The Prosthetic Citizen: Forms of Citizenship for a Mobile World

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A Prosthetic Citizenship?
Citizenship, the City and the Nation-State
Since the eighteenth century, one of the defining marks of modernity has been the use of two linked concepts of association – citizenship and nationality – to establish the meaning of full membership in society. Citizenship rather than subjectship or kinship or cultship has defined the prerogatives and encumbrances of that membership, and the nation-state rather than the neighbourhood of the city or the region established its scope. What is means to be a member of society in many areas of the world came to be understood, to a significant degree, in terms of what it means to be a rights bearing citizen of a territorial nation-state.

(Holston and Appadurai, 1999)
But with their concentrations of the nonlocal, the strange, the mixed, and the public, cities engage most palpably the tumult of citizenship. Their crowds catalyze processes which decisively expand and erode the rules, meanings, and practices of citizenship. Their streets conflate identities of territory and contract with those of race, religion, class, culture, and gender to produce the reactive ingredients of both progressive and reactionary political movements. Like nothing else, the modern urban public signifies both the defamiliarizing enormity of national citizenship and the exhilaration of its liberties.

(Holston and Appadurai, 1998)
The Citizen as a Mobile Figure
An early French Passport
The Universal Citizen?
Insofar as the legal definition and political concept of the citizen enfranchises the subject who inhabits the national public sphere, the concept of the abstract citizen — each formally equivalent, one to the other — is defined by the negation of the material conditions of work and the inequalities of the property system. In the United States, not only class but also historically sedimented particularities of race, national origin, locality and embodiment remain largely invisible within the political sphere. In this sense, the legal and political forms of the nation have required a national culture in the integration of the differentiated people and social spaces that make up “America,” a national culture, broadly cast yet singularly engaging, that can inspire diverse individuals to identify with the national project.

(Lisa Lowe, 1996, p2)
The Denizen

“foreign citizens with a legal and permanent resident status” (Hammar, 1990, p15)

from elsewhere/

from here.
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... A denizen is in a kind of middle state between an alien and a natural-born subject, and partakes of both of them. Fong Yeu Ting v. United States 149 U.S. 698 (1893), 734.
The logic of exclusion assumes that the categories of strangers and outsiders, such as women, slaves, peasants, metics, immigrants, refugees, and clients, preexisted citizenship and that, once defined, it excluded them. The logic of exclusion presupposes that the excluding and excluded are conceived as irreconcilable; that the excluded is perceived in purely negative terms, having no property of its own, but merely expressing the absence of the properties of the other; that these properties are essential; that the properties of the excluded are experienced as strange, hidden, frightful, or menacing; that the properties of the other; and the exclusion itself .... is actuated socially. (Isin, 2002, 3)
Law as discursively represented and law as lived are fundamentally at odds. (Chouinard, 2001, 165)
Sir, do you have any idea how BLACK you were driving?
These sites vary with time and place. Today, in many cities, they include the realm of the homeless, networks of migration, neighbourhoods of Queer Nation, autoconstructed peripheries in which the poor build their own homes in precarious material and legal conditions, ganglands, fortified condominiums, employee-owned factories, squatter settlements, suburban labor camps, sweatshops, and the zones of the so-called new racism. (Holston, 1999, 167)
The Argument

- Citizen as unmarked universal figure – unconnected.
- Citizen defined by history of citizen spaces.
- Mobility as characteristic of citizen.
- Citizen defined by its margins (with different geographies).
- As mobility is achievement of assemblage then citizen is prosthetic.
- Need to pay attention to the histories, geographies and politics of this process of prosthetics.