Appendix 2a – Writing assignment on being a well educated cosmopolitan person

F205 Second essay – 3- 4 pages in length – 100 pts. or 15% of your total course grade. Due: Wednesday, February 15

Purpose:

The purpose of this essay is for you to think about the value or significance of being a well educated person who is also a cosmopolitan. I would like you to challenge your own beliefs in relation to the authors we have read. All of the authors we have read so far had well developed views of what education was or how to achieve a good education. Several also addressed the idea of the value of a cosmopolitan education. Here is your chance to use your imagination and the literature we have read to reflect on and stimulate your own thinking of what it means to be well educated or, in Foucault's words, to cultivate yourself, and to conceive of yourself as a citizen of the world.

Assignment:

Rather than ask you to “confess” what you think or believe, I propose a more indirect way for you to explore these ideas. Furthermore, instead of me posing questions, I would like you to think what would be appropriate questions to pose. Therefore ….

Imagine that you are a TV or Radio host and you are going to interview a person known for being a very well educated cosmopolitan person. You are preparing yourself for the interview by reading up on authors who have thought deeply about what it means to be an educated person, such as Oakeshott, Martin, Rodriguez, Plato, Aristotle, Foucault. Nussbaum, Appiah and Hansen addressed cosmopolitan education.

You need to pose at least five different questions to your imaginary person and then come up with answers. You need to integrate our readings from class by mentioning at least three of the authors we have read.

Example: Aristotle considered an educated person to be ....... He said: “......”(Johnson & Reed, p...) Do you think this is an adequate characterization of a well-educated person? Or: The imaginary person responds by saying: I disagree with Nussbaum’s idea that everybody ought to have a cosmopolitan education ..... Rather I think it is necessary to .......

I will post a rubric of how I plan to grade this essay. Of course you are welcome to use additional references (although I do not expect this) but you have to use at least three of the authors we have read so far.

If you find the interview format too confining, you can just write this in an ordinary essay format but you need to pose five questions and integrate three authors.
Be sure to use proper citation. When you quote an author directly, state the page number – see example above or use the citation guide on Oncourse.
Essay 2: Interview on Cosmopolitanism

I had the privilege of conducting a one-on-one interview with philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah for tonight’s show. We discussed cosmopolitanism and its importance in today’s society. The following is a written account of my interview.

Mr. Appiah, you have been known to talk about cosmopolitanism. What made you interested in this topic and the idea of being a global citizen?

I believe that my own personal background and experiences have influenced me to study cosmopolitanism further. My father was born a Ghanaian Methodist, and my mother was born an English Anglican (Appiah, 84). Growing up in a mixed family environment helped me explore many new things about myself and my background. Naturally, I accepted both cultures as they had a great influence on my personality as I was growing up. Since I have my roots in England and Ghana, I have an attachment to both places, making me more interested in learning about current affairs of these two countries. I believe that in order to be a global citizen, one must be aware of global news, whether it is related to social, political, economic or religious issues. It is important to know what is happening in the world if one wants to understand and feel what people in different countries go through in their daily life.

I understand that you are a firm believer in cosmopolitan education. From your wide range of experience, what does it mean to be a cosmopolitan in today’s society? Is it important to have a cosmopolitan education?

First of all, being a cosmopolitan means being a citizen of the world. Globalization has made it evident that being a cosmopolitan is more important now than ever before. Today’s world is
becoming smaller and smaller with the increasing use of technology and the rapid connectivity between countries. Being a citizen of the world means breaking the boundaries that separate an American from a Mexican or an African from an Indian. Martha Nussbaum has said that Stoics believe we should think of ourselves as being “surrounded by a series of concentric circles” (Nussbaum, 3). These concentric circles consist of ourselves, our family, extended family, community, state, country, world, universe, etc. She says that we must be “responsible for all, rather than giving the immediate surroundings special attention and care” (Nussbaum, 3). A cosmopolitan is open to others, whether it is in the way they think or the way they act (Appiah, 85). It also means caring about the fate of humans living around the world. In a way, their lives affect ours and our lives affect theirs. Our daily lives are connected in such a way that when one nation fails, it has the power to affect all other nations as well. We are so connected with other countries that it is impossible to ignore them or to think of them as a separate entity of the world.

