how even the desire to have a "multicultural" experience is often filtered through one's own limited perspective on what that culture is: as local housing activist in Barcelona, Daniel Pardo reports, "his hometown […] had become like a theme park – filled with restaurants selling paella, tapas, and sangria, none of which have local origins, but which conform to a generic image of Spain" (Mead 2019: 35). The comparison with a theme-park is particularly revealing, as the theme park is a "bracketing" of everyday experience within which one could or might be challenged to transform one's behavior.

In both cases, what is at stake might be called a sense of "alreadyness", a false mapping of the social terrain in advance. For those with the institutional backing of privilege, power, and wealth, the wide world is already laid out before them as a playground, as places of potential resource extraction, potential business opportunities, potential sites of enjoyment. The same basic structure is true of rational cosmopolitanism; we are said to "already" belong to a more important community than the local and thereby elides the hard work of mutual understanding and the possibilities of productive friction on the ground. Diogenes' cosmopolitanism presents us with a counterpoint to both forms of "alreadyness", but to understand it fully we must return once again to Lugones' concept of streetwalking.

When exposed to the street, one never has a robust sense of stability, of a space that is enclosed, private, or wholly one's own. Consequently, Lugones characterizes streetwalking as necessarily tentative. When elaborating on how this is the case, she clarifies: "the word 'tentative' is used here in its literal meaning of a tactile sensing of the terrain, with a readiness to reroute, rephrase, gesture, word, move, in a multiplicity of ways, idioms, directions, a refracting of the sign as if trying to find, and being attentive to finding, recognition" (Lugones 2003: 229). Consequently, every engagement is a tentative one, a feeling out of what's going on at the moment, rather than the application of a strategic conceptual map, or the fulfillment of one's preexisting expectations.

This resists the conceptual guardrails provided by a rational cosmopolitanism insofar as, when streetwalking there is: "no common language, no common expectations, no reason to assume trust or trustworthiness, no comfortable womb-warm sense of safety and of having come home" (Lugones 2003: 229). Cosmopolitanism, at least as Diogenes the streetwalker understands it, is a theory of what we have in common, but the common is produced through interaction, through dialogue, through tentative engagements. As we saw with Levinas above, there is here no "return to Ithaca", no guarantee for a place of inhabitation, only a perpetual searching for one. Diogenes, in his search for a man by the light of the lantern, perpetually comes up short, characteristic of the Cynic's failed search for companionship. One form of this tentativeness is exhibited by Jean Améry, another Jewish philosopher who survived the holocaust. In exile in Antwerp, he writes:

the mere fact that one could not decipher people's faces was frightening. I was having a beer with a big, coarse-boned, square-skulled man, who may have been a respectable Flemish citizen, perhaps even a patrician, but could just as well have been a suspicious harbor tough about to punch me in the face and lay hands on my wife. Faces, gestures, clothes, houses, words (even if I halfway understood them) were sensory reality, but not interpretable signs. There was no order for me in this world (Améry 1980: 63-64).

This is not the result of being a mistrustful person, of fearing the foreign, but of recognizing that our subjectivity, our being an "I" means to find oneself exposed, without the backup of wealth, one's countrymen, political institutions, or the like. This is the perspective one who is forced to wander and is therefore made to recognize the tentative grasp all of us have on the social terrain when we are no longer cared for, when we are left outside the *polis* with the dogs. Diogenes, like Améry, is thinking like an exile, and it is this perspective that is productive for cosmopolitanism.

On the one hand, such tentativeness is a corrective to the examples of Brooklyn and Seville above: the "sense" of a place should come from its history, from engagements with people that do not presuppose recognition or acceptance in advance, of some shared rational nature. We should not misunderstand this tentativeness, however, for sheepishness or a lack of engagement. It implies an activity, a resisting. I would suggestively offer here, in light of Appiah's image of the ruddy worker in overalls opposed to the fashionable cosmopolitan, the example of the Indian Farmers Protests of 2020-2021 as an excellent example of cosmopolitan resistance. In these protests, farmers disputed the government's passage of the Indian Agriculture Act of 2020, meant to deregulate the sale of agricultural products, eliminating government guaranteed price-floors. Consequently, the farmers feared that, unable to sell their produce for profit, their work would no longer be profitable, and they would be forced to sell to large corporations who would either operate at scale and force these farmers from the market, or who would simply buy the land for real-estate development. These protests were confrontational, and at times violent. As if to attest, indirectly, to the "cosmopolitical" nature of these protests, the Modi government even went so far as to claim that these were the result of a "foreign conspiracy" of Pakistani and Khalistani interests (Vaidyanathan 2021). The government ultimately repealed these agricultural acts. What is important here, from a cosmopolitan perspective, is that these farmers understood that these acts were the ground floor of an attempted enclosure of space, a weakening of their ability to make a living off their land which would ultimately open it to commercial streamlining
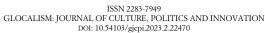
and redevelopment while closing it to local farmers. In their confidence, in their resistance to these forces of enclosure, the Indian farmers were essentially making themselves opaque,[20] resistant, to a rationalizing perspective that aimed to redefine their relationship to their work and their land[21].

