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## THE CHALLENGES OF GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP AND OF FELLOW FEELING, FROM THE POLIS TO EDUCATION TODAY

Tim Beasley-Murray

This chapter sets modern ideas of citizenship and of global citizenship (GC) into a tradition that reaches back to Ancient Greece. It is in the light of this tradition that the radical nature of these ideas can be better appreciated and their conceptual complexities better grasped. The chapter concludes by investigating the problematic concept of 'global fellow feeling', something that, I argue, is central to sustaining global citizenship, as both idea and as reality, and is no less of a challenge in today's globalized society than it was in the past.

### The Global: Rastignac and the Mandarin

Let us start with a story. This is the story of two students – not in London or Middelburg, and not in 2015 – but rather of two students in Paris sometime in the 1830s. This is a story told in *Le Père Goriot*, the novel by Balzac. Two students have come to Paris to make their fortune: one is a would-be poet and the hero of the novel, Rastignac, and the other his friend Bianchon, a student of medicine. The friends have not seen each other for while when they bump into each other at the entrance to the Jardin du Luxembourg. Rastignac reminds his friend of a passage, apparently in a book by the philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau:

"Do you recall the passage where [Rousseau] asks the reader what he'd do if he could make himself rich by killing an old mandarin in China merely by willing it, without budging from Paris?" "Yes." "Well?" "Bah! I'm on my thirty-third mandarin." "Don't make a joke of it. Really, if it were proved to you that the thing were possible and that a nod of your head would be enough, would you do it?" (Balzac, 2014)

The question that Rastignac put here is an important and difficult one that, in turn, contains a series of further questions: what are we willing to do to guarantee our own success? Whom are we willing to step on or to allow to suffer for our own gain? To whom do we have moral obligations and responsibilities? Are these responsibilities

<sup>1</sup> In fact, Rousseau's writings contain no such passage.

## Citizenship

In thinking about citizenship let us turn not to Paris of the 1830s, but to Ancient Greece. The aim here is to (re)discover the origins of our contemporary conception of citizenship. Despite the temporal distance that separates us from the Ancient Greeks, and despite the ways in which their concept of citizenship developed and became modified in Rome and in modern historical and political experience, our traditional and contemporary conception of citizenship continues to be structured by Greek ideas and by Greek political experience. Hence, while the image that I give you here of Greece – filtered not insignificantly through the thinking of Hannah Arendt – might be something of an idealized one, it is an image whose power legitimately lays claim to our imagination.

In Greece in the period between the 8th and 5th centuries BCE, a gradual process occurs in which communities reject previous forms of social organization, such as pre-political forms of primitive kingship, and come together in cities, thereby creating the polis. In the realm of ideas, the key feature of the polis is the notion that, within its walls speech replaces violence, and that one does things through persuasion and through the power of words. As Arendt puts it:

To be political, to live in a polis, meant that everything was decided through words and persuasion and not through force and violence. In Greek self-understanding, to force people by violence, to command rather than persuade, were pre-political ways to deal with people characteristic of life outside the polis, of home and family life, where the household head ruled with uncontested despotic powers, or of life in the barbarian empires of Asia, whose despotism was frequently linked to the organization of the household. (1998, pp. 26-27)

Speech, according to this Greek and Arendtian understanding of things, is the fundamental bedrock of citizenship. It is, then, the right to freedom of speech – that is not met by violence – that is not simply one of many rights, but the fundamental and foundational right of citizenship.

This Ancient Greek transition – from pre-political existence to the polis, and from mute violence to speech – was accompanied by a whole set of further shifts on a conceptual level and in conceptual vocabulary. In terms of Greek conceptual self-understanding: in moving to the polis and in throwing up walls around the city, human beings left the natural world and entered the artificial world of civilization. They thus left the sphere of natural necessity and set foot, for the first time, into a world of human freedom: bonds of kinship, which human beings cannot choose and were subjected to, were replaced by social bonds that human beings had chosen for themselves and in which they participated. The charisma of tyranny – and the hierarchy that tyranny institutes – gave way to legitimate authority and equality before the law (isonomia),

any less if the people whom our actions affect are not the people near us, members of our immediate community, but rather are people we have never met, living very different sorts of lives on the other side of the globe? These questions of our ethical responsibilities (and the way that these responsibilities are mediated by proximity and distance) are no less relevant and no less difficult to answer today.<sup>2</sup>

There is, of course, a big difference between the way that Rastignac and his fictional friend faced these questions in 1830s Paris and the way that we face these questions in Western Europe today. In the 1830s, Paris and China were, in practical terms, very far apart. It would have taken months of arduous travel by land or of a long and dangerous sea voyage round Africa and India to get from France to the Far East. What little a Parisian knew of China would have been gleaned from the fanciful accounts of travellers, or news that travelled so slowly that it was no longer news when it arrived.

