

THE AGORA, THE DOG, THE SAGE AND THE FRIEND: TRACING THE COSMOPOLITAN ANCESTRIES IN THE HELLENISTIC REGIMES

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And so I go about the world, obedient to the god, and search and make enquiry into the wisdom of any one, whether citizen or stranger, who appears to be wise.

(Plato, "Apology," *Five Dialogues*, 26)

Cosmopolitanism in the Early Days

Cosmopolitanism is an intriguing idea that has always been a perennial space for discussions regarding its relevance and viability among scholars and thinkers since the ancient age till today. From the ancient understanding of polis and cosmos, the idea retains its contemporariness even today connecting two apparently different aspects in a relation -individual and the world. The word cosmopolitanism has its roots in ancient Greece and comes from the word "kosmopolites," in which "cosmos" (universe/world) and "polis" (city-state) feature as two important thematic. While Diogenes is believed to be the originator of the thought, we can trace back its origins to the Socratic dialogues. However, the first traces of cosmopolitan thoughts go beyond Diogenes and Socrates. Rather it was in Homer's¹ epic poems and in some ancient Greek tragedies that we find the first glimpses of cosmopolitanism slowly taking shape although it was still in its germinating stage.²

In Homer's poetry, there are instances of various voyages to distant lands which have enabled the native people to venture beyond the local and approach the universal.³ Cosmopolitanism in its rudimentary understanding lay in the sharing of the mythical narratives and cultural encounters between the different Greek states. Again, in *Medea*, Euripides connected with human emotions irrespective of countries and marked human movement across different places like Greece, Troy, Taurica, Egypt, Tyre, Lydia, Mysia, and or Ethiopia. He pointed to a human nature beyond the accidents of citizenship and race, and regarded each man's [human] natural endowments as being his true fatherland [motherland] (Harris 4). Two other movements which also contributed in developing the concept of cosmopolitanism in the ancient and pre-Socratic Greek world are Orphism⁴ and Pythagoreanism.⁵ The cosmopolitan aspect in Orphism lay in this self-concern for salvation of souls which had a universal approach. It created an appeal across humanity, without being bothered about geographical limitations or their political obligations. In Pythagoreanism, the stress was more on the understanding of the concept of the divine in nature and searching for logic within that divinity. Both Orphism and Pythagoreanism were the initiating grounds where the basic cosmopolitan thoughts

get shaped up by attaching ample amount of importance to the individual soul for an understanding of universal order. Kenneth S. Guthrie says that Pythagoras could have been the pioneer in calling the world a cosmos (Guthrie 1987: 22). The Pythagoreans according to Guthrie held the belief that, “assimilation to the divine” is the “essential aim of human life.” (1962:199)

However, it is also observed that cosmopolitanism as a concept goes beyond philosophical, theological and logic based traditions. It can be traced in the domain of historiography as well. It operates within the medium of history writing because it was Herodotus⁶ who initially looked into non-Grecian historical documents for a comprehensive view of history. Harris finds this unique since history was written primarily to depict the victorious exploits and only local accounts and events were trusted as authentically documentable. (Harris 5). Thus as a concept, cosmopolitanism in the Greek world was slowly blooming through literature and historiography.

This study aims at looking into the major schools of thought in the ancient Greek where cosmopolitanism emerges through emphasis on human values, knowledge, conceptions of being just and idea of pleasure. Further, we attempt to point out the necessity of understanding cosmopolitanism as these ancient thinkers did – as a part of their daily life and ideas. Interestingly in the Hellenistic regime, the idea was not limited to the human beings but also extended itself to the other living beings in the natural world. Through the philosophical discourses of Socrates, Diogenes, and other Stoic and Epicurean thinkers like Zeno and Epicurus, cosmopolitanism began its journey as a philosophical thought. Gradually cosmopolitanism has developed from scattered instances of benevolence towards human beings irrespective of their geographical locations as observed in Homer (conversations of Priam and Achilles), to a set of human values in Socrates and other Greek schools of thought, into a set of critical deliberations relevant in our everyday lives.

