

Renormalizing Citizenship and Life in Fortress North America

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The relation between the concepts of sovereignty and citizenship are being rearticulated through what is popularly referred to as 'Fortress North America'. The 'War on Terror' has amplified previously emerging shifts in governance, control and surveillance. One significant consequence is the development of increasing border harmonization schemes between the United States of America and Canada. This development has led to newly emerging technologies of citizenship in both Canada and the USA. This paper pays particular attention to the shifts that are taking place with regards to the revocation of citizenship, the creation of new categories of citizenship through programs such as 'Nexus' and the proposed introduction of bio-metric ID cards in Canada and the introduction of the discourse of the 'new normal'. Through new border harmonization programs established in the 'Smart Border Declaration' citizens and non-citizens in both Canada and America will be organized, controlled and subjected to new forms of state surveillance. The discourse of the 'new normal' is meant to signal a shift in our expectations of daily life. Whether we are experiencing the 'new normal' due to disease, fear, risk, loss of faith or security, we are being called into place as subjects of this discourse. The 'new normal' is used in reference to the need for greater control, the expectation of greater security and surveillance of cells, microbes, bodies and society. This paper will explore the logic that is embedded within the discourse of the 'new normal'.

As Vice President Dick Cheney explained shortly after September 11: 'Many of the steps we have now been forced to take will become permanent in American life, part of a "new normalcy" that reflects "an understanding of the world as it is"'. (Lawyer's Committee for Human Rights)

'Normal' is when daily life is going the way you expect. It feels comfortable and you're used to what's happening. To try to hold on to that old normal—where everybody has certain roles and certain expectations—when you're dealing with cancer is often impossible. And, it leads to frustration, confusion, disappointment, and anger. The idea of letting go of the 'old normal' and adopting a 'new normal' frees families to adjust to the fluctuating needs and abilities of all members of the family ... (Dr Wendy Harpham)

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‘We are living in a new normal’, Gerberding told the Canadian Press. ‘The old days where an infection might emerge every now and again and capture our attention really has changed’. ‘These infections are on the move. And that’s really, I think the major challenge: How do we come to grips with a world that’s increasingly connected and where a problem in one corner is soon to be a problem everywhere?’

What is at stake here is nothing less than the new ‘normal’ bio-political relationship between citizens and the state. This relation no longer has anything to do with free and active participation in the public sphere, but concerns the enrolment and the filing away of the most private and incommunicable aspect of subjectivity: I mean the body’s biological life. (Giorgio Agamben)

The Evolving Meaning of the New Normal

The rule of ‘normalcy’ has been foundational to the maintenance, regulation and production of various practices of citizenship, particularly within the post-war era in Canada and the United States of America.¹ It has been an effective tool in the formation and resilience of a bourgeois techno-scientific capitalist democracy that has informed the development of social citizenship. In multifarious ways, the modern development of social citizenship has relied upon the persistence of accepted definitions of normal, or it has acted out against the ‘normalcy’ written into laws and social and moral codes of conduct and behaviour. On the one hand, ‘normalcy’ is the unremarkable, universal and ubiquitous quality of the everydayness of life; on the other hand, normalcy is veiled and reified such that it is rendered invisible to the subject who practices normalcy. Thus ‘normalcy’ is merely normal. The act of rendering normalcy invisible is an unacknowledged practice of power. And yet, the ‘normal’ is a highly charged and contested site that is politicized through a variety of social movements and political articulations that have sought to de-naturalize the meaning of ‘normal’. Considering that the language regarding ‘normal’ versus ‘abnormal’ has been intensively revisited in various forms of social theory (for example, Foucault, 2003), it is perhaps an odd political tactic to return the gaze of social analysis back on to a consideration of the normal through the discussion of a ‘new’ normal. Rather than thinking of the appearance of the ‘new normal’ as some banal form of periodization that rigidly refers to an ‘old’ and a ‘new’ reification of the normal, what must instead be understood are the ramifications for a concept of citizenship and life in Fortress North America—a consequence identified by Giorgio Agamben as the ‘bio-political relationship between citizens and the state’ and the ‘filing away of the most private and incommunicable aspect of subjectivity ...’ (Agamben, 2004). This development compels us to reflect and re-evaluate the renewed sets of possibilities, limits, acts of resistance and dissidence that the ‘new normal’ brings forth in the relationship between the citizen (non-citizen)² and the state. Through the enunciation of the ‘new normal’,

the question of what is left of citizenship is central to this analysis of the new codes of behaviour and articulations of the relationship between citizens (non-citizens) and the state.