So much has changed in the less than 200 years that separates us from Balzac. If we want to find out about China, all we have to do is switch on the television, pick up a newspaper or, most obviously, look online. More simply, we might just turn and talk to one of the hundreds of thousands of Europeans who are of Chinese origin – the passenger next to us on the bus, or the student next to us in the lecture hall. Or we could glance at the labels of the clothes that we are wearing, or the Made in China stamp on pretty well any consumer good that we use.

Today, then, Rastignac's question has a very different resonance. The extraordinary processes of globalization of the past 200 years have shaped the world we live in whether we like it or not. What this means is that human beings, right across the globe, are connected in real and dense ways. It follows that the 'old mandarin' of Rastignac's question is not some unimaginable figure, distant from us and to whom we have no connection. And it follows that we can't simply wish him dead and enjoy the riches that would result, blissfully ignorant.

Globalization means that we live in a world where our choices and our actions are both affected by, and have an impact on, the billions of other human beings with whom we share this planet. From this web of interconnections arises a – perhaps opaque and difficult to define – web of responsibilities. As the editors of a recent volume on cosmopolitanism put it in an evocative turn of phrase, we live "in a global age, in an age of overlapping communities of fate, where the fate and fortunes of countries are increasingly entwined with one another" (Brown & Held, 2010, p.13). In the light of our belonging to shared 'communities of fate', I argue that it is imperative, indeed unavoidable, that we start to develop a sense of ourselves as global citizens. What does this mean? To understand this, we need first to ask ourselves what it means to be a citizen.

<sup>2</sup> Appiah (2007, pp. 155-57) puts the story of Rousseau's mandarin to good use in his discussion of 'moral cosmopolitanism'.

where lawfulness replaced the arbitrariness of personal rule. This conception of isonomia, an equality of rights and of responsibilities, was the bedrock of the Greek idea of citizenship, characterized by Aristotle, for example, as "constitutional rule" and "government of freemen and equals" (1996, p. 19).

In sum, the Greeks have bequeathed to us a concept of citizenship that may be defined as follows: coming together freely, as equals, to work for the common good, within a framework of law that we have made and chosen to submit to, where all share the benefits and burdens of common existence. And it is against the background of this working definition of citizenship that we shall be able to better understand the concept of global citizenship and what it might mean.

### Global Citizenship

The notion of global citizenship also traces its origins to Ancient Greece. The first self-proclaimed global citizen was the philosopher and cynic Diogenes of Sinope, a colorful figure famed, among other things, for his public masturbation and for living in a barrel. This was a thinker who deliberately and provocatively went against the conventions of his time (Hicks, 1972). On one occasion, when asked where he came from, Diogenes replied: "I am a citizen of the whole world".<sup>3</sup> What Diogenes was saying was little less shocking than his public masturbation: he was saying that he did not identify with his particular city but rather with humanity as a whole, the latter a concept that scarcely existed at the time. Further, he was suggesting that we ought to treat members of the whole of humanity with the same responsibility and respect for rights that we treat members of our immediate political community. In taking the idea of citizenship beyond the bounds of the city, cosmopolitanism was a radical and, even, paradoxical concept. Diogenes' listeners would have thought he was out of his mind.

Once again then, the basic structure of notion of global citizenship is something that we owe to the Greeks. This idea, as cosmopolitanism, which found its first explicit statement in Diogenes' provocative words, was developed in the teachings of the Stoics and passed through the hands of thinkers like Erasmus, Kant, and others, until it became the buzzword that is today global citizenship.<sup>4</sup> In this process of intellectual-

<sup>3</sup> The Greek word that Diogenes used for "citizen of the whole world" was kosmopolitês, and it is from this that we get the word 'cosmopolitan'.

<sup>4</sup> 'Global citizenship' and 'cosmopolitanism' are simply different names for the same idea. The recent terminological shift from the latter to the former has come about simply because of the negative associations that.

historical transition, the idea of global citizenship has lost nothing of its radical and challenging nature. Here is one contemporary writer on the difficulties inherent in taking bounded notions of citizenship and stretching them onto a global scale:

The idea of citizenship gets its moral force from the experience of people living together in cities, people who identify with one another, face common enemies, and so forth. The idea of global citizenship takes that idea and stretches it so as to embrace the whole of humanity, regardless of what relationships may exist between people across the globe. It assumes that the moral force of citizenship can survive stretching. But this, to say the least, is something that needs to be argued for. (Miller, 2010, p. 378)

In today's situation where, as I have argued, globalization and the creation of global webs of enmeshment mean that we cannot avoid thinking in terms of global citizenship we are compelled to face up to what happens to the concept and practice of citizenship as it undergoes this global stretching. And we are no less compelled to face up to the range of paradoxes and conceptual challenges that emerge in the process.

