

Walking with Diogenes: Cosmopolitan Accents in Philosophy and Education

David T. Hansen
Teachers College, Columbia University

My essay has to do with beginnings, and, in that spirit, I would like to commence with the opening paragraph of Iris Murdoch's absorbing philosophical meditation on the moral life entitled *The Sovereignty of Good*:

It is sometimes said, either irritably or with a certain satisfaction, that philosophy makes no progress. It is certainly true, and I think this is an abiding and not a regrettable characteristic of the discipline, that philosophy has in a sense to keep trying to return to the beginning: a thing which it is not at all easy to do. There is a two-way movement in philosophy, a movement toward the building of elaborate theories, and a move back again toward the consideration of simple and obvious facts. [J.M.E.] McTaggart says that time is unreal, [G.E.] Moore replies that he has just had his breakfast. Both these aspects of philosophy are necessary to it.¹

What has interested me in this statement, from the time I first read it as a graduate student, is the idea of returning to the beginning. One of the very first writings I published years ago had the title "Getting Down to Business: The Moral Significance of Classroom Beginnings."² That paper resulted from my attempt, as part of a school-based inquiry, to understand why it is that some teachers seem so successful in establishing a meaningful, productive educational environment in the classroom. In pursuing this question, I read and reread the voluminous notes I had taken in the field. The notes led me back, literally speaking, to the beginning: the first two to three minutes after the school bell has rung, when teacher and students take their seats, get out their materials, and orient themselves to what is about to take place. For the teachers and students whose interactions I witnessed, these apparently routine moments embody substantive commitments about the worthiness of what they do together each day. Through their ritualized classroom beginnings, they affirm these commitments, and they ready themselves to enact them anew.

In recent years I have been examining the ancient idea of cosmopolitanism, which originates, in part, in images of solidarity or oneness with the whole of the world, or, indeed, with all of creation. At first glance, this interest may suggest an enormous leap from the low-to-the-ground, particularistic domain of the teacher. But I find cosmopolitanism fascinating precisely because I think it holds the promise of illuminating significances in educational work wherever it takes place today. A moment ago, I touched on how the moral prism I deployed in the study of classroom beginnings drew tacit meanings into the light. Likewise, the hypothesis that guides the work that I currently am undertaking is that a cosmopolitan prism can call attention to substantiating features of the relation between teachers, students, and curriculum that often remain in the shadows.

As I pursue this ongoing inquiry, I take heart from the proliferating research on cosmopolitanism today across the social sciences and humanities, as well as in education, including work done by colleagues in philosophy of education and

related fields.³ Scholars have accented cosmopolitanism's political, ethical, cultural, economic, aesthetic, epistemic, and other dimensions. While no consensus has emerged in these wide-ranging literatures regarding the meaning and scope of cosmopolitanism, or of its educational ramifications, there clearly exists a vibrant interest in the topic.

At the same time, the emerging field of cosmopolitan studies faces difficult theoretical and practical questions. In this essay, I would like to address a concern that challenges the hypothesis I put forward earlier, regarding the cosmopolitan aspects of teaching and learning in our time. This concern can be expressed in various ways: Is cosmopolitanism synonymous with universalism? Is cosmopolitanism fundamentally antagonistic to the claims of local communities? Is cosmopolitanism a spectatorial posture toward the world, or does it imply participation? Is cosmopolitanism a mode of exile, of rootlessness, and of social separation, or is it compatible with a meaningful notion of roots, of home, and of place? The issue, in a nutshell, has to do with the *inhabitability* of cosmopolitanism. In this light, another way to dramatize the concern is to ask whether cosmopolitanism is a fundamentally idealistic, utopian, or heroic outlook — which would render it beyond the grasp of most of us mortals — or whether it can in fact characterize or orient everyday human relations on the ground, a ground that would include life in schools and classrooms.

In order to approach this complicated issue, I will attempt what Murdoch calls, in the same text I mentioned at the start, “a movement of return.”⁴ This term of art captures the attempt to begin again by seeking the starting point of a particular idea, perspective, or argument, and then reconsidering both that point of departure and what has followed from it. I will return to the beginning of cosmopolitanism by turning to the figure who coined the term, Diogenes. (At this juncture, I say farewell to Murdoch, and thank her for helping to set the stage for Diogenes' entrance.) This self-professed cosmopolitan lived in the ancient Greek world; he was born in approximately 412 B.C.E., and died in approximately 323 B.C.E. As we will see, he practiced a form of embodied philosophy that influenced many subsequent philosophical practices in the Hellenistic and Roman worlds. Diogenes truly fused word and deed. He did so in a flamboyant, striking manner that included a public trashing of what he perceived as the purely theoretical philosophy of Plato, whom he criticized again and again. I will describe Diogenes' conduct in detail because that is the only way to discern his cosmopolitan outlook.