The 'new normal' is a working metaphor for a neo-liberal rationality that has effectively displaced and dislodged the presumed unitary liberal rational citizen-subject. In this paper I argue that the distinction to be made here is not that there ever existed a complete and 'unitary' monolithic liberal rational citizen-subject, but rather, that a neo-liberal democracy no longer requires such a subject to be interpolated through acts of governance. In North America, a neo-liberal rationality has effectively and fundamentally altered the appearance of the *democratic citizen* who is theoretically imbued with the capacity for a rational grasp of rights, responsibilities, individual freedom and liberty. Since the 'new normal' suggests alternative sets of norms, values and systems of management and control, the foundational elements of the democratic society are increasingly undermined and simply do not inform basic expectations of the everyday. In this instance, rather than viewing the birth of the 'neo-liberal' citizen as a rational subject, I argue that the appearance of this subject relies on the experience of anxiety, fear, and trauma. This paper examines the process through which the citizen-subject is refigured through the integration of neo-liberal social policies within the realm of the political.³ Furthermore, in this paper I trace the process of subjection that occurs through the enunciation of a 'new normal'. With specific reference to a series of debates that have followed in the wake of the *Smart Border Declaration* signed between Canada and the United States of America, I examine the evolving meaning of the production of the bio-social in this geopolitical region. Specifically, I examine the debates regarding civil liberties and the development of bio-metric identification cards and other technologies of surveillance that have appeared in the 'new normal'. I question what sort of understanding of rights and responsibilities are required of the citizen through the enunciation of the 'new normal'. Is the process of this new subjection leaving us at a place of anxious disengagement from the political, one that we will not recover from? How are categories that function to determine the political and various forms of acting as a citizen being recalculated through this enunciation? What are the moral and ethical claims of the new normal?

In the opening epigraphs quoted above, each speaker suggests that a shift in consciousness or awareness can now be identified as the 'new normal'. The enunciation of the 'new normal' acts as a reminder that daily life has been altered in some significant ways. In each of these articulations the meaning of the 'new normal' is neither clear nor entirely significant. However, what is striking is its tautological function in our present political life in the geopolitical landscape of Fortress North America. While this shift from old to new articulates a sense of loss or detachment through a reference to an experience of trauma, or an experience of illness or impending crisis, by relying on the metaphor of the 'new normal' the event itself requires no particular meaning. However, the 'new normal' is not merely a sign for encapsulating an experience of the 'everyday' that is now established on radically altered norms. Through the altered experience of the everyday, the incitement of the 'new normal' is central to the practices of subjection occurring in a neo-liberal rationalization of the social and political life in Fortress North America.

These pronouncements of the ‘new normal’ imply that the ‘new’ everyday is structured through increasing levels of impediments in daily life, even though the *a priori* rationalization for such impediments is neither made evident nor necessarily required. In other words, the structures arrived at through the ‘new normal’ are understood by the subject as simply ones that are required for managing everyday life in a ‘risk’ society or a society at risk. This new way of being is underwritten by a sense of anxiety and the practice of managing anxiety on a daily basis. The hyper-alertness of the ‘new normal’ does not result in an improved alertness or improved circulation of mind and body, something that would be understood through an experience of ‘true enlightenment’. Rather, these articulations of the ‘new normal’ suggest a sense of fear, anxiety and impending death. In this sense, the ‘new normal’ arises out of crisis, acts on a sense of hyper-awareness and the need to be hyper-alert and is a break from foundational expectations of a daily life. Life in the ‘new normal’ is not a ‘given’ because it is anticipated that there are potentially life altering surprises or challenges hidden around the corner that require careful vigilance. The ‘new normal’ acts as a paradigmatic shift in our social and political lives. The enunciation of the ‘new normal’ is often expressed through various sites including the media, health professionals, and government officials. The ‘new normal’ acts as a powerful symbol in the arsenal of a ‘risk’ society often in the practice of ‘crisis’ management.⁴ In the instances cited above, a crisis can refer to various forms of pathogens entering a relatively healthy organization or organism and altering it from within (a form of invasion): from malignant cells invading a body; to bio-organisms invading a society; to the human terror of evil invading a polity. The crisis precipitates a re-territorialization of the social, political and corporal that makes the ‘new’—normal once again.

