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The Cynics'

Understanding of and Contribution to Philosophy

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Introduction:

The Cynics are an understudied school in the history of philosophy especially, if we compare the amount of literature written on the Cynics to the amount of literature written on Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and other Greek schools like the Epicureans, the Neo-Platonists and even the Stoics. The lack of research interest in the Cynics, both from the side of philosophers and historians, is possibly grounded in a lack of interest in understanding the Cynical conception of philosophy. Unless we take a serious interest in understanding the Cynical conception of philosophy, we risk reducing the Cynics to the historical clowns of philosophy. Indeed, considered from the outside, the Cynics may appear as mere comedians who were affected by Socrates. However, a serious interest in their conception of philosophy may allow us to better understand the Cynics, arrive at a deeper appreciation of their way of life and thus assign higher philosophical value to their thought.

Another possible reason for the lack of interest and suitable appreciation towards the cynics, however, is the understanding of philosophy today. Philosophy is viewed as an elitist discipline. The ancient Greek understanding of philosophy as a way of life is thus foreign for many philosophical scholars. The appreciation of the Cynics' school or even the fair

judgement about it requires first an understanding of what philosophy as way of life means, how the Cynics view philosophy and what type of life the Cynics choose.

This thesis thus studies the Cynics' understanding of philosophy as a way of life. Part I of the thesis studies the Greek and Socratic understanding of philosophy. The Cynics' understanding of philosophy is deeply affected by Socrates. Antisthenes, the founder of Cynicism, was Socrates's student. Diogenes, the most influential and infamous figure in cynicism, described himself as "a Socrates gone Mad." The first part of the thesis gives an overview of the Greek socio-political, religious and philosophical conditions prior to the emergence of the Cynics and during their lives. It also seeks to understand the Cynics' reasons for their conduct and distinctive lifestyle. Part II of the thesis shows a panorama of different philosophical and artistic perspectives on the Cynics. This part thus tries to identify the motives working towards the constitution of the image of the Cynics in the history of philosophy. It presents ancient and modern philosophers' perspective on the Cynics but also French Enlightenment writers' and playwrights' image of the Cynics. Part III of the work is dedicated to the two primary sources used in this thesis: *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* and Dio Chrysostom's *Discourses 1-11*. Part III presents all the available information about these two primary sources. The core of the thesis is Part IV, which discusses the Cynics' understanding of philosophy as a way of life. Part 4 is divided into three sections. The first section gives a detailed explanation of what philosophy as a way of life means. The second section shows how the Cynics perform philosophy as a way of life. The third section, finally, gives a comprehensive account of the Cynics' way of life from its constitutive aspects.

Part I

The Greek and Socratic Understanding of Philosophy

The most integral concern in Socrates's thought and character—which is carried forward in the Cynics' message—is the confrontation with, challenge to, and changing of Greek

morality. Socrates is the subversive figure who altered the development of Greek morality. This change is criticized by a number of figures. Nietzsche, Hegel and Kierkegaard wrote about Socrates's alteration of Western values and his ironical method.

In *The Discovery of the Mind: The Greek Origins of European Thought*, Snell describes Socrates as “the turning-point from the moral thinking of the archaic and classical periods to that of the post-classical and Hellenistic ages”¹ Snell argues that Socrates introduces a new understanding of virtue in Greek society. Greek society values material gains, profit, achievement, happiness and honor. Greek society looks down on humanity, mercy and solidarity: “Certainly the Greeks did not admit to a universal law which required them to love their neighbour, or to feeling any great responsibility toward their fellow-humans”². For the Greek, the desire to harm others can only be prevented by law. There is no moral responsibility to value others' lives; “the desire to harm one's enemy finds its chief obstacle in justice. Justice, or the law, aims to benefit and protect a new universal of its own creation: the State. From the very first, however, this means that justice is restricted to an area within which its benefits can be realized, if necessary, by force.”³ Socrates criticizes this society through *irony*; “He preached it soberly and modestly, with but the faintest trace of a gentle irony.”⁴

The philosopher who probably offers the deepest and most detailed analysis of Socratic irony is Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard dedicates his dissertation entitled *The Concept of Irony with Continual Reference to Socrates* to the study of Socratic irony. Kierkegaard describes Socratic irony as a confrontation of the whole of existence; “it is adequately suggested therein that irony is no longer directed against this or that particular phenomenon, against a particular existing thing, the whole of existence.”

¹ Snell, B. 2013. *The Discovery of the Mind: The Greek Origins of European Thought*. Tacoma, WA: Angelico Press, 180.

² Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind: The Greek Origins of European Thought*, 168

³ Snell, 169.

⁴ Snell, 190.

Kierkegaard explained why Socrates chooses irony. For Kierkegaard, irony is the form that best fits the change that Socrates represented in his age. Irony is the method that Socrates found most suitable to alter the system of values in Ancient Greece. Ironical form possesses the power to change and to bring down complete systems of value; “on the other hand he used irony as he destroyed Greek culture. His conduct toward it was at all times ironic; he was ignorant and knew nothing but was continually seeking information from others; yet as he let the existing go on existing, it foundered. He kept on using this tactic until the very last.”⁵

Kierkegaard offers a critique of Hegel’s understanding of Socrates. Irony for Hegel is undermined if not condemned; he does not fully grasp its meaning or importance; “Hegel always discusses irony in a very unsympathetic manner; in his eyes, irony is anathema...Hegel then points out that this Socratic irony seems to contain something false.”⁶ Hegel cannot value irony as Kierkegaard does because Hegel cannot fully grasp Socrates as a living philosophical figure who understands philosophy as a way of life. Hegel understands how Socrates altered the course of Greek moral history and how Socrates confronted the fragility of Greek moral customary code: “we have the significance of his moralizing, and here it is clear what Hegel means when he, in line with the tradition of antiquity, calls Socrates the founder of morality”⁷; “The reality of ethics has become shaky, and this came to consciousness in Socrates. He raised ethics to insight, but this means precisely to bring to consciousness the fact that in their definiteness, their immediacy, ethical customs and laws are shaky.”⁸

Another existential philosopher who understands Socrates as Kierkegaard does is Nietzsche. It is true that Nietzsche attacks Socrates and the moral value system that Socrates propagates and represents, yet, he offers one of the deepest accounts of Socrates’s character,

⁵ Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Irony with Continual Reference to Socrates*, 263

⁶ Kierkegaard, 264-265.

⁷ Kierkegaard, 227.

⁸ Kierkegaard, 232.

life and thought. Indeed, Nietzsche shows conflicting emotions towards Socrates. Nietzsche appears to attack all ideas that Socrates stands for, especially those concerning morality. However, Nietzsche does not hide a profound fascination with Socrates.

Socrates —for Nietzsche— represents everything he loves and hates about philosophy. Nietzsche understands the nature of philosophy to be both theoretical and a way of life. Though Nietzsche abhors the type of moral thinking that Socrates propagates, he holds that Socrates represents what philosophy is:

“A later passage confirms that Nietzsche has not really changed his mind about Socrates: he is still the ideal philosopher. Short of the value-creating philosopher of the future who has never yet existed—and does not live today--there is none greater than Socrates...The model philosopher is still a physician, but the gadfly has turned into a vivisectionist.”⁹

Socrates is the model philosopher for the Cynics. Antisthenes decides to follow Socrates and to become his student despite being a philosopher before meeting Socrates and despite having disciples of his own. He even travelled every day to accompany Socrates; “Diogenes’ story also tells us that Antisthenes was converted to Socrates’ side with complete fervor, such that he walked every day to Athens from his home in the Piraeus to converse with Socrates.”¹⁰

Socrates represents the ideal philosopher for the Cynics especially because he confronts conventions of society and reveals its immorality through irony. He presents a model of the virtuous and ascetic way of life: “For Diogenes, and for the Cynics, Socrates was primarily a model of virtuous living and an outspoken voice of critique against an unreflective folk morality”¹¹; “Rather, virtue is almost self-sufficient (*autarkes*) for happiness: that is, it needs nothing in addition except for “Socratic strength” (*Sokratike-ischus*).”¹² The Cynics try to be the extreme version of Socrates in their confrontation of society, in their irony, in their virtue

⁹ Kaufmann, "Nietzsche's Admiration for Socrates," 484, 485.

¹⁰ Ahbel-Rappe, S, and R. Kamtekar. 2006. A Companion to Socrates. Malden (Mass.): Wiley-Blackwell, 78.

¹¹ Ahbel-Rappe, S, and R. Kamtekar, A Companion to Socrates, 78.

¹² Ahbel-Rappe, S, and R. Kamtekar, 89.

and in asceticism; “Socrates was ironic and bold, the Cynic was outrageously provocative and outspoken.”¹³

Socrates is the ideal for the Cynics. He is a father they look up to, but because they rebel against all authority including their own father, they try to differ from him; “Cynicism looks to Socrates as the founding father of a philosophy in which wisdom, ethical excellence and the good life meet. However, his example is a very demanding ideal, including continuous effort, time, reflection, dialogue, and much more. The Cynical tradition will follow Socrates’ example, but not in its entirety.”¹⁴

¹³ Ahbel-Rappe, S, and R. Kamtekar, 89.

¹⁴ Schutijser, D. 2017. "Cynicism as a Way of Life: From the Classical Cynic to a New Cynicism" in: *Akropolis: Journal of Hellenic Studies* 1, no. 1, 42.

Part II

Historic Philosophical and Artistic Perspectives on the Cynics

In Michael Trapp's paper, "Cynics" Trapp suggests a number of difficulties that affect the historical philosophical image of the Cynics. One of the important difficulties, which is stated by other philosophical scholars of the Cynics, is the lack of writings by the Cynics: "Precisely because we now have practically no real, first-hand, first-order Cynic writing - from this or any other period."¹⁵ In *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, Diogenes Laertius claims that Antisthenes and Crates produce a large number of writings; concerning Antisthenes' writings, Laertius remarks: "There are ten volumes of his writings extant...And Timon, rebuking him because of their great number, called him a universal chatterer."¹⁶ Concerning Crates' writings, Laertius reports: "There is also a volume of letters of Crates extant, in which he philosophizes most excellently; and in style is very little inferior to Plato. He also wrote some tragedies, which are imbued with a very sublime spirit of philosophy."¹⁷ Some of Antisthenes' writings survive as fragments but the same is not true for Crates' writings. What distinguishes Crates' literary work is his comic style that fits best with the Cynics' philosophical way of life: "Crates publicized his Cynicism by writing satirical verse."¹⁸

The lack of writings by the Cynics implies a difficulty for philosophical scholars. The real problem, however is not that philosophical scholars have no evidence about the Cynics' philosophy; the problem is rather that philosophical scholars are used to a specific way of thinking and understanding of philosophy that does not allow them to fully comprehend the unwritten philosophical traditions. A number of the Cynics —if not most of them— come

¹⁵ Trapp, M. 2007. "Cynics" in: *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*. Supplement no. 94, 200.

¹⁶ Laertius, D. 2018. *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*. Translated by Yonge. London: G. Bell and Sons, LTD, 222, 223.

¹⁷ Laertius, *The Lives and Opinions Of Eminent Philosophers*, 255.

¹⁸ Branham, R. B., and G. Marie-Odile. 2007. *The Cynics: The Cynic Movement in Antiquity and Its Legacy*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 43.

from highly educated elites in the Greek and Roman societies. They all possess the capacity to read and to write well. The choice not to write shared by most of them (especially Diogenes), is a choice that may have a deeper motive. The same choice was made by Socrates. There is no Socratic authorship. Few of the Cynics wrote and little of what they wrote survived. It is no coincidence that most of the surviving knowledge about the Cynics is in the form of anecdotes about their lives. The arrogant misunderstanding of philosophy as a way of life makes some philosophical scholars underestimate the true value of the Cynics' philosophy.

The most famous ancient Greek critique of writing is Plato's *Phaedrus*. In *Phaedrus*, Socrates presents his attack on writing. Socrates narrates the story of Thoth's invention of writing and uses King Thamus as the mouthpiece criticizing writing. King Thamus claims that writing causes forgetfulness and leads to the loss of real wisdom. He argues that those who learn through writing appear knowledgeable but in reality they are ignorant:

“This discovery of yours will create forgetfulness in the learners' souls, because they will not use their memories; they will trust to the external written characters and not remember of themselves. The specific which you have discovered is an aid not to memory, but to reminiscence, and you give your disciples not truth, but only the semblance of truth; they will be hearers of many things and will have learned nothing; they will appear to be omniscient and will generally know nothing; they will be tiresome company, having the show of wisdom without the reality... I cannot help feeling, Phaedrus, that writing is unfortunately like painting; for the creations of the painter have the attitude of life, and yet if you ask them a question they preserve a solemn silence. And the same may be said of speeches. You would imagine that they had intelligence, but if you want to know anything and put a question to one of them, the speaker always gives one unvarying answer. And when they have been once written down they are tumbled about anywhere among those who may or may not understand them, and know not to whom they should reply, to whom not: and, if they are maltreated or abused, they have no parent to protect them; and they cannot protect or defend themselves.”¹⁹

What is criticized here is the inability of writing to create engagement. Writing makes the people document their lives rather than living them. The difference that Thamus indicate between memory and reminiscence is the difference between engaging with the past as part of the present self from one side and considering the past documented dead images from the other side. Before writing, societies live their past in the form of narratives. The spoken narratives create engagement between the narrator, the narrative, the method of narration, the

¹⁹ Plato, and B. Jowett. 2001. *Phaedrus*. Blacksburg, VA: Virginia Tech, 38-39.

past figures and the future generations. The narrator, the narrative, the method of narration, the past figures and the future generations have dialectical relationship. The narratives and the method of narration take different forms throughout generations. Every generation gives the narrative a new life and the narrative shapes the listeners and the narrators differently over time. At the beginning, writing only documents the narrative but gradually writing documents only the information and undermines the importance of the narrative itself. The narrative is the *living* connection between the past, the present and the future.