### The Challenges of Global Citizenship

**From city state to world state?** The Greek notion of citizenship was a matter of the Greek polis, and the traditional notions of citizenship that draw on Greek ideas are likewise a matter of the state, the modern equivalent of the polis. Global citizenship rejects the boundedness that is inherent to the state (in this sense 'global citizenship' – certainly in the way that Diogenes used the term – is a weak oxymoron.) Global citizenship is, after all, a concept of citizenship without any state that it corresponds to.

There are theories of global citizenship that posit the desirability of a world state and seek the expansion and strengthening of mechanisms (such as those that exist already in the form of the UN Declaration of Human Rights and the International Criminal Court) that aim to impose universally binding obligations and duties on all the world's inhabitants as world citizens. These are the sorts of principles that underpin strong theories of Global Governance.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, I would argue that to think along these lines and to say that the aim of global citizenship ought to be the creation of a global state is to miss the thrust of global citizenship as a critical position.

From a critical perspective, the idea of global citizenship is a post-statist position. It is a position that is skeptical of the whole notion of boundedness and boundaries by which traditional notions of the state are characterized. And after all, in an era of mass

<sup>5</sup> For an overview of these theories, see Hewson & Sinclair (1999).

surveillance and the ever-increasing power of states to control their citizens, we might legitimately ask whether a global state really would be such a desirable thing.

**From exclusion to inclusion.** Ancient Greek conceptions of citizenship – and the traditional conceptions of citizenship that develop from them – exclude. This exclusion works in two directions: externally and internally. Insofar as you were a citizen of, say, Athens, you were defined by not being a citizen of Sparta, and you owed to a citizen of Sparta none of the duties that you owed to one of your own. This notion of citizenship not only excluded members of other political communities, but also excluded ‘barbarians’ who, according to the ‘civilized’ Greek, were not political beings at all. In both cases of external exclusion, those who lay outside the bounds of your own political community were not only those to whom you did not extend the benefits of citizenship, they were also those against whom you could be expected to fight, dying for your city if necessary.

This external process of exclusion in the concept of Greek citizenship was mirrored by an internal process of exclusion. For all the glory of Athens, for example, and the civic freedom that its citizens enjoyed, this was a city that conferred the benefits of citizenship only on a privileged few: namely adult males from citizen families. Varying over time, the number of citizens never amounted to more than 50,000 or so of a total population of approximately 300,000 inhabitants of the city. The rest of the population, excluded from citizenship, was made up of women, slaves and metics (resident foreigners) (Thorley, 2004, pp. 75–78). In both directions, then, Greek and traditional ideas of citizenship gain their vital force through mechanisms of exclusion.

Global citizenship, by contrast, is an inclusive concept. Global citizenship likewise includes in two directions. First, externally, or perhaps better, horizontally: it extends the conception of citizenship across national and state boundaries. In this way, global citizenship is truly ‘global’ in an international and transnational sense. Second, global citizenship includes internally, or perhaps better, vertically. Here we see a different and often overlooked way in which global citizenship is ‘global’: it is predicated on the rights of all, as human rights, to the benefits of citizenship, regardless of factors like gender, race and ethnicity, sexuality, or socioeconomic status. Here, no less than on the international and transnational plane, global citizenship is about overcoming the barriers of exclusion.

**From homogeneity to heterogeneity.** Traditional notions of citizenship are predicated upon homogeneity, and construct communities defined by their homogeneity. According to this model, the community is a group of people that agrees on things and that is not characterized by difference, whether of religion, of values, or of identity. Here, in the homogeneity of traditional citizenship, one can have a statement like that of Pericles’ funeral oration that says: this is who we are and these are the values of our city to which we adhere. Global citizenship, by contrast, deals with a notion of community that is characterized not by sameness but by difference: by all the differences in values,

culture, and identities that cut across the vast and complex world that we inhabit. What this means is that, for the community of global citizens, there is no equivalent to Pericles’ funeral oration. What we share in common cannot be fixed once and for all, but is permanently fragile and permanently in need of renegotiation. It follows from this that the demand that global citizenship makes of us is more complicated and more onerous than the demand that traditional notions make of its citizens: it demands not that we agree, but rather that we learn to disagree and nevertheless find common ground across difference.