I also will try to walk with Diogenes, who in some respects seems to be an ancient precursor of the modern *flâneur*, or one who strolls city streets. He prowled the precincts of Athens and other locales in a demonstrative manner that I will touch on in what follows. I will walk with him in order to try to identify another way of perceiving cosmopolitanism — that is, another way of beginning. On the one hand, Diogenes' extraordinary form of life accents the vitality of social criticism, while also expressing the unnamable passion for life and meaning, sometimes accompanied with unnamable suffering, that the exile, the castaway, and the wanderer know in their bones, and that any serious notion of cosmopolitanism must acknowledge.

On the other hand, I will try to point out features of cultural life that his perspective seems to have blocked from view, and without which cosmopolitanism may be an elusive, if not distracting, ideal in the affairs of our time.

DIOGENES: COSMOPOLITAN ICONOCLAST

A so-called Cynic philosopher, Diogenes was the first person in the ancient Greek era known to have characterized himself publicly as a *kosmopolites*, or “citizen of the cosmos.” “The only true commonwealth,” he said, is “that which is as wide as the universe.”⁵⁵ In the same breath, he declared himself “a beggar, a wanderer...without a city (*apolis*), without a home, deprived of native land.”⁵⁶ He seems to have fully grasped the radical and bold nature of his claim to cosmopolitanism, given how closely Greek identities were tied in that era to their respective city-states. He was exiled from his native Sinope (on the Black Sea coast of modern-day Turkey), allegedly for defacing its coinage — an apt image for the life of harsh assault on custom and convention he would go on to lead. Like his fellow Cynics, Diogenes treated local governance and custom as narrow-minded and out of tune with the simplicities and spontaneity that they saw as characteristic of nature. The Cynics rejected wealth, high office, and other conventional markers of success as barriers to genuine flourishing. Not surprisingly, perhaps, they idealized Socrates as an exemplary human being.

Diogenes pursued his self-chosen posture much further than did any of his philosophical comrades, including his teacher Antisthenes, who is the first recognizable Cynic thinker in antiquity, and who helped provide Diogenes a theoretical underpinning to his way of life.⁷ Upon his arrival in Athens, where he ended up residing for decades, Diogenes promptly intensified the iconoclastic practices he had initiated in Sinope. He publicly disavowed all local obligations, and famously took to living in a large, discarded wine jar in the agora. There he relieved himself and masturbated in plain view, ate his meals on the ground (including raw meat), and in general strove to scandalize the people around him. At night, he slept in the alcoves of temples, claiming that they were built for the likes of him. He had no quarrel with those Athenians who time and again called him a dog or dog-like, or *kynikos* (from the root *kyon*, or dog), whence comes the modern term “cynic.” Diogenes admired that animal’s naturalness and lack of guile in comparison with what he saw as the hypocrisies and pretentiousness of human society.

Diogenes railed against what he took to be his neighbors’ narrow-mindedness, bigotry, and self-satisfaction. When they complained that what he did in public should be done in private, he replied in effect that what they did in public ought to be done in private — for example, demagoguery, putting on airs, and showing off about the religious offerings they made in the temple. At the same time, he refused to leave the bustling agora or hide himself away like a hermit, no matter how disgusting he found the culture around him (and vice versa). He regarded his self-professed status as cosmopolitan as a credential for the office of permanent critic. He was a Greek chorus wrapped up in a single, hectoring voice. He mocked the desire for public acclaim, while making a spectacle of his asceticism. He seems to have believed that people ought to see themselves as part of the larger fabric of nature,

rather than as the blinkered citizens of a particular political entity no more destined to last than Percy Shelley's fabled Ozymandias. He had no truck with established religion, finding the multiplicity of gods and rituals distracting when compared with the grandeur of the cosmos and the task of dwelling in what he felt to be its moral light.⁸ Diogenes became a kind of hyper-Socratic gadfly, biting people into awareness and self-criticism. In a remark that is at once both a tribute and a rebuke, Plato called him "a Socrates gone mad."⁹

DIOGENES' COSMOPOLITAN INFLUENCE ACROSS TIME AND SPACE

Diogenes' conduct became common knowledge well beyond the confines of Athens, in part because that city, with its companion port, the Piraeus, was such a cultural crossroads in the ancient world, and in part because Diogenes often took to wandering from place to place. In fact, he ended up living part of his life in Corinth. His way of life exercised a mesmerizing effect on thinkers and teachers of all stripes and persuasions, regardless of whether they admired or were repulsed by him. References to his doings permeate subsequent Hellenistic and Roman philosophizing. His enactment of Cynic philosophy rendered it influential on Stoicism and other schools of philosophical practice. Moreover, his mode of life has continued to fascinate philosophers and social critics down to the present day. Many commentators seem to find in his life the reversal or transvaluation of values of which Friedrich Nietzsche later spoke as a necessary step toward human freedom.¹⁰ Indeed, the third century C.E. commentator Diogenes Laertius suggests that the dogged Cynic sought "the recoinage of values" in society.¹¹

