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Khaled Al-kassimi- 1452919
Dr. Peter Nyers

**[I AM CANADIAN, THEREFORE I
THINK?]**

Nothing is more annoying in the ordinary intercourse of life than this irritable patriotism of the Americans. A foreigner will gladly agree to praise much in their country, but he would like to be allowed to criticize something, and that he is absolutely refused

-Alexis-Charles-Henri Clérel de Tocqueville

The social contract that formulated our modern understanding of the relationship between the citizen vis à vis the sovereign has been reformulated and contested since the catalyst event of 9/11. The occurrence of the reconfiguration and contestation is directly linked to the securitization of citizenship and the border¹². The documentary entitled “I am an American: Filming the fear of difference” by Cynthia Weber elucidates such contestation and allows the reader, myself, to internalize several readings that I have been exposed to throughout the course of Critical Security Studies. Firstly, the documentary destabilizes the “Myth of an American immigrant” which before 9/11 at least entertained an immigrant being seen in a Xenophilic manner and not only in a xenophobic attitude. Secondly, the documentary exposes the fallacy of there being two regimes of rights, human and citizen, which I will allude to by discussing bills that have emerged after 9/11 such as Bill C-24, and Bill C-51. The purpose of this reaction paper is to convey through the use of Cynthia Weber’s critique of the PSA (Public Service Announcement) entitled *I am an American*, the reality that citizenship has become conditional which subsequently reduces citizenship rights to a privilege rather than a right.

Bonnie Honig, in the “Myth of an immigrant America”, captures the effect of newcomers in American society. She states that foreigners rejuvenate the first principles that the American

¹ Audrey Macklin, “Citizenship Revocation, the Privilege to Have Rights and the Production of the Alien,” *Queen’s Law Journal* 40:1 (2014): 2

² Mark B. Salter, “Passports, Mobility, and Security: How smart can the border be?,” *International Studies Perspectives*(2004):86

forefathers fought for during the civil war that capitalism is destroying³. Honig mentions that the foreigner is seen as an agent that reinvigorates American ideals by responding to the dissolution of the nuclear family, reinforcing heterosexual communions, and most importantly, civil society institutions which social democracy depends on⁴. The importance of Honig's piece that was released the same year the catalyst event took place is that it conveys to the reader that newcomers are at once seen through a binary of xenophilia and xenophobia. "Their" admirable hard work and boundless acquisition put "us" out of jobs. Their good communities also look like fragmentary ethnic enclaves, and their traditional family values threaten to overturn our still new fragile gain in gender equality⁵. In other words, the foreigner who is identified as shoring up and reinvigorating the authentic *I am an American* regime also unsettles it.

After 9/11, the foreigner was no longer perceived through a binary of Xenophilia and Xenophobia in the United States of America. Citizens along Immigrants were now securitized subjects and perceived through a xenophobic lens and perceived as potential threats to the ideal American which was publicized by the American Public Service Announcement entitled "I am An American". Cynthia Weber criticizes the PSA announcement and states that with the help of technology and reproduction, the announcement was capable of momentarily incorporating racialized groups in a Xenophilic fashion and perceive them as part of this new *American*, which came about after 9/11. However, as Weber elucidates, the watchword was "temporarily incorporate"⁶, to make it seem that post 9/11 America is a Nation that incorporates differences. If post 9/11 America was to incorporate differences, the PSA did just the opposite and not just to foreigners but to citizens as well. For instance, the PSA conducted exclusionary politics rather

³ Bonnie Honig, *Democracy and the Foreigner* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001),74

⁴ Ibid, 80-86

⁵ Ibid, 76

⁶ Cynthia Weber, "I am an American: protesting advertised Americanness," (*Citizenship Studies*17:2, 2013), 280

than inclusionary by dissolving all differences the interviewers possessed by excluding any markers of identity and culture which would determine their religion or ethnicity. The PSA did not include the names of the individuals involved in the public service announcement in the credits, and also did not include any famous indigenous American signs. Furthermore, the PSA created a template of what marks a “safe form of Americanness” from an “unsafe form of Americanness ” , the safe individuals whether citizen or immigrant are the ones who are “With” the administration on the War on Terror and conform to the national American Ideals and are not “Against” the administration in its WOT , to paraphrase President George W Bush famous post 9/11 speech⁷.

It is precisely because the PSA excludes any marker of identity and culture that we can perceive the PSA as a reminder of US distinctness in relation to these foreign or domestic differences⁸, and that they cannot be melted or be part of the composition of what it is to be *An American* post September 11th 2001. The PSA explicitly illustrates what type of Immigrant or American citizen can/cannot be tolerated post 9/11 America. I will include two examples from Cynthia Weber’s documentary to illustrate the aforementioned statement. Jose Matus from the Yaqui Tribe is advocating for American citizens from the Yaqui tribe to be treated with dignity and not with suspicion when crossing the Mexican American border⁹. Matu’s is an example of how the WOT securitized the borders and citizenship and even rendered American citizen’s a threat to national security. Another example is Phil Mcdowell, a former U.S sergeant who went into political exile in Canada because he no longer wanted to serve for the U.S military in Iraq¹⁰. Both of these cases, in the eyes of the PSA are unpatriotic and disloyal American citizens.