**Reality or utopia?** The final challenge – or weak paradox – inherent in the concept of global citizenship is one that I have alluded to above. On the one hand, processes of globalization and our ever denser enmeshment with others in other parts of the globe mean that we are already global citizens, whether we like it or not. From this perspective global citizenship is no abstract goal but rather an inescapable reality. In this case, the question is not whether we wish to become global citizens, but rather whether we ought to seek to be more conscious, more responsible, and better citizens of the world that we share. On the other hand, precisely because of the difficult and paradoxical nature of global citizenship as a concept, as I have described it above, global citizenship retains an unreal quality. It might be described as a challenge, an ambition, a metaphor, an attitude, a mode of engaging, a way of thinking, a demand that is yet to be fulfilled – a promise. Seen in the light of this unreal, utopian nonexistence, global citizenship as an idea can nonetheless have an effect on the way we think and the way we act. But if this is to be the case, I argue, the idea of global citizenship needs to engage us, not only as rational, but also as affective beings. And here we come to the problem of global citizenship as a problem of global fellow feeling.

## The Problem of Global Fellow Feeling

**Anti-cosmopolitan skepticism.** Ever since the rude reception that greeted Diogenes’ original proclamation of his belonging to the world, global citizenship has been an idea that many thinkers and writers have been skeptical of and have frequently dismissed. The reasons for this stem from global citizenship’s rejection of homogeneity and exclusion: this means it may appear to be rootless, abstract, and generalized. Here is Rousseau on the matter:

The essential thing is to be good to the people with whom one lives. Distrust those cosmopolitans who go to great lengths to discover duties they do not deign to fulfill to those around them. A philosopher loves the Tartars so as to be spared loving his neighbor. (1979, p. 39)



Behind Rousseau's effective anti-cosmopolitan rhetoric lies the idea that it is only with others like oneself that one can identify and share a sense of common feeling that leads to actions for the good. In this strand of thought, there is a skepticism towards the idea that global citizenship can have the motive force to bring people to feel, and hence act on, their responsibilities. As a contemporary writer puts it:

Cosmopolitanism as an ethical commitment strains to extend our concrete realities to include some distant and generalized 'others' who, we are told, are our global neighbors. The idea might give you the warm and fuzzies, but it's nothing for which you'd be willing to go to war. (Sibley, quoted in Appiah, 2007, p. 157)

The suggestion here is that cosmopolitanism is capable of producing no more than a lukewarm feeling of solidarity with the others, whether it be Rastignac's mandarin, Rousseau's Tartar, or the millions who suffer in other parts of the world today; it is insufficient to fire a driving passion and commitment to act, least of all in extreme cases.

**How to generate global fellow feeling.** The tradition of political thought has often distrusted the role of the passions in politics, seeing in the passions the source of irrational outbursts and violence that need to be kept in check by clear-sighted reason. A more nuanced view, however, would point to the indispensability of the passions in political experience. For the passions are those things that make people act, as Hobbes (1991), for example, demonstrates so clearly in the opening chapters of *Leviathan*. More specifically, fellow feeling, as a particular form of passion, is indispensable in the creation and sustenance of political communities. Thus, Rousseau, in *The Social Contract*, talks about the "sentiments of sociability, without which it is impossible to be a good citizen" (1997, p. 150). If this is the case, and if sentiments of sociability (what I am glossing as 'fellow feeling') are indeed the prerequisite for good citizenship, then the questions that follow for global citizenship are serious ones indeed. Is it possible to generate effective and cohesive fellow feeling that transcends the vast global diversity of culture and values? Can we commit ourselves affectively to a global community of difference, in such a way that we transcend our local identifications with those who are similar to us? If such a form of global fellow feeling were possible, how would it be possible to propagate or foster it in a global community as a whole?

To answer this last question, let us look at the ways that thinkers have posited that fellow feeling might be encouraged. Rousseau (1997) discusses the idea of civil religion. By this, what he means is a set of socially instituted rituals and ceremonial practices. Through civil religion, he suggests, in an evocative phrase, citizens may be taught how to "love their duties" (p. 150). Might there be a civil religion that could be instituted globally in the service of global citizenship?