Why the New Normal? Or the Practice of Renormalizing Life

The analysis of the articulation of the ‘new normal’ that I suggest is not founded merely through the field of the psychoanalytic or the social dimension of ‘trauma’ studies that seek to illustrate the act of subjection solely through traumatic events or modes of crisis. Rather, I question how the ‘new normal’ is a central metaphor that is operationalized through a neo-liberal mode of governmentality, a mode of governmentality that has been radically altered so that the subject and the state are no longer expressed through classical liberal democratic models. In other words, the enunciative function of the ‘new normal’ is almost a salve over the ‘wounds of attachment’ (Brown, 1995) to neo-liberal techno-capitalism (read as progressive modernity) market system rationality. The discursive function of the ‘new normal’ acts as a sensory memory for a heightened feeling of anxiety, but not as a memory that can be fully realized. Its enunciative function is a form of repetition/compulsion through which the subject enters an event of memory, anxiety and trauma, but only in order to *recover a functional and working life*. This is an important aspect of the relationship between the ‘new normal’ as an economically driven form of justification and the rationalization of neo-liberalism. The ability to return to ‘normalcy’ is completely dependent on the ability of the subject to be a

productive or indeed reproductive agent of the state. Through this process of subjection in the act of 'renormalizing', the notion of production is foundational. Recovery from a trauma is not based on the emotional or overall well being of society; rather, recovery is based on the ability to perform in an economically reproductive capacity. This act of renormalizing life after a traumatic event is nothing less than a productive practice of subjection that serves a societal based economic need. However, in the moment of a neo-liberal rationalization of governance, it has been argued that the relationship between a sovereign power and the citizen has become increasingly disarticulated (Bakker and Gill, 2003). In this process of renormalizing, what requires further exploration with a specific engagement is the relationship between subjection/subordination. Is it possible to be subjected without experiencing a passionate attachment to the power through which the subjection occurs (Butler, 1997)? This debate is a central concern for tracing the process of 'renormalizing' life, as in this process there is a marked disavowal of that power which at first was enacted through a process of subordination. In other words, the detachment of the subject is the process that requires careful examination in the act of 'renormalizing' life in Fortress North America.

The language of the 'new normal' has been used liberally in the media. For example, there were a number of programs for children in the New York City area in the aftermath of September 11, 2001 that attempted to reintegrate them into their lives after the traumatic event.⁵ The 'new normal' was also used to describe the experience of entering hospitals in Toronto during the SARS crisis, and the affect of anticipating the next 'pandemic' about to strike at any moment. The language of the 'new normal' is meant to explain away the reasons for why we experience a sense of loss, for a past life or a memory, not for a world that exists prior to September 11, 2001, or prior to the outbreak of SARS, but rather for the melancholic attachment to an experience of life somehow less encumbered. However, the challenges that arise through the articulation of the 'new normal' produce a subjectivity that requires the ability to be watchful, aware, alert, and understanding that life has been fundamentally altered. Hence, it is clear at this same moment that the false promise of a system of democracy based on an ethos of liberalism has been shed, and what is revealed is a sense of trauma that has been experienced in its absolute lack.

In her article 'Neo-liberalism and the end of liberal democracy', Wendy Brown (2003) argues that in the wake of 9/11, the War on Terrorism, the practices of 'homeland security' and the interventions into Afghanistan and Iraq, a complex set of questions regarding political mobilization have emerged. In this article she incites the 'American Left' to resist the arguments that rely on allusions to fascism, or totalitarian regimes. Through this resistance she offers an important reminder of the shift in political rationalization that occurs through a neo-liberal remaking of the social. She argues for examining this context as a 'mode of governance encompassing but not limited to the state, and one which produces subjects, forms of citizenship and behaviour, and a new organization of the social' (Brown, 2003). Furthermore, she states that: 'neo-liberalism carries a social analysis which, when deployed as a form of governmentality, reaches from the soul of the citizen-subject to education policy to practices of empire.

Neo-liberal rationality, while foregrounding the market, is not only or primarily focused on the economy; rather it involves extending and disseminating market values to all institutions and social action, even as the market itself remains a distinctive player' (Brown, 2003). Brown argues that the events of September 11, 2001 cannot be used as a simple reified moment to explain momentous shifts in our political life, because in doing so it dismisses the historical precedents that have been in motion for the past 30 years. And yet, through the events that occurred on September 11, 2001 in New York City and Washington DC, new forms of governance, unprecedented acts of law, and the reformulation of national security policies globally did take place. These fundamental changes that have occurred in North America and elsewhere are often passed off as a point of unease and expressed as a sense of anxiety, although there is also, more often than not, a willing acceptance. This acceptance is overwhelmingly based in an inexplicable notion that the world has changed, that the everyday is different, and that we are now living in the 'new normal'.

