

The ideal global citizen

[Linguistics](#), [English](#)



Margarita Pochtovaya Catherine Shelton ENC 1101 February 6, The Ideal Global Citizen Anything ideal is perceived to be synonymous with the epitome of perfection. An ideal person, therefore, would possess qualities and traits that would regard the person as a model of excellence when compared to others. One's initial perception, therefore, that writing an essay on the ideal global citizen would be straightforward and simple. However, the need to incorporate arguments presented in the previous reading from Madeleine Albright in "Faith and Diplomacy", and Kwame Anthony Appiah's "Making Conversation" and "The Primacy of Practice" make the discourse challenging. In this regard, one hereby aims to create a personal concept for the ideal global citizen through an exploration of various contentions on education, religious knowledge and moral systems.

A more comprehensive picture of a global citizen was expounded through reflecting on the definition of a global citizen. Parallelism with terms such as globalization or multiculturalism; while ultimately deciding to settle on the term cosmopolitanism (Appiah 58) are equally confusing and tend to provide increasing ambiguity, instead of clarity. Intricate as it seems, one perceived that to establish conjectures of ultimately concluding that "cosmopolitanism is an adventure and an ideal" (Appiah 62), would be the only shared conviction with Appiah's discussion. For one, the features or traits that make a global citizen ideal are those cited by Appiah of Christoph Martin Wieland's 1778 essay in the journal *Teutscher Merkur*, quoted as: "Cosmopolitans . . . regard all the peoples of the earth as so many branches of a single family, and the universe as a state, of which they, with innumerable other rational beings, are citizens, promoting together under the general laws of nature the

perfection of the whole, while each in his own fashion is busy about his own well-being” (Appiah 59). The ability to acknowledge that citizens are part of one universal family but recognizes individuality, privacy and confidentiality makes the concept ideal and global.

Since one recognized that the concept of idealism is analogous to absolute perfectionism, an ideal global citizen, apart from acknowledging universality of being a citizen of the world, should likewise accept the natural law for diversity in values and principles; yet, adhering to moral codes of conduct. As Albright cited Pope John Paul II’s argument that “ if people were to fulfill their responsibility to live according to moral principles, they must first have the right to do so” (Albright 4). This is crucial as other people governed under a totalitarian regime or from a communist form of government are discriminated from complete expression of human rights that restricts the concept of an ideal global citizen. An ideal global citizen must have freedom to live and ability to select preferences for religious affiliations, political beliefs, academic pursuits, and make regular conversations without fear or contempt.

One appreciates Faust’s acknowledgement and differentiation between practices and principles as the necessary ingredient for living in harmony. As acknowledged, “ practices and not principles are what enable us to live together in peace” (Appiah 72). Living in peace is therefore another crucial element that an ideal global citizen relishes. No citizen in war stricken nation could even state that one lives in a perfect environment. Without peace, there can be no perfection. When citizens are not accorded with opportunities to practice what they believe in or what their preferences are,

there is definitely nothing ideal in the situation. An ideal global citizen would be able to practice personal beliefs and preferences in any manner possible and where ever possible, within the confines of legal, moral and ethical standards of behavior. Citizens who might be subjected to any form of restriction through civil unrest, political dictatorship, or societal discrimination do not have opportunities and freedom for personal expression; making peace impossible and far flung.

The fact is that one strong believes that citizens regard greater importance in being able to live according to what they like and how they like to live. As emphasized by Appiah “ No doubt there are widely shared values that help Americans live together in amity. But they certainly don’t live together successfully because they have a shared theory of value or a shared story as to how to bring “ their” values to bear in each case. They each have a pattern of life that they are used to; and neighbors who are, by and large, used to them. So long as this settled pattern is not seriously disrupted, they do not worry over-much about whether their fellow citizens agree with them or their theories about how to live” (64). Thus, an ideal global citizen lives an undisrupted life, free from ridicule or worry about whether values are shared or not. Not worrying though should not be misconceived as being indifferent. An ideal global citizen should have a commitment and sincere sense for social and environmental responsibility.

Likewise, there is strong conviction that for a global citizen to be categorized in the ideal stature, adherence and acceptance to the statement that “ there are some values that are, and should be, universal, just as there are lots of values that are, and must be, local” (Appiah 62) must be eminent. An ideal

global citizen recognized both the universality and locality of values; and gets the chance to choose which values are to be imbibed, practiced, and adhered to – with utter respect for others’ beliefs, principles, practices and way of life. This was further validated by Appiah when he averred that “ what moves people is often not an argument from a principle, not a long discussion about values, but just a gradually required new way of seeing things” (65). The ability to accept that change is a necessary part of life is innate to an ideal global person. Likewise, the will and commitment to live one’s life as one pleases should also be premised therefore according to the ethics of reciprocity. Doing good to others so that others would likewise do good to oneself is a universal concept that encompasses religious doctrines and beliefs – that which an ideal global citizen practices and adheres to. In sum, one’s personal concept of an ideal global citizen is that who recognizes being part of one universal family but expresses individuality; must have freedom to live and ability to select preferences for religious affiliations, political beliefs, academic pursuits, and make regular conversations without fear or contempt; be able to live in peace; is accorded opportunities to practice what they believe in or what their preferences are; and lives an uninterrupted life, free from ridicule or worry about whether values are shared or not. It is not actually living peacefully alone; but being able to share the world in perfect harmony with others and with personal conviction for social and environmental responsibility. An ideal global citizen thereby values and practices the concept of ethics of reciprocity, as universally observed.

The ideal global citizen, more importantly, realizes that “ we have obligations

to others, obligations that stretch beyond those to whom we are related... (and) we take seriously the value not just of human life but of particular human lives, which means taking an interest in the practices and beliefs that lend them significance” (Appiah 59). There is nothing ideal when individuals live for the purpose of serving one’s selfish interests; or seeking the achievement of the goals of a selected few. The real value of seeing idealism in a global citizen is the ability of that citizen to actively share what one has for the betterment of another, regardless of demographic profile, race, ethnic or cultural background, values or principles in life with adherence to legal, ethical and moral codes of conduct.

Works Cited

Albright, Madeleine. “ Faith and Diplomacy.” *Emerging: Contemporary Readings for Writers*. Ed. Barclay Barrios. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2010. 23-33. Print.

Appiah, Kwame Anthony. “ Making Conversation.” *Emerging: Contemporary Readings for Writers*. Ed. Barclay Barrios. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2010. 57-72. Print.