Socrates and Cosmopolitanism of the Agora

Socrates (469/470- 399 BC) the ancient Greek thinker encouraged young people to ask questions and seek what is essentially true. He encouraged exchange of dialogues as one of the ways to unleash philosophical alternatives and develop interpretations so as to arrive at the best possible account of the concept or view point (Kenneth 8). These dialogues focussed on various aspects of the polis, on integrity, on laws and on the concept of cosmopolitanism. Though we come to understand much of the arguments through Plato’s documentation, it is difficult to understand the quintessential Socrates through his works. According to Eric Brown, “The most important indication of Socrates’ cosmopolitanism is his rejection of ordinary politics in favour of an extraordinary kind” (Brown 75). Even though Socrates did not express disdain regarding Athenian politics and was obedient in serving his state by participating as a soldier in battles like Potidaea, Amphipolis, Delion etc (Calder 84), he was an objective/distant commentator on the political activities. By extraordinary politics, Brown seems to indicate Socrates’ not so eager participation in local politics but an idea about general conception of justice and social goodness. Socrates justifies his position as a political figure who is not regionally bound to a place and is a part of a collective belonging to the same place, but as someone who respects his individual space as well as the concept of several other existing heterogeneous spaces. The extraordinary politics, which Brown says that Socrates practices, is another way of connecting oneself to the world at large, as a microcosm of the cosmos. Thus, Brown argues that Socrates in rejecting ordinary politics, and taking up extraordinary politics, is engaging himself in a cosmopolitan worldview instead of being tied to local commitments like active voluntary participation in the politics of Polis only (Brown 78).

Brown discusses the Socratic cosmopolitan viewpoint as the characteristic of an extraordinary political mission. With the vision of a universal concept of justice, Socrates does not want to distinguish between human beings when the judgement is regarding an individual over and above the society and humanity. He also rejects the conventional distinctions regarding being more beneficial

to the people closer to him geographically or connected to him in some ways either by blood or through friendship (even disciples/students). He believes that people in general should benefit from his extraordinary politics:

And although by itself the universalism pervading Socrates' discussions of virtue does not establish cosmopolitan conclusions, it is easy to see how Socrates could turn to this universalism in order to support his cosmopolitan injunction against harm and his cosmopolitan commitment to extraordinary politics. In this way, we can see Socrates as a citizen of the world, rejecting the ordinary political service of his native polis for the extraordinary political service of the cosmopolis. (Brown, "Socrates the Cosmopolitan," 80)

In Plato's *Dialogues*, often we find that the persona of Socrates appears to give us a ground with the intention of bridging the gap between the concepts of nationalism and cosmopolitanism. Haeryun Choi says that:

The Socrates' philosophy shows that we can build "a bridge" between these two competing concepts. Socrates, in Plato's dialogues including *Apology* and *Crito*, show how to live as a human being with the characteristics and the attitude of a global citizen. (Choi 49).

A question legitimately arises here – Is Socrates, a nationalist who centres his attention around Athens only or is he a cosmopolitan who is concerned with humanity at large without the prejudice of being a citizen only of his 'polis'? In "Crito," we come across a Socrates who is deeply respectful of his city laws and abhors the idea of escaping to Thessaly (a neighbouring city) when there is an impending death penalty awaiting its final hour. Crito persuasively tries to convince Socrates to choose exile and not death. The insistence of Socrates on obeying the laws of Athens as a citizen and acknowledging the influence of his state-polis on his education highlights his spirit of nationalism. The laws were representatives of virtue and to abide by them was the duty of a citizen of Athens. According to Socrates, the laws are like his guardians and say that every true Athenian should be answerable to them as they would feel regarding their biological parents. (Plato, *Five Dialogues*, "Crito," 53)

Socrates was open to sharing his discussions regarding ethics, truth, justice, virtue and piety only within the frontiers of his city. He extended his views to everyone and would gladly engage with all irrespective of them being natives of his own polis Athens or foreigners from other places. According to Socrates, the quest for "truth" should be oblivious to boundaries and he ardently invited everyone irrespective of the person being either an Athenian native or a foreigner.