Wendy Brown makes the argument that a fundamental shift has occurred at the foundation of democratic practices and principles. She argues that 'Neo-liberal governmentality undermines the relative autonomy of certain institutions from one another and from the market—law, elections, the police, the public sphere—an independence that formerly sustained an interval and a tension between a capitalist political economy and a liberal democratic political system' (Brown, 2003, p. 13).⁶ Through the disappearance of these illusory sets of distinctions between a capitalist political economy and a liberal democratic political system, our understanding of the political in order to think through both complex modes of resistance and the processes of everyday life need to be refocused on the contingencies of the market regulation and the production of the moral subject-citizen. This requires us to think critically of the terms and articulation of democracy, as the meaning of democracy is increasingly distanced from a classical liberal or bourgeois model. The assessment that Brown brings to this question is innovative in its insistence on the act of detaching from the 'wounded attachment' of liberalism and what this could mean for an emergent 'left', 'socialist' or 'radical democracy' project. Once the understanding and the experience of bourgeois democracy itself has been replaced by this neo-liberal political rationalization, the citizen-subject is no longer merely cynical about a political process that is meaningless, and from which he or she is disenfranchised. The mode of acting politically is potentially moved to a different sphere, and the idea of acting as a citizen takes on a market rationality within political life. It is this shift that I think is clearly pronounced through the use and deployment of the metaphor of the 'new normal'.

As Wendy Brown points out, the shift in neo-liberal rationality is made complete through the disappearance of the *false promise* of liberal democratic freedoms and values. She makes the compelling argument that '[t]he space between liberal democratic ideals and lived realities has ceased to be exploitable because liberal bourgeois democracy itself is no longer the most salient discourse of political legitimacy and the good life. Put the other way around, the politically exploitable hollowness in formal promises of freedom and equality has largely vanished to the extent that both freedom and equality have been

redefined by neo-liberalism' (Brown, 2003, p. 18). The idea of freedom and liberty have been such foundational aspects of our 'being human' that liberalism has effectively used this conceptualization of the concept of freedom to harness fundamental civilizational discourses through acts of colonization and conquest. Within neo-liberal market rationalization, the discourse regarding human life (*bios*) has once again become the source of re-negotiation.

The act of renormalizing life establishes and extends the governmentality thesis whereby the neo-liberal shift is reliant on 'the regulatory competence of the state onto "responsible", "rational" individuals [with the aim of] encourage[-ing] individuals to give their lives a specific entrepreneurial form' (Brown, 2003, p. 7). The question that I raise here is whether or not the formation of the subject is entirely a 'rational subject'? The rational subject discounts too easily the subjective formation through deepening feelings of anxiety, fear, insecurity and hyper-alertness that typifies the experiences expressed through the 'new normal'. Rather, what it is necessary to examine is how the 'irrationality' of the subject is increasingly called upon by the contemporary modes of governance in a neo-liberal sphere. The extent of these feelings cannot be underestimated, as will be noted in the discussion regarding the perimeter security of North America and the introduction of bio-metric identification security.

The 'new normal' acts as a powerful symbolic metaphor in an arsenal of metaphorical exchanges since September 11, 2001. These metaphors include terms such as Homeland, Virgin Land, Ground Zero, Operation Enduring Justice, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and so forth. Unlike these metaphorical projections, the 'new normal' is particularly effective in establishing a re-negotiation of the citizen-subject in relation to our daily lives (Pease, 2003, p. 2). Arising out of a discourse of 'survivor' language, the 'new normal' brings to bear on a public the desire for re-constitutive moments. But is it representative of something that challenges a bio-political reading of the post-September 11, 2001 modes of governance? Is it, in other words, something 'new'?

