2. Belonging to the Whole: Critical and ‘Heraclitical’ Notes on the Ideal of Cosmopolitanism

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_Helios neos eph’hemerei estin_ (The sun is new every day), Heraclitus, B6

What is the _cosmos_? And what could it mean to belong or stem from it as its _polites_, its citizen? This is the question posed to us by the very configuration of the word: cosmopolite, and the cosmopolitical. Who is the cosmopolite? Do we know this figure? Does he or she exist? Has he ever existed? Or are we, in fact, all of us such beings? But do we not indeed know very well what this is all about? For the ideal of cosmopolitanism, of world citizenship, and of global politics, would seem today to confront us with a greater urgency than ever. In a world which is rapidly coming together through trade, transaction, and exchange of information, the emergence of something like a global community, and thus of a global ethical and political responsibility, is a living reality. The globalization predicted as a consequence of capitalism by Marx and the growth of a global political community anticipated by Kant as the natural destiny of mankind following the growth of international trade, and also promoted by him as the logical extension of his universalist ethics, are today an evolving reality. Following the disastrous experience of global warfare in the two world wars, the

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community of nations agreed on the creation of the first legal structures for the execution of global justice for so-called crimes against humanity, enacted by international tribunals. And through the creation of the global political forum of the United Nations, it was also possible to charter something like global ethico-political principles, in the form of the declaration of human rights. The growing awareness of the gross injustice in the distribution of goods around the Earth, and not least the recently recognized threat of humanly induced global climatic changes, also point to global politics, to a political responsibility for the cosmos as a whole, and to a new class of global political functionaries. In this very real sense it would seem that we are indeed living through the creation, for the first time in history, of what would seem to be the final realization of the ideal once formulated in ancient Greece, at a time when the world was only partially known and inhabited, namely the ideal of the *cosmopolites*, the citizen of the world. As if indeed this was our destiny.

But precisely at this point, when the initial and initializing words seem to reach their culmination, it is more important than ever to go back and listen to their older, original meaning. This is important not only for reasons of historical interest, but also for the possibility of maintaining a philosophical, reflective relation to what is taking place in the name of these words today. For just as language enables us to think and grasp that which is, it also guides us, and often in ways of which we are scarcely aware. To reflect philosophically on the word *cosmopolites* is also of special importance, since its very coinage is so intimately associated with philosophy itself, with the birth of its peculiar ethos and orientation. In confronting this word, philosophy also, inevitably, confronts itself and its own spiritual and intellectual heritage. But this heritage is not one, it is not singular and unitary, but is instead ambiguous from its very inception.

In historical studies on the emergence and growth of the cosmopolitan ideal, it is often stressed that it constitutes a change in mentality which stems from social changes. In times of increased travel and commerce, and of imperial politics, the cosmopolite appears as
a role to be assumed. In this respect, the gradual weakening of the Greek city states in antiquity in favour of the imperial and multicultural situation in the Alexandrian and later Roman Empires, could seem to mirror the present situation, in which again the cosmopolite emerges as an ideal at a time when the nation state is weakening. In its everyday positive connotation, the cosmopolite today often signifies somebody who is seemingly at home everywhere, who has cultivated his humanity to the point where ‘nothing human is unfamiliar’ to him, to recall the saying of Terence, and of later humanists. As such, the cosmopolitical is also a metaphysical concept, for it designates the nature of being, the nature of man and of man’s place within being as a whole. And as such it remains question worthy, in need of our continued reflection, not least in order to preserve the implicit possibilities of the ideal itself. For the cosmopolitical contains in itself an ambiguous heritage. On the one hand, it implies a totalizing and unificatory discourse, stemming from a conception of rationality as one (divine) order; on the other hand, it points towards a questioning of all limiting orders, a willingness to go beyond the confines of the particular community, the particular nation, in an opening up towards the world at large. The cosmopolite is the one who aspires for the community of men at large, and to thus transcend what is immediately familiar in favor of the new and the unexpected, as well as the unexpected in oneself. When cosmopolitanism is recalled today, it can therefore function as a call for adaptation, for unification and standardization, as a subjection to a universal principle. But at the same time it can imply a belonging to the whole as an openness to what is not limited, and to a difference that can never be mastered, for it is a difference that is part of the individual self. This dual aspect of the heritage of cosmopolitanism also has its counterpart in the different conceptions of liberalism, as well as that of education, of Bildung.