Consider the dynamic role Diogenes' legacy played in the intellectual ferment of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe, which was more unwieldy and multidirectional than the familiar term "Enlightenment," with its rationalistic overtones, can encompass.¹² That age was absorbed, among other things, with cosmopolitan ideas and prospects. Thomas Schlereth argues that the age regarded Diogenes as "antiquity's existentialist" because he so willingly chose his own way.¹³ Many of that era's thinkers and reformers viewed Diogenes as a priceless teacher because he placed a self-chosen path of virtue above the norms of convention. They admired his willingness to pay the price of social contempt in exchange for liberty and adherence to nature — in other words, they admired his paying homage to *physis*, or nature, rather than *nomos*, or human law. They idealized him as a hero of clear-sightedness, and were struck by his claim that the most priceless gift to a human being is *parrhesia*, variously translated as "exercising freedom of speech" and "truth-telling." In Diogenes' era, freedom of speech in its broadest, unrestricted sense was often reserved solely for citizens of the polis, and for the wealthy and powerful. It was not a right that impoverished immigrants to the various city-states could count on. Thus, a signal mark of Diogenes' cosmopolitanism is the claim that the right to speech derives not from the laws of humanity, but from those of the cosmos, as he perceived it.¹⁴

Denis Diderot and other cosmopolitan-minded writers in the eighteenth century delighted in the report that Diogenes would walk the streets of Athens in broad

daylight carrying a lantern, saying that he was looking for an honest human being. They seemed to relish his cutting, often hilarious rebukes of established authority, such as his alleged reply to the powerful Alexander the Great who, on visiting the conquered Greek city-states, paid a visit to the renowned Cynic. When Alexander asked if he could provide anything for him, Diogenes, who at that moment was sitting in the sun (which, given his outdoor life in the agora, he often did, especially in the colder months), replied, “Stand out of my light.”¹⁵ No doubt, many eighteenth-century *philosophes* appreciated the resonance of Diogenes’ response with the idea of letting in the light that, they argued, so often is blocked by the walls of unexamined custom and belief. Diderot’s fellow *encyclopédiste* Jean le Rond d’Alembert summed up the prevailing ethos when he wrote: “Every age, ours above all, needs its Diogenes. But the difficulty is to find people with the courage not just to live his way but to endure the consequences that accompany it.”¹⁶

The seventeenth century artist Nicolas Poussin, often characterized as a philosopher who worked in oil paint rather than prose, captures, in my view, the moral admiration that many felt for Diogenes. In a painting entitled “Landscape with Three Men,” which can be seen in the Museo Nacional del Prado in Madrid, Poussin juxtaposes a spartan-clad Diogenes with a brightly dressed youth who is reclining in the grass. In the background is an estate or township from where Diogenes has apparently just departed. The youth languidly points back to the solid-looking buildings as if to say: “There is the place to dwell, ye vagabond cosmopolitan philosopher. It promises a settled, comfortable way of life. Go back, relax, and take your ease like me.” Diogenes, with trademark wooden staff in hand, points the opposite way, to a place or space outside the picture, as if to say: “On your feet, ye bovine citizen. You need *routes* not just *roots* if you’re to grow. You need the world.”¹⁷ In another painting, entitled “Diogenes in a Landscape,” which can be seen in the Musée du Louvre in Paris, Poussin, in my view, beautifully renders Diogenes’ quest for simplicity (part of his biting criticism of Athenian culture was directed toward what he viewed as its grotesque materialism). In the painting, Diogenes stands by a stream of clear, fresh water where he was about to drink. But he has just dropped his wooden bowl to the ground. He had noticed a youth nearby, down on his knees, drinking from his cupped hand. He was startled and moved by the sight of a person who had found a greater simplicity than he.¹⁸

ARRIVING AT THE BEGINNING

At the beginning of this essay, I spoke of returning to the beginning. As we have seen, Diogenes coins the term cosmopolitanism and enacts its meaning, as he conceives of it, in all the facets of his life. His profane, impudent mechanisms of social critique are certainly the stuff of legend. And yet, his irreverence toward local custom mirrors his reverence toward trying to live in what he felt was the light of the cosmos. He was not agnostic, much less nihilistic, about the worthiness of life. His Cynicism differs from the modern-day notion of cynicism. Heinrich Niehues-Probsting emphasizes that Cynics like Diogenes had a strong sense of value, esteeming among other things independence, freedom of speech, closeness to nature, and comradeship with like-minded people. He argues that modern-day

cynics, in contrast, lack principle and a sense of value. As Oscar Wilde memorably quipped, cynics know the price of everything but the value of nothing.¹⁹

In my view D'Alembert was right: every era needs its Diogenes. Perhaps every community and every individual person needs an internal Diogenes, too, which is a claim that would encompass universities, schools, and individual classrooms. Poverty-stricken, iconoclastic, and mocked at every step of the way, Diogenes' speech act in declaring himself cosmopolitan remains a provocative gesture of human agency and freedom that, for good reason, has endured across the centuries.

BEGINNING AGAIN: FROM DIOGENES' COSMOPOLITAN WITNESS
TO THE IDEA OF COSMOPOLITAN PARTICIPATION

In addition to a movement of return, of going back to the beginning, I also referred at the beginning of this essay to walking with Diogenes. I would like to do so now. For while I join those who draw moral nourishment from his blending of social critique and simplicity of life, I find inhabitability *in* rather than *outside* cultural life to be a crucial criterion for a viable cosmopolitanism. Thus, I want to reconsider Diogenes' universalism and his distance *from*, rather than participation *in*, everyday cultural affairs.