And so I go about the world, obedient to the god, and search and make enquiry into the wisdom of any one, whether citizen or stranger, who appears to be wise (Plato, *Five Dialogues*, "Apology," 26)

It might be important to note that Socrates did not travel outside Athens and neither ever expressed his wish to do so. Although, he talked with anyone who was willing to discuss, he even detested closed spaces something like that of a court or classroom. Also, his view towards oratory (Plato, *Gorgias*, 23) shows the urge for dialogic communication. Socrates believed in knowledge being an unrestricted pursuit where any sort of a boundary would be hampering its realisation to the full and preferred discussion about philosophical thoughts in the agora or the market place which was a public space for gathering. Agora is an interesting selection of space for discussing philosophical issues owing to the fact that it was a form of universal gathering not restricted only to Athenians but different strangers who flocked there for commercial purposes. For Socrates, the pursuit for knowledge, undeterred by the chains of political and spatial limitation defines his cosmopolitanism.

However, at this point, it might be interesting to peek into Plato who documented a considerable portion of the cosmopolitan Socrates. According to H.C. Baldry, Plato believed that the bonds which hold the cosmos in harmony are also equally responsible for holding both the individual soul of the citizen and the polis or the city in order. This was one of the cosmopolitan traits in Plato's thought

which he also formulates through his conception of the ideal republic (1965: 76-77). The thought of a nation and the principle of nationhood germinate in Plato's *The Republic*. We find Plato's cosmopolitan worldview as an intermediary phase before the arrival of the truly cosmopolitan thinkers like the Cynics and Stoics. Plato's philosophy has also been defended by critics like Gabriela Carone who stresses on the fact that Plato's cosmopolitan thoughts was a kind of ethical cosmopolitanism (Carone, 13) and she argues that the propelling factor behind Plato's late cosmology is the critical engagement with his ethical thought. Plato's concern with individual human ethics is the essence of his cosmopolitan thought. Plato's cosmopolitanism attempts to amalgamate the concept of an ideal Grecian polis with the idea of universal harmony in the broader cosmos also. It opens the question to philosophically tease out the dichotomy of the cosmopolitan soul and its relation with the city.

After Socrates, cosmopolitanism found its profound expression in the Cynic and Stoic schools of thought. Cynicism focussed on the rejection of the conventions that do not conform to the natural laws. The cynic eulogized everything that was natural and discarded the traditions imposed by the laws and social codes in the city-state or polis. However the cynics were responsible for introducing the cosmopolitan concept in a broader sense with diluting the deep sense of being within the control of the polis.

Diogenes and the Cynic School of Cosmopolitan Thought

Diogenes Laertius of Sinope (c.404-323 B.C.E.), the founder of the cynic school is also considered the first cosmopolitan who claimed to be a "kosmopolites," a citizen of the world. In R.D Hicks translated version of *Diogenes Laertius- Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, there is a passage on Diogenes which mentions that:

On being asked what he had gained from philosophy, he replied, "This at least, if nothing else—to be prepared for every fortune." Asked, where he came from, he said, "I am a citizen of the world." (65)

Diogenes lived an unconventional life practicing austerity with ease and was dissociated with the luxuries of the world. His popular image shows him as a beggar living on the alms given by people and one who discarded any sort of material comfort and slept in a large ceramic jar in the marketplace. He went around with a lamp during the day in crowded places publicly stating the purpose of finding one honest man (Matton, 261). Cosmopolitanism in the Cynic worldview begins with Diogenes who affirmed that "I am a citizen of the world" (*Diogenes Laertius*, 65). Apart from the cosmopolitan aspect in the statement, does Diogenes indicate a total rejection of the polis? This is one of the major concerns of some critics who often criticise Diogenes' cosmopolitanism (Balot, "Hellenistic Political Thought" in *Greek Political Thought*, 284). On the other hand, scholars like Eric Brown, name Diogenes' cosmopolitan view as a positive one (Brown, "Hellenistic cosmopolitanism," 551). John L. Moles in his article, "Cynic Cosmopolitanism," denies ascribing to any kind of negativity to the views on cosmopolitanism expressed by the cynics. Moles is of the opinion that Diogenes, in claiming to be a citizen of the world, does not mean that he is "apolis" or without a polis. Instead, it is rejection of the tradition of the local polis in favour of a higher understanding of the cosmopolitan ideal (Moles, "Cynic Cosmopolitanism," 109).