For Socrates and the Cynics, writing is static, serious and academic. Socrates accuses writing of lacking the dialectical capacity. Socrates and the Cynics live dynamical performative lives. Even the few writings of Crates are comic or theatrical. Philosophy for Socrates and the Cynics is a way of life and a lived life. Anecdotes preserve the narratives of the lived life. Anecdotes tell best what a philosopher's life is like. Anecdotes tell the lived details that can never be imagined through a serious academic treatise or even a scene in a dialogue. Anecdotes tell what food they eat, what housing they live in, how and where they have sex, how they quarrel, how they love, whom they love, how they die, where they choose to be buried and many other details. These details are the lived life. These details *are* what *philosophy* is for them.

Positions taken on the cynics vary throughout history. These positions are affected by a number of factors like the epoch of the writer and how it views conventional morality, religion and political authority. Moreover, the importance the writer attributes to the cynics as philosophers is affected by his/her understanding of philosophy itself:

“For instance, German classical philosophy of the 18th century interpreted the Cynical movement differently than the French 18th century philosophers. Both are different from the inflamed comments that Augustine flings at Diogenes. Nietzsche's and Foucault's references to the Cynics are even enthusiastic, and for most of the French enlightenment philosophers, such as Diderot, Diogenes became a champion for their own enlightened attitude.”²⁰

²⁰ Lotz, C. 2005. "From Nature to Culture? Diogenes and Philosophical Anthropology" in: Human Studies 28, no. 1, 47.

Most philosophical scholars of the modern age do not view the Cynics as philosophers who deserve to be studied deeply because they do not recognize that a philosopher can choose to abstain from writing or from engaging in philosophical discourse and instead decide to live philosophy:

“Whereas modern philosophy keeps to its academic context, focusing on issues such as epistemology, logic and metaphysics, classical philosophy was instead intended to take place in the very core of the lived life. The philosopher in antiquity was first of all required to respond to the question how one was to live. In other words, classical philosophy was primarily a philosophy as a way of life.”²¹

Most philosophers and philosophical scholars of antiquity and the medieval age oppose the Cynics because of their social and cultural background that judge the Cynics’ way of life as inappropriate and obscene;

“But against this, there is a strong - perhaps even overwhelming - suspicion of class bias. The authors who do the condemning are almost all by birth members of the political and social élite; whatever their commitment to anti-conventional thinking, they have strong interests in the maintenance of conventional political and social order. Moreover, they tend also to share a commitment to the norms of propriety and stylishness that were central to verbal expression, written and spoken, as well as to social life. Cynics would naturally offend them the more vigorously they clung to their founder's ideals of therapeutically aggressive unrespectability in word and deed, and the more they seemed liable to inspire insubordinate attitudes in the lower orders. And they would naturally do their best to groom a selected few Cynics into something more respectful.”²²

The most influential and most flagrant example of prejudiced ignorance of the Cynics’ understanding of philosophy, however, is Hegel. In his lectures on the history of philosophy, he straightforwardly accuses the Cynics of possessing no philosophy and even speaks about them in a disparaging style revelatory of the bias inspiring it;

“There is nothing particular to say of the Cynics, for they possess but little Philosophy, and they did not bring what they had into a scientific system; it was only later that their tenets were raised by the Stoics into a philosophic discipline... but they were, generally speaking, nothing more than swinish beggars, who found their satisfaction in the insolence which they showed to others. They are worthy of no further consideration in Philosophy, and they deserve in its full the name of dogs, which was early given to them; for the dog is a shameless animal.”²³

Hegel accuses the Cynics of lacking true independence and freedom because their lives lack what he considers an organized moral system:

²¹ Schutijser, D. 2017. "Cynicism as a Way of Life: From the Classical Cynic to a New Cynicism" in: *Akropolis: Journal of Hellenic Studies* 1, no. 1, 36.

²² Trapp, M. 2007. "Cynics" in: *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies. Supplement no. 94*, 200.

²³ Hegel, G. W. F. 2016. *Hegel's Lectures on the History of Philosophy: Volume 1*. Translated by Elizabeth Sanderson Haldane. 1. Vol. 1. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul LTD, 480-487.

“But the Cynics so enforced that negative moment that they placed freedom in actual renunciation of so-called superfluities; they only recognized this abstract unmoving independence, which did not concern itself with enjoyment or the interests of an ordinary life. But true freedom does not consist in flying from enjoyment and the occupations which have as their concern other men and other ends in life; but in the fact that consciousness, though involved in all reality, stands above it and is free from it.”²⁴

Hegel cannot fully appreciate how the Cynics intend their way of life as an authentic expression of their philosophy. He states; “Diogenes is only famed for his manner of life; with him, as with the moderns, Cynicism came to signify more a mode of living than a philosophy.”²⁵ Hegel chooses to abandon his responsibility as a fair historian of philosophy and to enforce both his understanding of philosophy that lacks any sense of what philosophy as a way of life can be and his social and cultural moral system on his understanding of the Cynics. Hegel does not deserve to be regarded as a fair historian of philosophy when it comes to his account of the Cynics; yet, unfortunately because of his status, his prejudiced and deeply unsympathetic, even hostile account of the Cynics may be a possible explanation of the main reasons for their marginalization in philosophical academia.

Away from philosophical academia, the sphere of art pays tribute to and sympathetically respects the Cynics’ tradition. The peak of artistic interest in the Cynics appears in the Renaissance and Enlightenment in the work of French and Italian playwrights. Literary scholars give attention to this interesting phenomenon. In “Too Paradoxical for Paradoxes: The Role of the Cynics in Two Mid-Sixteenth-Century French Texts, Charles Estienne's *Paradoxes* and Philibert De Vienne's *Le Philosophe De Court*,” Hugh Roberts gives a number of examples of French literary philosophical works that display a strong influence of the Cynics, especially Diogenes:

“*The Tiers Livre*, first published in Paris in 1546, is the most paradoxical of Rabelais’s works. It is no coincidence that its prologue is dominated by the figure of the paradigmatically paradoxical philosopher of antiquity, Diogenes the Cynic, with whom Rabelais explicitly identifies both himself... Despite claiming not to understand ‘le haut allemand’ of philosophy, Bruscombille comically manipulates commonplace philosophical material, including, for example, the association of Diogenes with sex.”²⁶

²⁴ Hegel, G. W. F., 481.

²⁵ Hegel, G. W. F., 484.

²⁶ Roberts, H. 2004. “Too Paradoxical for Paradoxes: The Role of the Cynics in Two Mid-Sixteenth-Century French Texts, Charles Estienne's *Paradoxes* and Philibert De Vienne's *Le Philosophe De Court*,” in: *French Studies* 58, no. 4, 461.

“This is true, for example, of ‘L’Apologie de Raimond Sebond’, in which Montaigne undertakes the praise of a dubious theological work, Sebond’s *Theologia naturalis*. The Cynics have a small but important role to play in this text, since Montaigne uses a discussion of their shameless sexual antics to raise the possibility that, if reason and nature were guides to behaviour, normative moral values of vice and virtue should be inverted.”²⁷

Another book by Hugh Roberts on Diogenes’ influence on Rabelais is *Dogs’ Tales: Representations of Ancient Cynicism in French Renaissance Texts*. Roberts writes: “The prologue to the *Tiers Livre* is not only the best-known adaptation of the Cynic tradition in French Renaissance texts, but within it Rabelais explicitly identifies himself and his book with Diogenes. When Rabelais self-consciously and clearly informs his readers that his writings can be described as ‘Diogenicques’”²⁸ Roberts also gives an account of the sources on the Cynics that the French Renaissance writers use. Roberts claims that the Italian Renaissance translations of Cynic literature affect French writers; “Judging from editions and translations, Italian texts made the greatest impact on representations of ancient Cynicism in the French Renaissance.”²⁹ He also mentions the French translation of *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* and Plutarch as the main sources;

“Sources also become instances of reception through translation. This is true of the first French translation of Diogenes Laertius, which was published in 1601 and re-issued only once, in the following year. The translator, François de Fougerolles, was a doctor and author of medical treatises as well as of several French translations... Plutarch is the second major source of Renaissance knowledge of the Cynics.”³⁰

Roberts and Bywater study the possible reasons behind the French and Italian fascination with the Cynics in the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. Both scholars agree that one of the reasons for this fascination is the position of the Cynics on Religion. Thus, according to Bywater:

“This new interpretation of Cynicism enables us to realize the fact that the Cynic of the first and second centuries was not a philosophical oddity, to be relegated to a chapter of a history of ancient philosophy,

²⁷ Roberts, H, "Too Paradoxical for Paradoxes: The Role of the Cynics in Two Mid-Sixteenth-Century French Texts, Charles Estienne's *Paradoxes* and Philibert De Vienne's *Le Philosophe De Court*," 462.

²⁸ Roberts, H. 2006. *Dogs' Tales: Representations of Ancient Cynicism in French Renaissance Texts*. Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, 163.

²⁹ Roberts, H., *Dogs' Tales: Representations of Ancient Cynicism in French Renaissance Texts*, 28.

³⁰ Roberts, H, 36-37.

but a religious reformer at a moment when the Greek world seemed to have lost the power of religious initiative.”³¹ And Roberts remarks: “it is not a coincidence that this period of religious upheaval and philosophical questioning should have been drawn to the odd but compelling example of Diogenes and his followers.”³²

The writers of Renaissance and the Enlightenment also entertain subversive ideas against society and conventional morality. They represent the dreamers of a different society that breaks free from its traditional chains. They find their ideas and critique of society manifested in the image of Diogenes: “Diogenes does not propose a dry critique of normative values; instead he conveys his philosophy through subversive humour and slapstick display.”³³ Roberts argues that Diogenes is used as a comical political symbol in Renaissance and the Enlightenment plays;

“Diogenes’ lantern, with which he sought for a man in the crowd at midday, is illustrated in emblem books throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, turned to radical political purposes in an anonymous late sixteenth century poem from the Spanish Netherlands, and used as a comic symbol of folly in the comedian Bruscabille’s early seventeenth century routines. Representations of Cynicism are as unpredictable and varied as they are amusing.”³⁴

The Renaissance and the Enlightenment writers seem to appreciate the Cynics’ value as philosophers. Even those writers of Renaissance and the Enlightenment who oppose the Cynics especially for their shamelessness nonetheless still regard Cynicism as an important philosophical tradition:

“This is not to say that there are not several writers who, having claimed that the Cynics were learned philosophers, find it impossible to say in what their learning consisted. Furthermore, there are even more writers whose reactions to Cynicism reveal anxiety or outright hostility, but these rarely consist in denying Cynicism’s standing as a philosophy. The reception of Cynicism belongs simultaneously to the history of ideas and to literary history.... Outraged rejection of Cynicism is the other side to idealized representations of the Dogs. Such reactions are almost invariably motivated by abhorrence of Cynic shamelessness and/or of freedom of speech. Analyzing such responses gives key indications of how the Dogs remained persistently provocative and dangerous to Renaissance eyes.”³⁵

31 Bywater, I. 1880. "Bernays' Lucian and the Cynics" in: *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 1, 301.

32 Roberts, H. 2006. *Dogs' Tales: Representations of Ancient Cynicism in French Renaissance Texts*. Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, 6.

33 Roberts, H., *Dogs' Tales: Representations of Ancient Cynicism in French Renaissance Texts*, 4.

34 Roberts, H., 6.

35 Roberts, H, 15-17.

Part III

On the Two Primary Sources Used in this Thesis

The two primary sources used in this thesis are *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* by Diogenes Laertius and Dio Chrysostom's *Discourses 1-11*. The primary surviving sources on the Cynics also include *Cynics' Epistles*, but they are not used in this thesis because it is probable that the authors they are attributed to did not write them.

The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers is the most important surviving ancient source on the history of Greek philosophy. Nietzsche criticizes Laertius a lot but he gives him credit as the fundamental author on the ancient Greek history of philosophy. Nietzsche dedicates three long studies to *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, which contributes half of his famous uncompleted work *Philologische Schriften*.³⁶ Despite his critique of Diogenes Laertius, Nietzsche credits him with great importance and influence:

“Nietzsche was engrossed by his work on Diogenes, but he was not in love with his author. The studies contain a string of scornful remarks: Diogenes was a sleepy-head, he was stupid, he was impudent and imprudent thief, he was “wretched little Laertius”, he was hasty and careless, vain and pretentious. Yet, Nietzsche had a clear—even exaggerated—idea of the historical importance of Diogenes”³⁷

Nietzsche is one of the few philosophers and philosophical scholars who defend the reliability of *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* as a source on the history of philosophy. In “Nietzsche's View of Socrates”, Dannhauser writes about the reliance of Nietzsche on *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*:

“Nietzsche thus thought that it was proper to draw on Diogenes Laertius and did so. In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Socrates is introduced by way of his influence on Euripides; the second paragraph of Diogenes Laertius' chapter on Socrates deals with the latter's influence on Euripides. Similarly, the story that Plato burned his tragic poetry in order to become a student of Socrates is to be found in Diogenes Laertius' chapter on Plato. One can scarcely say, however, that Nietzsche's image of Socrates is based on Diogenes Laertius. The latter presents a diffuse collection of “facts” (at least according to Nietzsche's understanding of him) from which diverse interpretations can arise. What is more, Diogenes ends his chapter on

³⁶ Barnes, J. 2014. “Nietzsche and Diogenes Laertius” Essay. In: *In Nietzsche as a Scholar of Antiquity*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 115.