On the one hand, as we have seen, what renders Diogenes so compelling is his permanent status as one who resides outside the ordinary stream of human culture. That status provides him with a powerful basis for the criticism of unquestioned custom and convention. On the other hand, culture cannot be culture if it is outside of culture; society cannot be society if it is outside of society. Diogenes' cosmopolitanism is profoundly incomplete — unless, to deploy his own satiric bent, we are all to take to living in old wine jars in the agora. (And I would not put it past him to say here: “Now you're beginning to understand.”) I want to ask whether Diogenes' harsh rejection of local custom and ritual, as practiced in Athens or anywhere else (he was an equal opportunity critic of all culture), is counter-cosmopolitan, as well as counter-cultural. In severing his roots in local life, does Diogenes become not a citizen of the cosmos but a citizen of nowhere?

I would like to deploy the conceit of walking with Diogenes out of respect for his embodied manner of doing philosophy. As indicated previously, Diogenes gave an important impetus to philosophy understood as the art of living, as a way of moving in the world. I want to suggest to Diogenes: Let us walk the streets of your ancient Athens, including its agora, which was a magnet to philosophers and scholarly charlatans from far and wide. Let us stroll through its ancient port, the cultural *mélange* called the Piraeus, with its many foreign residents and visitors, which was, in Diogenes' day, what one scholar calls “a center for innovations in everything” with regard to economic, social, artistic, religious, and cultural life.²⁰ But let us walk without your famed lantern, with which you hoped to catch an honest face. The light it casts may be too harsh, putting into the shadows the gestures of the everyday and ordinary, which constitute the only soil in which cosmopolitan relation between people can grow. Figuratively speaking, let us fashion a cosmopolitan prism from the minerals in that soil.

For Diogenes, what I just dubbed “cosmopolitan relation” was a matter of cultivating a way of life in harmony with nature and the cosmos writ large. My hypothesis on our walks would be that cosmopolitan relation pertains directly to human culture. It is a term of art for, among other things, the ability to dwell meaningfully in a space of often paradoxical transition: of leaving *and* remaining at home, of engaging the strange *and* the familiar, of witnessing *and* participating. Cosmopolitanism as I see it is not a synonym for open-mindedness, though it has family resemblances with that oft-cited virtue. It constitutes not just reflective openness to the world, but reflective loyalty toward the local.²¹ This often unsteady fusion of openness and loyalty does not necessitate abandoning tradition, cultural inheritance, or individual striving, aspiration, and creativity. On the contrary, the fusion has no meaning without them. Cosmopolitanism as I understand it presumes the reality and value of individual and community distinctiveness, and would disappear in their absence.

Moreover, from a cosmopolitan perspective, it is impossible to try to be open at all times to everything new, or loyal at all times to everything known. To try to be permanently open dissolves life, while trying to be permanently loyal petrifies it.²² I intend these claims in a descriptive rather than normative sense. Cosmopolitan relation, or artfulness, involves discerning how and when to express openness to the new, and loyalty to the known, in the vicissitudes of everyday life. In this respect, it finds ever-distinctive expression in particular moments and interactions.

Thus, in setting out on our walk I would hope to turn from the dazzling figure of Diogenes and his invention of cosmopolitanism to the everyday world itself. What *does* that world look like? And how does it look back at Diogenes?

I have no doubt that Diogenes and I would find evidence aplenty for the view that human culture embodies a seemingly immovable, myopic habituation that endlessly frustrates the seeker of justice, freedom, and meaning in life. We would find one incentive after another to take moral guidance from a picture of the cosmos rather than from the cultural scenes before us. However, if we put away the lantern and look in the light of how people actually dwell *in* the everyday, I think we would find that human culture also features unfathomable creativity, and that this capacity is no more visible than when individuals and communities intersect. These intersections generate not just sparks of strife and violence, although that obviously happens. They also trigger new, unanticipated modes of mutual learning, appreciation, and fulfillment, as people strive to inhabit an ever-changing, ever-unpredictable world. Cosmopolitanism can denote cultural beginnings at the crossroads of human interaction.