2 For a recent good summary of the historical arguments concerning the emergence of this ideal and also its relation to religion as political identity, see Ingrid Saelid Gilhus, ‘The Role of Religion in Cosmopolitan Culture’, in K. Almqvist & E. Wallrup (eds.), Cosmopolitanism: Perspective from the Engelsberg Seminar 2003 (Stockholm, 2006).

3 The question of Bildung, paideia, education or formation can be traced alongside that of the cosmopolitical throughout its history. For to learn the foreign, to
Taking the thought of the cosmopolitical in such a direction will at first seem to remove it far from its ancient, Stoic sources, in which the very idea of the cosmopolitical seems to be essentially linked to a conception of the universe as arranged and guided by a divine and rational order. But in order to investigate this notion of a more original experience of difference in unity, I will focus partly on what is arguably the most ancient source of the Stoic conception of a cosmic order or logos, namely the pre-socratic thinker Heraclitus and the fragments which mention cosmos and logos. For in these scattered remains, written around 500 BC and preserved only partially in later, secondary sources, we find several remarkable formulations that in themselves make problematic the standard understanding of Stoic cosmology, as well as its subsequent tradition. Indeed, here we find what is arguable the first preserved example of a philosophical use and understanding of the very concept of “cosmos”.

As we shall see, the discourse of cosmopolitanism is from the outset a discourse on the discursive itself, on logos, ratio, and reason, what reason is, where reason is, and what the moral and political implications of reason are. But since logos is what defines man, at least according to the famous definition by Aristotle, that man is the zoon logon echon, the ‘animal with reason’, it is ultimately a discourse on man, and on the natural fate of man. In going back to the earliest sources of the Stoic, and thus also of the Kantian conception of rationality, I also want to show how we can and should problematize the often naïve conception of natural right which lies at the heart of the cosmopolitan ideal. It has to do with the nature of that measure in things and in life which reason seeks, and which it at the same time creates, and the living ambiguity of which it is so difficult to accept. By going back to this fundamental philosophical issue, we can hopefully find resources for the articulation of a more free relation to the contemporary problem of ‘world order’ or cos-

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become acquainted with what is not one’s own, and to learn to recognize one’s own in what is apparently foreign are part of the formation of a cosmopolitical being. This correlation between cosmopolitanism and education is discussed in detail in Peter Kemp’s excellent book Världsmedborgaren. Politisk och pedagogisk filosofi för det 21 århundradet, trans. J. Retzlaff (Göteborg, 2005).
mic logos, in which the apparent alternatives of an authoritarian imperialistic world order and an empty ideal of global justice often seem to constitute the horizon. For one of the most pertinent tasks for philosophy today is to define what it would mean for man to belong to and inhabit the Earth, and to belong to the world as a whole.

In the word *cosmopolites* we encounter the fusion of two Greek words, *cosmos* and *polites*. The second of these, of which I will speak later, is certainly not philosophically innocent in this particular configuration, but its translation does not appear to be a problem, as we render it as *citizen, civitas*, a member of a city or state. With *cosmos* it is different. It has become a basic word in most Western languages, as in cosmology, cosmogony, cosmic and cosmos. As such it is a synonym for what we also speak of as the *universe* (from the Latin *universum*, that which has ‘turned into one’). Its linguistic origin can be traced to the verb *cosmeo*, which in Homer depicts the arranging and ordering of things and people, e.g., in an army. In the *Iliad* we thus also find the noun *kosmetor*, referring to a commander or chief. As a noun in Homeric Greek, *cosmos* means both an order and what is done in an orderly, duly fashion, but also an adornment or ornament (cf. in this respect the other axis of the modern appropriation of the word in ‘cosmetics’). What we do not find in Homer, however, is the use of *cosmos* in its later ‘universal’ sense, as a designation of the totality of what is. When speaking of the surrounding, total element of life, Homer will instead speak of the Earth (*gaia*) and the heavens (*houri anos*).

