

Cosmopolitanism and Borderless Philosophy

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(Lausanne Movement, 2018)

What should *the philosophy of the future*¹ look like? My view is that whatever the philosophy of the future should look like in detail, in any case it should be inherently bound up with *cosmopolitanism*.

So I'll need to say something about the very idea of cosmopolitanism (see also Kleingeld, 2012; Hanna, 2018a; Kleingeld and Brown, 2019) by way of philosophical stage-setting. Notoriously, there's no comprehensive, analytic definition of the term "cosmopolitanism" as it is used in either ordinary or specialized (say, legal, political, or

¹ This of course borrows a phrase from the subtitle of Nietzsche's 1886 iconoclastic masterpiece, *Beyond Good and Evil* (Nietzsche, 1966). Ludwig Feuerbach published *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future* in 1843, and Ernst Bloch published *A Philosophy of the Future* in 1970: the former deals mainly with atheism, materialism, and embodiment; the latter deals mainly with utopian neo-Marxism; and of course Nietzsche's book deals mainly with skepticism about the very idea of morality, especially Christian morality. So although their books were brilliant, critically penetrating, and prescient, none of them explicitly dealt with, or faced up to, the problem of what I'll call—following A.N. Whitehead (Whitehead, 1927/1967)—*science and the modern world*. For an attempt to provide a philosophy of the future in that sense, see (Hanna, 2024a).

scholarly) language, covering all actual and possible cases. It's variously taken to refer to: globe-trotting sophistication; nihilistic, rootless, world-wandering libertinism; the general idea of "world citizenship"; a single world-state with global coercive authoritarian power; a tight federation of all nation-states, again with global coercive authoritarian power; or a loose, semi-coercive-authoritarian international federation of nation-states and related global institutions concerned with peace-keeping, criminal justice, human rights, social justice, international money flow and investment, or world-trade, like the United Nations, the International Court of Justice, the (plan for a) World Court of Human Rights, the World Bank, or the World Trade Organization. Nevertheless, the "cosmopolitanism" does have an original, core meaning.

What is that original, core meaning? As Kwame Anthony Appiah correctly and insightfully points out about "cosmopolitanism" in his same-named 2006 book:

Cosmopolitanism dates at least to the Cynics of the fourth century BC [and especially to Diogenes of Synope], who first coined the expression cosmopolitan, "citizen of the cosmos." The formulation was meant to be paradoxical, and reflected the general Cynic skepticism toward custom and tradition. A citizen—a *politēs*—belonged to a particular polis, a city to which he or she owed loyalty. The cosmos referred to the world, not in the sense of the earth, in the sense of the universe. Talk of cosmopolitanism originally signalled, then, a rejection of the conventional view that every civilized person belonged to a community among communities. (Appiah, 2006: p. xiv)

In short, the original, core meaning of "cosmopolitanism" expresses a serious critique of existing political communities and States; a thoroughgoing rejection of fervid, divisive, exclusionary, loyalist commitments to convention, custom, identity, or tradition; and a robustly universalist outlook in morality and politics, encompassing not only the Earth but also other inhabited worlds if any, and also traveling between worlds, and, finally, the entire natural universe.

I believe that there is a conception of real philosophy that corresponds directly to this original, core meaning of "cosmopolitanism" — what I call *borderless philosophy* (see, e.g., Hanna et al., 2018-2024). Now, what do I mean by that label?

Here's what I mean by "philosophy." By *philosophy*, aka *real philosophy*, I mean authentic (as opposed to inauthentic, uncommitted), serious (as opposed to superficial), synoptic reflection on and thinking about the human condition in all its manifold variety and ineluctably embedded in its broader and wider natural and social world.

And here's what I mean by "borderless." According to a broadly Kantian *dignitarian* philosophy, all human persons (aka *people*) are non-quantifiably absolutely intrinsically objectively valuable, which is to say that they have *dignity*, or *worth* (in German: *Würde*), and as a consequence of that, they are all morally obligated to respect each other sufficiently, and to be actively concerned for each other's well-being and happiness—call this *kindness*—as well as for their own well-being and happiness (Hanna, 2023a, 2023b). Now, because the Earth is a sphere, and because people all live on that sphere within essentially interconnecting surface-spaces, and "no one ha[s] more of a right than another to be on a place on the earth" (Kant, 1795/1996: p. 329, Ak 8: 358), they must share the Earth with each other. People are essentially embodied conscious animals living in forward-directed time, and living in spaces whose inherent directions (up-down, right-left, back-front, etc.) are all centered on, and determined by, the first-persons embedded in those spaces (Hanna and Maiese, 2009). In order to live, and in order to live well and be happy, people need to be able to occupy certain special spaces in which they eat, rest or work, sleep, have intimate emotional relationships and/or families, etc.—let's call them *homes*—and also to move freely across the surface of the Earth, without having their dignity violated, and without violating others' dignity.

