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Tertium comparationis 26 (2020) 2, S. 203-214

Tertium Comparationis
Journal für International und Interkulturell
Vergleichende Erziehungswissenschaft
Vol. 26, No. 2, pp. 203–214, 2020
Waxmann Verlag GmbH

To Global Citizenship Education itself: Points of reflection and extension

William Gaudelli

Lehigh University, Pennsylvania, USA

Abstract

This paper reflects on the compilation of vignettes of Global Citizenship Education (GCE) in a variety of contexts. The analysis is framed by Critical Everyday Theory (CET), employing the concepts of estrangement, alienation and novelty to extend and develop these contributions. A consideration of what is new in these pieces for GCE, and how they address power coupled with the value of ethnographic research is examined.

I have often joked with my doctoral students about the implicit messages of research papers and conference papers – "I've got the *really-real* in this paper!" This implied declaration, commonplace in academia where social science and humanities scholars frequently theorize something grandiose out of banal events, is a way of demanding attention … this is *really-real so pay attention*! As a doctoral student nearly three decades ago, I was obsessed with the *really-real* which drew me to engage with ethnographic methods. I was not interested in distillations and abstractions drawn from statistical inferences of phenomena in relation to each other; I wanted to observe the 'things themselves' in all their raw nakedness. While my study was about what global education looks like through the eyes of participants in three high schools, the method of intently listening, closely observing and deeply inferring was as important to me as the foci of my gaze (Gaudelli, 2003). I was in search of the *really-real* in these situations, something deeply authentic in what the teachers and students were doing that would reveal things much larger than the immediacy of the experience assumed.

One way to characterize all of the pieces in this special issue is in terms of all of the authors' sharp focus on the same – the situations of learning about global citizenship within and beyond formal educational settings where real things happen. What a two-fold challenge this collective effort represents! On the one hand, the authors are seeking contents that are not altogether commonplace in any context, namely Global Citizenship Education. Say that this issue focused on how algebra is taught in secondary schools. Such an inquiry would be altogether simple to find as its universality is a given. But to go in search of *Global Citizenship Education* – but what even is that?! And how would you know it when you found it? On the other hand, this content challenge is compounded by a methodological one, or the process of seeing, hearing and witnessing that is respectful of the emic and yet points both to its problematic dimensions and outwards to something larger at play in the work. This dimension of the challenge is acutely felt as the authors grapple with moving beyond the immediate experience towards something larger and more foundational, ultimately pointing towards what we might call Global Citizenship Education.

My approach in this reflection is to honor the work of both the scholars and the participants in these studies by doing precisely the same things they have done – accepting their rendering of the emic, bottom-up experiences of this grandiose idea of global citizenship and pushing what is rendered into a new frame of thinking, a structural analysis that has been referred to as Critical Everyday Theory, drawing principally on the work of the philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre (1961/2014). Why? At its core, scholarly work is a dialectical engagement for me. What can I do with these words, with these phrases, with these insights? I employ them not as recipes for intervention or formulas for action but as points of experience that beg for response and interpretation. Second, I have found Critical Everyday Theory to be a useful tool to think within the context of Global Citizenship Education (Gaudelli, 2016). Following my analysis of the six vignettes in light of Critical Everyday Theory, I turn to the center-point of this issue, GCE, and what insights, questions and directions develop in light of these important contributions.

I want to offer a few introductory points about what I take to be Critical Everyday Theory that I use in carrying forward this reflection. These are by no means exhaustive of the discourse but illustrative and pragmatically useful to what I have in mind for these papers. My rationale for choosing Critical Everyday Theory (CET) is based on the methodological choice of the authors – to focus on the everyday, common experiences of educators in a variety of spaces to generate their insights. CET works from the premise that estrangement, or seeing the quotidian world freshly, is a crucial precondition towards seeing it anew, as if for the first time. This repose is deep in the foundations of sociology and anthropology as one of the methodological options in those fields. Thus, it seems an appropriate fit to analyze these pieces from within that

same set of assumptions. Lefebvre (1961/2014) uses the work of Charlie Chaplin, the clowning yet sharply insightful American filmmaker of the early 20th century, who took normalcy seriously by interrupting its patterning repetition to unmask the spell of the ordinary. Lefebvre writes:

> The most extraordinary things are also the most everyday; the strangest things are often the most trivial, and the current notion of the 'mythical' is an illusory reflection of this fact. Once separated from its context … the trivial becomes extraordinary, and the habitual becomes 'mythical.' (pp. 35–36)

Chaplin was a genius at playing with estrangement. His film renderings of an assembly line in *Modern Times* (1936) illustrates how what is commonplace can be made to seem absurd in the absence of context. Chaplin plays the line-worker in his own film, rapidly ratcheting bolts to objects, as the line-supervisor continually speeds up the assembly line. He becomes so fixated on the repetitive motion that he eventually gets sucked into the gears of the assembly line which forces a work stoppage. He then begins to see every object – a fire hydrant, a woman's blouse – as bolts to be ratcheted. The humor of the scene translates well even into the present context, nearly a century removed, and yet the insights about repetition, rapidity and subsequent alienation linger just beneath the images. As Ben Highmore (2002) notes,

> What makes the assembly line such a telling exemplification of everyday modernity is not the specificity of the factory environment, but the generalized condition that it points to: 'plodding', 'monotony' – the emptiness of time. (p. 8)

Assembly lines have largely disappeared from post-industrial societies but their equivalents are suffused in those same societies – generally understood as the 'daily grind.'

Alienation, then, is a primary concern of CET and Lefebvre as it borrows from a principal tenet of Marxism: Modern capitalism has splintered sustenance from labor, rendering labor(ers) as a commodity such that workers experience detachment in the most essential dimension of themselves, their work. Lefebvre's analysis, however, shifts from alienation as solely the result of labor, capitalism and the division of workers (proletarian) from their work, and towards a much broader, and perhaps even more damning, criticism: that all aspects of modern life are organized in response to alienation, even those that are positioned as the opposite of labor, namely leisure. Lefebvre (1961/2014) uses this opposition of work/leisure to demonstrate how even the absence of what we assume to be alienation – work, repetitive and disconnected – is in fact the repository of the very same anomic emptiness that is present in the original Marxist critique. Leisure, or being away from work, is always constituted by this absence, of having the liberation to enjoy pleasure.

> Chaplin gave us a *genuine reverse image* of modern times: its image seen through a living man, through his sufferings, his tribulations, his victories. We are now entering the vast domain of the *illusory reverse image*. What we find is a false world: firstly because it is not a world, and because it presents itself as true, and because it mimics real life closely in order to replace the real by its opposite; by replacing real unhappiness by fictions of happiness … This is the 'world' of most films, most of the press, the theatre, the music hall: of a large sector of leisure activities. (Lefebvre, 1961/2014, p. 57)

Thus, the activities of leisure are dependent upon who the subject is, just as the performer is at work for someone else's leisure, and, that leisure itself happens only in relation to the 'time off' in which it occurs, often in the same spaces, such as watching TV or reading a novel at home. CET begins with this unity as a total entity, not separable into distinct units and activities, and that the 'leisure world' is not set apart, but rather constituted by, the 'work world'.

The use of estrangement coupled with the enduring presence of alienation are two important components of CET to which I will add just one more: the *new* or total (hu)*man*. A popular notion in the early 20th century that Lefebvre is responding to is the idea of a *new man*, a discourse brought about by the socialist revolutions of that period, in which this new, whole, unified man was altogether different from the divided self of contemporary capitalism and earlier agrarianism and feudalism. This belief in a 'turning the page' of history, or at least the will to have that be the case, was so profound that states were organized on this premise. In the USSR, for example, the new man was pronounced as a "total act, radical break, absolute renewal" that represented an instantaneous shift from alienation to fulfillment (Lefebvre, 1961/2014, p. 87). The desire for novelty, particularly in light of political revolutions, is not new, of course, as Parisian revolutionaries in the time of the First Republic were said to have destroyed public clocks as a way of holding that moment of change, *ad infinitum*. Lefebvre and CET, rather, aim to historicize the *new man* not as new but as an outer limit to the horizon, an aspirational possibility of what people might become through many iterations focused on improving social being. Thereby, CET undercuts the myth that time can change instantly into something new; rather, Lefebvre views time as always continuous and connective.