It is a noteworthy fact that the sense of *cosmos*, which we are tracing here, has not been found by the lexicographers in sources outside those classified as philosophical. In other words, it is as a philosopheme that it first emerges, a linguistic invention which is simultaneous with the birth of what is eventually recognized as philosophy. In the chapter on Pythagoras in Diogenes Laertius’ *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* (written in the third century AD), Pythagoras is said to have been the ‘first to call heaven (*ton houranon*) the cosmos’, though he also mentions other suggestions
that have been made, such as Parmenides and Hesiod. From Pythagoras we have no remaining texts, only sayings and legends reported by other writers. In the preserved fragments of Parmenides’ poem, by the subsequent tradition entitled *On Nature*, there is indeed a mention of a *cosmos*, an *order* according to which beings are united and separated. But supposedly somewhat before this occurrence of the word we have the remarkable fragment from Heraclitus (no. 30 in the Diels-Kranz edition, which does not seem to have been known by Diogenes Laertius): ‘This *cosmos*, the same for all, no god nor man has made, but it ever was and is and will be: fire everliving, kindled in measures and in measures going out’. This is the oldest known preserved example of the very word *cosmos* as a designation of the whole of being. In the Heraclitean text we encounter the word as it reaches out for a totality, to touch the whole in its evasive nature. The way Heraclitus uses it here is truly remarkable, as he forges a metaphor for the totality of being out of that which is ordered and arranged, and at the same time twice short-circuits its implied meaning. First, he does so by refusing to recognize an ordering agent, since neither god nor man made or shaped it; secondly, by negating its stability, since it is equated with fire and life, a *puraizoon*. A century later we can see in Plato’s *Timaeus* how *cosmos* has become an established term in a philosophical discourse on the whole and its origin. But for Plato, the image of the world as *cosmos* is developed in terms of a creator and designer, an original cause in the form of a craftsman, carpen-

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6 Cf., Charles Kahn’s edition of the Heraclitean fragments, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus* (Cambridge, 1979), p. 45. In only one other fragment out of the hundred and twenty preserved fragments is there a mention of the cosmos, in no. 124, which reads ‘among that which is randomly dispersed, the cosmos is the most beautiful’. Its authenticity is, however, more uncertain. For my own more detailed commentary on these and the other fragments, see Herakleitos, *Fragment* (Lund, 1997).
7 When Timaeus introduces his theme of the origin of the world, with which the subsequent dialogue is concerned, he says: ‘when it comes to the heavens (houranous) or the cosmos, or if some other name may be appropriate…’ *Timaeus* 27a.
ter or simply maker, metaphors which are all mentioned in *Timaeus*. In the Heraclitean image, however, there is no agent, no origin, but a *cosmos* which lives in perpetual transformation and self-consummation, which emerges and withdraws, according to a measure, a *metron*.

It is from this point in intellectual history that we have a *cosmology*, in the sense of a logos of the cosmos, a discourse on that which is designated by this name. But what *is* the *cosmos*? How can we answer this question outside the space which the word itself establishes? The word indicates all that is in the image of an order, the nature and principle of which it sets up as the task for understanding to explore, to contemplate, and to live by. For this is the second seminal inheritance from Heraclitus to subsequent thought, that this *cosmos* has a measure and an order, as a *metron*, but more importantly as a *logos*, as what speaks and can be spoken of, as what thinks and can be thought. The first lines from his only partially preserved text read: ‘Although this *logos* holds forever, men ever fail to comprehend, before they hear it and once they have heard. Although all things come to pass in accordance with this *logos*, men are like the untried when they try such words and works as I set forth, distinguishing each according to its nature and telling how it is. But other men are oblivious of what they do awake, just as they are forgetful of what they do asleep’. And this is then followed by another remark on the *logos*, listed as fragment 2: ‘Although the *logos* is shared, most men live as though their thinking were a private possession’. All things come to pass according to a logos, a logos which holds and which is common to all, but which nevertheless, and perhaps precisely for this reason, is by no means apparent, but hidden from view, inaccessible, even to those who have a share in it, who themselves belong to it.

The *cosmos* is possible to know, in the sense of bringing it to articulation, to bring out the articulation which already from the outset characterizes it. And this articulation is something which characterizes man himself, although he may not have access to it. Can it be fully grasped and mastered? And what would a mastery of it amount to? In two of the fragments, a correlation is suggested between the logos and the soul, the *psuche*, of which it is said that to
it ‘belongs a logos that grows itself’ (B115) and also that ‘the limits of this psuche will not be found, so deep is its logos’ (B45). But the logos is not a personal possession, but what resonates from within the cosmos itself, as when he says in another seminal fragment: ‘it is wise, not listening to me, but to the logos, and to agree that all things are one’. Here the logos is what speaks of and lets man discover the hidden unity of all things. But this unity is what lives only in and through diversity, as the beautiful fragment 51 declares: ‘they do not comprehend how a thing agrees at variance with itself: it is an attunement turning back on itself, like that of the bow and the lyre’.