**Do you consider cosmopolitan education to be a sort of educational transformation from a “regular” education standpoint?**

Definitely. David Hansen describes cosmopolitan education as “moving closer and closer apart… and further and further together” (Hansen, 3). This means that one begins to learn how different everyone is from one another, but those differences are what make them come together. This is an educational transformation, where one must set aside any previous misconceptions or doubts about a particular nation, culture, race, etc. in order to make a meaningful impact in that area. A transformation to cosmopolitan education may seem to be a painful process at first, as it requires one to come out of his comfort zone and look into things that may seem foreign. But the whole purpose of cosmopolitan education is to learn about caring for others around the world
Appendix 2b – Writing assignment by student A.S. considered excellent –

See App. 2c how this essay was assessed under iRubric. Additional comments were made on essay itself.

and having the mindset of bringing progress and improvement in their lives, whether they are in a developed country or in a developing country.

You have explained what cosmopolitanism is, but what are the benefits of having a cosmopolitan education? In other words, coming from an individualistic society, what can I get out of it?

Ah. For one thing, cosmopolitanism is a way to help exchange ideas from person to person and from continent to continent. Every culture has a different way of expressing a thought or an idea. By getting to know people around the world, this transmission of information becomes easier and is a way for everyone to learn from each other. For example, a new rice-picking invention in China can be brought to the villages of the Philippines, making it easier for Filipino farmers to pick rice. Not only will this invention benefit China’s economy, but it will also boost the Philippines economy and living condition in these villages. This transmission of new ideas, thoughts, and information will help improve the overall quality of life of the people around the world. What can you get out of it? Well, in the exchange of information one can learn new ideas from others and teach others what he knows. One also has the ability to influence others with his point of view. However, I would like to point out that influencing people does not mean imposing ideas onto them. In order to make a meaningful change in people’s life, one must be willing to guide them and present them with information, hoping that they will make their own decisions. When they make their own decisions, they are using their own judgment, rather than relying on someone else.

There are always two sides to a story. If there are benefits, there have to be disadvantages. What are the disadvantages of cosmopolitanism?
Well, a disadvantage comes with the transmission of information. Good information is not always transmitted from country to country and bad information is not always prevented from being communicated from country to country. Like I mentioned earlier, an idea that is forcefully imposed on someone can potentially harm that person. Sometimes, communication in a cosmopolitan world can be misunderstood or can be taken out of context, due to differences in ways of thinking or uses of language, which can harm someone’s life or career rather than helping them.

**Since most of our viewers are teachers, how can you relate cosmopolitanism to education today? How can we implement this in schools?**

As a cosmopolitan, one is always looking out to improve the lives of the people around him. When I say “around,” I mean physically around as well as around the world. Education allows a person to think intellectually on how to make his or her life better than before. What I would like to say is start with children. John Locke thought that “the minds of children were more malleable than they actually are” (Appiah, 90). Children learn faster than adults and beliefs and habits taught from a young age will remain with them throughout their lives. Teaching cosmopolitanism and acceptance of other cultures from childhood will help them become “global citizens.” These children will be presented with more opportunities in the future to come in contact with people from China, India, and Spain, than my generation or your generation. Therefore, it is necessary that they are exposed to cosmopolitan education in their classrooms. One of the best ways our children can gain this exposure is by immersing themselves in a foreign culture. There is no better way to learn about others than by experiencing a new environment and culture first-hand.
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You have provided our viewers with amazing insight about cosmopolitanism. Would you like to give closing remarks to our future teachers before we sign off?

To all of our future teachers, I would like to say that teaching is a great service to humanity. With your knowledge, you will be able to teach anywhere in the world. Children are our future and you are the ones who will help them become our world leaders. Teach them to break barriers. Teach them to accept others. Teach them to learn to improve the quality of their lives, their families’ lives, and the lives of the people around them. So do not limit yourself to teaching only in the United States. Venture out of your comfort zone. Study abroad or teach abroad in order to become a cosmopolitan teacher so that you can create cosmopolitan students.

Thank you for your time and great advice, Mr. Appiah. We hope to hear from you again.
Cosmopolitan Questioning

DJ: Welcome to tonight’s show! I’m Steve Stepnoski, your DJ for this evening.

Tonight’s guest, Stan Stepanski, is renowned in the academic world and describes himself as a cosmopolitan citizen.

DJ: Now, you attended Indiana University. How do you believe someone learns from his or her “college experience”, so to speak, by studying at a university?

SS: Attending a university fosters the beneficial environment in becoming an educated person. It permits you to encounter unfamiliar experiences, people, and situations that you cannot necessarily learn from a lecture or a textbook. However, to me, the “college experience” is not a sum of the curriculum you learn or apply but instead a period of time, or as Oakeshott calls it, “the gift of an interval” (114).