³⁷ Barnes, J. “Nietzsche and Diogenes Laertius”. In: *In Nietzsche as a Scholar of Antiquity*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 116.

Socrates with high praise of Socrates. The extent of Nietzsche's use of Diogenes Laertius is difficult to estimate, if only because *The Birth of Tragedy* lacks any scholarly apparatus."³⁸

Unlike many modern philosophical scholars, Nietzsche does not undermine the importance and reliability of the anecdotal style in *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*. He is rather impressed by it and believes that it is the style that fits most with ancient Greek philosophy; "It was surely in the anecdotal aspect of the *lives* that Nietzsche found 'the spirit of old philosophers,' and it was that aspect which made the *lives* congenial to him."³⁹

The entry in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* on Dio Chrysostom reports:

"Dio was banished in 82 CE for political reasons from both Bithynia and Italy. He wandered for 14 years through the lands near the Black Sea, adopting the life of poverty advocated by the Cynics. With the death of the emperor Domitian his exile ended, and he made a new career as a public speaker and philosopher. A collection of 80 "orations" with fragments of others survives, but some are dialogues or moral essays, and two are spurious."⁴⁰

Dio Chrysostom sixth discourse *Diogenes or On Tyranny* is central in this thesis for a number of reasons. First, it is one of the few surviving texts written by the Cynics (Dio Chrysostom is a late cynic): "He wandered for 14 years through the lands of the Black Sea, adopting the life of poverty advocated by the Cynics."⁴¹ Moreover, it gives additional details about Diogenes' life that are not reported in *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*. Furthermore, the style of writing is different, in as much as it is neither written in a form of anecdotes nor in the form of a philosophical treatise. It is rather written in the form of a political speech. Dio Chrysostom is one of the few Cynics who engages in the political life. The sixth discourse draws an insightful comparison between Diogenes and tyrants.**Part IV**

The Cynics' Understanding of Philosophy as a Way of Life

³⁸ Dannhauser, W. J. 2019. Nietzsche's View of Socrates. Cornell University Press, 92.

³⁹ Barnes, J. "Nietzsche and Diogenes Laertius". In: In Nietzsche as a Scholar of Antiquity. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 118.

⁴⁰ "Dio Chrysostom." Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc. Accessed August 15, 2021. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Dio-Chrysostom>.

⁴¹ "Dio Chrysostom." Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc. Accessed August 15, 2021. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Dio-Chrysostom>.

1 What Is Philosophy as a Way of Life?

“Philosophy conceived as a way of life encompassed, if not for Socrates (for reasons special to him that I will explain in the next chapter), then for his successors, the whole subject, not only philosophy’s moral part. All the major thinkers in this tradition regarded the subject of philosophy in all its parts, and gave good reasons for so doing, as a completely integrated, mutually connected and supporting, single body of knowledge. The “moral” part was not something separable and could not be fully comprehended except along with the philosophy of nature (including the theory of the divine), logic, the theory of knowledge, philosophy of language, and, above all, metaphysics... It is by adopting this assumption that the ancient philosophers are able to make plausible, and to work out, in their different theoretical constructions, their conceptions of philosophy as a way of life.”⁴²

This quotation, that comes from John M. Cooper’s work *Pursuits of Wisdom: Six Ways of Life in Ancient Philosophy from Socrates to Plotinus*, describes the ancient Greek understanding of philosophy as a way of life. Cooper describes how philosophy for the ancient Greeks represents a wholeness of knowledge. This wholeness of knowledge is required for directing a life worth living. This wholeness of knowledge is not pursued only for itself; rather, it is pursued for living a good life. A philosopher cannot be a philosopher except if he/she is pursuing a wholeness of knowledge of values and living according to this knowledge.

This understanding of philosophy enforces harmony between philosophical belief and action on the philosopher. A philosopher who discovers through reasoning that luxury is useless or that the ascetic life is the virtuous life cannot decide to enjoy any of the luxuries of life. A male philosopher who discovers through reasoning that patriarchy gives him unjust advantages as a male should throw away all his social advantages. A philosopher who discovers through reasoning that marriage is against freedom should be willing to confront a conservative society and refuse to marry. A rich philosopher who discovers through reasoning that the hierarchy of classes gives him unjust advantages should throw away his fortune. Philosophy as a way of life requires truthfulness, courage and the will to sacrifice. Cooper writes:

⁴² Cooper, J. M. 2012. *Pursuits of Wisdom: Six Ways of Life in Ancient Philosophy from Socrates to Plotinus*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 7-9.

“To live a life of philosophy is to live committed to following philosophical reason wherever it may lead. The promise is that by doing so—but only by doing so—one will achieve the best possible human life...To be a philosopher in this ancient tradition, then, is to be fundamentally committed to the use of one’s own capacity for reasoning in living one’s life: the philosophical life is essentially simply a life led on that basis. This is the basic commitment that every true and full philosopher made in adopting philosophy—in choosing to be a philosopher—whatever ancient school they belonged to.”⁴³

Cooper argues that this understanding of philosophy is passed on by Socrates and survives in modern and contemporary philosophy of ethics: “One aspect of ancient philosophy as a way of life has survived intact in philosophy nowadays: the prominence among philosophy’s varied subfields of ethics or moral philosophy.”⁴⁴ The Socratic philosophical way of life is the virtuous life. It is a life of pursuing truth with loyalty to justice, courage and self-control: “It is also, as we have seen, a life committed to just, courageous, temperate, and pious actions... It is a life of continued and, in principle, open-ended search for the truth, both in the theory and in the practice of life.”⁴⁵

2 The Cynics’ Understanding of Philosophy as a Way of Life

In Hannah Arendt’s work *The Human Condition*, Arendt presents Aristotle’s understanding of *βίος*. Arendt reads Aristotle’s conception of *βίος* as the life of the free man who does not dedicate his life to tough labour or craftsmanship; “it excluded everybody who involuntarily or voluntarily, for his whole life or temporarily, had lost the free disposition of his movements and activities.”⁴⁶ This life of freedom has three forms. The first form is the life of enjoying bodily pleasure. The second form is the life of political engagement, the *βίος πολιτικός*. The third form of life is the philosopher’s life of contemplation, the *βίος θεωρητικός*. The philosopher’s life of contemplation is a life of seeking truth. It is a life that does not prioritize participation in the city’s affairs. It is a life that does not aim at changing the people or even

⁴³ Cooper, J. M., *Pursuits of Wisdom: Six Ways of Life in Ancient Philosophy from Socrates to Plotinus*, 18.

⁴⁴ Cooper, J. M., 2.

⁴⁵ Cooper, J. M., 61.

⁴⁶ Arendt, H., D. S. Allen, and M. Canovan. 2018. *The Human Condition*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 12.

teaching them the truth sought. Arendt summarizes the three forms of the free life in this paragraph:

“The remaining three ways of life have in common that they were concerned with the "beautiful," that is, with things neither necessary nor merely useful: the life of enjoying bodily pleasures in which the beautiful, as it is given, is consumed; the life devoted to the matters of the polis, in which excellence produces beautiful deeds; and the life of the philosopher devoted to inquiry into, and contemplation of, things eternal, whose everlasting beauty can neither be brought about through the producing interference of man nor be changed through his consumption of them.”⁴⁷

What these three forms of life have in common is their concern with immortality. The free man tries to seek a life higher than the life of all other species. The free man seeks a life that guarantees immortality. The mortality of the human beings is the core concern of the Greeks. Mortality is an inferiority for them. They desire to transcend their inferiority to the Gods and to the cosmos:

“The Greeks’ concern with immortality grew out of their experience of an immortal nature and immortal Gods which together surrounded the individual lives of mortal men. Imbedded in a cosmos in which everything was immortal, mortality became the hallmark of human existence... The task and potential greatness of mortals lies in their ability to produce things—works and deeds and words—which would deserve to be and, at least to a degree are at home in everlastingness, so that through them mortals could find their place in a cosmos where everything is immortal except themselves.”⁴⁸

The transcendence of this inferiority can only be achieved through freedom from necessities of life. This freedom is only granted to those who do not need to labour. This freedom allows the three forms of life that defeat the human mortality. The *βίος πολιτικός* allows the human being to transcend their mortality through leaving behind them an impact on the others in the polis. The *βίος πολιτικός* frees the politician from their human mortality because their actions will live after their death. On the other side, the *βίος θεωρητικός* frees the human being from mortality because it allows them to reach the transcendent truth. It allows them to reach the position of the immortal Gods.

The Cynics agree with Aristotle that philosophy is *βίος*. They also agree with him that the philosopher’s free life never primarily aims at bodily pleasure. However, the Cynics’

⁴⁷ Arendt, H., D. S. Allen, and M. Canovan. 2018. *The Human Condition*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

⁴⁸ Arendt, H., D. S. Allen, and M. Canovan. 2018. *The Human Condition*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 18-19.

understanding of philosophy as *βίος* cannot be comprehended fully through Aristotle's demarcation of the three forms of the free life. For the Cynics, the philosopher's free life is a life of seeking truth and goodness but never in isolation from others. The philosopher does not necessarily engage in politics but they are responsible for the society they live in. The philosopher tries to teach the society truth and goodness.

“When a man said to him, ‘I am not calculated for philosophy,’ he said, ‘Why then do you live, if you have no desire to live properly?’”⁴⁹

This short answer by Diogenes of Sinope carries the Cynics' understanding of philosophy. Philosophy is the meaning of life. No one can live their life as they should without philosophy. Life itself loses its meaning and value when it is not lived according to philosophy. It is the understanding of philosophy as a way of life rather than as a theoretical scientific discipline that gives philosophy the dignity it deserves as the deepest quest for the meaning of life.⁵⁰

The Cynics live up to their philosophy, because the harmony between philosophical belief and action gives meaning to their lives; “In the followers of Antisthenes we admire mainly the courage with which they developed and sometimes applied their principles with all their most radical consequences and expressed them in their way of life.”⁵¹ This understanding of philosophy as a way of life becomes the inspiration for other ancient philosophical schools like Stoicism:

“For both Stoics and Platonists, Cynics made an extremely handy point of reference, above all in pursuit of three points, central to them all, which Cynic behaviour illustrated in a particularly colourful and striking manner: the point that philosophical commitment made a real difference, opening up a hugely important gap between the devotee and the layman (dramatized by the apartness of the Cynic, his manifest in-society-but-not-of-it-ness); the point that *philosophia* was a practical discipline, made to be lived out, not just subscribed to intellectually (illustrated by the ostentatious extremity with which the

⁴⁹ Laertius, D. 2018. *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*. Translated by Yonge. London: G. Bell and Sons, LTD, 241.

⁵⁰ The concept of meaning for the Cynics needs deeper analysis in a separate study. It goes beyond the scope of the current inquiry.

⁵¹ Merlan, P. 1972. "Minor Socratics," in: *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 10, no. 2, 146.

Cynics practised what they preached); and, thirdly, the point that philosophia demanded, centrally, a radically revised appreciation of the importance, or rather, unimportance of material things.”⁵²

A philosophical life is the free life worth living; it differentiates between the life of the free human being and the life of the slave. Freedom and slavery hold different meaning for the Cynics than for the Greek and Roman societies. The slave is the one who lives a worthless life devoid of meaning granted by philosophy. Diogenes criticizes the athletes who are the most admired glorious figures in ancient Greece and describes their lives as slavery; “A man once said to him, ‘I conquered men at the Pythian Games:’ on which he said, ‘I conquer men, but you only conquer slaves.’”⁵³

“Do I appear to you to have come to a wrong decision, if I devote that time to philosophy, which I otherwise should have spent at the loom?”⁵⁴
This quotation from Hipparchia may seem a declaration of rebellion against the traditional role of women in the Greek society. It carries this feminist meaning, but it also carries another meaning. This quotation expresses the insight that the philosophical life is higher than any form of life focused on fulfilling biological needs. The “life of the loom” is a life dedicated to fulfilling the needs of the individual and the patriarchal society. The Cynics view these needs as depriving the human being of true freedom. True freedom only exists in the philosophical life. The philosophical life is a reflective life. This reflection leads to living the most virtuous form of life.