In speaking of this order, in speaking to and at the same time from within this order, and thus permitting the words to touch and reveal its evanescent nature – a nature which in another fragment it is said that ‘it loves to hide’ – can thinking hence be true to its calling. What is this logos of which Heraclitus speaks? It is a word never before used in this sense. Some generations later it, too, has become an established philosopheme, as in Aristotle’s aforementioned famous definition of man as the zoon logon echon, the animal with logos, often translated as ‘reason’, sometimes as ‘speech’. But instead of readily jumping to what is familiar, or what would rather appear to make it familiar, the point of these reflections on the origin of some of our key philosophical terms is to leave room for a certain uncertainty and indecidability as to their exact meaning and significance. For the familiarity of the term easily overshadows the underlying uncertainty and unfamiliarity of the matter. The Heraclitean logos distances itself from what is idion, private, as well as from the many, polloi, reaching instead for the shared and common, and unitary, xunon, koinon, and hen. And yet the common for which it reaches is not to be found among what is generally recognized as the common. For this is precisely what must be questioned and in the end disregarded. Only the one who expects will ‘find the unexpected, which in itself is untraceable and aporetic’, as Heraclitus says in fragment B18. Its projected community is thus not an existing community, but a community always in the making, the emergence of which presupposes the transcendence of common reason. To its ethos belongs even the prepared-
ness to sacrifice what can be considered as a false and limited community, in favour of a community of *logos*. The point becomes accentuated in the case of Heraclitus personally, who, according to legend, was the inheritor of the throne, but who relinquished it to his brother for a philosophical life.

What then is the relevance of these remarks on the Heraclitean fragments for the contemporary issue of cosmopolitanism? The appearance of *cosmos* as a philosopheme is simultaneous with the emergence of the philosopher himself, as the individual who has made it a task to understand and discern a *logos* of this *cosmos*, of nature, and of life, as a commitment to the growth and development of the logos that man carries within himself. Furthermore, the community and universality for which he aspires are not the immediate universality of the world, but a hidden universality in the making. To commit oneself to this universality requires a dual movement, to move beyond the common thoughts and practices of men, and at the same time to seek inside oneself, not for what is private, but instead for the hidden common word, thought or reason, for a logos which is accessible only for those who are able to follow their own way.

Here the emergence and nature of this ethos from the particular viewpoint of the Heraclitean fragments have been outlined. Within our present context this choice is not incidental, since Heraclitus was among the most important predecessors to the formation of the general cosmology of the Stoic school of thought, within which the explicit ideal of the philosopher as a *cosmopolites* is eventually articulated. This tradition is initiated with the teaching and writings of Zeno of Citium around 300 BC. For him and his followers, it was a central part of their doctrine that the *cosmos* is permeated by a divine *logos*, as a fate in which man also has a share, and in accordance with which he must try to live his life. In the scholarship on the early Greek philosophers it was often noted that the Stoics, in their reception of Heraclitus, while paying tribute to his thought, nevertheless deviated from his understanding of the *logos* of the *cosmos*, not least in their conception of a periodically recurring cosmic conflagration. But this is of minor importance here. The point of tracing the Stoic conception of the *cosmos* and its *logos*
back to their own oldest source is to open up the possibility of an interpretation of this conception which displays both the fecundity and the ambiguity of this idea in a way that is lost in the standard accounts, both in regard to what the *cosmos* is and what it can mean to live by its inherent *logos*. For it is precisely the meaning of this that is at stake when we turn to the metaphor of being a citizen of this *cosmos*, i.e., its *polites*.