I would have some faith that Diogenes and I might see this form of cosmopolitan relation because of what today’s proliferating scholarly literatures have disclosed. Field-based work has shed light on what Scott Malcolmson dubs “actually existing cosmopolitanism,” a term he deploys in order to distinguish it from the theoretical versions that also are multiplying across the humanities and social sciences.²³ Scholars have identified cosmopolitan relation in the everyday lives of

working-class people, immigrants, youth, retired persons, deeply religious people, artists, and many others. They have studied these enactments in countries such as Britain, Canada, China, Greece, Malawi, Thailand, and the United States. They have documented the reality, the fragility, and the resiliency of everyday cosmopolitan-minded interaction.²⁴

At the same time, recent historical research suggests that such interaction has been going on for a long time, perhaps as long as that millennia-old process called globalization. For example, historians have illuminated cosmopolitan-minded practices in the Mediterranean world of the Roman era; in Alexandria, Egypt, and other urban centers of the Ottoman era; in the history of Odessa and other port cities in various parts of Europe, Russia, and elsewhere; and in Europe in the early modern era.²⁵ These historical and field-based lines of inquiry attest to the organic origins of a cosmopolitan orientation. It emerges from below, or from the ground up, rather than awaiting top-down initiatives or directives. A common denominator in the studies, as I read them, is the uncommon ways in which people across space and time express a cosmopolitan disposition. There is no single form that it takes, and no single language that people deploy. Although in all cases it seems to feature a version of what I shorthanded earlier as a dynamic openness to the new fused with loyalty to the known, the expressions of a cosmopolitan sensibility are highly contextualized and distinctive. Moreover, while Diogenes and I are walking through large cities, recent research also suggests that cosmopolitanism is not an exclusively urban phenomenon.

A lesson I draw from pondering this literature (I would also want to include novels, poetry, and film from across time) is that cosmopolitanism can mark educational, as well as cultural, beginnings. On the one hand, cosmopolitanism can itself be viewed as an educational orientation through which people learn modes of creative habitation, as opposed to passive habituation, in a hurly-burly world. On the other hand, its educational significance can be drawn from a feature of Diogenes' life that has not been touched on explicitly thus far. Diogenes and his fellow Cynics undertook deliberate forms of *askesis*, or personal discipline, in order to fashion themselves into persons who could withstand the inevitable shocks of life while retaining personal continuity and a sense of home in the cosmos.²⁶ For Diogenes, this discipline or exercise was self-directed, although he seems to have believed that it had a moral import to the extent that he could inspire others to learn from it (a point that recalls the fact that he chose to reside in the public agora, rather than retire to a hermit's life). It was a training in endurance and patience, as when he was seen talking to a statue, and, when asked why, replied, "I am practicing disappointment [for when I ask for alms]."²⁷

In thinking back to the hundreds of classroom beginnings that I have witnessed, which I touched on at the start of this essay, I believe that one can see in them an implicit or tacit mirror of *askesis*. I hasten to add: not, to be sure, in the full-blown ancient sense of that term. Nonetheless, the idea helps highlight the fact that many teachers and students do seem to practice forms of self-cultivating activity each day that are predicated on the notion that self and world are mutually implicated. They

position themselves to participate, they ready their materials for the engagement to come, and they wind up their social talk as they shift to talk of a different sort. Looked at through a moral prism, as I suggested, such mundane acts can take on new, formative meanings. Among other things, such acts literally bring into being a particular ethos that influences and supports those involved.

So it is with a cosmopolitan prism. Such a prism can spotlight ways in which teachers and students take hold of their education by becoming mindful of such everyday practices, in conjunction with bringing to life the presence of traditions and inheritances from elsewhere that are embedded in art, history, literature, mathematics, science, and other domains of curriculum. In this enterprise, teachers and students can work out the meaning, if not in so many words, of reflective openness to the world fused with reflective loyalty to the local. They can work through the paradoxical transitions touched on previously: leaving and remaining at home, engaging the strange and the familiar, and witnessing and participating. At the same time, they can render those paradoxes themselves into objects of discussion and inquiry. In so doing, they discover why grasping another idea, value, custom, or practice requires shifting their interpretive proclivities, however modestly, to meet the reality embodied in the new.²⁸

In this light, cosmopolitanism's educational trajectory is not arithmetical. It does not mean the strategic adding or subtracting of aspects of identity, outlook, or knowledge. It is not a mosaic game of fitting together prefabricated pieces of knowledge and inheritance into a jigsaw puzzle of one's private design. It is not a matter of simply acquiring information. Like any serious view of education (as I understand that all-too-familiar concept), cosmopolitanism implies transformation in value, practice, or belief, however minute each alteration may be in the larger scheme of things. Diogenes notwithstanding, such a transformation is not universalistic, in the sense of reaching closer and closer to an *a priori* notion of human being, purpose, and place in the cosmos. Rather, this kind of transformation recognizes the permanence of change in the world, including in the very idea of the universal, and the permanence of permeability and porosity to the world's influence. For millennia, individuals and communities have crafted ways to keep such influence at bay, all of them chimerical in the sense that all those ways themselves embody an ongoing response to the world. There is no keeping the world "at bay." Judging from the research literatures cited previously, many of these same individuals and communities across time have sought to sustain their integrity, or continuity as distinctive and irreproducible beings with particular histories and inheritances, through a creative, transformational response to residing at the crossroads of the new and the different, and the tried and the known. It is a crossroads that they seem to *inhabit*, if never in a definitive or homogenized manner. I picture cosmopolitanism as a term of art that sheds light on this ever-evolving undertaking.