For the Cynics, there is no importance to any knowledge that does not manifest itself in life. There is no importance to any knowledge if it does not give meaning to life:

“What Antisthenes most admired and imitated in Socrates was his independence of character; on this account he attached no value to scientific investigation except in so far as it had some direct bearing on active life... He and his followers despised art and learning, mathematics and natural science. He followed Socrates in his insistence on definition but used it in such a way that it made all real science.”⁵⁵

The Cynics understand that theoretical knowledge is important for learning virtue and they give importance to theoretical knowledge when it contributes to ethics: “they emphasized the practical side, that is, right action, and especially the consistent earning out of moral principles in life. They likewise attributed only so much value, therefore, to scientific

⁵² Trapp, M. 2007. "Cynics" in: *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*. Supplement no. 94, 198.

⁵³ Laertius, D. 2018. *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*. Translated by Yonge. London: G. Bell and Sons, LTD, 224.

⁵⁴ Laertius, D., 255.

⁵⁵ Zeller, Eduard, et al. 1960. *Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy*. Meridian Books, 125-126.

investigations as those investigations serve ethical purposes.”⁵⁶ Windelband in his *History of Ancient Philosophy* concisely answers the accusation that the Cynics are incapable of producing scientific knowledge: “They had in common an indifference for theoretic science and a desire to concentrate philosophy upon the art of living.”⁵⁷ The Cynics view the primary focus on theoretical knowledge as a distraction from philosophy as a way of life.

Another reason for the Cynics’ rejection of theoretical scientific knowledge that does not contribute to living a virtuous life is the Cynics’ belief in the public role and nature of philosophy. They reject a scientific institutionalized understanding of philosophy that only fits the elite: “the role of the intellectual is almost always in conflict with the institutional sense of philosophy. The intrinsic, exoteric value of philosophical knowledge or public truth does not allow itself to be restricted from the outside, although institutions like academies, groups, movements, and universities tend to reduce truth and knowledge to ideologies or to mere sophistry.”⁵⁸

The Cynics' understanding of philosophy as a way of life is not dedicated to the elite exclusively. They believe that philosophy as a way of life is within the reach of every human being. In fact, they believe that philosophy as a way of life is a message to humanity. For the Cynics, a philosopher cannot be a philosopher without aiming at changing his society:

“Because Diogenes lives a public life, the very sense of his own activities is not only visible to the public: it is public, and thus it is political. However, the presentation of one’s ethos in the public has another sense, namely a sense of universality. Diogenes does not produce esoteric, that is to say, “secret” knowledge that can only be understood by some people or by a specific group of people. Rather, he reveals the exoteric function of having knowledge at all, and in this way he provides us with a first version of a philosopher who may be called an “intellectual” – that is, if we agree to call a philosopher who produces universal knowledge for and in the public an intellectual.”⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Windelband, Wilhelm. 1899. *History Of Ancient Philosophy*. Translated by Herbert Cushman, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 141.

⁵⁷ Windelband, Wilhelm, *History Of Ancient Philosophy*, 140.

⁵⁸ Lotz, C. 2005. "From Nature to Culture? Diogenes and Philosophical Anthropology" in: *Human Studies* 28, no. 1, 49.

⁵⁹ Lotz, C., "From Nature to Culture? Diogenes and Philosophical Anthropology" in: *Human Studies*, 42.

The Cynics' undermining of theoretical knowledge can be criticized by other philosophers, even those who perceive philosophy as a way of life. Ptolemy believes that philosophy seeks the virtuous way of life, but he believes that this virtuous way of life can only be achieved through theoretical knowledge (mainly mathematics):

“Ptolemy argues that mathematics is the only part of philosophy capable of transforming an individual’s soul into a virtuous, or excellent, condition. If one desires a good life, then one must study mathematics... Ptolemy transforms ancient virtue ethics and champions the mathematician’s way of life as the best way of life.”⁶⁰

For the Cynics, philosophical knowledge gives --besides meaning-- beauty to the philosopher. Diogenes once said to a young man studying philosophy; “Well done; inasmuch as you are leading those who admire your person to contemplate the beauty of your mind.”⁶¹ The philosophical knowledge of how to live a meaningful life also precedes the concern for money for the Cynics. Laertius quotes Diogenes: “He said that a rich but ignorant man was like a sheep with a golden fleece.”⁶²

3 The Cynics' Way of Life

3.1 *On Freedom and Political Power*

Philosophy endows the Cynics with the pride to look down on political power. Philosophy grants the freedom that leads to the acquisition of this pride. Crates says; “That a man ought to study philosophy, up to the point of looking on generals and donkey-drivers in the same light.”⁶³ Most Cynics despise engagement in politics and mock politicians and voters: “But, like so much else, the classical Cynics rejected this bustling involvement and stood aside from elections, juries and daily politics.”⁶⁴ The Cynics do not believe in the transparency or honor

⁶⁰ Feke, J. 2000. *Ptolemy's Philosophy: Mathematics as a Way of Life*, Princeton University Press, 52.

⁶¹ Laertius, D. 2018. *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*. Translated by Yonge. London: G. Bell and Sons, LTD, 239.

⁶² Laertius, D., *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, 234.

⁶³ Laertius, D. 2018. *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*. Translated by Yonge. London: G. Bell and Sons, LTD, 252.

⁶⁴ Desmond, W. 2014. *Cynics*. London: Taylor and Francis, 109.

of politicians. They do not fear to announce their doubts, or even accusations of corruption. One anecdote on Diogenes illustrates: “when he had seen the hieromnemes leading off one of the stewards who had stolen a goblet, he said, ‘The great thieves are carrying off the little thief.’”⁶⁵

The Cynics are truthful and honorable in their rejection of and even independence from political power. They refuse both to engage politically and to receive any help from those in power. They keep their dignity and honor through the harmony between their philosophical beliefs and their actions. This seems to be the thematic core in three anecdotes about Diogenes’ and Crates’ encounter with Alexander the Great. In these anecdotes, Diogenes and Crates show fearlessness and pride in their freedom from need. These are the three anecdotes (two about Diogenes’s encounter with Alexander the Great and one about Crates’ encounter with Alexander the Great):

“Once, while he was sitting in the sun in the Craneum, Alexander was standing by, and said to him, ‘Ask any favour you choose of me.’ And he replied, ‘Cease to shade me from the sun.’”⁶⁶

“When Alexander was once standing by him, and saying, ‘Do not you fear me?’ He replied, ‘No; for what are you, a good or an evil?’ And as he said that he was good, ‘Who, then,’ said Diogenes, ‘fears the good?’”⁶⁷

“When Alexander asked him whether he wished to see the restoration of his country, he said, ‘What would be the use of it? for perhaps some other Alexander would come at some future time and destroy it again.’”⁶⁸

3.2 *The True King*

*“There was no human being more liberal, or more upright, or more temperate than myself.”*⁶⁹

This quotation from the *Apology* shows Socrates’ pride in his free and virtuous life.

⁷⁰Socrates does not beg for his life or even show weakness in front of his accusers or judges.

⁶⁵ Laertius, D., 233.

⁶⁶ Laertius, D., 230.

⁶⁷ Laertius, D., 242.

⁶⁸ Laertius, D., 252

⁶⁹ Xenophon, and H. G. Dakyns. 1890. “The Apology” in *The Works of Xenophon*. London: Macmillan.

⁷⁰ The reason for using Xenophon’s *Apology* rather than Plato’s *Apology* in this thesis is the relationship between Xenophon and the Cynics from one side and the relationship between Plato and the Cynics from the other side. In *the Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, Laertius narrates a number of anecdotes that

His pride shows his belief in his value regardless of his imprisonment, trial and expected death. The Cynics neither fear nor sanctify Alexander the Great, because they have a different understanding of the true leader. The true king for the Cynics is not the political figure who rules state(s) but rather the free man who even under slavery does not lose his freedom: “the ideal king they saw as a Cynic sage, truly free even if he happened to be in slavery, truly rich, even if he happened to live in poverty.”⁷¹ The Cynics view the leaders of their times as unfree and unhappy because they live a fearful and anxious life. Dio Chrysostom’s speech on “Diogenes or on Tyranny” is a comparison between the life of Diogenes and the life of tyrants and it shows how Diogenes views tyrants’ lives. The paradigmatic tyrant example used in the comparison is the King of Kings of Persia. According to Dio Chrysostom, Diogenes

“refused to compare himself any farther with the king of Persians, since there was a great difference between them. In fact, the king was, he said, the most miserable man alive, fearing poverty in spite of all his gold, fearing sickness and yet unable to keep away from the things that cause it, in great dread of death and imagining that everybody was plotting against him, even his sons and his brothers.”⁷²

In Dio Chrysostom’s discourse against tyranny, he tries to destroy the image of the tyrant as a happy man that deserves envy. He has two targets: to make everyone refuse to be a tyrant himself and to change the conception of happiness within his society. He tries to propagate the Cynics’ idea of happiness that is not rooted in power nor in wealth but rather in freedom and asceticism. Dio Chrysostom describes in his speech how the tyrant is always afraid so that he cannot enjoy anything he possesses. He argues that the tyrant cannot enjoy the food he eats because he cannot trust that it is not poisoned. The tyrant cannot enjoy his sleep in the most luxurious palace he lives in because he constantly thinks of murder. When his friends die, he cannot grieve for them properly because he is afraid of his enemies’ power. In all of this psychological torture, he is not even free to express his fear because he is afraid that his enemies would use this opportunity to attack him:

show the hostile relationship between the Cynics and Plato. From the other side, Xenophon sheds light on the Cynics —especially Antisthenes— in his Socratic dialogues.

⁷¹ Merlan, P. 1972. "Minor Socratics" in: *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 10, no. 2, 147.

⁷² Dio Chrysostom. 1932 *Discourses 1-11*. Translated by J. W. Cohoon. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 269.

“He had no one to trust, nor refuge to which he could turn so that he might live a single day without fear. He suspected everything he ate or drank;” “Anyone who suffered a loss of a friend by death believes in his heart that time will eventually heal his grief; but tyrants, on the contrary, find their trouble growing worse and worse; since it is not easy for a tyrant to reach old age; and a tyrant’s old age is grievous, unlike that of the horse in the proverb. For his victims as well as those who despise him have multiplied, and he, owing to his own infirmities, cannot defend him;” “his mind dwells on death, imagining that perhaps he will be slain by the very object of his love, and with this fear he must quaff his wine and with it must lay himself down to sleep.”⁷³

Dio Chrysostom opposes the tyrant's life of fear and captivity to Diogenes’ freedom. He quotes Diogenes: ““I however, ’says Diogenes, ‘go by night whithersoever I will and travel by day unattended and I am not afraid to go even through an army if need be, without the herald’s staff, yea, and amid brigands; for I have no enemy, public or private, to block my way.””⁷⁴

3.3 Slavery

For the Cynics, the king (in the Greek political definition) can be enslaved by fear, and the slave (in the Greek social and political definition) can be a free man. Diogenes considers himself free even under slavery because he possesses philosophical knowledge. When Diogenes is sold to Xenocrates, he proudly announces that he is the one who possesses the upper hand because he is the one who will teach his children:

“Diogenes told him that they were all fools; for that lions did not become the slaves of those who kept them, but, on the contrary, those who maintained lions were their slaves. For that it was the part of a slave to fear, but that wild beasts were formidable to men.”⁷⁵

He convinces Xenocrates and others that he, Diogenes, is the one who possesses the higher philosophical knowledge and true freedom. Besides being a teacher of Xenocrates’ children under slavery, Diogenes becomes a well-known philosophical lecturer:

“Accordingly, it is said that an Æginetan of the name of Onesicritus, having two sons, sent to Athens one of them, whose name was Androstenes, and that he, after having heard Diogenes lecture, remained

⁷³ Dio Chrysostom. 1932 *Discourses 1-11*. Translated by J. W. Cohoon. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 271-277.

⁷⁴ Dio Chrysostom. 1932 *Discourses 1-11*. Translated by J. W. Cohoon. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 281.

⁷⁵ Laertius, D. 2018. *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*. Translated by Yonge. London: G. Bell and Sons, LTD, 228.

there; and that after that, he sent the elder, Philiscus, who has been already mentioned, and that Philiscus was charmed in the same manner. And last of all, he came himself, and then he too remained, no less than his son, studying philosophy at the feet of Diogenes. So great a charm was there in the discourses of Diogenes. Another pupil of his was Phocion, who was surnamed the Good; and Stilpon, the Megarian, and a great many other men of eminence as statesmen.”⁷⁶

3.4 The Three Paths to Independence: Independent Fulfillment, Training for Hardships and Asceticism:

The highest form of happiness for the Cynics is a virtuous free life. The end of everything the Cynics’ do is virtue and freedom. Laertius writes about Diogenes: “he was adopting the same fashion of life as Hercules had, preferring nothing in the world to liberty... On one occasion he was asked, what was the excellent thing among men; and he said, ‘Freedom of speech.’”⁷⁷

The Cynics’ understanding of freedom is influenced by Socrates. Freedom for the Cynics requires breaking the chains of desire. Diogenes says; “servants serve their masters, and that wicked men are the slaves of their appetites.”⁷⁸ The Cynics aim to deal with their desires through independence; “The fundamental purpose of Cynicism in all these determinations is to make man entirely independent.”⁷⁹ Independence for the Cynics can be accomplished through three methods: independent fulfillment, training for hardships and asceticism. They try to fulfill their desires independently of others and society. Masturbation for Diogenes is a way of independently fulfilling his sexual desire; “On one occasion he was working with his hands in the market-place, and said, ‘I wish I could rub my stomach in the same way, and so avoid hunger.’”⁸⁰

The endurance of hardships is the Cynics School’s prerequisite for its membership. Antisthenes is well known for pushing students away from him because of his harsh methods; “When he was asked why he reproved his pupils with bitter language, he said, ‘Physicians too

⁷⁶ Laertius, D., *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, 246.