Following this too brief overview of CET, I begin now with the vignettes themselves and introduce elements of CET – estrangement, alienation and the new (hu)man – at key moments along the way. In Natasha Robinson's vignette, the focus is on a classroom in South Africa and a familiar type of teacher, Mr. Cilliers, who tries to get students to *feel* their way through historical traumas. The feelings-first approach suggests a kind of pedagogical intervention against the deadened response that students too often have to state-level tragedies and systematic oppression. He employs the Holocaust and apartheid as touchstones in this context, leading with the feelings of victims of these mass-scale events, an attempt to humanize suffering.

Mr. Cilliers' teaching pivots around the idea that oppression happens as a result of a lack of love, thus the antidote is clear: attachment, affiliation and love. But when students say "get over it" with respect to contemporary South Africans and apartheid, as reported by Robinson, the elixir fails to deliver, as the faulty premise is exposed. Reparative interventions like land reform and affirmative action would "make other people feel bad" and are, as such, disqualified from consideration. As Robinson rightly notes, the feelings-only approach was "not what good Global Citizenship Education looked like" as students were removed from their implication in the very contents they were studying.

Here is a familiar intonation in global learnings of all varieties – the severance of the observer from the observed. Alienation sits at the core of how global learning is often engaged: events that happened in the past or far away and to people I neither know nor care much about; as such, alien content through and through. Students might be taught to feign feeling for others (though I wonder, can one possibly imagine the feeling of being a Jew in Europe during the rise of Nazism, or understand what it felt like to be treated as non-human in South Africa, and is such an approach ethically and pedagogically defensible?) if only to further alienate themselves from the implications in the present. Why begin there? Why not begin in the immediacy of student lives and how – through the cellphone in their pockets – they are all connected to unimaginable ecological and human suffering: to child labor, resource extraction, and digital waste piles (Wenar, 2016)? Such an encounter would be a process of estrangement, of making the very familiar altogether strange and cast in a new light. If done well, it might help develop a sense of connectivity, concern and engagement for making the world anew that is elemental to GCE.

Annett Gräfe-Geusch offers dual, compelling vignettes from an ethics course for newcomers and local students in a Berlin secondary school. The time of her study is quite important as 2015 witnessed a massive influx of some 1 million people on the move, largely from Syria and into central Europe. The project between refugees and German students exposes some of the pedagogical challenges and opportunities presented in the midst of a global crisis, most poignant as the issue literally comes home. While the two teachers profiled, Herr Lock and Frau Wels, understood their role as accommodating newcomers and encouraging the same attitude among their students, when dialogues encountered religious affiliation, national identity and assimilation within German society, the neat endings quickly come undone. GCE, it occurs to me in this vignette, has a good-sounding feel to many and yet, as Gräfe-Geusch confirms, it is a complicated and controversial terrain.

Perhaps some of that discomfort comes from the patina of new (hu)man that inheres within global citizenship. Global citizenship, while not a new idea, does represent a new identity space for declamations of who one is in light of geopolitical

changes and economic interconnections that are now commonplace. But just like the *new man* discourse of socialist revolutions a century ago, there is no magical contemporary emergence of the global citizen itself, vanquishing state identities of the past in a new epoch. No – it is a continuity with other political affiliations, a *newer human* let's say, that reminds us that experience is more contiguous than characterized by neat 'breaks' in time. In light of their focus on immigration, there is an element of this type of magical thinking among the teachers as well. That they were surprised by the students, and even themselves reverted to Western European, state-based responses (such as assimilation into German culture or treating religion in a secular fashion), demonstrates the extent to which they believed in the 'new day' thinking that accompanies globalization and Global Citizenship Education, only to be reminded of the continuity of previous citizenship discourses alongside a more current variety.

This recognition also helps to work against the homogenous imaginary of the past that is so often invoked in right-wing political discourse, or against the idea that the global reality has thrust upon us, unwillingly for some, a new polyglot, multicultural reality that ostensibly threatens the solidity of a (mythical) stable German identity. Rather, the influx of 'different' people is a current inflection of difference, not altogether new, as the presence of Jewish, Roma and Turkish communities in Germany, in some cases for centuries, can attest. Note that I point to Germany in this example only since the author works in that context, but surely we are aware that these insider/outsider concepts and mythical notions of glorious, singular pasts are present in many societies, if not all.