I would hope that, in walking with Diogenes, we might find ourselves practicing a mode of discipline: that is, learning to look, again and again, at the manifold ways of life before our eyes, and to be on the lookout for signs of cosmopolitan relation. As mentioned, scholars have generated evidence to suggest that we would witness

something along such lines. In so doing, we might “begin again” with a cosmopolitanism that is more many-sided than the version that Diogenes coined, which, for all its ethical and aesthetic value, cannot be cashed out in the give and take of cultural life. Diogenes was “dog”-matic (pun intended), in the sense that, culturally speaking, he saw what he expected to see, and it was all too real: human culture does feature appalling narrow-mindedness and cruelty. But what Diogenes’ lantern cast in the shadows is equally real, and requires a cosmopolitanism that it seems he could not imagine. In many of the social settings in which people dwell, cosmopolitan sensibilities do not have to be generated anew. First and foremost, they have to be recognized. The moral aspirant will, I think, find it worthwhile to look for them.

CONCLUSION: THE FIRST SHALL HAVE THE LAST WORD

Diogenes was once chided for having been exiled from his native Sinope. He replied to his interlocutor, “You wretched man, that is what made me a philosopher!” On another occasion, when someone said to him, “The people of Sinope condemned you to banishment,” he replied, “And I condemned them to remain where they were.”²⁹ Diogenes expressed his universal vision by dwelling as simply as possible in the light of the cosmos, in which he felt at home. His voice was not just that of the social critic whom d’Alembert said every era requires, and whom I suggested perhaps every person and community needs. Diogenes’ embodied philosophy also hearkens to the anguish of the exile, the castaway, and the wanderer. The disappointment that he sought to practice by talking to statues mirrors a pronounced experience of loss and pain.

In calling attention to grounds other than established culture and religion in which to cultivate human being and solidarity, Diogenes helped set the stage for later modes of cosmopolitanism, such as those of the still influential Stoics. At the same time, he helped launch a kind of seriocomic philosophizing (*spoudogeloios*), without which the discipline of philosophy might lose its soul, if we understand philosophy in both its theoretical and practical senses.³⁰ Diogenes’ uncanny ability to tolerate criticism and public laughter, his endless verbal witticisms and *bon mots*, and his *brin de folie* (“a touch of craziness,” in contrast with “the mad Socrates”), was not a game, even though he seems clearly to have enjoyed playing the role. In my view, he continues to cast a valuable Cynical (though not cynical) eye on the scope and trajectory of today’s cosmopolitan studies. Thus, at the close of our walk, I imagine Diogenes turning to me and saying: “Many thanks for your sketch of an inhabitable cosmopolitanism. It will serve as a useful plate upon which to place the meal I am now going to hustle from you. The last thing we need in the cosmos” — I can hear him barking as I quickly beat a retreat — “is a theory of cosmopolitanism! Go back out to those streets you say we should explore without my lantern. In addition to walking face first into some walls, maybe you’ll be lucky and walk into the truth that life on this earth should be a scene of gratitude for being here at all.”

1. Iris Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good* (London: Ark, 1985), 1.

2. David T. Hansen, “Getting Down to Business: The Moral Significance of Classroom Beginnings,” *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 20, no. 4 (1989): 259–274.

