Introduction

Being cosmopolitan in Europe during the early modern age meant—as now—the ability to experience people of different nations, creeds and colors with pleasure, curiosity and interest, and not with suspicion, disdain, or simply a disinterest that could occasionally turn into loathing. This benign posture, whether toward foreigners or disbelievers in one's own religion, did not come about—then or now—automatically, or even easily. It happens when circumstances or situations, times, and places exist that are propitious. In other words, such a varying stance in the world possesses a history, and this book seeks to recapture aspects of it. Focused on Europe from roughly 1650 to 1800, the chapters ahead take their definitions of the cosmopolitan from what those contemporaries said, as well as inevitably from our own lived experience.

We can recognize the early modern words used to describe the cosmopolitan as now being a part of our own idealistic vocabulary. Cosmopolitans, as French philosopher, Denis Diderot, put it in his encyclopedia of 1751, are "strangers no where in the world."[1] They accept the foreign hospitably, without necessarily agreeing with, or practicing, every cultural value associated with it. They enjoy people different from themselves, live next to them comfortably, or socialize and trade with them respectfully.[2] A gossipy journal of the 1770s in the Dutch Republic called itself, *De Kosmopoliet of Waereldburger* (The Cosmopolite or World Citizen). It surveyed theater and the arts, taking a particular interest in foreign languages and unusual dialects. It sought to treat nothing foreign or strange as unknowable or despicable. It also satirized the new sociability associated with the cosmopolitan, in effect making fun of its own ideal.[3] By the second half of the eighteenth century the word, and the ideal, had become commonplace.

Then in the 1790s the implications of cosmopolitan mores received a novel treatment and were given international dimensions. The German philosopher Immanuel Kant created a political agenda for the Western nations by proclaiming the cosmopolitan acceptance of all peoples to be a necessity. It would become, he said, the foundation for a perpetual peace among nations.

And he saw hospitality toward strangers as the tell-tale sign of cosmopolitan behavior. In the same decade other, anonymous, writers agitated for political reform at home and addressed the British in the voice of "the cosmopolite."[4] Their writings forcefully associated cosmopolitan values with the impulse for political reform. As we shall see in the chapters ahead, they were right to see the linkage, to assert that certain political conditions—long associated with democratic republics—made cosmopolitan mores happen more easily. By the 1790s a century of experimenting with constitutional systems of governance in Britain, and the growing realization on the Continent that monarchical absolutism was doomed to failure, made cosmopolites certain that democracy, and the revolutions that were then promoting it, lay in their interests. In societies where nationalist pressures mounted by the year and would soon lead to the Napoleonic Wars, a few visionaries longed to transcend those profound rivalries.

I am not suggesting an early, until now unnoticed history of the ability to think about other people ethnographically. I am not wishing us to pretend that the same Europeans who could on occasion mix amicably at home with the foreign or dream of perpetual peace did not also practice the slave trade abroad. But I am saying that in certain early modern circles and settings, with motives that could range from millenarian Protestantism to the desire for profit, some Europeans approached those distinctly different from themselves hospitably, with a willingness to get to know them, even to like them. From at least the sixteenth century such an expansive person was termed a *cosmopolite*, best defined as a citizen of the world.

Vagaries will always surround the word, and all we can do is provide a few examples of its usage. From 1600 to 1800 writers in search of universal fellowship and human rejuvenation, sometimes through medicine and alchemy, signed themselves "cosmopolite." Others who decried the treatment of minority religions, in one case the massacre of French Protestants during the wars of religion, shielded their identity under the anonymous label, cosmopolite.[5] As early as the 1640s in English, the cosmopolitan came to mean someone who identified beyond the nation. At the same moment in French, the cosmopolite offhandedly appears as a "habitué of all the world." All these wordsmiths probably had different causes and agendas in mind, particular to their moment. They did, however, bequeath to us a useful vocabulary. Their opponents, ever watchful, saw the implications and drew them out to the extreme. They said that cosmopolites could not identify with their country and could not be good citizens.[6]

Now, early in our new century, we reject the indictment. Regardless of

our national identity, we now see the cosmopolitan acceptance of strangers, foreigners—or just people who are exotic or different—as increasingly compelling, even necessary. Learned conversations occur among theorists about how best to achieve a vibrant cosmopolitanism.[7] Cities afford daily experience of people whose customs and skin color announce their differences, and most of the time—and most people—strive to be accommodating, even hospitable. Yet tensions also mount in European cities as their original inhabitants react bitterly to the foreigners in their midst. At moments these reactions to foreigners, especially of Moslem background, resemble the tensions of white and black Americans who have struggled for a century and more to cohabit urban spaces peaceably. Having a historical perspective on past experiences of the different and the foreign may put some of these struggles in perspective.