Jennifer Riggan observes global citizenship in the container of neoliberal economics in Ethiopia. We learn that students are taught in recitative, call-and-response fashion in a course on Civic and Ethical Education (CEE). The curriculum is deeply political as it was propagated by the People's Revolutionary Democratic Party from 1991 to the present as an 'education' to promote savings in western-style banks as opposed to traditional, local savings customs. The tendency to save was associated with leading a planned, rational life, as compared to a religious orientation that is averse to savings, ostensibly in the spirit of 'God will provide' and 'let's celebrate today and forget about tomorrow'. Yet the teachers were astutely aware that their teaching was theatrically disconnected from the reality of most students, since the government-school pupils were highly unlikely to find themselves or their families in a situation where any saving was possible due to their need to simply survive.

The alienating nature of the CEE course resonates throughout this vignette. The students and teachers, as well as the author, clearly understand this course as something that does not make sense in their everyday lives, advocating a kind of alternative life that is both unreachable and incongruent. As Riggan notes, "but this

[neoliberal] positionality does not reflect the reality of their everyday lives in which traditional institutions are sometimes more reliable than banks, cooperative borrowing and lending imbued with social relationships have long proven themselves to be reliable …" to which I would add that this type of doctrinaire learning can hardly be deemed as educational. What would a course like CEE need to be to be truly educative? I would suggest that moving away from the individual to the social in terms of savings and banking could be educational. Questions like: Why do banks hold your savings? What happens to the aggregate savings held by banks? Who benefits from this arrangement? How? Who owns the banks? Where is the money they hold in aggregate invested? And who benefits from those investments? When viewed from this social, rather than merely individualistic, frame, savings and banking take on a different look entirely, one that has the potential to be broadly educative and relatable to the daily lives of these young Ethiopian students.

Meg Gardinier considers the role of street and online protests in her vignette about students in Tirana, Albania. She interviews Keti, Lena and Fabian, university students who are organizing a protest over education and the increase of tuition fees in this context. The students organized around a series of demands: reduction of fees, improved dormitory conditions, expanded library resources and more open university governance. Gardinier notes that the student movement, though focused on the particularities of Tirana, gestures towards the future with global calls for justice all through peaceful street protests and social media. She notes that this situation bears on citizenship education as it involves direct action on the part of young people who cannot presume the guaranteeing of these rights, situating citizenship less as an achieved identity and more as an aspirational demand (Osler, 2011).

The students are attempting to undo the settled normalcy of daily life, if only for those who work in the Albanian government and direct the university, as a way of calling attention to their demands. Protests can be effective insofar as they disrupt the routines of those in power as well as passers-by so that the fissure can be noted, the calls can be addressed and a new normal can be enacted. We do not know from Gardinier's account if any of those demands were met or if the students framed the protests in the way that Gardinier has, and yet the notion of GCE being an activity based in a real-life setting is critically important. Too often this educational discourse is viewed too superficially as just that – a discourse and related pedagogical practice – rather than as a mode of living. That these young people have 'taken it to the streets' is evidence of the viability of a rights-based citizenship that constitutes more than observing injustices to be written about in end-of-term papers, but rather to live and act in accordance with these principles.

The students' temporal strategy is implied here, or their attempt to 'break time' and call attention to their cause. Yet inevitably these 'breaks' cannot be sustained.

Careful attention must be given to how to translate protests into policies. I recall vividly when my son was quite young, on a dark winter morning after a Christmas holiday, asking why we could not have Christmas every day. I asked him to play that out, or to think about what that would look like – constantly decorating, shopping, cooking, visiting, hosting, and on and on, such that he understood the exhaustion of a break if it is perpetual, no matter how delightful it might be. The same is true in breaks of a variety of types – they must inevitably end in the return of the ordinary. But in light of CET, normalcy has elasticity such that the inflection of 'new times' or 'breaks' can be realized within a new epoch. When the inevitable return of 'normal time' comes, the break of the protest will have served its purpose if some movement towards justice can be achieved in the quotidian.