In the aforementioned *Lives of Philosophers* Diogenes Laertius also tells the story of how Diogenes of Sinope (ca. 400–325 BC), who was the teacher of Zeno, when asked from where or whence (*pothen eie*) he was, simply responded: *kosmopolites*, a citizen of the world. The story, if authentic, is commonly recognized as the first coinage of the not so frequently used word. How should we interpret this gesture, this configuration of thought, whereby a man describes himself as a citizen, not of any particular city, but of the *cosmos* as such? First, we can ask what is a *polites*? What does it mean to be a citizen? It means to be a recognized member of a community, a subject under the law, with duties and responsibilities, normally to pay taxes and to participate in the defence of the community, with the right to protection from violence and theft, and in democratic states to participate in the decision-making through the vote. In Aristotle’s *Politika*, written around the same time as Diogenes’ declaration, the citizen is explicitly defined as ‘the one who participates in the decisions and rulings (*kriseos kai arches*) of the state’ (1275a). A citizen, a *polites*, is thus by definition a member of a city or state, a *polis*, an organized community, regulated by laws. The law is what defines and surrounds the city, like its wall, to again use an image from Heraclitus, who in one fragment speaks of how the people must ‘fight for the law as for the city wall’. A citizenship is most often something which is not chosen, but into which a human being is born, and by means of which he comes to know and recognize himself, as a member of this or that community or nationality. It is by virtue of having citizenship that this being can make his living, since citizenship is most often connected to the right of employment and of practicing

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9 Fragment DK 44.
a trade. It is also by virtue of being a citizen that a person can move around the Earth, for it is as a citizen that one is granted the documents needed for travel, and for entry into other communities. He who is not a citizen in a particular *polis* will be received with suspicion in every other community, if he is received at all. As an inheritance from the ancient practice of hospitality to strangers, the right of the stateless to seek refuge in a state, we have today’s international legal framework for how to deal with refugees, a right which was also emphasized in Kant’s outline of a cosmopolitical order, and which was taken up in the contemporary debates, notably by Derrida.¹⁰

When the Cynic and Stoic thinkers describe their humanity in terms of cosmic citizenship they are speaking metaphorically, in a way which is not philosophically innocent. In its negative aspect it emphasizes that man is not restricted to belonging to this or that community. But to be human is to be a part of the world at large, and to relate to all that is, as one total horizon. But this is not to be a citizen in the strict sense. For there is no such city or state to belong to. In Aristotle’s *Politika* we also find the famous definition of man as not only an animal with reason, but as the ‘political animal’ (*politikon zoon*). For as Aristotle writes, the one who by his nature (and not simply by chance) does not belong to a state, who is *apopolis*, is wretched (*phaulos*), but possibly also something greater than man (*kriettion he antropos*)! In referring to that which is more or greater than man, Aristotle could be said to open a space for the transcendence of the space of local citizenship, yet still clearly marking that this is something that is beyond the essence and telos of man.¹¹ To be part of a community is to be human, even though the precise nature of this community can be very different, as Aristotle’s own detailed catalogue of forms of statehood explores.

The coinage of the term *cosmopolites* is metaphorical. It relies on the colloquial sense of citizenship as codified, e.g., by Aristotle,

¹⁰ See Derrida, *Cosmopolites de tous les pays, encore un effort!* (Paris, 1997).
¹¹ It is to this argument that Nietzsche will later respond, in an aphorism in *Götzen-Dämmerung*, where he writes that ‘To live alone one must be an animal or a god – says Aristotle. There is yet a third case: one must be both – a philosopher’, in *Kritische Studienausgabe*, Vol. 6, p. 59, Eng. trans. R. J. Hollingdale, in *Twilight of the Idols* (London, 1968), p. 23.
as a person taking part in decisions and rulings of the city or community, as a responsible and free agent, not just as a passive participant. As we have seen, already the metaphorical designation of the totality of being as cosmos, as a humanly well-organized whole, even as an organization, in a sense anticipates the possibility of thinking of the participant in this totality as a member of a community. But as a cosmos understood in the Heraclitean sense, created by no one, an ever-living fiery life, it is clearly not a totality to which man belongs as being under an organized rule and ruler. Rather, it is an abysmal space where the pulse of life and death comes to pass interchangeably, and in relation to which man can seek to know and think its measures as well as his own. By forging the very metaphor cosmopolites, Diogenes of Sinope also affects the very understanding of what this cosmos is. One can say that he humanizes it, by making it into an anthropocentric figure, through which it obtains something of the character of an overruling political body. It is thus an ambiguous philosophical gesture. The purpose is to give word to the sense in which the man of reason, of logos, the philosopher, finds his belonging in a contemplation of the whole. For obviously there is no universal political community to join. Outside the city states there is no rule of law, no cosmos in the conventional sense. The organized states are the cosmoi, the orderings. Yet the one who has opened his eyes and ears in understanding will hear another voice, another calling, and he will see the patterns which characterize the whole. In regard to this overarching cosmos he has no saying, no vote, and he cannot regulate its development. And there is no one there to recognize him and grant him the privileges which he could expect as a citizen. In relation to the cosmos, he is without rights and without influence. Supposing we apply Aristotle’s political terms more strictly, the cosmopolites would thus appear rather as a wretched apolis, an individual without community. But what then is this community in the making, this other non-political community? Is it the community of philosophy, in the sense of reason’s open and uncertain search for the logos of that which is, for its tales and its measures? And who are its members? The educated? Who can justly claim citizenship of this order? Or is it an order open to all who show themselves
committed to its cause and its task? Those who are prepared to ex-
pect the unexpected?