Cynic cosmopolitanism rests on the belief of living according to nature in contrast with living in a polis confined within the laws of the government or state. Often Cynic cosmopolitanism can be taken as a reevaluation of social codes that defines the life of a typical 'polis'. In relating themselves as citizens of cosmos, the perfect and much higher conception of a polis, cynics show an alternate way of conceiving humanity not just in terms of inhabitants in different territorial spaces but of the cosmic space in general. Thus, in the cynic cosmopolitan world view, the concept of 'race' does not matter and the cynics claim that one can lead a cynic life anywhere on earth without being bothered about the fact in which they are living (Moles, 111). In ascribing to the whole of earth as their own, the cynics extend themselves, in a way, a connection with the entire mankind.

To the Cynics, therefore, the concept of cosmopolitanism is a positive sentiment where they exhibit their alliance to the natural world full of natural resources rather than the polis. Their acceptance of the term ‘dog’ to be associated with their lifestyle and philosophy shows their complacency of being close to natural world. This *animal-philic*, specifically the dog-like behaviour, that the cynics like Diogenes exhibited, was the testimony of their simple lifestyle. We find roaming around for alms for food, urinating and masturbating in public places indifferent to the presence of other people, engaging in free love, replying without being afraid of hierarchies and power structures – are similar to the habits of an animal who does not know to discriminate between a pauper and a king. They (the cynics) also did not care for any kind of burial or cremation rites. The association with the natural aspects, is in general, an extension of their concern with humanity at large or the representation of the cosmos on earth. Although the cosmopolitan idea is less expressed in Cynic school unlike the Stoic and Epicurean philosophical attitude, there are positive sentiments towards the natural world and humanity at large which was viewed as a form of lifestyle.

The Cynics’ emphasis on living according to nature was also inclined towards a kind of animal primitivism which was not common with the Stoics. Also, there was an implicit bias towards individual self-sufficiency. According to Moles, their philosophy was circled around a central question which stresses on the simplicity of the concept – “what could be more comforting than to live the life of animals?” and “What could be more comforting than the conviction that self-sufficiency leads to happiness?” (Moles, 120). To the Cynics, the concept of cosmos is real which can be achieved simply by following their worldview. The Cynics did not only restrict themselves to thinking about their own happiness, but also concerned they were of the satisfaction of the “fellow citizens” who could transcend from being only the citizens of the ‘polis’ to the citizen of the ‘cosmos’. Thus the Cynic philosophy of the cosmopolitan worldview was significantly promoting advancement in relating the affairs of the polis to the polity of the cosmos.

The Stoics and the Political “Sage”

Founded by Zeno of Citium (334 BC – 262 BC), the philosophical ideas of Stoicism were heavily drawn from the Cynics. It is assumed that the Stoic philosophers who succeeded the Cynics further worked on the concept and propagated their belief in the presence of a universal order to which every human being was equally responsible (Hughes 107). The Stoics attempted to explain both natural phenomena and human ethics with logic, order, and harmony. Their method of analysis was based on a rational and philosophical understanding of the world (Long 108). Unlike the cynics, who freely expressed their adherence to natural and animal world, the stoics maintained a hierarchy.