Heather Kertyzia employs an autoethnographic approach to her teaching of two university courses through a peace/GCE frame in the US. One of the courses focuses on violence in Los Angeles, delivered to predominately Latinx and African-American students, and the other relates to racism, sexism and social injustices in the context of a highly diverse set of international students. Kertyzia is engaged in circumspect wondering about her work, examining her positionality vis-à-vis her students and the imposition of a practice and discourse such as 'Global Citizenship Education' on historically marginalized and minoritized university students.

Kertyzia's piece, particularly in its description of the participants from LA, offers a cogent illustration both of the power of estrangement as well as the potentially alien quality of GCE. GCE has a legacy rooted in exclusion that must be reckoned with. I'll briefly note that her estrangement of the otherwise taken-as-given 'urban student' population as offering real value in understanding global inequities is a significant insight, one made available through the otherness in which she places herself in relation to them. The questions that she generates demonstrate the power of estrangement in helping people to think differently about what is otherwise, supposedly, ordinary. Her sample of students in this case also helps to illuminate a significant problem in GCE: a legacy of exclusion. The heritage of global learning was once the domain of very few people who worked or traveled internationally, such as corporate heads and those working in diplomatic/foreign service. These ways of thinking about working globally have carried into the present circumstances, and while global learning is a more plural space than it was half a century ago, it is still, as Kertyzia correctly notes, the province of the few. That her students in LA were keenly focused on local manifestations of violence, peace and inequality is unsurprising, and as she notes in explaining the need to move beyond the binaries of local/global, a venue for extending and deepening the global work by moving into this hyper-local space.

I would suggest, though, that the potential to build that connectivity, or for her students to connect the systemic violence they witness as part of a much larger global

dynamic of violence among oppressed people, is precisely what can be empowering about GCE in contexts like these. The alienation that they most certainly experience in their lives is not necessarily compounded by a focus on GCE, albeit through the lens of violence in East LA, but a product of other forces. Rather, understanding oppressive forces on a broader scale can inform and move people to work in solidarity across state-boundaries. Martin Luther King Jr. marveled at his visit to India in the early 1960s and his growing awareness about the position of 'Untouchables' in the caste hierarchy. These insights germinated into a much broader understanding of his oppression as an African-American man as well as his commitment to the liberation of all oppressed peoples.

Finally, in Lance Levenson's vignette set in a Church of Scotland school in Israel housing primarily Palestinian students, we have a classic illustration of global hybridity. The power of ecumenicalism within GCE is evident in the songs, liturgy and stories briefly shared here. We are given a glimpse of the school as a special place wherein otherwise marginalized youth, whose citizenship outside the boundaries of the school is hotly contested on the geopolitical stage, is open for experimentation and cross-synthesis therein. They call it an oasis, a fitting metaphor for the context of Israel. Levenson suggests that the school ethos encourages politics to be "checked at the door" as religion is the particular universal in this setting, and yet one has to wonder how much that is possible in a country such as this and at a time such as now.

One element of CET and of Lefebvre's work that I did not introduce, which however deserves a mention in light of Levenson's piece, is his theorizing around religion as well as mystical and spiritual domains. Religion as an institution emerged as a "symbolic expression" of the unity of the individual in the social, though locating this synthesis in the realm of God, outside of the person (Lefebvre, 1961/2014, p. 95). Lefebvre asserts that religion dislocated people from a unity within themselves and in the ordinary experience of being, noting the sharp distinction between that which is sacred and profane, of God and of man. The emergence of a total (hu)man that unifies the individual and the social is not achievable through religion, according to CET, as it projects unity into a being that is necessarily outside of people. Following suit, modernity has relegated spiritual dimensions of human experience as ancillary to economic life. Thus, religious experience is not eradicated (as it was intended to be within Marxist states), but rather pushed into a separate category of time/place, and in more secular societies, occupying a precarious foothold in what is increasingly fallow ground. While the creation of hybrid, religiously informed environments such as the one Levenson describes might resonate with elements of GCE, it is difficult to see how such a highly secular concept develops unique traction in a context like this.