By sharp contrast, everyone also accidentally or contingently belongs to one or more arbitrarily-established social institutions, *nation-States*, that occupy arbitrarily-divided areas of the Earth's surface, and are ruled by special groups of people called *governments*, whose rule is enforced by police and armies. The function of governments is to issue commands of various kinds, without regard to their specific moral content, justified instead by *political authority*, backed up by force or the threat of force (aka *coercion*), for the purpose of protecting various self-interests of certain people specifically enclosed, governed, and controlled by that nation-state, call them *citizens*. Other people who live within these nation-states, and are also controlled by those states, but are not citizens of them, are *foreigners* (*étrangères*, *Ausländer*, etc).

By virtue of the spherical shape of the Earth, by virtue of their essential embodiment, but above all by virtue of their dignity or worth, all people inherently belong to a single universal moral community, call it *humankind*. Therefore humankind, unlike any and all nation-states, is a *borderless* global community.

So, by *borderless* philosophy I mean that philosophy in this sense can and should be truly universal and synoptic, fundamentally explanatory, profoundly insightful, life-transforming, and world-changing for humankind. More specifically, borderless philosophy is "borderless" in at least three different ways: (i) it's fully "cosmopolitan" in the original, core meaning of that term, crossing State and continental borders, connecting philosophers from all over the world, and extending its scope to the entire natural

universe, (ii) it's maximally unrestricted as to presentational format, and (iii) it's maximally unrestricted as to philosophical content. So borderless philosophy is my version of the real philosophy of the future, and it's a way of doing philosophy that's fully emancipated from the contemporary professional academy and its commodification, mechanization, and moralization of higher education, i.e., *The Ivory Bunker* (see also Hanna, 2024b), and what I call *the military-industrial-digital complex*, insofar as that's humanly possible. — And here's another label for borderless philosophy, with both of the Shelleys (i.e., Percy Bysshe and Mary) in mind: philosophy unbound from the excesses of formal-&-natural science, or *Frankenscience*.

According to the borderless philosopher, *nothing* of philosophical import should ever be written in stone and stored in an intellectual mausoleum; *nothing* of philosophical import should ever be beyond the reach of more serious philosophizing; and *nothing* of philosophical import should ever be boarded up, imprisoned within a barbwire fence, hidden behind a wall, locked down, or bordered in.

Correspondingly, there are some significant parallels between borderless philosophy and what Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, in the wild-&-woolly days of the French post-Structuralists, called *nomadology* (Deleuze and Guattari, 1986). The primary difference is that whereas nomadology is flamboyantly pluralistic, to the point of explicit relativism and syncretism—aka *bricolage*—borderless philosophy is fully open-minded and pluralistic, yet also retains an objective, universal, dignitarian philosophical core derived from *radical enlightenment* thinking in general and *broadly Kantian philosophy* in particular (Gay, 1971; Hanna, 2018b).

In view of all this, borderless philosophers should be engaged in philosophy that's directly relevant to humankind, or what I call *the philosophy of thought-shaping*, which in turn is a basic sub-part of the overarching philosophy of *mind-shaping* and *life-shaping* (Maiese and Hanna, 2019; Hanna and Paans, 2020, 2021, 2022; Maiese et al., 2022). Mind-shaping and life-shaping philosophy, in turn, finally realizes John Dewey's 1917 program for "recovery in philosophy":

[P]hilosophy recovers itself when it ceases to be a device for dealing with the problems of philosophers and becomes a method, cultivated by philosophers, for dealing with the problems of [humanity]. (Dewey, 1917: p. 65)

Now, like Diogenes, I'm always *more-or-less* cynical. But in my *more* cynical moods, I think that the only thing standing between the night of the living philosophical dead that is contemporary professional academic philosophy, and the daylight of living

philosophy that is borderless philosophy, is, well, *money*. Oh!, what I could do for borderless philosophy with even *as little as* 1 billion \$\$ USD:

Money, get away
Get a good job with more pay and you're O.K.
Money, it's a gas
Grab that cash with both hands and make a stash
New car, caviar, four star daydream,
Think I'll buy me a football team
Money, get back
I'm all right, Jack, keep your hands off of my stack.
Money, it's a hit
Don't give me that do goody good bullshit
I'm in the high-fidelity first-class traveling set
And I think I need a Learjet
Money, it's a crime
Share it fairly but don't take a slice of my pie
Money, so they say
Is the root of all evil today
But if you ask for a rise it's no surprise that they're giving none away (Pink Floyd, 1973)

The moral: as things now stand, and perhaps forever, borderless philosophy is absurdly, pathetically, *moneyless*, rolling around in its Diogenic barrel, and what the professional academic philosophers inside The Ivory Bunker would mockingly call *a failure*. —A failure like Diogenes, Socrates, and Prometheus (Z, 2017). So, for the time being anyhow, and perhaps forever, borderless philosophers could and should simply accept and indeed *affirm* their own failure, and just get on with their lifework *in the philosophical underground* (Hanna, 2024c).

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