DJ: I believe you are referring to his article, “The Idea of a University”?

SS: Yes, and I agree with his description. He explains the interval as a chance when one can view the world freely without being forced toward a particular direction—“a moment to taste the mystery without the necessity of at once seeking a solution” (114). This momentary freedom is a necessary primary step in becoming an educated person. I believe it provides a person with an objective lens in which to observe their place in the world. Yet, it is imperative, during this interval, that the person gathers thoughts and questions that shape their point of view rather than forming assumptions and stereotypes. Essentially, what I am suggesting is that in order to become a well-educated person or
cosmopolitan, one must first engage in an opportunity that liberates them from outside forces or previous mentalities—such as attending a university.

**DJ:** You mentioned a well-educated person is like a cosmopolitan. Martha Nussbaum asserts, “through a cosmopolitan education, we learn more about ourselves” (4). Do you agree? How does a cosmopolitan learn more about himself or herself?

**SS:** A well-educated person is a cosmopolitan if they view themselves as a citizen of the world. That’s why “the gift of the interval” is crucial. The opportunity permits an individual to see themselves as a global citizen and member of humanity instead of, for example, just a white middle-class American male. The cosmopolitan worldview acknowledges, as Nussbaum describes, that “the destinies of nations are closely intertwined” and one’s actions ultimately have global impacts (5). But this recognition alone does not mark the cosmopolitan. Nussbaum also explains that cosmopolitanism “offers only reason and the love of humanity” (6-7). This considered, I believe the well-educated person chooses to become a cosmopolitan because of their love of humanity; and, in turn, they realize their love of humanity is what drives them to become well-educated. That’s the lesson the cosmopolitan learns.

**DJ:** Aristotle once said we can become educated by our habits (Johnson and Reed 34). Do you believe a person can become well-educated or a cosmopolitan through habit?

**SS:** I agree with not only Aristotle’s belief that one can become educated by habit but also that one can remain well-educated and a cosmopolitan by habit. I believe the development and continued practice of a gratifying skill or action instills and maintains a necessary confidence and pride to a person—just like Aristotle explains, “states of character arise of out like activities” (Johnson and Reed 34). To me, if one feels fulfilled
by their skill or action, then they have motivation to repeat it. That said, one becomes well-educated and a cosmopolitan through habit because it allows one to understand their role in society while also sustaining their confidence and satisfaction. The habit functions as a sort of daily reminder of their role and contributions as a global citizen.

**DJ:** Aristotle also said “temperance and courage are destroyed by excess and defect, and preserved by the mean” (Johnson and Reed 35). How does the cosmopolitan “preserve the mean”?

**SS:** Preserving the mean, or even Apollo’s maxim “nothing in excess”, all involve striking a balance. The cosmopolitan must remain in balance by expressing moderation not only intellectually but also physically. Excess food and drink will induce indulgence, while lack of exercise will cause physical weakness. Intellectually, the cosmopolitan must think both rationally and ideally, be the speaker and the listener, compliment but also critique. He or she must be willing to change but without forfeiting their former selves. Essentially, the cosmopolitan citizen plays both roles and maintains a balance between them. Becoming a cosmopolitan involves encountering options and deciding on the best choice, or what Aristotle calls “the mean relative to us, determined by a rational principle” (35). The cosmopolitan preserves the mean not only by expressing moderation, but by consistently seeking to improve both humanity and his or her own self.

**DJ:** Your idea of constantly improving oneself reminds me of Foucault’s “The Cultivation of the Self”. How does the cosmopolitan “cultivate” himself or herself?

**SS:** I believe the cosmopolitan first begins to cultivate himself or herself by engaging in an opportunity to free oneself and clearly observe the world around them. From there, the cosmopolitan can understand and contemplate their place in the world and become
cognizant of how their actions can influence it. Then, the cosmopolitan can carry out their role through habit and moderation by seeking to improve both themselves and humanity. In addition to this progression, I believe to cultivate oneself means, as Foucault puts it, “get to know oneself…by contemplating a life reduced to its essentials” (50-51). This considered, the cosmopolitan or educated individual starts inward and works outward. He or she beings by “cultivating” or understanding their own self, then progresses toward how they can be beneficial and improve the world they live in. In essence, the cosmopolitan is first a citizen of their inner world—fulfilling its roles and duties—then becomes a citizen of the shared outer world.
Appendix 2b Excellent student response to cosmopolitan interview 5

Works Cited