Global Citizenship Education reconsidered

I close by offering some insights drawn from these six vignettes regarding GCE. First: What do the data, descriptions, events, participants and voices presented in the vignettes tell us about GCE? What's new in GCE? My impression from reading these pieces suggests that the concept of GCE is very much a work-in-progress, which is well illustrated in the range of pieces offered herein. The fact that so many different types of experiences – from singing in a religious school to protesting government finance for higher education to promoting particular varieties of citizenship through formal education – all can be read intelligibly through the lens of GCE suggests a wide discursive field in development. The looseness of GCE conceptually is something that I and many others have written about for the past two decades (Andreotti, 2006; Goren & Yemini, 2017; Marshall, 2011). My sense has been and remains that a loosely affiliated field has the potential to attract new conversations and experiences into its fold. And yet, it also runs the risk of failing to congeal around some common understanding of what we are talking about, a risk underscored by the range of pieces evident here.

That risk noted, the novelties offered here are many. The geographic diversity of examples is a welcomed addition to GCE as the field runs the risk of being a discourse and practice of the West imposed on the rest. The focus on informal spaces of learning, such as a street/social media protest, is a valuable contribution and speaks to the need to continue to look for other venues in which GCE can and is being enacted. And lastly, the address of inequities by most of the authors, or as I see it, a countervailing force from which global learning evolves, is also a change for the better. This new direction builds on the work of others who are trying to dissolve the binary of local/global particularly with respect to inequality and oppression.

The second question to address in relation to GCE is: *What do these stories tell us about the power relations unfolding in these educational contexts?* The diversity of voices in these accounts, including the scholars and their participants, suggests that GCE is increasingly a field shaped by a widening range of actors. Participation does not constitute power, of course, as demonstrated by the students in LA and Tirana, who remain relatively powerless despite their presence in these vignettes. Though representation is a necessary step in the direction of empowering communities who have been subjugated and oppressed, a more promising sign of recognition and value lies in those same communities actually having greater power and more access to resources. The maldistribution of power and the related inequities that come into focus through these educators' efforts is a dominant theme throughout. When I first began researching global learning in the 1990s, seeking perspectives in urban schools among historically marginalized populations, I was often asked rather

directly why I was engaging with those populations and not with the 'future global leaders' where a focus on global learning was more readily found. We are beyond this point of recognition now such that this question is outdated, and as offensive now as it was then. I look forward to the next decade of discourse in the field and how this increasingly diverse representation of voices will shape our collective projects in the years ahead. Suffice it to say that the presence of these issues and voices is long overdue in GCE.

And third: What is to be gained from looking at data from different theoretical and methodological perspectives and positionalities, particularly data collected by different researchers with or without (G)CE in mind? What are the limits of such approach?

I want to end where I began this piece, addressing the methodological focus on the emic and the interpretation of lived experiences offered herein. What ethnographic-type research renders in terms of depth, context and contour, it fails to deliver in scale, breadth and scope. The use of vignettes offers some opportunity to see similar concerns in a fairly condensed fashion, across context and situation. But one does wonder in reading accounts like the one from Ethiopia how specialized or universal the experiences being read about here in fact are. The limitations of this approach, then, are in the inability to respond to that question, one likely to come from policymakers, scholars who claim a scientific foundation and lay-people. As I noted from the outset, I find this context-focused work that is detailed, nuanced and even a bit uncertain to be engaging to read and put into an internal dialogue. But increasingly, scholars operate in a world that seeks certainty over complexity. There was a time in this line of research, dating back to Edmund Husserl's (Husserl & Gibson, 1931) work, that this was viewed as a false choice, that one could engage in highly descriptive 'things themselves' without, it was believed, sacrificing the scientific qualities of the same. I do not believe that such an assertion can be sustained now, though most who work in a qualitative/interpretive framework contend that the scientific mantle claim is asking the wrong question.

The aspirational dimension of GCE and efforts like these to examine it in its everyday performance ought not be minimized, however. The challenge of the current COVID-19 pandemic underscores the importance of taking global interdependence, ecological sustainability and eradicating injustice as seriously now as ever. The scholarly work to document these efforts in concert with the educational forays into GCE serve as a guide to how the future will unfold. The importance of such efforts cannot be overstated and I applaud the energy of the authors and their participants in pointing towards these new possibilities.

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