⁷ Ibid, 282

⁸ Ibid,283

⁹ Ibid, 284

¹⁰ Ibid,285

Rather than the PSA celebrating American diversity, it is more of a warning to different Americans to align themselves with the national side and keep their cultural markers or political contestations aside¹¹. Thus, any individual, Citizen or immigrant who contests post 9/11 American patriotic ideals is seen as part of American difference (other-particular) and not American diversity (self-universal)¹² or seen as exacerbating Xenophobia and not Xenophilia.

The last section will confer the warning Weber alludes to, by discussing the policies and Bills the United States of America and Canada enacted after 9/11, thus only the ideal “safe American” and “safe Canadian” prospers while the “unsafe American” and “unsafe Canadian” is distanced.

Before I investigate the controversial bills, at this point the reader might be wondering, how is it that a citizen and an immigrant are treated and seen as equally threatening to national security? The answer to that question as Engin determines is that it is a fallacy to believe that there are two regimes of rights, citizenship rights, and human rights¹³. The PSA makes that explicit. Even if you are a citizen of a country, if your actions threaten the dominant ideal of the state, citizenship rights can be annulled for the reason that the citizen is now seen as disloyal. However, if you are an immigrant and prove your allegiance to the host country through military conscription, you can be granted citizenship. The reason I mention this is because ever since 9/11 took place, we see the adoption of bills in Canada which are highly similar to the Bills adopted in the United States such as the Patriot act. Both countries adopted bills that undermine both regimes of rights rendering Engin fallacy accurate.

¹¹ Ibid, 283

¹² Francesco Ragazzi, “Diasporas, security, citizenship”, Routledge (2013):213

¹³ Engin F. Isin, “Two regimes of rights?”, Routledge (2013):53

Audrey Macklin addresses Bill c-24 by stating that it violates Canadian citizenship rights (regime of citizenship rights) and Canada's international legal obligations (regime of human rights)¹⁴. She states that Bill C-24 is an exclusionary practice for the reason that it facilitates citizenship revocation and turns citizenship into a privilege rather than a right. In other words, the Bill delocalizes the border and turns citizenship into a security issue thus making threats no longer just perceived as coming from the outside but also from the inside¹⁵. The bill categorizes Canadians into two categories similar to the PSA, "safe Canadians" and "unsafe Canadians". The reform makes citizenship harder to get and easier to lose for Canadians and immigrants who do not adhere to Canadian Ideals¹⁶.

Another Bill which is equally controversial is Bill C-51, which has been compared to the PATRIOT Act¹⁷. Bill C-51 also known as the Anti-Terror Bill, is also violating the Canadian charter of rights and freedom and Canada's international legal obligations. The reform allows the Canadian government to detain any individual if they are perceived to be a security threat for up to five days. It allows CRA to share information on individuals without their consent. The Bill also provides a sweeping range of measures that would allow suspects to be detained based on less evidence and lets CSIS actively interfere with suspects travel plans and finances.¹⁸

Both reforms, Bill C-24 and Bill C-51, confirm the fallacy that there are not two distinct regimes of rights, precisely because both regimes have one source of power, and that is the

¹⁴ Macklin, 3

¹⁵ Salter, 80

¹⁶ Debra Black, "Immigration experts say Bill C-24 discriminatory and weakens citizenship" http://www.thestar.com/news/immigration/2014/06/27/immigration_experts_say_bill_c24_discriminatory_and_weakens_citizenship.html accessed 12/03/2015

¹⁷ CBC, "Edward Snowden says Canadian spying has weakest oversight in Western world" <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edward-snowden-says-canadian-spying-has-weakest-oversight-in-western-world-1.2981051> accessed 13/03/2015

¹⁸ *ibid*

State¹⁹. Also, both reforms that got enacted after 9/11 elucidate that contesting state domestic policy is not welcomed but is rather perceived as unpatriotic, disloyal or “unsafe”. Lastly, both Bills reinforce the PSA motto “*E pluribus unum*” which Weber was critical about because it confirms that Canada similar to the United States can at any time change its directions and rewrite its foundations by putting the “one” or the “many” in jeopardy if they are perceived as threatening what the state defines as being the “One”²⁰.

Conclusion

I started this reaction paper by quoting Tocqueville, and I think that it is necessary that we amend his quote and make it “A foreigner and a citizen will agree to praise much in their country, but they would like to be allowed to criticize something, and that they are refused”. The modification is necessary precisely because of the exclusionary politics embedded in the PSA that Cynthia Weber critiques. Her critique indicates that the PSA is the death notice of the melting pot myth of the United States Of America²¹. Also, her critique mentions that an Immigrant and an American citizen are both perceived as unsafe individuals precisely because they critique the government or because they are perceived as not aligning themselves with the “national side”. Also, her critique of the announcement demonstrates that post 9/11 America perceives even its citizens in a xenophobic manner; it is no longer merely the immigrant who is perceived in a Xenophobic-Xenophilic fashion. Lastly, the PSA solidifies Engin’s fallacy of there not being two regimes of rights because the citizen and the immigrant are both seen as threatening individuals. Bill C-24 and Bill C-51 filters the “unsafe” immigrants/citizen from the

¹⁹ Engin, 53

²⁰ Weber, 286

²¹ Cynthia Weber, ‘I am an American’: *Filming the Fear of Difference*, (Bristol: Intellect.2011):18

“safe” immigrant/citizen. By adopting the PSA motto “out of many, one” we become complicit in hindering citizenship rights and human rights, rather the adoption of “out of one, many”, renders all citizens and immigrants as professed safe individuals, no matter what identity marker or political criticism they embrace. I think, therefore, I am Canadian.

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