Yet even when being successfully cosmopolitan very little is known about why and how the ideal arose in the West. Why did early modern theorists or pundits seize upon the notion of cosmopolitanism as a form of virtue, one that would make Europeans hospitable to foreigners, comfortable among people of different religions, or simply eager to socialize outside of kirk or kin, among relative strangers? Clearly commerce made people imagine a wider world, but mercantile life is only part of the larger story of how and why some Westerners began to think in cosmopolitan ways.

An interrogation of places and people from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries helps us better understand how a cosmopolitan idealism became thinkable, if not fashionable. A few places to launch this inquiry are fairly obvious: both science and merchant life have long been associated with inculcating a cosmopolitan affect. As we shall see, both associations have merit, but need qualification. Such nuancing is possible because a different kind of history, one here focused on practices and social experience, qualifies what once had been taken as truisms about why some Europeans began to think in cosmopolitan ways. International commerce helped but, as we shall see, the potential of mercantile exchange to instill cosmopolitan mores rested on many variables. Science too contributed, but the most avowedly cosmopolitan voices in its early modern camp were often alchemical—not the first practitioners who come to mind when we think about the scientific.

Such varying conditions and unexpected participants cannot be accessed by writing yet another intellectual history of the cosmopolitan ideal. There already exist excellent accounts of writers and philosophers, largely from the early modern period, who wrote idealistically and learnedly about the cosmopolitan.[8] Rather, the goal of the pages ahead lies in presenting practices,

behaviors, social habits, mores from the quotidian long past, that may offer insight into the circumstances that made the cosmopolitan sometimes more, other times less possible. Sometimes contemporary witnesses spied what the eye of the historian sees and used the terms "cosmopolitan" or "cosmopolite" to call attention to what they were doing, or advocating. Alchemists were particularly fond of invoking the term, of crossing any border in search of their illusive treasures. But even when sources do not invoke the word, this book labels as cosmopolitan social practices that others at the time may not have called by that name.

Beginning in a small southern French city, Avignon, the chapters ahead classify some behavior from the past—in the absence of a better term—as cosmopolitan. Avignon afforded that opportunity because the city's clerical magistrates, representatives of the Inquisition, found certain activities—the mixing of Christians and Jews, Protestants and Catholics, or the breaching of class lines—so unacceptable that they left rich records of their efforts to stop them. Perhaps the terms "cosmopolitan" or "cosmopolite" are best understood within the setting depicted in the opening chapter. The deliberations of the Roman Catholic Inquisition sought to impose a clear alternative—the majority report in some places—that placed subjects behind the barriers erected by confessional loyalty, or social place, or national identity. The defenders of orthodoxy and the power of churches and kings thought that border crossing might threaten their authority. They believed that opposition politics could arise more easily when social experience spilled beyond the confines of confessional community, or kith and kin. They had been right to worry. As the final chapter will show, by the 1770s a cosmopolitan affect did indeed knit together the many participants who made up a growing, international and republican conversation. It spelled trouble for empires, monarchs, and their states or colonies throughout the Atlantic world.

In 1790 French revolutionaries stormed into Avignon, and the new National Assembly in Paris finally incorporated it into the French state. Then future generations forgot about what Avignon had been like (and by implication what France might have been like if left) under the control of the Roman Catholic Inquisition. From the Middle Ages until 1790 it had governed the city and some surrounding territory for reasons that had to do with events centuries earlier in the history of the papacy. Leaving records in this southern provincial setting, these crusty anti-cosmopolites might have been missed, just as we might ignore their many early modern counterparts who once held or aspired to power.