Another way of promoting fellow feeling might be through art, as Nussbaum (2013) suggests. Nussbaum's idea is that in art human beings can come together around a

common set of symbols and a common set of aesthetic experiences. Could one simply imagine a global aesthetic and a global art that might be harnessed to promote the sort of fellow feeling necessary for global citizenship? In the cases of both globally cohesive civil religion and globally cohesive art, the task is a difficult one. On the one hand, there is the danger that a global civil religion or art would be too specific. Such a thing would apparently be global but in fact it would reflect local tastes and practices; apparently global, but—as the history of world cultural hegemony teaches us—most likely European in inspiration. As a result, it would fail to account for the cultural variety of the world. Or, on the other hand, a civil religion or art designed to promote global citizenship would be too general, too vague, too banal, if not downright kitsch. As a result, it would lack that emotional sway that civil religion or a unifying art are meant to have.

**Education for global citizenship.** If the paths of civil religion and art are unlikely to lead us very far in the right direction, then a more effective route—and one that Rousseau and others have also thought about in relation to fellow feeling—will be that of education. Education has that advantage that it can incorporate difference and promote the modes of critical reflection that will be needed to do justice to the complexities of global citizenship. Education for global citizenship, as education for global fellow feeling, will be indispensable in an age where global citizenship has become unavoidable.

What ought such an education to look like? Education for global citizenship cannot by definition, be prescriptive or aggressively normative. It must, however, create a space for critical reflection where students become aware of the complexities and challenges of GC and prepare to act on the consequences. Drawing on some of the thoughts on the nature of global citizenship outlined above, education for global citizenship will encourage students to think in terms of what they share in common and to think critically about how they are already implicated in the global. It will encourage students to think in terms of the differences in culture, values, power, and perspective that cut across our common world, and learn how to negotiate them with respect but not with indifference. And finally, it will encourage the sort of participation that emerges from reflection and help students to define a sense of rights and responsibilities on which such participation will be based. In so doing, education for global citizenship will necessarily aim to foster that fragile and difficult thing, so necessary for global solidarity and globally directed action: global fellow feeling. The aim of an education of this sort is to produce—and I quote here from the aims of the Global Citizenship program at my own university—students who:

look beyond their individual and local interests; who see the complexity of an interconnected world, in all its diversity and inequality; who understand the nature of the challenges that face that world; are aware of their social, ethical and political

responsibilities towards that world; and who are ready to work together to change it for the better. (UCL Global Citizenship)

But what of the students with whose story I started this paper? After anguished deliberation, Bianchon answers Rastignac's questions as follows: "Damn it, I've come to the conclusion that the Chinaman must live" (Balzac, 2014). Leaving behind the high minded ideals of universities' manifestos for global citizenship, a more modest aim of education for global citizenship might be this: to educate students who – whether with Bianchon's reluctance or not – come to the same conclusion and let the mandarin live; students who are willing to take at least a first step towards becoming responsible global citizens.

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## GLOBAL PEDAGOGY IN PRACTICE: CITIZENSHIP, RIGHTS AND STUDENT IDENTITIES

Audrey Osler

In many regions of the world, university and college students are encouraged, and even expected, to engage in civic learning. At the same time, there has been a renewal of interest at national and international levels in education for democratic citizenship that targets children and young people in elementary and high schools across the globe (European Commission, 1997; Osler & Starkey, 1999; Torney Purta et al., 1999, 2001; Cogan & Derricott, 2000; Parker, 2003; Banks, 2004; Council of Europe, 2002, 2011). Opportunities for civic learning at schools and universities are complementary: both can contribute to the strengthening of democracy and to the enhancement of democratic practices and processes in communities. This educational goal remains critical, as Osler and Starkey have noted:

In both established democracies and newly established democratic states, such as those of Eastern and Central Europe and Latin America, there is a recognition that democracy is essentially fragile and that it depends on the active engagement of citizens, not just in voting, but in developing and participating in sustainable and cohesive communities. (2006: 433)

Increasingly, programs are moving from a framework in which civic learning is designed for the national sphere (to which learners are assumed to have a natural affinity) to one that encompasses local, global, and other scales of belonging. This chapter presents a framework for civic learning that might be applied at various levels of education to support what has been termed 'education for cosmopolitan citizenship' (Osler & Starkey, 2003, 2005; Osler, 2011b).

Education for cosmopolitan citizenship aims to support learners' citizenship engagement at different scales, including the local, the national and the international, and to understand the inter-connections between these different scales. Such education must necessarily equip learners with knowledge and skills, but also with a disposition to take action to promote greater social justice, acknowledging not only our common humanity and global interconnectedness, but also learners' diverse affinities and identities: Civic educational programs which focus exclusively on the national level are no longer appropriate, since as Castles has observed, the "principle of each individual being a citizen of just one nation-state no longer corresponds with reality for millions of people who move across borders and who belong in various ways in multiple places" (2004: 18)