⁷⁷ Laertius, D., 243-244.

⁷⁸ Laertius, D., 242.

⁷⁹ Windelband, Wilhelm. 1899. *History of Ancient Philosophy*. Translated by Herbert Cushman, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 144.

⁸⁰ Laertius, D. 2018. *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*. Translated by Yonge. London: G. Bell and Sons, LTD, 233.

use severe remedies for their patients.”⁸¹ The reason why Diogenes succeeds in convincing Antisthenes to allow Diogenes to be his student is that no matter how harsh Antisthenes is or what he does to push Diogenes away, Diogenes accepts everything and insists on being his student;

“And when he came to Athens he attached himself to Antisthenes; but as he repelled him, because he admitted no one; he at last forced his way to him by his pertinacity. And once, when he raised his stick at him, he put his head under it, and said, ‘Strike, for you will not find any stick hard enough to drive me away as long as you continue to speak.’ And from this time forth he was one of his pupils; and being an exile, he naturally betook himself to a simple mode of life.”⁸²

Diogenes trains his body to endure the most torturous conditions. Laertius writes: “during the summer he used to roll himself in the warm sand, but in winter he would embrace statues all covered with snow, practicing himself, on every occasion, to endure anything;”⁸³ “He used to go bare foot through the snow...Once he attempted to eat raw meat, but he could not digest it.”⁸⁴ The training for hardships is not a pointless form of masochism. Training for hardships, rather, has two aims: firstly, to make the person used to any form of sufferance that may occur to them so that when this suffering occurs, the person can still be content, secondly, to make the persons able to stand for their values under any pressures:

“In itself, personal virtue for Antisthenes and the Cynics remained in one sense a defense or power of resistance against external interference... Our anecdotal evidence for Diogenes of Sinope emphasizes the physical toils to which he would submit himself for the sake of hardening his soul toward indifference to external circumstances of bodily comfort.”⁸⁵

For example, someone trained to live in the street will not suffer if they lose their house in a hurricane, and if they are threatened by a tyrant with being thrown into the street, they will not fear the tyrant’s threat, and they will stick to their honesty and freedom. Laertius writes about Diogenes:

“He used to say, that there were two kinds of exercise: that, namely, of the mind and that of the body; and that the latter of these created in the mind such quick and agile phantasies at the time of its

⁸¹ Laertius, D., *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, 218.

⁸² Laertius, D., 224.

⁸³ Laertius, D., 225.

⁸⁴ Laertius, D., 229.

⁸⁵ Ahbel-Rappe, S, and R. Kamtekar. 2006. *A Companion to Socrates*. Malden (Mass.): Wiley-Blackwell, 87-88.

performance, as very much facilitated the practice of virtue; but that one was imperfect without the other, since the health and rigour necessary for the practice of what is good, depend equally on both mind and body. And he used to allege as proofs of this, and of the ease which practice imparts to acts of virtue, that people could see that in the case of mere common working trades, and other employments of that kind, the artisans arrived at no inconsiderable accuracy by constant practice; and that any one may see how much one flute player, or one wrestler, is superior to another, by his own continued practice. And that if these men transferred the same training to their minds they would not labour in a profitless or imperfect manner. He used to say also, that there was nothing whatever in life which could be brought to perfection without practice, and that that alone was able to overcome every obstacle; that, therefore, as we ought to repudiate all useless toils, and to apply ourselves to useful labours, and to live happily, we are only unhappy in consequence of most exceeding folly. For the very contempt of pleasure, if we only inure ourselves to it, is very pleasant; and just as they who are accustomed to live luxuriously, are brought very unwillingly to adopt the contrary system; so they who have been originally inured to that opposite system, feel a sort of pleasure in the contempt of pleasure.”⁸⁶

Dio Chrysostom quotes Diogenes arguing that his training for hardships allows him to be free and fear nothing, not even natural disasters:

“If all the gold, all the silver, and all the copper should give out, that would not injure me in the least. And if an earthquake lays all the houses low as happened once in Sparta, and all the sheep were killed so that not a single man has wherewithal to cloth himself, and want overwhelms not only Attica but Boeotia as well and the Peloponnesus and Thessaly, as it is said to have done aforetime, I shall fare none the worse nor be the more destitute. For how much more naked shall I be than I am now, how much more homeless? I shall find all the food I need in apples, millet, barley, vetches, the cheapest of lentils, acorns roasted in the ashes, and cornel-berries, on which Homer says Circe feasted Odysseus 'comrades and on which even the largest animals can subsist.”⁸⁷

The Cynics reject luxury and become the pioneers of the life of asceticism in ancient Greece. Antisthenes even considers the enjoyment of luxury harmful: “Someone was praising luxury in his hearing, and he said, ‘May the children of my enemies be luxurious.”⁸⁸ Diogenes mocks those who show a snobbish attitude;

“Once, when a man had conducted him into a magnificent house, and had told him that he must not spit, after hawking a little, he spit in his face, saying that he could not find a worse place;”⁸⁹ “On which account he said to a man, who had his shoes put on by his servant, ‘You are not thoroughly happy, unless he also wipes your nose for you; and he will do this, if you are crippled in your hands.”⁹⁰

The Cynics search for the simplest and most minimalist form of life. They try to get rid of any unnecessary objects. The throwing away of unnecessary possessions and fortune is fundamental for the Cynics. Laertius writes on Diogenes;

⁸⁶ Laertius, D., 243-244.

⁸⁷ Dio Chrysostom. 1932 *Discourses 1-11*. Translated by J. W. Cohoon. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 283.

⁸⁸ Laertius, D. 2018. *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*. Translated by Yonge. London: G. Bell and Sons, LTD, 220.

⁸⁹ Laertius, D., *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, 228.

⁹⁰ Laertius, D., 233.

“On one occasion he saw a child drinking out of its hands, and so he threw away the cup which belonged to his wallet, saying, ‘That child has beaten me in simplicity.’ He also threw away his spoon, after seeing a boy, when he had broken his vessel, take up his lentils with a crust of bread.”⁹¹

Laertius writes on Crates;

“Diocles says that it was Diogenes who persuaded him to discard all his estate and his flocks, and to throw his money into the sea... Demetrius, the Magnesian, relates that he deposited his money with a banker, making an agreement with him, that if his sons turned out ordinary ignorant people, he was then to restore it to them; but if they became philosophers, then he was to divide it among the people, for that they, if they were philosophers, would have no need of anything.”⁹²

The Cynics do not believe that property fits with a philosopher’s life. The Cynics despise how society gives value to property and fortune. The societal understanding of value makes the lives of the people meaningless. The Cynics, like their idol Socrates, try to subvert the Greek understanding of value. Diogenes says: “that things of great value were often sold for nothing, and *vice versa*.”⁹³ Diogenes even mocks gold; “When the question was put to him, why gold is of a pale colour, he said, ‘Because it has so many people plotting against it.’”⁹⁴

The misunderstanding that occurs in many philosophical scholarly writings on the Cynics is related to the accusation of rejection of pleasure. The Cynics do not reject pleasure; they rather have a different understanding of and path to pleasure. They do not believe that pleasure is dependent on fortune or power. They believe that they are capable of enjoying the pleasure enjoyed by the richest and most powerful men without the need for their money or power;

“When Diogenes of Sinope was exiled from that place, he came to Greece and used to divide his time between Corinth and Athens. And he said that he was following the practice of the Persian King. For that monarch spent the winters in Babylon and Susa”⁹⁵; “He himself on the other hand, by spending the night near Megara, could very easily be in Athens on the following day...his reputed happiness that there was nothing in his actual life such as they imagined. For some things were of no use at all and other things were within the reach of even the very poor.”⁹⁶

⁹¹ Laertius, D., 230.

⁹² Laertius, D., 251.

⁹³ Laertius, D., 229.

⁹⁴ Laertius, D., 235.

⁹⁵ Dio Chrysostom. 1932 *Discourses 1-11*. Translated by J. W. Cohoon. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 251.

⁹⁶ Dio Chrysostom, *Discourses 1-11*, 255.

They even believe that asceticism leads to a better enjoyment of pleasure:

“They imagined that he was careless of his health and life, whereas this rigorous regime gave him better health than fell to the lot of those who were ever gorging themselves, better than fell to the lot of those who stayed indoors and never experienced either cold or heat. And he got more pleasure, too, out of sunning himself and more pleasure in eating food than they did by keeping pace with the seasons and growing accustomed to them gradually, he met either extreme without discomfort.”⁹⁷

3.5 The Aspects of the Ascetic Life

3.5.1 Clothing

The Cynics live up to their commitment to an ascetic simple needless life in every respect.

The origin of the Cynics’ unique customs in clothing is debatable. Laertius gives two conflicting accounts on it. He says about Antisthenes:

“He was the first person to set the fashion of doubling his cloak, as Diocles says, and he wore no other garment. And he used to carry a stick and a wallet; but Neanthes says that he was the first person who wore a cloak without folding it.”⁹⁸

Laertius also quotes Diogenes:

“He was, according to the account of some people, the first person who doubled up his cloak out of necessity, and who slept in it; and who carried a wallet, in which he kept his food; and who used whatever place was near for all sorts of purposes, eating, and sleeping, and conversing in it... Being attacked with illness, he supported himself with a staff; and after that he carried it continually, not indeed in the city, but whenever he was walking in the roads, together with his wallet.”⁹⁹

3.5.2 Food

The Cynics’ food and housing (especially Diogenes’) reflect their belief in the natural, their rejection of civilization (cooking), their independence and their asceticism:

“The Cynics’ diet overlapped with this to a certain extent, although they gravitated towards wild, uncultivated plants: they are usually depicted eating figs, lupin beans, lentils, olives, lettuces, garlic, thyme, mint and other herbs, as well as loaves of barley bread, or even wheat loaves and honey cakes if they were there for the taking. Sometimes they are said to have grown vegetables themselves. At other times, they picked them by the roadside, and one should not forget that the Greek cities (even Athens) were small;”¹⁰⁰ ‘cooked meat was more expensive than grains or legumes, and most ancients ate meat rarely, most typically on a day of sacrifice...The Cynics had a different reason for renouncing meat: it was cooked, and cooking, whether boiling, roasting, frying or fricasseeing, is a merely human invention... But if one should not eat cooked meat, there was no reason not to try it raw and, according to legend at

⁹⁷ Dio Chrysostom, *Discourses 1-11*, 255.

⁹⁸ Laertius, D. 2018. *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*. Translated by Yonge. London: G. Bell and Sons, LTD, 221.

⁹⁹ Laertius, D., *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, 225.

¹⁰⁰ Desmond, W. 2014. *Cynics*. London: Taylor and Francis, 83.

least, the Cynics were not ideological vegetarians”¹⁰¹; “he took a cask which he found in the Temple of Cybele, for his house, as he himself tells us in his letters.”¹⁰²

3.6 On Death and Immortality

*“So even in face of death he showed no touch of weakness, but with gaiety welcomed death's embrace, and discharged life's debt.”*¹⁰³

In this quotation from the *Apology*, Xenophon describes Socrates' fearlessness in front of death. The true test of the Cynics' Socratic beliefs is their commitment to the Socratic fearlessness of death and their belief in immortality:

“Men, however, who are so very fond of life and devise so many ways to post-pone death, generally did not reach old age, but lived infested by a host of maladies which it were no easy task even to name, and the earth did not supply them with drugs enough, but they required the knife and cautery as well.”¹⁰⁴

Immortality for the Cynics is fundamental. They believe that they should live the philosophical meaningful moral life that makes them immortal. Antisthenes says: “those who wish to be immortal ought to live piously and justly.”¹⁰⁵ For the Cynics, the meaningful life is the virtuous life of the free philosopher who impacts society. This life is the immortal life.¹⁰⁶

3.7 Nature versus Civilization

For the Cynics, the moral life is a natural life that defies manmade civilization. The Cynics do not see any agreement between nature and civilization and they reject civilization because it defaces human nature. They reject even laws because they think that they oppose nature (and

¹⁰¹ Desmond, W., *Cynics*, 85.

¹⁰² Laertius, D. 2018. *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*. Translated by Yonge. London: G. Bell and Sons, LTD, 225.

¹⁰³ Xenophon, and H. G. Dakyns. 1890. “The Apology” in *The Works of Xenophon*. London: Macmillan.

¹⁰⁴ Dio Chrysostom. 1932 *Discourses 1-11*. Translated by J. W. Cohoon. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 263.

¹⁰⁵ Laertius, D. 2018. *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*. Translated by Yonge. London: G. Bell and Sons, LTD, 218.