3. M. Victoria Costa, "Cultural Cosmopolitanism and Civic Education," in *Philosophy of Education 2005*, ed. Kenneth Howe (Urbana, Ill.: Philosophy of Education Society, 2006); Kevin McDonough, "Cultural Recognition, Cosmopolitanism, and Multicultural Education," in *Philosophy of Education 1997*, ed. Susan Laird (Urbana, Ill.: Philosophy of Education Society, 1998); Kevin McDonough and Walter Feinberg, eds., *Citizenship and Education in Liberal-Democratic Societies: Teaching for Cosmopolitan Values and Collective Identities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Kathyne Mitchell and Walter C. Parker, "I Pledge Allegiance to...Flexible Citizenship and Shifting Scales of Belonging," *Teachers College Record* 110, no. 4 (2008): 775–804; Marianna Papastephanou, "Arrows Not Yet Fired: Cultivating Cosmopolitanism Through Education," *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 36, no. 1 (2002): 69–86; Marianna Papastephanou, "Globalisation, Globalism and Cosmopolitanism as an Educational Ideal," *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 37, no. 4 (2005), 533–551; Hiro Saito, "Envisioning Cosmopolitan-National Education: Ethics of Dialogical Affiliation" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New York, March 2008); Sharon Todd, "Ambiguities of Cosmopolitanism: Difference, Gender and the Right to Education," in *Education in the Era of Globalization*, eds. Klas Roth and Ilan Gur-Ze'ev (Amsterdam: Springer, 2008).
4. Murdoch, *Sovereignty of Good*, 1.
5. *Diogenes Laertius: Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, vol. 2, trans. Robert D. Hicks (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005), 6.63, 6.72. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are from this text. This work will be cited using the conventional "D.L. 6.passage number" system in order to refer to passages in Laertius' Book 6 where he discusses Diogenes and other philosophers. On occasion, I will also refer to translations from *Diogenes Laertius: The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, trans. Charles D. Yonge (London: George Bell and Sons, 1909), and I will indicate when I have done so. Most of what we know about Diogenes' life derives from Laertius' third-century C.E. text. Classicists and philosophers of the ancient world continue to debate the authenticity of the sayings ascribed to Diogenes, some referring, therefore, to "the figure" of Diogenes as traditional sources have given him to us and as he has influenced historical lines of philosophical thought and practice (compare Pierre Hadot on "the figure" of Socrates in his *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, ed. Arnold I. Davidson, trans. Michael Chase (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 147). On Diogenes' coining of the expression "cosmopolitan," see John L. Moles, "Cynic Cosmopolitanism," in *The Cynics: The Cynic Movement in Antiquity and Its Legacy*, eds. R. Bracht Branham and Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 119.
6. D.L. 6.38; translated in William Desmond, *Cynics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 202–203.
7. Diogenes Laertius reports that Antisthenes "derived so much benefit from [Socrates] that he used to advise his own disciples to become fellow-pupils with him.... He lived in the Piraeus, and every day would tramp the five miles to Athens in order to hear Socrates. From Socrates he learned his hardihood, emulating his disregard of feeling ["his indifference to external circumstances," in Yonge's translation], and thus he inaugurated the Cynic way of life" (D.L. 6.2). In *Phaedo* 59b, Plato mentions Antisthenes as being one of the few persons present at Socrates' death. The social shamelessness for which many Cynics became renowned can be traced, at least in part, to moments where Socrates deliberately scandalizes his interlocutor in order to make a point; see, for example, Plato *Gorgias* 494b–495.
8. Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé, "Religion and the Early Cynics," in *Cynics*, eds. Branham and Goulet-Cazé, 59–60, 64–65, 69–74.
9. D.L. 6.54. Diogenes said of himself that "I fawn on those who give me anything, I yelp at those who refuse, and I set my teeth in rascals" (D.L. 6.60).
10. Nietzsche was much taken with Diogenes, and peppered his writing with references to the ancient figure's mode of philosophizing (see, for example, *Beyond Good and Evil*, #2.26, and *Human, All Too Human*, #18). For discussion of Diogenes' influence through the Middle Ages, Renaissance, Enlightenment, and modern era, see the wide-ranging essays in *Cynics*, eds. Branham and Goulet-Cazé; and Desmond, *Cynics*, 209–236.
11. D.L. 6.20; translated in Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. 1 (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1985), 120.
12. For discussion of this ideational tumult see, for example, Sankar Muthu, *Enlightenment Against Empire* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2003); and Thomas J. Schlereth, *The Cosmopolitan Ideal in Enlightenment Thought: Its Form and Function in the Ideas of Franklin, Hume, and Voltaire, 1694–1790* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977).

13. Schlereth, *Cosmopolitan Ideal in Enlightenment Thought*, xvii.

14. D.L. 6.69. For background discussion, see R. Bracht Branham, "Defacing the Currency: Diogenes' Rhetoric and the *Invention* of Cynicism," in *Cynics*, eds. Branham and Goulet-Cazé. Michel Foucault regards Diogenes and the Cynics as important inaugurators of a tradition of philosophy that embodies the "scandal" of truth: the critique, on the one hand, of custom and convention, and on the other hand, of philosophy that treats truth as correspondence to a timeless reality. See, for example, Michel Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, ed. Frédéric Gros, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Picador, 2005), 15–19. In a review of Foucault's viewpoint, Thomas Flynn characterizes Diogenes as turning a "carnavalesque grimace" toward Plato and the latter's conception of philosophy; see Thomas Flynn, "Foucault as Parrhesiast," in *The Final Foucault*, eds. James Bernauer and David Rasmussen (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994), 110. Like Socrates, Diogenes apparently regarded Athens as more inhabitable than elsewhere because the city had a reputation for not censoring voices in the agora. See Eric Brown, "Socrates the Cosmopolitan," *Stanford Agora: An Online Journal of Legal Perspectives* 1, no. 1 (2000): 74–87. Anthony A. Long recalls the important point that numerous Sophists, who were contemporaries of Diogenes, also distinguished between nature or cosmos, and human convention. However, Long shows that, for some of the Sophists, the distinction constituted a license to amass as much power and wealth as possible. These figures had a quantitative notion of human fulfillment; consider how often Callicles, in Plato's *Gorgias*, refers to "getting more." In contrast, for Diogenes, the distinction between cosmos and social convention led to a qualitative image of life in which less is more. In Diogenes' outlook, persons ought to aspire to a life of simplicity and harmony with the present moment. They should model themselves after children and animals, whom the Cynics pictured as free of a grasping and envious desire. Moreover, Long emphasizes that Diogenes and his Cynic confreres did not reject morality out of hand. They esteemed virtues of justice and moderation, and they never advocated violence or harm to others. Rather, they censured non-moral values such as wealth and political domination, and they attacked what they saw as massive hypocrisy regarding morality itself. See Anthony A. Long, "The Socratic Tradition: Diogenes, Crates, and Hellenistic Ethics," in *Cynics*, eds. Branham and Goulet-Cazé, 34–5. Also see Heinrich Niehues-Probsting, "The Modern Reception of Cynicism: Diogenes in the Enlightenment," in *Cynics*, eds. Branham and Goulet-Cazé, 349.