The Stoic insight regarding cosmopolitanism is expressed in the *Republic (Politeia)* written by Zeno. To the Stoics, a polis defines a place which is inhabited by human beings governed by law. Since law results from logic and rationality, there is an impossibility of finding a true polis built by human hands. Therefore, cosmos is regarded as the right of polis and hence goes the justification of saying that the cosmos is, as it were, the “ideal” kind of a polis which envelops human life. However, the conception of an ideal polis according to the Stoic doctrine worked on the basic assumption that reason should be the basis of all. According to Eric Brown, Zeno’s Republic was a rational imagination of “how a plurality of cities would look like if every adult were a sage” (Brown, “Hellenistic Cosmopolitanism,” 552). Thus cosmopolitanism, in the stoic world view in according to Zeno’s Republic had an underlying concept of morality where every human being would live in harmony as their life would be controlled not by laws but by reason. Brown sums the Stoic view of Cosmopolitanism mentioning that:

In such a world, there would be no need for institutions for justice since every human being would be in harmony with every other, living by the same right reason. Nor would there be any significant differences between the various cities, for all of them would in fact be ordered by the same right

reason, parts of the same cosmopolis. What is more in ideal world of sages, every human action would harmonize with the right reason that pervades the whole and would thereby benefit every human being. (Brown, "Hellenistic Cosmopolitanism," 552)

The Stoics, unlike the Cynics, do not concur to a life of isolation from the political affairs of the state, although they deny the association of the term 'polis' to any city state. Even though they think of the cosmos as the ideal 'polis', they wish to be in accord with the affairs of the state and participate in its political decisions. The Stoic conception of an ideal human being is a sage and they advocate the sage's participation both in the affairs of the state and also in leading a family life. A good human life, according to the Stoics, was defined by helping others achieve a better mode of life than they presently led. To engage in politics, therefore was one of the ways to reach out to maximum number of people.

The Stoics express a genuine concern towards humanity through an involvement of the 'sage' in the political scenario of the state and also in family life through marriage and procreation. The emphasis is more on reason and justice since the concept of 'sage' is a metaphor of idealizing the perfect order through human reasoning operating in establishing an ideal 'polis' synonymous with the idea of the cosmos. Some of the thinkers like Cicero promote the idea of being more helpful towards one's compatriots instead of people in general all over the world. This might be called as the moderate cosmopolitan view where the attitude to serve humanity begins with one's city-state or 'polis'. However we also have found another set of views that combines the cynic disregard of 'polis' altogether for a greater purpose of extending help to all humanity almost following the Socratic view of Cosmopolitanism. Thus the Stoic cosmopolitanism, beginning with Zeno incorporates both the strict and moderate worldview, with its basis rooted in extending goodness and stability towards humanity considering both the constraint and liberty associated with 'polis'. Interestingly, the Epicureanism which developed almost as a parallel school of thought along with Stoicism differed with the latter in several aspects, but presented to the world a different point of view regarding cosmopolitanism.

The Epicurean School of Thought

Epicurus,⁷ was a Greek philosopher who around 307 B.C propounded a school of philosophical thought which was later termed as Epicureanism that placed pleasure as the greatest principle in human life. There is an emphasis regarding the mode of attaining this pleasure which focuses on living a simple life, doing one's duties to gain knowledge and limiting one's desires. However, the epicurean definition of pleasure differs from the principle of hedonism that places pleasure as the highest good achievable in the life of a human being. However it does not talk about absence of pain as the form of greatest pleasure. Epicureans echo the stoic thoughts in some ways when they advocate simple living, curbing oneself off the excesses of materialism by putting up a limit to desires, but they markedly differ regarding their views in politics. It is with regard to the Epicurean political view, that we can begin our discussion on the Epicurean view on cosmopolitanism.

The Epicureans considered the absence of pain as the zenith of pleasure. Politics, according to them was a contributing factor to disturb mental peace and hence it should be avoided (Laertius, 119). The Stoic cosmopolitan view is that of being helpful to the compatriots as a point higher in the preferential order than extending help to any human being without being biased by the geographical borders. The Epicureans, differ in their cosmopolitan attitude by being indifferent to any kind of active political involvement within the city-state. Instead, they promote some sort of a passive relation with political affairs of the 'polis' without being indulgent. Therefore in rejecting the special obligation to serve the compatriots first, Epicurean cosmopolitanism, like that of the cynics, expands the philosophical horizon to the humanity at large. Although, there is a kind of cynical disregard for the political service towards one's city-state, Epicureans follow the middle path of being secured

under the laws of the ‘polis’ and yet not partake enthusiastically in the political undertakings.

