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Editorial

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Sitting at home, you dream of living in places you barely know. And yet, you feel like a tourist in your own city. Maybe you should get out more. But when you do go out, you barely recognize anything. It's a problem: everything important happens somewhere else. You are more attached to political struggles and events in other places. All the food you eat is imported. All your closest friends and family have moved away to live or work in countries where they don't speak the language. You might as well join them, but then again that's what brought you to the strange place where you live now – maybe two or three generations ago. Maybe it's time to put a stop to all this. You should plan a trip to your ancestral home, the home of your parents or grandparents or great-grandparents, your real home. You should reconnect with your history, with your real self. But this is not a promising option either – you are well aware of the kind of economic capture that masquerades as identity tourism, just as you are attuned to the political capture that the fundamentalists taking over your country already lay out with their promises of a return to a fake womb, to a more essential grounding of identity that never existed anyhow.

Faced with this problem, the available options appear quite meager: you are immobilized as a tourist or dragged across the earth on an endless shopping trip. But actually, these insufficient options are only the beginning of a transformation you have been undergoing for some time. Your sense of rootlessness is in fact your defining condition, and what you are really looking for are the terms you can use to situate this pathological restlessness. Because you are not even here or there anymore – it's gotten far worse and far more interesting: in fact you are everywhere and nowhere all at once. You are now composed of cosmic particles that float around the earth in clouds that cluster around various places simultaneously. Cancel your travel plans? If only you could! This may be the only way of explaining why your ancestors keep trying to friend you on Facebook, asking to crash at your apartment when they come to town for a conference or to do research for an exhibition. The childhood bullies and teenage girlfriends and boyfriends who visit you in your sleep? The fascists opening fusion food restaurants in your neighborhood? The proliferation of bearded men playing banjo, balalaika, or praying? Good luck!

Like it or not, you have become cosmopolitan. Indeed, the cosmopolitan idea in the West traces back not to the smooth surfaces of transcontinental trade and urban mercantile sophistication but to the opposite, to the cranky and ascetic Cynic philosopher Diogenes, who in the third century BCE claimed his home to be the whole earth. And, like Diogenes, the real

challenge is to understand what it means to have already joined with a cosmic polis. A clear political project for this condition does not present itself easily, though you can easily argue that some very significant political movements from the past few years have been composed of vast multitudes of people like you who share this condition. Diogenes was probably the first to declare himself a cosmopolitan, and for that his attachments were all negative: he lived without property, job, or citizenship, dressed only in a cloak while claiming to be happier, freer, and more courageous than kings. When he was famously paid a visit by Alexander the Great, who had heard of a strange and knowledgeable character sleeping in a large jar in the market, and sweepingly offered to grant Diogenes any wish he desired, our cosmic citizen replied, "Please, don't stand in my sun."

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