The ambiguous nature of the metaphor of the political relation to
the *cosmos*, which, in a sense, equates the man of reason with a
citizen in the whole of being, is brought out in a sharper and, for
the future discussion, more decisive way by the Roman Emperor
Marcus Aurelius. In Marcus we find the philosopher and politician
in one person. Particularly noteworthy from the present argument is
that he is also one of our more important sources for the knowledge
of Heraclitus, since it is in his *Meditations*, written in Greek, that
several of the fragments have been quoted and thus preserved. So,
e.g., it is Marcus who in referring to Heraclitus speaks of ‘the *logos*
which rules everything, and which men continuously have a deal-
ing with, and from which they nevertheless take their distance’.12 In
the most important passage in *Meditations* for the development of
the philosophical sense of the very image of the *cosmopolites*,
Marcus writes as follows, organizing his thoughts in the form of a
logical deduction: ‘If the capacity for thought is common to all
[again an implicit reference to Heraclitus] then so is reason,
through which we are rational, something common to all. If this is
the case, then we also have in common the inner voice, which tells
us what to do and not to do. If this is the case, then we also have a
common law. Supposing this, we are all citizens in a common state
(*cosmopolites*); and again supposing this, the world (*cosmos*) as a
whole can be looked upon as one state. And from this state we also
have our capacity for thought, our reason and the law’.13

The ambiguity of the voice that speaks here is remarkable. Mar-
cus was at this point writing from the most powerful political posi-
tion in his world, as Emperor of Rome. His reference to a shared
law, rooted in a divinely inspired rationalism, is an imperial voice.
Yet in his beautiful, and humble Stoic call for temperance and re-
fection, he is far removed from demagogy. The ethos for which he
here speaks is one of freedom, independence and self-sufficiency,
of *autarkeia*, so central to many of the ancient philosophical

12 The fragment is no. B 72, and is found in Book 4, Section 46 of *Meditations*.
13 Ibid.
schools, and for Stoicism in particular. The genuine philosopher bows to no one, not even to the emperor, for he is equal to everyone, as in the famous story from *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* of the encounter between Diogenes of Sinope and Alexander the Great, where the emperor offered to satisfy his wishes, upon which Diogenes is said to have replied: ‘stand out of my light’. Another important source for Marcus was the slave Epictetus, who one century earlier developed his own radical version of Stoic ethics, as preserved by his pupil Arrianus in the *Manual*, where the supreme goal of life is said to be the achievement of freedom, not to become general, senator or consul, but to become free. And the way to this freedom is to disregard everything that does not depend on ourselves. Stoicism could therefore become a philosophy for both emperors and slaves, for it seeks to articulate a universal predication of man, under which everyone lives. This general predication is the divine order and a destiny, the recognition of and compliance which constitutes a route to a harmonious life.