¹⁰⁶ The concept of immortality for the Cynics is an integral concept that shapes their understanding of virtue and meaning; however it is hard to reach a precise and detailed understanding of what they mean by immortality. It is difficult to enforce a Platonic understanding of immortality on the Cynics. The scholar cannot be assured that the concept of immortality in works like *Phaedo* and *Phaedrus* represent the Cynic conception of immortality. Antisthenes and Diogenes are famous for constantly sarcastically attacking Plato and his ideas. Also, there are no anecdotes or quotations describing an afterlife in any work about the Cynics.

therefore, morality). The rejection of civilization is related to the Cynic understanding of virtue. The Cynics understand virtue as following the natural and rejecting whatever opposes it; “The Cynic view of virtue is nothing so much as a capacity to activate a latent logos, in tune with nature’s innate moral preferences.”¹⁰⁷ Laertius writes on Diogenes; “And another of his sayings was that he opposed confidence to fortune, nature to law, and reason to suffering.”¹⁰⁸ Windelband writes on Diogenes: “he contended against all the devices of civilization as superfluous, foolish, and dangerous to virtue.”¹⁰⁹

Unlike many philosophers, the Cynics do not believe that civilization gives human beings superiority over animals. They rather argue that civilization reduces human beings to a position below animals. They believe that animals hold a higher status than human beings because they maintain their nature. One anecdote in *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* says about Diogenes: “He saw a man giving himself airs because he was clad in a lion’s skin, and said to him, ‘Do not go on disgracing the garb of nature.’”¹¹⁰ Desmond quotes Diogenes: “it would make no more difference if the whole human race died out, because they are no better than flies and wasps.”¹¹¹ It is not a surprise that the name of the Cynics is related to dogs. Laertius writes about Antisthenes:

“He used to lecture in the Gymnasium called Cynosarges, not far from the gates; and some people say that it is from that place that the sect got the name of Cynics. And he himself was called Haplocyon (downright dog).”¹¹²

The Cynics do not feel ashamed of being compared to dogs; they rather take pride in it. They find their dog-likeness a proof of their intention to follow the ways of natural and thus it

¹⁰⁷ Dockstader, J. 2018. "Cynic Cosmopolitanism" in: *European Journal of Political Theory*, 283.

¹⁰⁸ Laertius, D., *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, 230.

¹⁰⁹ Windelband, Wilhelm. 1899. *History of Ancient Philosophy*. Translated by Herbert Cushman, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 144.

¹¹⁰ Laertius, D. 2018. *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*. Translated by Yonge. London: G. Bell and Sons, LTD, 233.

¹¹¹ Desmond, W. 2014. *Cynics*. London: Taylor and Francis, 110.

¹¹² Laertius, D. 2018. *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*. Translated by Yonge. London: G. Bell and Sons, LTD, 221.

is an expression of their true identity. Diogenes tells a number of anecdotes about his pride in his dog-likeness. Here are some of them:

“Once at a banquet, some of the guests threw him bones, as if he had been a dog; so he, as he went away, put up his leg against them as if he had been a dog in reality;”¹¹³ “Once Alexander the Great came and stood by him, and said, ‘I am Alexander, the great king. ‘And I, ‘said he, ‘am Diogenes the dog. ‘And when he was asked to what actions of his it was owing that he was called a dog, he said, ‘Because I fawn upon those who give me anything, and bark at those who give me nothing, and bite the rogues.’”¹¹⁴

The Cynics adopt the commitment to the natural in all details of their lives, even in their nakedness; “This was the ultimate consequence of the agenda of rejecting merely human artifice, since no animal makes or wears clothes, and so human beings should not either.”¹¹⁵ Even the Cynics’ rejection of national identity is the result of their belief that national identity defies nature: “what keeps people artificially divided from nature is to be overcome.”¹¹⁶

3.8 Institutions

3.8.1 Knowledge and Virtue

*“Strange, do you call it, that to God it should seem better for me to die at once? Do you not know that up to this moment I will not concede to any man to have lived a better life than I have; since what can exceed the pleasure, which has been mine, of knowing that my whole life has been spent holily and justly?”*¹¹⁷

In this passage from Xenophon’s *Apology*, Socrates expresses his belief and commitment to virtue which becomes the core of the Cynics’ way of life. For the Cynics, virtue (which is found in the natural) is the path of happiness for both the individual and the society as a whole. Windelband writes about the Cynics:

“So much the more was the science of these men limited to their theoretically meagre doctrine of virtue. Virtue, and it alone, is sufficient to satisfy- all strivings for happiness. Virtue is not only the highest, but the only good, — the only certain means of being happy. Over against this spiritual and therefore sure possession, which is protected against all the changes of the fateful world, the Cynics despised all that men otherwise held dear. Virtue alone is of worth.”¹¹⁸

¹¹³ Laertius, D., *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, 234.

¹¹⁴ Laertius, D., 239.

¹¹⁵ Desmond, W. 2014. *Cynics*. London: Taylor and Francis, 80.

¹¹⁶ Dockstader, J. 2018. “Cynic Cosmopolitanism” in: *European Journal of Political Theory*, 283.

¹¹⁷ Xenophon, and H. G. Dakyns. 1890. “The Apology” in *The Works of Xenophon*. London: Macmillan.

¹¹⁸ Windelband, Wilhelm. 1899. *History of Ancient Philosophy*. Translated by Herbert Cushman, New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 143.

Antisthenes claims that the reason behind the collapsing of states is their lack of virtue: “cities were ruined when they were unable to distinguish worthless citizens from virtuous ones.”¹¹⁹ The knowledge that deserves to be pursued for the Cynics is the knowledge of ethics. Antisthenes says that the most important knowledge is “to unlearn one’s bad habits.”¹²⁰ Diogenes condemns all the specialists in different fields who possess knowledge in their fields and do not seek knowledge and application of the virtuous:

“He used to express his astonishment at the grammarians for being desirous to learn everything about the misfortunes of Ulysses, and being ignorant of their own. He used also to say, ‘That the musicians fitted the strings to the lyre properly, but left all the habits of their soul ill-arranged. ’And, ‘That mathematicians kept their eyes fixed on the sun and moon, and overlooked what was under their feet.’ ‘That orators were anxious to speak justly, but not at all about acting so. ’Also, ‘That misers blamed money, but were preposterously fond of it.’”¹²¹

The knowledge of virtue for the Cynics comes with the commitment to a virtuous life. They believe that a real philosopher is authentic in his commitment to the application of the virtuous; Diogenes says; “Those who utter virtuous sentiments but do not do them, are no better than harps, for that a harp has no hearing or feeling.”¹²² Crates also believes in the truthfulness of living a virtuous life; “Crates’ life, then, should be regarded as a contribution to Hellenistic ethics, just like that of Diogenes.”¹²³

The Cynics find hypocrisy and self-manipulation in the Greek moral system: “Diogenes did not attack the general principles of Greek popular morality. Rather, the target of his attack on convention was largely its hypocrisy and inconsistency.”¹²⁴ They try to put the Greek society in front of a mirror that shows its hypocrisy; “The Cynics had succeeded in showing that many conventional values were vulnerable to critical scrutiny.”¹²⁵

¹¹⁹ Laertius, D. 2018. *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*. Translated by Yonge. London: G. Bell and Sons, LTD, 219.

¹²⁰ Laertius, D., *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, 219.

¹²¹ Laertius, D., 226-227.

¹²² Laertius, D., 241.

¹²³ Branham, R. B., and G. Marie-Odile. 2007. *The Cynics: The Cynic Movement in Antiquity and Its Legacy*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 42.

¹²⁴ Branham, R. B., and G. Marie-Odile, *The Cynics: The Cynic Movement in Antiquity and Its Legacy*, 35.

¹²⁵ Branham, R. B., and G. Marie-Odile, 45.

The Cynics decide to follow their natural morality even if this means defying the Greek social order; “the Cynic adopts a lifestyle that symbolizes his independence from the immoral values that enslave the majority of people.”¹²⁶ They look down on all conventions of the Greek society in all its aspects and do their best to live a life that opposes these conventions; “From Diogenes until the last ‘dogs’ of the ancient world, the Cynics defined themselves first by ‘snarling’ at the institutions, rituals, beliefs and assumptions by which their contemporaries lived.”¹²⁷

3.8.2 The Relationship between the Cynics and the Ancient Greek Society

“proudly the great man steps; he thinks, no doubt, he has performed some great and noble deed in putting me to death, and all because, seeing him deemed worthy of the highest honours of the state, I told him it ill became him to bring up his son in a tan-yard. What a scamp the fellow is! he appears not to know that of us two whichever has achieved what is best and noblest for all future time is the real victor in this suit. Well! Well!”¹²⁸

In this quotation, Socrates shows his belief in his impact on the city. Despite knowing that he will be sentenced to death, Socrates is assured that the society will value him and will condemn his accusers and prisoners after his death. Socrates knows that his life and death are dedicated to his society. He knows that his influence and memory will persist in his society even when he loses his life.

The Cynics are authentic because they do not give attention to the society’s point of view about them. They do not condemn the ancient Greek society, seek its acceptance, and respect at the same time. They do not care about the ancient Greek society’s opinion. Antisthenes prefers to be badly spoken of and considers this a proof of the truthfulness of his virtue. Antisthenes says; “It is a royal privilege to do well and to be evil spoken of.”¹²⁹

¹²⁶ Branham, R. B., and G. Marie-Odile, 35.

¹²⁷ Desmond, W. 2014. *Cynics*. London: Taylor and Francis, 77.

¹²⁸ Xenophon, and H. G. Dakyns. 1890. “The Apology” in *The Works of Xenophon*. London: Macmillan.

¹²⁹ Laertius, D. 2018. *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*. Translated by Yonge. London: G. Bell and Sons, LTD, 218.

John MacCunn is one of the few philosophical scholars who is sympathetic to some of the Cynics' reasons for defying society and respects them rather than condemning them. He rightly emphasizes how the ancient Greek society values war, conflict, violence, aggression and slavery. He uncovers how the ancient Greek value system leads to the tremendous suffering of the whole ancient world. He thus understands that the Cynics target awakening the Greek society and facing it with the falsity in its system of values:

"For two reasons any such misinterpretation would be grossly unjust. (a) One that the Cynic revolt against society was far from unprovoked. In our gratitude for what Greece has done for us (and what has it not done for us?), we must not forget that even the Greece of Pericles had its blots. It was devastated by constant wars, and it could be ruthless in its manner of waging them. It was split up into little municipal states which hated each other with a perfect hatred, as Athens hated Thebes or Sparta, or as Thebes hated Athens. It was built upon slavery -the horrible slavery of the mines as well as the milder bond- age of the household; and it grew into slavery rather than out of it. Beautiful in so much, even as its own Parthenon, Greek civilization could as little assimilate this servile substratum as could the Parthenon transmute into frieze and columns the native rock of the Acropolis. And then these little States -were torn by those intestine rivalries, and cursed by those unscrupulous ambitions which led to the political inferno described in lurid pages by Thucydides. Add to this the perennial vices that may only too surely be reckoned upon where wealth has grown, and luxury increased, and command of leisure and facilities for culture borne their usual harvest of diletantism. Who will say that such a society did not need its censors and satirists? There was a word of advice once given by Diogenes. It may be commended to all those, whether individuals or nations, who wince under the lash of their critics: "Associate with your enemies: they will be the first to tell you of your faults." (b) The second point-the second consideration which forbids us to take Cynicism too lightly-is that, despite all its extravagances it rested on a principle. Disgust with social life was part of it. But it was not the main part, nor would it ever have been so bitter had it not found inspiration elsewhere in the life, and in the doctrine, of Socrates."¹³⁰

The Cynics choose comedy as their method of social critique. Comedy is the philosophical mirror that the Cynics hold up to Greek society. Crates is known for his comic plays: "Crates publicized his Cynicism by writing satirical verse."¹³¹ Diogenes' comic performances depicted in anecdotes are also an act of raising the mirror: "A number of anecdotes portray Diogenes as criticizing theoretical philosophy and speculation."¹³² Diogenes considers comedy the scream that catches the Greek society's attention and show the Greeks their reality: "He used to say, that he imitated the teachers of choruses, for that

¹³⁰ Maccunn, J. 1903. "The Cynics" in: *International Journal of Ethics* 14, no.185, 186-187.

¹³¹ Branham, R. B., and G. Marie-Odile. 2007. *The Cynics: The Cynic Movement in Antiquity and Its Legacy*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 43.

¹³² Bowman, P. 2006. "Selling Cynicism: The Pragmatics of Diogenes' Comic Performances," in: *Classical Quarterly* 56, no. 1, 98.

they spoke too loud, in order that the rest might catch the proper tone.”¹³³ Diogenes’ comedy and social confrontational actions are a mixture of two contradictions. They provoke the Greek society and awaken it by shock but at the same time they make the Greek society respect and love Diogenes. Diogenes describes himself in this statement:

“When hungry, I am a dog of Melita; when satisfied, a Molossian; a sort which most of those who praise, do not like to take out hunting with them, because of the labour of keeping up with them; and in like manner, you cannot associate with me, from fear of the pain I give you.”¹³⁴

It is interesting that the ancient Greeks love Diogenes. This love protects Diogenes. This love makes them tolerate how Diogenes defies their sacred institutions. This love also allows them to understand Diogenes’s reasons behind his beliefs and actions. Laertius writes; “He was greatly beloved by the Athenians; accordingly, when a youth had broken his cask they beat him, and gave Diogenes another.”¹³⁵ Another indication of the ancient Greeks’ love for Diogenes is his honorable burial. He does not ask to be buried, in fact he asks to have his body thrown away:

“Some, however, say that when he was dying, he ordered his friends to throw his corpse away without burying it, so that every beast might tear it, or else to throw it into a ditch, and sprinkle a little dust over it. And others say that his injunctions were that he should be thrown into the Ilissus; that so he might be useful to his brethren.”¹³⁶

Yet, the ancient Greeks insist on giving him the honorable burial that they believe he deserves:

“On this there was a quarrel, as they say, between his friends, as to who should bury him, and they even came to blows; but when the elders and chief men of the city came there, they say that he was buried by them at the gate which leads to the Isthmus. And they placed over him a pillar, and on that a dog in Parian marble. And at a later period his fellow citizens honoured him with brazen statues, and put this inscription on them.”¹³⁷

The ancient Greeks’ preference for comedy can be the reason for their love of Diogenes. The ancient Greeks develop comedy in theatre and theatre is part of their lives:

¹³³ Laertius, D. 2018. *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*. Translated by Yonge. London: G. Bell and Sons, LTD, 229.