An older historiography about early modern Europe, written after World

War I, had not been so forgetful. Writing in the aftermath of imperialist war, European historians saw the importance of cosmopolitanism. Nearly a hundred years ago when those historians wrote, cosmopolitan behavior seemed much more difficult and problematic than it does today. Living in the wake of the virulent nationalism and imperialism of the nineteenth century, Europeans then knew the dangers of nationalism, at home and abroad. They looked for ways to achieve cosmopolitan mores and affects because they implied peaceful ways of dealing graciously with foreigners who might become enemies. The great historian of French letters Paul Hazard even located the earliest French usage of "cosmopolite," when in 1560 the humanist Guillaume Postel urged his prince to become one by seeking a universal peace, especially in religion and with the Turks.[9]

Inspired by those now dated historical accounts, but less enthralled by the power of competitive nations, in today's world cosmopolitanism has taken on meaning closer to home, a way of living in our own multiethnic towns and cities. Thus it becomes clearer that in the early modern period it could also mean transgressing within a traditional society of orders, titles, exclusionary kith and kin, religious barriers and prohibitions, gender norms and affectations, and as always, it meant thinking past national identities, being accepting of foreigners at home and abroad.

It is harder to spy cosmopolitan behavior when writing in only one national history. Sometimes to find the transgressive the historian herself has to cross spacial or national boundaries. Even when beginning and ending in Britain, as this book does, it was helped by voyaging and living abroad. Because so many histories stick to events in one nation, or to the formation of its national identity, they tend to miss alternative life experiences, ones that point away from privileging the nation. Being comparative in our archival focus may privilege past lives that—like the comparative historian's perambulations—gazed beyond the nation. Using a historical method that requires border crossings offers certain explanatory advantages. We see that cosmopolitanism can have a variety of meanings: the embrace of foreigners, the crossing of religious barriers, as well as the ability to step away from family taboos and regional parochialism.

For centuries nationalism dominated the consciousness of most Europeans, and it often obscured the cosmopolitan practices that lay beneath the surface in urban settings throughout the Euro-American world. Since 1945 Europeans have struggled to put that legacy behind them and to embrace a pan-European identity. In the same period foreign migration to every Western country—the cities of the United States have also witnessed the same

pattern—has meant that everywhere we turn we see ethnic, racial, religious, and linguistic diversity. One theorist involved in the ongoing discussion around cosmopolitanism describes large cities everywhere in the world as now possessing "multicultural enclaves [that] are harbingers of new faces of citizenship . . . no longer based upon exclusive attachments to a particular land, history, and tradition."[10] We see the effects of this new identity in everyday social interactions, in the classrooms, or workplaces, or dinner tables of Los Angeles, to name a familiar setting to this author. While the current levels of racial and ethnic diversity may be unprecedented in the urban West, rising to the challenge presented by diversity and embracing cosmopolitan mores, has a past. Here we will examine evidence of behaviors, mores and practices we may legitimately label (sometimes avant la lettre), cosmopolitan.

First we will focus on the mingling of Christians and Jews, aristocrats and commoners in Avignon. We will then move on to examine the cosmopolitan implications found in the clubbing of genteel alchemists and naturalists busily distilling plants or making air pumps. Next the book turns to the jostling of foreigners in stock exchanges across northern and western Europe, searching always for the conditions that made those moments hospitable and not contentious. Then we will turn to the ritual fraternizing of masonic "brothers" in privacy, even secrecy. The freemasons have also always been associated with the inculcation of cosmopolitan mores. We want to know what truth lies in the claim. We will end with liberal Protestants and republican revolutionaries of the 1790s, young radicals who thought they could remake the world, and in the process invented the bohemian. All are here invoked to unveil practices that lay at the origins of modern, Western cosmopolitanism. Although it only surfaces as an articulated ideal largely after 1750, the chapters ahead demonstrate that some experiences antedate the ideal, possibly making it more easily imagined by late eighteenth-century philosophers.