The philosophical proximity between Stoicism and Christianity is apparent, and partly explains the success of Christianity among the educated Romans. In the Gospel of John, the working of God is captured in the same terms as the Stoic world order, in terms of the *logos*. It is from the point of view of this proximity that we can also again observe the fundamental ambiguity of the Stoic cosmopolitan attitude. On the one hand, it designates a refusal of any particular inheritance, the insistence on the unbounded character of the free person. To say that one is a *cosmopolites* is then to say that one comes from nowhere in particular and from everywhere. It refuses the limit of a particular confinement. Diogenes of Sinope represents the figure over whom no one can rule, for he rules himself through his developed virtues. He recognizes no command, and he can live this refusal, for he has nothing to lose, no property, no belongings. He stands before the world in his naked humanity and cannot be

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14 Ibid., p. 41. According to another ancient legend, Alexander himself is said to have declared that ‘had I not been Alexander, I should have liked to be Diogenes’. Ibid., p. 35.
threatened, for he endures fate as the supreme order. The other side of the ideal becomes most visible in Marcus, where the cosmopolitical is directly connected with the idea of a given divine moral and political law of the Earth. The virtuous man will be able to access this law by means of his own reason, the divine element in himself. This law is there from the beginning, and it can also ideally become the law of the universe, or at least of the empire. Here the cosmopolitical understanding of a divine law of the world fuses and blends with the possible practice of an imperial or imperialistic legislation, to shape the cosmopolitical ideology into a potential political empire as well. It is this same tension that we can trace as an inheritance in and from Christianity; between cosmopolitanism as the ascetic recognition of a divine order, manifested as a fate to contemplate and with which to comply, and the order as also a task to accomplish in the form of universal legislation, as the human accomplishment of God’s rule on Earth. This ambiguity will continue to characterize liberalism in its modern Kantian and post-Kantian shape as well.

As a last point in this collection of remarks on the ambiguity of the cosmopolitical, I want to call upon another, more modern Heraclitean, namely Hegel, who in his lectures on the history of philosophy once wrote: ‘that there is not a single line by Heraclitus that I have not taken up in my logic’.\textsuperscript{16} Hegel is not a thinker of cosmopolites or of the Weltbürger, but in the third part of Philosophy of Right, dealing with ethical life (Sittlichkeit), there is a fascinating remark on the cosmopolitical, which in passing brings together several of the themes touched upon so far. There, he writes: ‘It is part of education (Bildung), of thinking as consciousness of the individual in the form of universality, that I am apprehended as a universal person, in which all are identical. A human being counts as such because he is a human being, not because he is a Jew, Catholic, Protestant, German, Italian, etc. This consciousness, which is the aim of thought, is of infinite importance, and it is in-

adequate only if it adopts a fixed position – for example, as cosmopolitanism – in opposition to the concrete life of the state’.17

Unlike Kant, and partly in open opposition to his political philosophy, Hegel never affirmed the possibility of a global political federation of states. The idea and concept of cosmopolitanism is not a living category in his thought. But in this short passage he brings together several key elements for a philosophical analysis of the cosmopolitical. First of all, the passage speaks of the growth of a universality as a process of formation or education, of Bildung. The individual subject grows into a recognition of itself, conjunctly with a recognition of others as universal. The recognition that ‘all are identical’ under the most general heading of ‘humanity’ or ‘human being’ is not a given fact on the basis of which a moral or political theory is deduced, but instead a growing realization of thinking itself. Thus, there is a teleological destiny of rationality, which comes to maturation in the process of seeing itself mirrored in all others, as instantiations of the same. For Hegel, the logos is not a fixed entity, but a growing, evolving reality, in conjunction with the development of humanity itself.

Philosophy could be portrayed as the struggle to reach, by means of reason, a comprehension of the real. In Hegel’s formulation, it is the task of giving the implicit rationality of reality a rational form, and thereby, as he writes elsewhere in the Philosophy of Right, ‘to appear justified to free thinking’.18 This is his understanding of what it would mean to unearth the hidden logos of the cosmos, to bring the rational principle out in the open, in and through understanding itself. Philosophy is a work accomplished by the human spirit, which ideally brings it into harmony with the world as it is and appears, but also with the fate of humanity as such. In this declaration Hegel gives voice to a central inheritance of the whole philosophical adventure, namely that through the practice of rational reflection and thought, the individual human being comes to recognize the generality and universality of his predicament as a rational creature, beyond the confines of temporal, cultural, political, and

18 Hegel, Philosophy of Right, p. 11.
religious belongings. And in this process it is not only a question of grasping a universal truth, but of becoming, oneself, this universality.