¹³⁴ Laertius, D., *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, 237.

¹³⁵ Laertius, D., 232.

¹³⁶ Laertius, D., 247.

¹³⁷ Laertius, D., 247.

“While not the golden age of Athenian drama, fourth-century literature suggests a heightened atmosphere of theatricality, when public display in Athens becomes informed by the cultural prominence of the theatre.”¹³⁸ Diogenes becomes a comic performer to deliver his critiques to the ancient Greek society:

“It seems more likely that Diogenes managed to make an impact on the philosophical and social scene because of a rare ability to marry not only seriousness with the comic, but also abuse and congeniality. The historical Diogenes faced a dilemma. He advocated an uncompromising, anti-social philosophical position, which he believed had to be enacted in the face of society. This, however, was clearly an unmarketable product, so he had to rely on packaging. He had to forge a way of subverting accepted views without being ignored or getting banished. His solution was humorous performances, by means of which he could tap into comic conventions and the tolerance they could rely on. He could enact his views, at the same time exposing folly, demolishing opposition, and keeping his audience amused. In the terms used by Demetrius, the dog had to fawn in order to bite.”¹³⁹

Comedy and comic performance for the Cynics are also a method of argumentation and critique of some prevalent philosophers and their doctrine in ancient Greece. Two anecdotes in *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* show the mockery of Diogenes as a philosophical critique of Platonic ideas:

“Plato defined man thus: ‘Man is a two-footed, featherless animal,’ and was much praised for the definition; so Diogenes plucked a cock and brought it into his school, and said, ‘This is Plato’s man.’ On which account this addition was made to the definition, ‘With broad flat nails;’”¹⁴⁰ and “When Plato was discoursing about his ‘ideas, ’and using the nouns ‘tableness ’and ‘cupness;’ ‘I, O Plato! ’interrupted Diogenes, ‘see a table and a cup, but I see no tableness or cupness. ’Plato made answer, ‘That is natural enough, for you have eyes, by which a cup and a table are contemplated; but you have not intellect, by which tableness and cupness are seen.’”¹⁴¹

Desmonds views the Cynics’ comic performance as a new language. A language carries with it a whole system of ideas and an entire way of life. The Cynics philosophy is a way of life that opposes the ancient Greek understanding of the good life. The Cynics need a subversive language that fits, conveys and interacts with their philosophical way of life. This is why they create a comic performative language of their own:

¹³⁸ Bowman, P. 2006. "Selling Cynicism: The Pragmatics of Diogenes' Comic Performances" in: *Classical Quarterly* 56, no. 1, 97.

¹³⁹ Bowman, P., "Selling Cynicism: The Pragmatics of Diogenes' Comic Performances" in: *Classical Quarterly*, 104.

¹⁴⁰ Laertius, D. 2018. *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*. Translated by Yonge. London: G. Bell and Sons, LTD, 231.

¹⁴¹ Laertius, D., *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosopher*, 236.

“The first and perhaps most obvious aspect of this new “language” is the Cynic vocabulary of gesture. Actions speak louder than words: whistling to the crowd, eating beans noisily, farting, belching, urinating, defecating in public, masturbating, rolling about in the sand, embracing snowy statues, carrying a tuna or bowl of soup across a crowded marketplace, sleeping in a pithos, carrying a lantern around at noon, and innumerable other contortions, twists and shapes: all these loudly trumpet the brazen freedom.”¹⁴²

The confrontation with the ancient Greek society and the shocking attack on its system of value is not a selfish act from the Cynics. The Cynics do not try to apply their understanding of virtue without caring for the outer society. They rather confront the ancient Greek society because they feel responsible for it. They care for their society and for mankind in general and they believe that their path to help their society and humanity is to confront: “the motive for all this exhibitionist and unsettling behaviour was love of humanity - *philanthrôpia* - the desire to set people straight, and moreover to do so without regard for conventional restrictions on benevolence.”¹⁴³

The philosophical meaningful virtuous life for the Cynics is not a life of solitude. The Cynics are not monks who live in isolation from society. The Cynics’ asceticism and independence means that they do not need society for the satisfaction of their desires. Yet, the Cynics still believe that their virtue lies in the impact they cause on their society and on humanity as a whole. They believe that they are responsible for awakening humanity through comedy and shock. They believe that they are responsible for spreading virtue. They inherit this understanding of responsibility from Socrates, but unlike Socrates, they believe that they are responsible towards humanity as a whole, not only towards Athens:

“The obligation on the good Cynic, himself well on in the cultivation of virtuously simple attitude and lifestyle, was to do all he could to provide just that instruction and encouragement. This was to be done both by preaching and by example. And in order to match the medium to the message - to bring home to unenlightened humanity the size of the gap between their ideas of the good life, and the reality - both the preaching and the example should pull no punches. Both in words and in exemplary behaviour, Cynics aimed to be disrespectful, aggressively witty, funny and shocking: ‘frankness’ and ‘shamelessness’ (*parrhêsia* and *anaideid*).”¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² Desmond, W. 2014. *Cynics*. London: Taylor and Francis, 122.

¹⁴³ Trapp, M. 2007. "Cynics" in: *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*. Supplement no. 94, 191.

¹⁴⁴ Trapp, M., "Cynics" in: *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*, 190.

The unique and most confrontational feature of the Cynics' way of life is their shamelessness. This feature is the most debated in the whole history of philosophical scholarship about the Cynics. Some philosophers in medieval and modern ages, such as Hegel, reject the Cynics specifically for this feature. Other philosophers and writers find this feature the most attractive attribute of the Cynics. Shamelessness distinguishes the Cynics from all philosophical traditions in the history of philosophy. For the Cynics, shamelessness is their strongest act of confrontation with society to awaken it: "Diogenes' shamelessness revealed Roman imperial manners and *mores* as a social construct freighted with the ability to define membership in Greco-Roman society."¹⁴⁵

Shamelessness is a prerequisite for being accepted as a Cynic. Those who cannot face society and who fear shame cannot be accepted as Cynics. The Cynics prove their capability to be philosophers and followers of Cynicism when they pass the test of shamelessness. This transpires from two anecdotes about Diogenes and about Hipparchia. Diogenes rejects a student because he feels ashamed;

"Once a man came to him, and wished to study philosophy as his pupil; and he gave him a *saperda* and made him follow him. And as he from shame threw it away and departed, he soon afterwards met him and, laughing, said to him, 'A *saperda* has dissolved your friendship for me.'"¹⁴⁶

Hipparchia proves to Theodorus that she deserves to be a Cynic philosopher and to attend philosophical gatherings through showing that she possesses shamelessness and that women are capable of being shameless; "He made no reply to what she said, but only pulled her clothes about; but Hipparchia was neither offended nor ashamed, as many a woman would have been."¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ Branham, R. B., and G. Marie-Odile. 2007. *The Cynics: The Cynic Movement in Antiquity and Its Legacy*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 239.

¹⁴⁶ Laertius, D. 2018. *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*. Translated by Yonge. London: G. Bell and Sons, LTD, 230.

¹⁴⁷ Laertius, D., *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, 255.

There are a large number of anecdotes on Diogenes', Crates' and Hipparchia's shamelessness in different aspects of life and especially in their sexual habits. Eating in public is considered a *faux pas* for the ancient Greeks but Diogenes does not care about this: "Being once reproached for eating in the market-place, he made answer, 'I did, for it was in the market-place that I was hungry.'"¹⁴⁸ Diogenes also defends his public masturbation without showing shame: "On one occasion he was working with his hands in the market-place, and said, 'I wish I could rub my stomach in the same way, and so avoid hunger.'"¹⁴⁹ Hipparchia and Crates are famous for having sex together in public: "And true to Cynic form, Hipparchia disrupted the conventions of the public sphere by taking her private life to the streets, whether that disruption came in the form of bathing, speaking, or having sex."

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3.8.3 Marriage and Children

The relationship between Hipparchia and Crates is an exception for the Cynics. Antisthenes and Diogenes do not believe in love or marriage. In fact, they condemn both, and especially marriage as a social institution. Concerning love, Diogenes says; "love was the business of those who had nothing to do."¹⁵¹ Concerning marriage, Diogenes says; "Young men ought not to marry yet, and old men never ought to marry at all."¹⁵² What is interesting is that Diogenes precedes Marx and communist thinkers in the idea of destroying marriage and making children a common property of the whole society:

¹⁴⁸ Laertius, D., 238.

¹⁴⁹ Laertius, D., 233.

¹⁵⁰ Kennedy, K. 1999. "Hipparchia the Cynic: Feminist Rhetoric and the Ethics of Embodiment" in *Hypatia* 14, no. 2, 51.

¹⁵¹ Laertius, D. 2018. *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*. Translated by Yonge. London: G. Bell and Sons, LTD, 235.

¹⁵² Laertius, D., *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, 237.

“Another of his doctrines was that all women ought to be possessed in common; and he said that marriage was a nullity, and that the proper way would be for every man to live with her whom he could persuade to agree with him. And on the same principle he said, that all people’s sons ought to belong to everyone in common.”¹⁵³

The progress that Marx and communism give to Diogenes’ idea is the important subversion of the view of women and children as property.

Hipparchia and Crates offer a different understanding of love and marriage for the Cynics and an exceptional understanding of love and marriage for the ancient Greek society. Laertius reports the very passionate romantic emotional loyal story of Hipparchia’s marriage to Crates:

“Both she and Metrocles were natives of Maronea. She fell in love with both the doctrines and manners of Crates, and could not be diverted from her regard for him, by either the wealth, or high birth, or personal beauty, of any of her suitors, but Crates was everything to her; and she threatened her parents to make away with herself, if she were not given in marriage to him. Crates accordingly, being entreated by her parents to dissuade her from this resolution, did all he could. He could not persuade her, he rose up, and placing all his furniture before her, he said, ‘This is the bridegroom whom you are choosing, and this is the whole of his property; consider these facts, for it will not be possible for you to become his partner, if you do not also apply yourself to the same studies, and conform to the same habits that he does.’ But the girl chose him; and assuming the same dress that he wore, went about with him as her husband, and appeared with him in public everywhere, and went to all entertainments in his company.”¹⁵⁴

This story contains more than an understanding of love, loyalty and belief in mutual commitment. It also contains a distinctive understanding of marriage that opposes the ancient Greek society. In this model, money of the groom, his age, his physical beauty and his physical strength are all unimportant. All that matters is his philosophical virtuous way of life and the bride’s love for him. Thus, even the only Cynic model of marriage is socially confrontational.

Concerning having children and family bonds, Diogenes attacks how the Greek society values having children: “When he was asked whether he had any girl or boy to wait on him, he said, ‘No.’ and as his questioner asked further, ‘If then you die, who will bury you?’ He replied, ‘Whoever wants my house.’”¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ Laertius, D., 244.

¹⁵⁴ Laertius, D., 254.

¹⁵⁵ Laertius, D., 236.

The Cynics value friendship as a form of human contact. They believe that friends are the support that a human being needs in the hardships of life. Thus, Antisthenes says: “those things were the best for a man to take on a journey, which would float with him if he were shipwrecked.”¹⁵⁶ The ancient Greeks value friendship but the Cynics have a different understanding of friendship that opposes the ancient Greek understanding of who deserves friendship. The ancient Greek prefer the friendship of those in power and their understanding of friendship is somehow opportunistic but the Cynics prefer the friendship of those lower than they. The Cynics prefer the company of the people who can be influenced by them. Laertius writes about Antisthenes:

“He was once reproached for being intimate with wicked men, and said, ‘Physicians also live with those who are sick; and yet they do not catch fevers.’ He used to say, ‘that it was an absurd thing to clean a cornfield of tares, and in war to get rid of bad soldiers, and yet not to rid one’s self in a city of the wicked citizens.’”¹⁵⁷

3.8.4 Religion and Superstitions

The Cynics are pioneers in rebelling against religion and superstition in the ancient world. Diogenes is known for mocking and criticizing both religion and superstition: “when a man, who was very superstitious, said to him, ‘With one blow I will break your head;’ and I, ‘he replied, ‘with one sneeze will make you tremble.’”¹⁵⁸ Antisthenes and Diogenes direct a profound critique to the ancient Greek religion in their deep comedy. There is an anecdote about Antisthenes mocking the ancient Greek priests’ promises of bliss in the afterlife: “When he was being initiated into the mysteries of Orpheus, and the priest said that those who were initiated enjoyed many good things in the shades below, ‘Why, then,’ said he ‘do not you

¹⁵⁶ Laertius, D., 219.