The mingling, jostling, clubbing, and fraternizing here described constituted situations where, willy-nilly, people behaved in relatively cosmopolitan ways. To make such a benign statement about how expansively early modern Europeans on occasion could act toward one another, toward strangers and foreigners, requires a reorientation in thinking about aspects of European history. It asks that we briefly take our gaze off the rise of the national states, off the wars and tensions to which their progress gave rise. We should see cosmopolitan mores in situ at the same time as the wars—perhaps only in a few places, but there, nonetheless.

Each chapter offers episodes—case studies as they are known in the

historian's trade—that give some insight into how and why, and under what circumstances, relatively cosmopolitan behavior appeared. In Chapter 1 we will witness the devout fathers of the Holy Inquisition as they tried to keep people anchored by the exclusive embrace of the one true faith; inadvertently, they help us locate the transgressors. Thus throughout the book, without ever having wished to be so helpful to the historian, alarmed censors, inquisitors, and spies leave evidence of border crossing that points toward the cosmopolitan. The boundary police can be found in Protestant as well as Catholic Europe, as the Societies for the Reformation of Manners in Britain will show us. In that same opening chapter cosmopolites spring up, simultaneously and seemingly at will, in Avignon, in England, in the Dutch Republic . . . wherever organized social life outside the home can be observed.

Anchored by our acquaintance with the antipodes of cosmopolites and their enemies, we must then turn to alchemy and science at the critical moment when modern scientific practices first coalesced, in the decades after 1650. Chapter 2 presents Protestant visionaries in London, like Robert Boyle, who laid out the experimental method based upon mechanical assumptions. His counterparts also appear; French naturalists in Paris who anchored the newly founded Académie des sciences. Somewhat surprisingly, we find in both places that alchemy informed their experimental practices. Within a few decades it would come to be dismissed as magic. In very different national contexts these mechanists and alchemists made science a more open enterprise, one geared to the search for reform and human rejuvenation. The group activities so inherent in the practice of science began early in its history. In complex ways the need for experiments to be witnessed made the social setting of natural inquiry more congenial than most for the emergence of cosmopolitan mores. A specific vision of humankind—often of alchemical origin—provided idealism in both places.

Chapter 3 turns to very public venues, to the currency and stock exchanges, long extolled by visitors as fascinating microcosms, social spaces that threw strangers and foreigners together in ways predisposing them to be cosmopolites. After 1700 Western Europe experienced a marked advance in international, indeed global commerce, and luxury tastes developed that valorized foreign patterns and designs.[11] A globalized universe became conceivable, even consumable, as never before. Just as the Western consumer economy pulled ahead of all competitors in the global market, so too there appeared the first articulations of the cosmopolitan as an ideal.[12] Predictably the historical records of exchanges, found in Antwerp, London, Paris, Lyon, and Marseille, tell a more convoluted story than the simplistic notion of

freedom sometimes said to be the essence of commercial life. The cosmopolitanism practiced on their busy floors may be described as real but fragile, hard won only after decades of practice. Whenever exchanges functioned under regulations imposed by an absolutist state, be it Spanish or French, their open practices were also more easily put into retreat. A walk on the floor of early modern exchanges makes visible, but vexed, the cosmopolitanism proclaimed as being there by poets and pundits.

After 1700, genteel and curious seekers did not need to be scientific or alchemical when they searched to broaden their social horizons. A new cultural and intellectual tone had emerged among the educated. Profoundly related to and partly caused by the cosmopolitan behavior here described, the Enlightenment rested on new social gatherings resolutely apart from the courts and the religious confraternities.[13] Chapter 4 examines one of the newest and most exotic forms of eighteenth-century sociability. We have arrived at the masonic moment.

Eighteenth-century allies of the new science—particularly in its Newtonian form—freemasons have often had their enemies from the eighteenth century onward. No one in the twentieth century hated them more than the Nazis. French archives recently returned from Moscow—the Russian army took them in 1945 from the Nazis who had stolen them in Paris—shed new light on how to read the social limits and permissions that freemasonry offered its disparate members. Like the immensely public exchanges, the very private social enclaves formed by lodges showed cosmopolitan impulses by degrees, in some places and not in others. Always they sought by rules and constitutions to turn lodges of relative strangers into society and government in miniature.