Yet, what may be called the Epicurean cosmopolitanism can be understood by their definition of friendship. John Rist in his paper “Epicurus on friendship” says that Epicurus describes friendship as “immortal good” and glorifies it by adding:

Friendship, he says, dances round the world, calling on us all to awake to blessedness; to the blessedness, that is, of the gods. Those of us who are noble concern ourselves with wisdom and friendship (Rist 122).

Rist also points out that Epicurus does not approve of any special obligation to serve one’s fellow beings owing to the “natural instinct” (Rist 122). Brown calls this kind of an attitude to be a kind of ‘positive cosmopolitanism’:

If this community of friends, as far outside the sphere of conventional politics as it can safely be, is still open to all human beings as such, it could be understood as the best one can do to share community with human beings as such, and in this case, the Epicureans are positive cosmopolitans (Brown, 556)

In summing up, we may say that Epicurean cosmopolitan worldview begins with the concern of attaining pleasure which is the highest object of goodness but through moderate means according to one’s capability. There is an insistence on limiting one’s desires to obtain satisfaction which is said to be a very important factor behind finding pleasure. Epicurus attributes almost a divine quality to friendship where he says that only friend “helps to alleviate the problem of the hostility of other men” (Rist 122). However it is through the idea of friendship which accomplishes itself almost as a universal stature in reaching out to every individual without being limited within a particular place. The less connection to politics of any kind within the ‘polis’ is also another element responsible for the distinct aspect concomitant with Epicurean cosmopolitan thought.

From Ancestries to the Present

Cosmopolitanism began with the subtle understanding of human bonding which focuses on different aspects like justice in Socrates, abstinence from worldly objects in the Cynics, emphasis on reason as in the Stoics, and the pursuit of friendship and pleasure in the Epicureans. With these schools of thought, cosmopolitanism emerges as an intense concept involving the individual, the polis, and the world. The idea of “polis” signifies local identity, citizen rights and the need to acknowledge the region of inhabitation as an important constituent of one’s identity. However, the sense of belonging to the polis is both accepted and challenged simultaneously by the Greek thinkers. While Socrates believes in interacting with “foreigners” for the sake of knowledge but resists to venture out of his polis, Diogenes rejects his allegiance to the “polis” and thereby the duties that dawn upon him in lieu of citizenship. While citizenship involves a political connotation with rights, laws, duties and obligations, the sense of belonging is a more friendly term to connect an individual with a place. Hellenistic cosmopolitanism teases out the dichotomies of citizenship and belongingness which is still one of the most debated issues of the twentieth century. It might be interesting to note that in Socrates, cosmopolitanism is based on the grounds of ethics, but nonetheless adheres to “rootedness” to the “polis”. This version of Socratic cosmopolitanism anticipates Kwame Anthony Appiah’s contemporary notion of “Rooted Cosmopolitanism.” Appiah remarks:

We cosmopolitans face a familiar litany of objections. Some, for example, have complained that our cosmopolitanism must be parasitic: where, they ask, could Stein have gotten her roots in a fully cosmopolitan world? Where, in other words, would all the diversity we cosmopolitans celebrate come from in a world where there were only cosmopolitans? The answer is straight forward: the cosmopolitan patriot can entertain the possibility of a world in which everyone is a rooted cosmopolitan, attached to a home of one’s own, with its own cultural particularities

but, taking pleasure from the presence of other, different places that are home to other, different people. (Appiah, 67-68)