¹⁵⁷ Laertius, D., 219.

¹⁵⁸ Laertius, D., 235.

die?”¹⁵⁹ There are a number of anecdotes about Diogenes comically criticizing ancient Greek religion in different aspects.

Diogenes’ comic critique of ancient Greek religion has reasons. The first reason is that the ancient Greeks believe that sacrifice is capable of protecting them without performing practices that improve their health; “He was also very indignant at seeing men sacrifice to the Gods to procure good health, and yet at the sacrifice eating in a manner injurious to health.”¹⁶⁰ The second reason is that the ancient Greeks believe that initiation can lead to salvation without becoming virtuous;

“When the Athenians entreated him to be initiated in the Eleusinian mysteries, and said that in the shades below the initiated had the best seats; ‘It will, ’he replied, ‘be an absurd thing if Agesilaus and Epaminondas are to live in the mud, and some miserable wretches, who have been initiated, are to be in the islands of the blest.’”¹⁶¹

The third reason is that the ancient Greeks think that purification can atone for their sins:

“Once he saw a man purifying himself by washing, and said to him, ‘Oh, wretched man, do not you know that as you cannot wash away blunders in grammar by purification, so, too, you can no more efface the errors of a life in that same manner?’”¹⁶²

The fourth reason is that the ancient Greeks wish that the Gods grant them what they desire regardless of whether their desires are good or evil; “He used to say that men were wrong for complaining of fortune; for that they ask of the Gods what appear to be good things, not what are really so.”¹⁶³

The four aspects of the critique of religion have something in common. They center on the ancient Greeks’ image of the Gods as instruments to achieve their desires, to protect them, to forgive their mistakes and to make them reach salvation without committing the acts that are required for those achievements. The ancient Greeks do not do what is good for their health or what is virtuous. They commit sins and bribe the Gods by sacrifices and religious

¹⁵⁹ Laertius, D., 218.

¹⁶⁰ Laertius, D., 227.

¹⁶¹ Laertius, D., 231.

¹⁶² Laertius, D., 232.

¹⁶³ Laertius, D., 232.

practices to achieve atonement and salvation. Diogenes diagnoses religion in ancient Greece as a method of escaping responsibility towards the self and towards virtue.

Diogenes does not completely reject religion. The Cynics are not atheists. The Cynics criticize conventional ancient Greek understanding of religion, but they have respect for religion and a different understanding of the True Gods. There is an interesting anecdote that shows Diogenes' love and respect for places of worship, Laertius writes; "When supping in a temple, as some dirty loaves were set before him, he took them up and threw them away; saying that nothing dirty ought to come into a temple."¹⁶⁴ Diogenes believes that the True Gods are virtuous and that human beings are capable of being their image: "One of his apophthegms was that good men were the images of the Gods."¹⁶⁵ Windelband stresses the opposition of the Cynics' understanding of religion to the ancient Greek's understanding of religion and notes their respect to what they believe to be the true worship. Windelband writes:

"All mythical ideas and religious ceremonies fall under the class of the conventionally determined, the unnatural, and are excusable only because they may be regarded as allegorical expressions of moral concepts... Positively the Cynics represented an abstract monotheism which finds in virtue the true worship of God."¹⁶⁶

3.8.5 Rationality versus Madness

The Cynics also criticize the ancient Greek society's understanding of rationality and madness. They act in ways that contradict the ancient Greek society's understanding of rationality. They believe that they are philosophers who seek wisdom but they act in ways that cannot be described by the ancient Greeks as wise or even reasonable. These actions are a method of subverting the ancient Greek understanding of rationality. Laertius writes about Diogenes:

¹⁶⁴ Laertius, D., 241.

¹⁶⁵ Laertius, D., 235.

¹⁶⁶ Windelband, Wilhelm. 1899. *History of Ancient Philosophy*. Translated by Herbert Cushman, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 144.

“Another of his sayings, was that most men were within a finger’s breadth of being mad. If, then, any one were to walk along, stretching out his middle finger, he will seem to be mad; but if he puts out his fore finger, he will not be thought so.”¹⁶⁷

3.8.6 Class and Property

The Cynics also rebel against the institution of social class and propagate an understanding of property as belonging to the whole of humanity; “everything belongs to the Gods; and the Gods are friends to the wise; and all the property of friends is held in common; therefore everything belongs to the wise.”¹⁶⁸ Wisdom is not elitist for the Cynics. They believe that all humans are capable of becoming wise if they choose to pursue the philosophical way of life. All Cynics choose to embrace a destitute life style regardless of their class standing prior to joining the movement. Crates and Hipparchia are the most famous example of this. Crates sacrifices all his fortune and Hipparchia accepts to live with him in his destitute life despite her past luxury; “By accepting Crates’ marriage offer, Hipparchia also embraced the Cynic way of life, a life that demanded she give up not only her domestic tasks but also the comfort and stability of a high social class.”¹⁶⁹

3.8.7 Citizenship versus Cosmopolitanism

The Cynics rebel on the most fundamental institution for the ancient Greeks, which is the citizenship of Athens. The Cynics do not give value to citizenship, the first Cynics are not pure citizens of Athens, and “other Cynics also renounced their citizenship, took to the open road and became ‘citizens of the cosmos’.”¹⁷⁰ Antisthenes is of non-Athenian origin:

“Antisthenes is said to have been born at Athens, the son of an Athenian of the same name and a Thracian mother. We have no direct information of the date of his birth, but it has ordinarily been set at 444 B.C.... Since his parents were not both Athenians, his birth did not entitle him to citizenship...he obtained

¹⁶⁷ Laertius, D. 2018. *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*. Translated by Yonge. London: G. Bell and Sons, LTD, 229.

¹⁶⁸ Laertius, D., *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, 244.

¹⁶⁹ Kennedy, K. 1999. "Hipparchia the Cynic: Feminist Rhetoric and the Ethics of Embodiment" in *Hypatia* 14, no. 2, 49.

¹⁷⁰ Desmond, W. 2014. *Cynics*. London: Taylor and Francis, 114.

citizenship for himself, and he may have done so through his military service or through the aid of his friends.”¹⁷¹

Diogenes is not only a foreigner in Athens but also he is in exile and he is not regretful of it; “A man once reproached him with his banishment, and his answer was, ‘you wretched man, that is what made me a philosopher.’”¹⁷² Diogenes considers exile and loss of citizenship as a prerequisite for becoming a philosopher. This is related to the Cynics’ rejection of citizenship as unnatural and their pioneering belief in cosmopolitanism;

“Cynic cosmopolitanism is both a denial of affiliation or identification with any particular place or people and an affirmation of and identification with the whole cosmos, nature itself...Living stateless and regarding all poleis as against nature is the Cynic therapy whereby one overcomes the burdens of locality, of being constrained by any social or group identity.”¹⁷³

Diogenes is the inventor of cosmopolitanism: “The question was put to him what countryman he was, and he replied, “A Citizen of the world.”¹⁷⁴

The Cynics’ cosmopolitanism supports their understanding that all property belongs to all humanity:

“For the Cynics, the universe itself is one’s homeland...By being a citizen of the cosmos, the Cynic thought not only that everyone was essentially at home everywhere, but that everything belonged to everyone as well. Everyone has equal right to everything.”¹⁷⁵

The Cynics follow their cosmopolitanism into rejecting state laws and following what they understand to be the law of the cosmos;

“Diogenes replaces these illusory values with a way of life in accordance with true law, the source of which is the ‘only true commonwealth’ (monēn orthēn politeian), the cosmos itself...Diogenes shows that law is a wider category than Sinope or Athens or Corinth, that it entails a commitment to humanity and the natural world of the widest conceivable breadth, the cosmos, and that practicing the endurance of the Panhellenic hero Heracles leads to a self-sufficient and successful life.”¹⁷⁶

This rejection of state laws may be misunderstood as an escape from boundaries and responsibilities of the Cynics towards other citizens of the state. Yet, the Cynics do not aim at

¹⁷¹ Sayre, F. 1948. "Antisthenes the Socratic" in: *The Classical Journal (Classical Association of the Middle West and South)* 43, no. 4, 237.

¹⁷² Laertius, D. 2018. *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*. Translated by Yonge. London: G. Bell and Sons, LTD, 234.

¹⁷³ Dockstader, J. 2018. "Cynic Cosmopolitanism" in: *European Journal of Political Theory*, 282-283.

¹⁷⁴ Laertius, D. 2018. *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*. Translated by Yonge. London: G. Bell and Sons, LTD, 240.

¹⁷⁵ Dockstader, J., "Cynic Cosmopolitanism" in: *European Journal of Political Theory*, 284.

¹⁷⁶ Paone, C. 2018. "Diogenes the Cynic on Law and World Citizenship" in: *Polis: The Journal for Ancient Greek Political Thought* 35, no. 2, 490-492.

escaping responsibility; they rather aim at widening the scope of the understanding of responsibility. They aim to extend it to the whole of humanity and not only to citizens of the same state; “Diogenes philosophical mission and form of care attach not to his native Sinope but to all humanity.”¹⁷⁷

The Cynics’ cosmopolitanism and belief in the ethical responsibility towards humanity makes them condemn military power and war. This Cynic condemnation of war as unnatural is in sharp contrast to common Greek understanding that honors wars and military heroes : “The Cynics concurred that war is unnatural, for what other animals dress themselves in metal and line up to kill each other, with no benefit to anyone?”¹⁷⁸ Diogenes shows no fear of military figures even when he gets captured by one;

“And Dionysius, the Stoic, says that after the battle of Chæronea he was taken prisoner and brought to Philip; and being asked who he was, replied, ‘A spy, to spy upon your insatiability.’ And Philip marvelled at him and let him go...When Perdiccas threatened that he would put him to death if he did not come to him, he replied, ‘That is nothing strange, for a scorpion or a tarantula could do as much: you had better threaten me that, if I kept away, you should be very happy.’”¹⁷⁹

3.8.8 Gender Equality

The Cynics do not only promote equality between different classes and citizens and foreigners but also promote equality between men and women. They believe that the true value and meaning lies in virtue and they believe that both men and women are equally capable of virtue; Antisthenes says; “Virtue is the same in a man as in a woman.”¹⁸⁰ The Cynics are considered rebellious in their cultural and social context because they are among the few in their times who regard women as equal to men and capable of living a philosophical virtuous way of life; “The Cynics were one of the few sects that allowed and even encouraged the

¹⁷⁷ Paone, C. 2018. "Diogenes the Cynic on Law and World Citizenship" in: *Polis: The Journal for Ancient Greek Political Thought* 35, no. 2, 493.

¹⁷⁸ Desmond, W. 2014. *Cynics*. London: Taylor and Francis, 112.

¹⁷⁹ Laertius, D. 2018. *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*. Translated by Yonge. London: G. Bell and Sons, LTD, 233-234.

¹⁸⁰ Laertius, D., *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, 221.

participation of women, observing no intellectual differences between men and women.”¹⁸¹

Hipparchia is the most flagrant example of the Cynics opposition to the ancient Greek society’s understanding of the place of women:

“Because Hipparchia lived during the first century of the Hellenistic age (323-30 B.C.), she enjoyed the few, limited extensions of social freedom. I am not suggesting that the status of women shifted in any major way during this time; however, subtle changes expanded women's movement, and thus their spatial mobility, in the political polis...Infanticide of female children and rampant illiteracy were still status quo for women in the Hellenistic age. Within this context, Hipparchia's refusal to follow the demands of her parents was all the more significant. Consider also that patrilineage, law, and social custom all considered marriage a financial arrangement. Hipparchia rejected these injunctions in choosing to marry for love, not for the insurance of familial wealth and relations, but in doing so, she exiled herself not only from her family and home but from the expectations and rewards of her social class.”¹⁸²

Epilogue

During the defense of this thesis, two important points were raised by Professor Alessandro Topa and Professor Thomas Rule. Professor Alessandro Topa criticized the passing over the theoretical aspect of philosophy, both in the portrayal of the figure of Socrates, including my account of Plato’s critique of writing in the *Phaedrus*, and in the understanding of philosophy presupposed in the thesis as a whole. My decision not to highlight the theoretical aspect of philosophy, however, reflects the historical fact that the discussed. Cynics’ understanding of

¹⁸¹ Kennedy, K. 1999. "Hipparchia the Cynic: Feminist Rhetoric and the Ethics of Embodiment" in *Hypatia* 14, no. 2, 49.

¹⁸² Kennedy, K., "Hipparchia the Cynic: Feminist Rhetoric and the Ethics of Embodiment" in *Hypatia*, 51-52.

philosophy—which is the main topic of this thesis—lacked any emphasis on theoretical philosophy. After Antisthenes, the Cynics rejected theoretical philosophy and emphasized philosophizing as a way of life.

Professor Thomas Rule pinpointed the desideratum of a clearer understanding of the concept of the meaning of life in this thesis. During the defense, it appeared that the usage of concepts like ‘the meaning of life’ or ‘value’ faces two difficulties that require future study. The first difficulty is the non-existence of equivalent Greek expressions, as both concepts are modern. The second difficulty lies in the systematic challenge to develop a clear and definite understanding of what both concepts really mean.

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