Man is the ‘rational animal’, the animal equipped with reason and speech, with *logos*. But what is *reason*? What is this something which presumably defines us, and yet which always remains to develop, to cultivate, to bring to its fulfilment? And what does its self-fulfilment imply in terms of moral and political consequences? For Kant, the rationality of man designates an inherent and natural teleology, a movement towards a different order, a universal order. This is the central thesis of his treatise on universal history from the cosmopolitan viewpoint. In its fifth thesis, it is stated that the ‘achievement of a universal civic society’ is both the greatest problem for the human race, and also the task which nature has given him.¹⁹ Hegel would agree to a certain point, even though in his politics he did not want to speculate beyond the nation state and specific cultures, which he continued to see as the living agents of a universalization. What, then, does he mean when he discards cosmopolitanism as a fixed position? In the German original text the expression is somewhat more lucid. For here it is clear that what he affirms in this development is the development of a universal, communal spirit of mutual recognition of men as all instances of the universal (*allgemeine*) person. This is for Hegel what education, *Bildung*, ultimately amounts to: to see the other as identical to oneself. As such, it is a pivotal step in the development of consciousness, indeed one of ‘infinite importance’. But its significance is lost, he seems to say, when it is codified in a specific political position, as in opposition to the nation state. Cosmopolitanism is thus interpreted in the sense of a political ideology which opposes the nation state. But for Hegel the growth of the universal consciousness is not dependent on the abolishment of the nation state, which in itself has its own logic of development and importance. Thus it is not in refusing the universality of the claim that he opposes cosmopolitanism, but rather that the underlying significance

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of its ethos is not dependent on the realization of a specific political goal.

Perhaps we can say that for Hegel, the (historically unlikely) construction of a world-state would not imply the fulfillment of the genuine inheritance of the Stoic cosmopolitical ideal from Marcus, for this, too, would be a particularity of another order. To live the life of the logos in Hegel’s understanding is to expose oneself to a universalization which grows in and through the individual as it reaches its maturation, and thus its inner teleology. When Hegel renounces cosmopolitanism as a label for this movement of individual consciousness towards its universal telos, he could thus be interpreted as renouncing the metaphor of the polite as a way to describe man’s relation to the universal and to the whole. Becoming part of a universal logos in Hegel’s sense is not ultimately a political event, for the political will always remain bound to a specific state and culture. The consequence of the extraordinary rationalistic vision of Hegel is not the universal empire, but an open and, in the end, undecidable programme of a continued historical dialectic on the political level. At the same time, the completion of spirit would seem to indicate that at a level of philosophical insight and understanding, the inherent logos of the cosmos can come to its expression and articulation in the form of philosophy itself. In this respect, Hegel is a true inheritor of the Stoic tradition and its programme for a rational reconciliation with a cosmic historical destiny. And as such I think it is fair to conclude that he also could be read as a modern interpreter of what the open, metaphorical ideal of the philosophical ethos of the cosmopolites implies, indeed as its most extreme expression. For it is in Hegel’s philosophy, more consistently than perhaps in any other modern system of thought, that the universalization of the spirit in accordance with the inherent logos of the cosmos is accentuated as the very goal of the philosophical formative journey, its Bildung.

It is also at this point that we can return, in conclusion, to the Heraclitean source, and allow its questions to resonate. An ever-recurrent theme in post-Hegelian philosophy has been the questioning of its totalizing and implicitly totalitarian implications. If the universalization of spirit is indeed its destiny, then it would seem
that Hegelian metaphysics also has as its destiny the cancellation or sublation (*Aufhebung*) of the individual, in favor of its general essence. This was the critique already voiced by Kierkegaard, and it has been repeated in many versions and from many perspectives in 20th century philosophy, not least in critical theory and in hermeneutic philosophy. But from Heraclitus and the oldest source of Stoic rationalism we have the impetus to also think of this unity as a unity in difference, as differing in itself. Furthermore, we have the impetus to think of the projected universal community as a community of dissent, and as such as a community always to come. And perhaps most importantly, we find the trace of a thought of a singularity, which is not the individual as an enclosed sphere, as a ‘private possession’, as separate from the communal, but as a singular route to the community always in the making, as that which can only be found ‘in search of myself’, to repeat some of the fragments quoted earlier. The ethos appropriate for this latent logos is not one of adaptation to what is general, but one that is prepared to meet the unexpected, that which is ‘untraceable and aporetic’, in other words, that to which no known and established routes lead. To be a *cosmopolites* in this sense is not to affirm the given community, but to remain vigilant in the free and singular search for what shows itself as uniting.

References

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