The relevance of revisiting these ancient philosophical thoughts is to comprehend cosmopolitanism as a concept that entails a possible recognition of the local as well as transcendence from its limitations. These concepts which initiated the formative theories of western pedagogical traditions were not universals in their scope and orientations but an individualistic approach to understanding the significance of person with this immediate environment and beyond. By going back to the roots of the cosmopolitan theories, we might open up the trodden path once again that does not compel the concept to fall in the traps of “world governance” or “utopia” but as a mode of living and thinking in the everydayness of life. Although the political concerns had emerged in some of the ancient worldviews like the “sage” in the Stoic philosophy, the emphasis was on a humanistic concern for preserving and protecting the interest of an individual, the polis and beyond. The implication of the individual both in the sense of a conscious allegiance to the polis and also as someone who values the ideas of justice, knowledge, reason and pleasure is a major conceptual addition of these ancient minds in underpinning the cosmopolitan discourses. It evolves as an anti-totalitarian understanding of the world, consisting of the individual, his/her local preferences, religion-ethnic and cultural differences with a perspective to look beyond the limitations. The limitations might not only be restricted to geographical borders but the different lines drawn across in the names of race, gender, laws and faith. Ideally, the polis is a representation and never a determination of the cosmos. In this sense, cosmopolitanism might be defined as the allegiance to a location and the possibility of a broader sense of understanding the world through the “indigenous ways of being.” Gerard Delanty in “The Cosmopolitan Imagination: Critical Cosmopolitanism and Social Theory” emphasizes the contemporary relevance of understanding the concept as having a co-reference to the multiplicity of ways in which the social world is constructed in different modernities. Rather than seeing cosmopolitanism as a particular or singular condition that either exists or does not, a state or goal to be realized, it should instead be seen as a cultural medium of societal transformation that is based on the principle of world openness, which is associated with the notion of global publics. (Delanty 27)

Cosmopolitanism thus, looks at the possibility of engaging in an interactive worldview where the local boundaries cater to the need for a spatial location for human inhabitation but never function as a limit to the possibilities of the mind. The importance of the agora and open philosophical discourses among common people stems from the cosmopolitan connection to the world that Socrates builds within his polis. Local allegiance to the polis is also as significant as the necessity of creating associations with the world. The four major schools of the ancient Hellenistic thought, which we touched upon in this paper, press forward the different facets of cosmopolitan thoughts still relevant in the present times. These thoughts might possibly be realizable in everyday life through a quest for knowledge, principles of local governance, an individual, and the necessity to expose oneself to the fluidity of boundaries.

NOTES

- 1 Homer (800 – 701 B.C) is the legendary blind poet of ancient Greece who is considered to be the author of *Iliad* and *Odyssey*
- 2 Although there is an earliest evidence of this concept in Egypt based on the inscriptions of Pharaoh Akhnaton, it is considered to be an isolated event that did not develop further as it was the case in ancient Greece. (Harris, 1-2)
- 3 This excerpt from *The Iliad* is about Priam, the king of Troy and Achilles, the Greek hero. Interestingly they are supposed to be enemies who would ideally share feeling of mutual vengeance. However, they transcend their boundaries and communicate with each other not only for the human need of sharing common feelings, but the belief of relating to mutual solidarity.

Thus spoke Priam, and the heart of Achilles yearned as he bethought him of his father. He took the old man's hand and moved him gently away. The two wept bitterly- Priam, as he lay at Achilles' feet, weeping for Hector and Achilles now for his father and now for Patroclus, till the house was filled with their lamentation. But when Achilles was now sated with grief and had unburdened the bitterness of his sorrow, he left his seat and raised the old man by the hand, in pity for his white hair and beard; then he said, "Unhappy man, you have indeed been greatly daring; how could you venture to come alone to the ships of the Achaeans, and enter the presence of him who has slain so many of your brave sons? You must have iron courage: sit now upon this seat and for all our grief we will hide our sorrows in our hearts, for weeping will not avail us. (Homer, *The Iliad*, Book 24: 561-2).

- 4 Orphism is a philosophical school of ancient Greece whose basis lay in its religious roots that originates in the fourth century B.C. They ascribed divinity to the souls and believed that the soul lives through successive bodies through transmigration.
- 5 Pythagoreanism was based on the concepts of Pythagoras (570-495), the Greek philosopher and mathematician who believed in the idea of transmigration of souls.
- 6 Herodotus (484 - 425 BC), was a Greek historian who wrote *The Histories* which is ethnographic historical documentation of the ancient Greco-Persian war. He is known as the "Father of History."
- 7 Epicurus (341-270 B.C) was the founder of the epicurean school of thought which placed pleasure as the highest goodness attainable by man.

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