But when strangers assembled in order to behave as "brothers," issues became fraught, and the tensions seen in other sites of cosmopolitan mores surfaced dramatically. Masonic lodges struggled over who should be admitted into their intensely urbane, but private world. We will examine the detailed records of one lodge in Bordeaux, where the agonizing about membership continued throughout the eighteenth century, and where—at least when it came to the admission of Jews—the cosmopolitan impulse faltered. A lodge that had crossed social barriers enough to be composed of English and French merchants struggled—without success—to be even more open. Lodges in London and Amsterdam admitted Jews. Yet meeting privately, even secretly, bonded by shared and internationally known rituals, the Christian "brothers" of Bordeaux, although themselves from different nations, could not bring themselves to embrace Jewish members, even visitors.

Finally, one aspect of freemasonry, namely its claim to be secret, requires attention. In masonic hands the claim amounted to an affectation, possibly even a way of seeking attention. By the 1720s and 1730s just about everything found in lodge practices (rituals, passwords, dress, and manners) had been exposed and scrutinized in print. But in the 1790s, as politics in so many parts of western Europe turned deadly, imitators in need of secrecy found something in masonic practices that became almost the sine non qua of modern subversives, revolutionaries—and terrorists. The modern birth of the secret society as an agent of political action—and directly imitative of masonic practices—turned the possibility of the cosmopolitan in powerful and new political directions, potentially sinister. Chapter 4 will close with Irish revolutionaries who by 1800 gave birth to the form of politics dependent upon secrecy. In the process they made the practices of eighteenth-century freemasons seem quaint. Caught in the thicket of British persecution, Irish radicals formed secret societies; they gave birth to a darker side of the radicalism and republicanism of the 1790s.

Chapter 5 returns more optimistically to the revolutionary moment of the 1790s. In that decade British radicals and romantics aspired to new personal identities. Moved in the direction of democracy, inspired by revolutions abroad, they defied inherited emotional boundaries and sought to live without the constraints that had governed male and female behavior in previous generations. They identified as citizens of any revolution, anywhere, and all required personal transformation. In the search to become worthy citizens of a new era, they slipped out from under the net of traditional social mores. In effect, they invented the bohemian. The cosmopolites of the 1790s inherited a generation of republican political agitation combined with liberal Protestantism that as early as the 1760s had crossed oceans and channels. Their goal of becoming citizens of the world made them men and women better fit for other, less repressive seasons, when revolutions and wars did not threaten the established authorities so profoundly. Yet more than any of the others in our cast of characters, the eccentric radicals of the 1790s seem familiar; we can imagine them in our midst, in one of our own immensely diverse, polyglot urban centers.

Although the radicals of the 1790s seemed more familiar to us than the alchemists who long preceded them on the path we have identified as cosmopolitan, there was no preordained evolution. Every impulse toward expansiveness had its detractors, its obstacles; every chance to open up to the foreign and the different could be thwarted. In Antwerp in the sixteenth century it was possible to be murdered on the floor of the stock exchange. In London

during the Restoration the state saw to it that Quakers were barred from operating businesses at the Royal Exchange. In Lyon right up to the French Revolution a statue of the Virgin Mary sat at the center of the exchange, a warning to Protestant merchants that they were less welcome than their Catholic counterparts. Every episode reveals that we cannot understand the emergence of the cosmopolitan ideal in our modern consciousness without first seeing a set of early modern social experiences that had been contested, fragile, easily put in retreat, but—and this too is important—the cosmopolitan possessed revolutionary implications for who governed in the very states or colonies wherein the behavior slowly, fitfully took shape. Just as present-day theorists have imagined, the cosmopolitan did in fact augur a new radicalism. So too, as we know in our time, it would then also be a tentative impulse.[14]

Urging that we take new approaches to European history—ones that require thinking across national boundaries and confessional fault lines—seems a valid response to the expansive changes that have occurred within Europe and the West in general over the past half-century. The unprecedented crumbling of the economic borders within Europe, the new globalism seen in the people and mores of Western cities, these, alone, should force us to rethink aspects of European history. Yet despite such developments over the period of the last sixty some years—from when the European Union was first formed, right up to today—we have remained enthralled by the history of the formation of the nation-states. They still organize the curriculum of nearly every history department in the country. To be sure, a few other topics have fought for attention. We now also write about gender relations, or class tensions, or racism, slavery, and xenophobia—all valid, all worthy, even urgent topics. But we have also lost the narrative of other past practices that might inform current tensions and debates.