15. D.L. 6.38.

16. Quoted in Branham and Goulet-Cazé, eds., *Cynics*, vii (translation from the French mine).

17. The play on roots and routes derives from Kwok-bun Chan, *Chinese Identities, Ethnicity and Cosmopolitanism* (London: Routledge, 2005), 13.

18. Compare D.L. 6.37. In Raphael's famous painting in the Vatican, "The School of Athens," Diogenes lies sprawled on the steps, unkempt in his weather-beaten cloak, which covers only part of his body, supremely indifferent to the gathering of renowned philosophers surrounding him — especially Plato and Aristotle, who literally tower above him on the top step. For a discussion of depictions of Diogenes from the Roman era through the present, see Diskin Clay, "Picturing Diogenes," in *Cynics*, eds. Branham and Goulet-Cazé.

19. Niehues-Probsting, "Modern Reception of Cynicism," 294.

20. Allan Bloom, "Notes," in *The Republic of Plato*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic, 1968), 441.

21. The idea of "reflective loyalty" mirrors Alain Locke's work on what he calls "value attitudes," which he distinguishes from values *per se*. Locke draws, in turn, upon Josiah Royce's concept of being "loyal to loyalty," rather than solely toward particular objects of loyalty, as a ground for human relation. Alain Locke, "Cultural Relativism and Ideological Peace," in *The Philosophy of Alain Locke: Harlem Renaissance and Beyond*, ed. Leonard Harris (Philadelphia, Pa.: Temple University Press, 1989); and Josiah Royce, *The Philosophy of Loyalty* (Nashville, Tenn.: Vanderbilt University Press, 1995).

22. An analogy with another intensely debated outlook — namely, what it means to be moral — can shed light here. John Dewey observed that a sign of maturity is knowing when to raise the question of the moral, that is, knowing when to ask whether an act or proposal is just, good, or worthy. To ask this question about every act or notion ("May I sneeze now?") would drive people mad and bring life to a halt. To refuse to ask the question would render life a horror. See John Dewey, *Ethics* (1932), in *John Dewey: The Later Works, 1925–1953*, vol. 7, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989), 170.

23. Scott L. Malcolmsen, "The Varieties of Cosmopolitan Experience," in *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation*, eds. Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).

24. I have tried to characterize this literature in David T. Hansen, "Cosmopolitanism and Education: A View from the Ground," *Teachers College Record* 112, no. 1 (2010).

25. See, for example, Margaret Jacobs, *Strangers Nowhere in the World: The Rise of Cosmopolitanism in Early Modern Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); Maya Jasanoff, "Cosmopolitan: A Tale of Identity from Ottoman Alexandria," *Common Knowledge* 11, no. 3 (2005): 393–409; Maya Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire: Lives, Culture, and Conquest in the East, 1750–1850* (New York: Random House, 2005); Gretchen Reydam-Schils, *The Roman Stoics: Self, Responsibility, and Affection* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Tanya Richardson, *Kaleidoscopic Odessa: History and Place in Contemporary Ukraine* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008); and Sophia Rosenfeld, "Citizens of Nowhere in Particular: Cosmopolitanism, Writing, and Political Engagement in Eighteenth-Century Europe," *National Identities* 4, no. 1 (2002): 25–43.

26. For illuminating treatments of the theme of self-cultivation or "spiritual exercise" among the ancients, see Julius Domanski, *La Philosophie, Théorie ou Manière de Vivre? Les Controverses de l'Antiquité à la Renaissance* [Philosophy as Theory or as Way of Life? The Debate from Antiquity to the Renaissance] (Paris: Éditions de Cerf, 1996); Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*; and Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*.

27. D.L. 6.49, trans. Yonge.

28. I have addressed these themes in David T. Hansen, "Curriculum and the Idea of a Cosmopolitan Inheritance," *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 40, no. 3 (2008): 289–312.

29. D.L. 6.49, trans. Yonge.

30. This tradition also commences with Democritus (who lived from approximately 460 to 370 B.C.E.), the so-called "laughing philosopher," who also chided his contemporaries for what he saw as their lack of interest in virtue. The tradition finds later expression in figures as diverse as Desiderius Erasmus, François Rabelais, Michel de Montaigne, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Nietzsche; for further discussion see, for example, Timothy McDonough, "The Fool's Pedagogy: Jest for Liminal Learning," in *Philosophy of Education 2001*, ed. Suzanne Rice (Urbana, Ill.: Philosophy of Education Society, 2002). On the paradoxical and the ludic in Cynic cosmopolitanism, see Moles, "Cynic Cosmopolitanism."

For their thoughtful criticism of an earlier version of this essay I thank Stephanie Burdick-Shepherd, Cristina Cammarano, Martha Crowley, Caroline Heller, Giovanni Ildefonso, Mark Jonas, Kyung Hwa (Alice) Jung, Deborah Kerdeman, Megan Laverty, Gonzalo Obelleiro, and Winston Thompson.