CONCLUSIONS

The cosmopolitan lesson of Diogenes is not simply that rational humanity can overcome and feel at home in situations of devastating impoverishment and homelessness, and it is not that our homelands and local cultures are irrelevant to moral philosophy. On the contrary, a careful consideration of Diogenes' philosophy, alongside Lugones' account of streetwalking, teaches us that we must actively displace the values, the systems, and the political structures that enclose and flatten our shared world, making a home for some and homelessness for others. If we are courageous enough to displace these values, to critique the inequalities of property and privilege, the accumulation of ever-more wealth into increasingly fewer hands, we might yet create a space for the marginalized to belong[22]. Any true cosmopolitanism must reckon with the inequalities of our world, a recognition that is just as important, if not more so, than the recognition of a shared rational humanity. When Diogenes doubles his cloak and carries his food in a knapsack, the lesson should not simply be that Diogenes was very clever to have done so, nor that this act bears witness to his basic rational dignity. On the contrary, it is an occasion to ask about the circumstances that led to this sad state of affairs where his shelter extended no farther than the cloak over his body. In committing to a life of extreme poverty, but doing so within the heart of the *polis,* Diogenes unfolds and renders visible the frameworks of sense that organize and rationalize Athenian daily life.

It should be clear that Diogenes' lessons for cosmopolitanism do not provide a strategic conceptual map to navigate a shared

world; on the contrary, he reminds us to be tentative in our engage-
ments, to never rest easy despite whatever institutional or social
backing we might enjoy. We live in a world of people like Diogenes,
a world of exiles; some are exiles in place, no longer able to feel at
home in their communities because their own circles of belonging
are being challenged and eroded by outside influences, if not made
prohibitively expensive and thus effectively uninhabitable. Other
places are devastated by lack of economic opportunity, underin-
vestment, or political violence, leading to massive economic migra-
tions and new social and political dislocations[23]. While cosmopoli-
tanism, at least classically construed, might be an edifying concep-
tual tool for those of us who wish to broaden our cultural horizons,
or indeed, who feel limited by our own narrow cultural worlds, it
does little for those who are made to suffer homelessness and pre-
carity in the shadow of such high-minded ideals. In Foucault's
words, Cynicism, in contrast to Stoicism, has "laid down this oth-
erness of an other life, not simply as the choice of a different, happy,
and sovereign life, but as the practice of a combativeness on the
horizon of which is an other world (*un monde autre*)" (Foucault
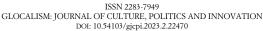2011: 287).

Cosmopolitanism is a theory that seeks to ethically and morally
account for the totality of the human world, but this totality is never
simply given. Diogenes shows us that the world and our cities are
not as simple as we might like to believe, that there are outsiders
inside the *polis*, that we do not all share the same experience of the
world. The sun may shine and the rain may fall on the rich and poor
alike, but how the elements are experienced always depends on the
adequacy of one's shelter. If cosmopolitanism is to be worthy of the
name, it must be capable of redirecting our attention away from
grand unifying narratives of ourselves and others, and not rest sat-
isfied with merely witnessing the spectacle of global humanity on
the streets of our wealthiest cities. Cynicism, just like streetwalking,
never meets the world as an unchangeable fact. When the street is
more than a passing diorama, when it becomes inescapable and the
structures that guarantee home and safety cannot be taken for
granted, the streetwalker is necessarily combative, in search of an

"other world". On the street, we see the scenes of homelessness and misery that bear witness to a world bitterly divided by the institutionalized structures of wealth and privilege. Such scenes occur on the very same streets where we global citizens, still falling short of Diogenes' search for the human, circulate under the shadows of the luxury condominiums and office buildings that order our lives, so often constructed on the demolished residences and uprooted worlds of those who can no longer call their city home.

NOTES

[1] I use the term "homeless" throughout the paper rather than the more recent term "unhoused" precisely because of the wider metaphorical significance of the former term as opposed to the narrow descriptive meaning of the latter.