Of course, the cosmopolitanism of the Enlightenment owed debts to the classical world. It is indeed the case that Zeno, the stoic and social outcast, and Diogenes, the cynic, writing in ancient Athens, provided a rationale for a community above the state, for rational people becoming "citizens of the world."[15] Even earlier, Homer may have seen that a rough similarity between nobles and commoners implied the possibility of universalist ideals, among them human equality.[16] As we shall see, by late in the eighteenth century, the notion of human equality came to imply the necessity for cosmopolitan border crossing.

But a great deal of human and Western history had unfolded between Zeno and the Enlightenment, between Diogenes and Kant. Indeed not much

attention went to the ancient ideas about cosmopolites until they were revived in the eighteenth century. In ancient Greek society where slavery at home was commonplace, as was a haughty notion of Athenian superiority, such globally civic thinkers were probably more outliers than fashion setters. They did not live in significantly large urban settings where international commerce was commonplace. Perhaps in the early modern period such theorists were also outliers—as they sometimes seem to be today. But that does not mean that the behavior they sought to valorize is without a history.

To fill the temporal vacuum stretching from the ancient writers to the late eighteenth-century moments of high idealism about the cosmopolitan we need to take another look at early modernity, looking through different lenses, asking different questions from those posed by the traditional history of ideas, or by the national histories. We need a history of cultural practices, of de facto mores, not simply high ideals. We need to dwell upon *praxis* or *experientia*, not upon theory, *episteme*, or *scientia*, to use terms familiar to that age.[17] With the aid of historical evidence, much of it archivally based, a new argument emerges about the antecedents of the modern notion of the cosmopolitan: long before Kant wrote, some early modern Europeans were having new experiences we may legitimately describe as cosmopolitan. They may not have reflected upon those experiences with the depth of insight we associate with the great theorists, but that makes their practices, or habits of being social, no less real or interesting. Historical evidence suggests that in the eighteenth century the cosmopolitan became a viable ideal because, even amid wars and national rivalries, select places existed where another, more benign experience became occasionally possible. Small enclaves flourished where social, religious, and national boundaries were routinely crossed and seeds of an expansive social experience took root. The cosmopolitan ideal proclaimed by Enlightenment writers matured partly because of the fecundity of those experiences.[18]

Finally, laying emphasis upon the emergence of cosmopolitan mores may give new insight into why the democratic revolutions of the eighteenth century offered such potent messages, then and now. Put another way, because we have lost sight of cosmopolitan practices experienced by a wide range of people in the past we lack convincing explanations for why later in the eighteenth century reform and revolution became infectious, first gripping the American colonies in the 1770s, then in the late 1780s causing upheavals in the Atlantic world, in nations as different in political structure as the Dutch Republic, the Austrian Netherlands, and France. Why did so many people, speaking disparate languages, in such differing political conditions, come to

the conclusion that urgent change was necessary? A preexisting set of assumptions, vocabularies, and experiences, identifiably cosmopolitan and present for a century or more, made the international republican conversation happen more easily. For the words "all men are created equal" to have any substantial meaning, people, then and now, have to experience the foreign or the unfamiliar, be struck by how radically different other people can be, and yet decide that some universal statements are still applicable. If humankind is to respond to issues of tyranny, or ethnic and religious hatred, then history suggests that something like a "cosmopolitan consciousness," that is, "the repeated local understanding of one's connectedness to the whole" is required.[19] In the chapters ahead we find examples of how, out of lived experience, such a consciousness may have taken shape within early modernity in the West. Something, some compelling interest, often of a commercial or nascently scientific or intellectual nature, called for border crossing, for mingling in coteries outside of congregation, kith and kin, ultimately across national borders.[20] Fitfully, the mingling led to thinking, and articulating, the cosmopolitan ideal, now seen as a mainstay of liberal and tolerant social experience, a goal for peoples everywhere.