

## **People without Borders: Becoming Members of Global Communities**

*Co-organisers: Xiao-lei WANG, Pace University, USA and Minkang KIM, The University of Sydney, Australia*

This symposium examines the meaning of global citizenship by exploring a self-understanding that focuses on the dynamic process of becoming citizens of the world. The participants reflect on their own global experiences from different angles: personal, intergenerational, philosophical, metaphorical and educational. Through this multi-perspective reflection, the contributors offer a nuanced conceptualisation of global citizenship that transcends the artificiality of national boundaries. The purpose of the symposium is to encourage readers to move away from the mindset of “we and the other” and move towards the direction of “we”, that is, we are all connected and at the same time both affect and are affected by the other and the events around us. As a result of this dynamic process, we change. Only through the articulation of this change and constant self-reflection can we live meaningfully on “Planet Earth,” the common home of humanity.

### **Introduction**

*Xiao-lei WANG, Pace University, USA*

In the introduction, the presenter discusses the complexity of global citizenship. A medial conceptual framework is introduced to re-conceptualise the notion of global citizenship and develop a self-understanding of what it means to become global citizens. This medial thinking acknowledges the challenges involved in the globalisation process and allows us to understand them differently. This framework encourages us to ask about our location in the process of globalisation; that is, globalisation is not something that befalls us, but rather a process we are also involved in as subjects.

### **Being and Belonging: Feeling at Home on Planet Earth**

*Derek SANKEY, The University of Sydney, Australia*

The author begins with the question: “What is the very best form of governance for a planet in distress?” He then presents a collage of personal thoughts and experience, all arising from the author’s profound sense of being a citizen of Planet Earth, without national or ethnic borders. The author believes that we are all closely related, with quite recent common ancestors: one human species living together on one planet home. From that vantage point, the author provides a critique of representative democracy and other related eighteenth-century ‘modern’ ideas, including national sovereignty, the adversarial rule of law and scientific objectivity. He views these as obstacles to the sustainability of our planet home. As an alternative, the author offers a “politics of wisdom.” The urgency with which he writes is encapsulated in his claim that unless we collectively relate ourselves to our planet home and adopt a politics of wisdom, humanity “may yet render itself homeless.”

### **Homelessness and the Global Citizen: A Cognitive Process of a Conceptual Integration**

*Derek Worley PATTON, University of Melbourne, Australia*

The author discusses that he thought, as many of us do, that his “home” was dependent on a location, a “hometown” that signified a point of reference for his connection to the world. Coming back after years of experiences with multiple cultures and encountering other spiritual disciplines and longing for home, the author finds that this is an illusion. Our hometowns are only starting places for our journeys, and our true

home is the whole planet and anywhere we encounter other people with whom we can connect at this level. This feeling of “homelessness” that the author experiences is dual-fold in that it is both a blessing and an adversity that teaches us about ourselves and how we exist in the world around us. “Homelessness” is also an illusion once we recognise our true home and who we really are. This occurs cognitively through a process of conceptual integration.

### **Where Can I Plant My Roots?: A Quest for Community Connection When Planet Earth Is Home**

*Dorrie HANCOCK, Queensland University of Technology, Australia*

The author explores the concept of “planting roots,” a metaphor used to refer to what it means to be settled and belonging to a community. The childhood sense of belonging associated with an agricultural history and way of life sets her on a quest to ‘plant roots’ in her adult life, even while she lives in a number of cultures and countries. The diverse settings and experiences reveal different facets of community belonging and interpretations about where home is. Her journey leads to a sense of disorientation about where home might be and how she can “plant roots,” challenging her to re-conceive the metaphor. She comes to understand the plant represents her sense of self and belonging and then reinterprets the metaphor from “planting roots” to “roots in the air.” The concept of global citizenship, one without borders, is then explored using the altered metaphor.

### **Myself in Relation to Others: Embracing Our Most Intimate and Our Most Globalised Selves**

*Laurance SPLITTER, The Hong Kong Institute of Education, Hong Kong*

The author exposes some common misconceptions about the concept of citizenship, particularly in relation to notions of identity, the self and morality. He argues that none of these fundamental concepts gains much intellectual traction by being linked to citizenship and, further, that they are more reliably grounded on the familiar concept of a *person*, understood in relational terms. An individual is who he/she is not because of his/her affiliations, group memberships (including nationality, religion, ethnicity and culture), commitments or even values, but because of his/her *relationships to others* – especially, although not exclusively, to other persons. Some of these relationships (concerning one’s origin and early life history) are beyond one’s control, but others (concerning one’s future options and directions) are not. Our grasp of such concepts as *global citizenship* and *cosmopolitanism* depends on our capacity to imagine our more intimate relationships as *writ large*

### **Cultivating Empathy for Our Neighbours, beyond National and Parochial Borders**

*Minkang KIM, The University of Sydney, Australia*

The author explores the following questions: “Who is a good citizen in a global world? What constitutes goodness when we refer to a citizen as “good” in our global world? How do nationalistic prejudices blunt our ability to take perspectives beyond our national borders?” To address these questions, the author turns to the devastation of the 2011 Japanese tsunami and reports on a small research project that investigated the perspectives and attitudes of eight-year-old Korean children one year after the tsunami. The findings indicated that the Korean children held some rather alarming prejudices. Nevertheless, when viewed within the context of how the mass media in Korea reported the tsunami, these prejudices were not entirely irrational. In some ways they were socially enabling, in accordance with widespread and strong anti-Japanese sentiment in Korea. Nevertheless, the study also revealed that this kind of provincialism and

prejudice is malleable, and children can employ their capacity to empathise, if situated in an empathy-cultivating context in school.