[2] The concept of the "Parrhesiastic" approach to truth comes most famously from Foucault in the *Courage of Truth* (Foucault 2011), but also characterizes the work of many contemporary scholars of Cynicism (Navia 1996; Mazella 2007; Husson 2011).

[3] See Bernard Williams' *Shame and Necessity* (Williams 1993), and Alasdair MacIntyre's *Whose Justice? Which Rationality* (MacIntyre 1987) for specific authors who attempt to rehabilitate Greek polis-based thinking.

[4] Hill goes so far as to argue that the enlightenment culture of Western countries is the true cosmopolitan perspective and our attachment to local traditions is actively dangerous. Hill questions, for example, whether a culture with low life expectancy, such as that of the native Americans', is worth preserving (Hill 2009).

[5] For a specific instance of this approach, which valorizes a de-centered or "homeless" perspective on the world see Wahman 2017.

[6] For a sustained engagement with the way certain forms of cosmopolitanism encounter otherness, see the work of Alphonso Lingis, and Simone Fullagar's excellent analysis of his work in *Encountering Otherness* (Fullagar 2001: 171-183).

[7] Appiah, for example, begins *Cosmopolitanism* with a consideration of how walking down New York's Fifth Avenue on an ordinary day would expose us to more people from different places than our ancestors may have seen in their entire lifetime (Appiah 2006: 22).

[8] For a contemporary illustration of this point, see Badger, Quealy 2019.

[9] It is crucial to note here that such a moral obligation need not be derived solely from cosmopolitan theories of norms and duties. One alternative would be that, insofar as we in the West are relatively rich only because of a history of colonialism and the economic exploitation of non-Western nations, we have a duty to correct this historic injustice. See, for example, Mills 1997: 41-90.

[10] A recent piece published in the "New York Times" highlights one example of this shadow economy (Newman 2019).

[11] See the work of Lisa Guenther, here, who uses Levinas' work to examine the ways in which solitary confinement not only physically, but also psychologically affects those confined. Her work on "world" is very much consonant with the way I am using the word "world" here. See in particular Guenther 2018: pp. 74-89.

[12] For Levinas, ethics is "first philosophy", meaning that our ethical entanglement with others is a fundamental attribute of human experience. Consequently, it does not need to be "grounded" in universal reason or moral categories. For more detail, see Levinas' influential work on "The Other" (Levinas 1969, 1998).

[13] A similar point is made by Jean Améry in *At the Mind's Limits,* an account of his detainment and torture in a Nazi camp. In this piece he specifically claims that the loss of "fatherland" is at the same time a loss of home, and that cosmopolitanism remains a second-rate and dubious substitute (Améry 1980: 41-62).

[14] This theme of the "view from below" is common in alternative epistemologies, which suggest that those who experience oppression are more likely to be able to accurately recognize its existence as well as the structures that perpetuate it (Harding 2018).

[15] Here, Lugones is drawing upon a distinction made by Michel de Certeau in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (de Certeau 1984). However, she complicates this account by claiming that we can be strategic about the tactics we use.

[16] For Lugones it is essential to consider that the perspective of the streetwalker is a feminine perspective, denoted by *una callejera*, which has a pejorative gendered sense of promiscuity and prostitution that *un callejero* does not.

[17] For more on the malleability of borders, particularly those which divide "us" from "them" in a political sense, see Casey 2014: 189-213, wherein he discusses the US-Mexico border along these lines.

[18] See again Charles Mills' *The Racial Contract,* specifically the final chapter, "Naturalized Merits", wherein he elaborates on the concept of Whiteness as a social and political reality grounded in exclusionary practices rather than a biological category (Mills 1996: 91-133).

[19] Here I draw a distinction made by Ed Casey between space and place, where space is abstract mathematical space and place is a specific (if indeterminate) lived-in region (Casey 1997).

[20] I draw on this language of "opacity" from Éduoard Glissant's *Poetics of Relation.* Of specific interest is the chapter "Transparency and Opacity," (Glissant 1997: 111-121). Here, he argues specifically for a "right to opacity", contrasted with specifically universal theories of the human.

[21] Lugones thought has been more widely applied to a properly geopolitical project by Emma Velez. See Velez 2022: 339-352.

[22] The way in which tactics can be integrated into a specific process of "home-making" can be seen in Ortega 2014: 173-188.

[23] The most recent number of such migrants is 281.000.000 in 2020, from the *United Nations World Migration Report*, 2022.

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