Smart Borders: Renormalizing Citizenship

Immigration policy has historically been a source of anxiety within Canada and the United States of America. Both countries understand themselves to be 'immigrant nations' and have various nationalist interpretations based on the experience of immigration. However, both countries also share in a history of regressive and protectionist immigration policies, which is most evident when viewing the history of Asian migration, Afro-Caribbean migration, South-East Asian migration, and Latin American migration to North America. In the post-September 11, 2001 period, the enunciation of the new normal has led to a heightened fear of 'immigrants' or 'foreigners' as they are essentially converted into 'terrorist' suspects. This fear or anxiety of the border, immigration, and foreignness has resulted in measures to 'renormalize' citizenship (almost read as an act of re-patriotizing citizenship) that have led to the introduction of methods to 'secure' identity.⁷

To illustrate this point, we can see how the relationship between a healthy and secure society is over determined by a healthy and secure economy. In the *Smart*

Border Declaration signed in 2001,⁸ the main agenda that was on the minds of Canadian and American governments was the pressing need to maintain an open access to border crossings and the creation and streamlining of a system through which the movement of trade would not grind to a halt. This is the quandary of having to create a system of security for the economy, and the movement of trade that would not be affected by the potential ‘evil’ of human beings and the insecurity brought about by their movement. In remarks made with the Homeland Security Council, issued through the Press Secretary on October 29, 2001, the following exchange between a reporter and the President of the United States occurred:

Q: Mr. President, we understand this task force is to help tighten and close the loopholes in immigration laws. Why were these loopholes so vast, and why were they left for so long? And also, what do you say to the American public who is concerned about anti-American sentiment among Americans who may have helped these immigrants who came in and started September the 11th?

The President: September the 11th taught us an interesting lesson, that while, by far, the vast majority of people who have come to America are really good, decent people, people that we’re proud to have here. There are some who are evil. And our job now is to find the evil ones and to bring them to justice, to disrupt anybody who might have designs on hurting—further hurting Americans.

George Bush’s un-rehearsed answer suggests that the system must be protected, or that America’s generosity (due to technological progress) must be protected from human beings. No longer is the economy or the American ‘way of life’ meant to be that which sustains Americans. Rather, it is the economy and the ‘way of life’ that must be secured from them, because some of them are potentially *evil*. The relationship between the society and economy is dissolved or deliberately obscured in this understanding of security. In fact the crisis that has been presented in the moment of the new normal is concerned with the redeployment of what is human, and how this definition of who or what is human could potentially destroy or stand in way of the system of capital-technological progress.

In the case of Canada, the changes to immigration and refugee policy, found in the current *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*,⁹ clearly preceded the events that have given rise to the anxiety ridden ‘new normal’ discourse that foregrounds contemporary discussions of tighter border control and tighter immigration and refugee policy (Abu-Laban and Gabriel, 2002). Yasmeen Abu-Laban and Christina Gabriel argue that changes in the direction of Canadian immigration and refugee policy have been directed by ‘neo-liberal’ and globalization discourses that emerged throughout the 1990s (Abu-Laban and Gabriel, 2002). These shifts and changes are tied to a neo-liberal restructuring that has led to a de-emphasis in certain classes of immigrants (mainly the independent class) and an increase in migrant and seasonal worker programs (Arat-Koc, 1999;

Sharma, 2002). This shift in immigration policy, within a neo-liberal rationality, illustrates the articulation of another figure in the trajectory of capitalist-biotechnological rationalization of the border. The migrant arrives to perform a task, as an agent of late capitalist production. In this instance the migrant is subjected to a series of laws that prevent basic fundamental freedoms of mobility, speech and autonomy of personhood. The migrant worker is reduced to the market rationalization; human life is ultimately subjugated to serve the capitalist-biotechnological system. Increasingly, the passage between and over borders becomes rationalized through a biotechnological set of practices. As labourers, travellers, migrants, professionals, and refugees are all increasingly subjected to techniques of surveillance and forms of categorization, bodies themselves are being subjected to modes of control and re-definition. The debates regarding the use of bio-metric technology and data collection are foundational to the rationalization practices of the 'new normal'.

The distinctions between the categories of border travellers can be starkly contrasted when we examine the introduction of the 'Nexus' program.¹⁰ The Nexus program is a privatized system of border control where people who travel across the American and Canadian border can attain a pre-approved security clearance, have bio-metric identification stored on their pass, and be able to bypass long queues at border crossing points. Similar to a pass that one can purchase to travel on a private highway, the Nexus pass is an instantiation of a privatized class of citizenship, one in which Nexus members abide by particular sets of 'responsibilities and rules' established by this company.¹¹ The Nexus program was first introduced as a method for 'low-risk' candidates who cross the border frequently, mainly on business or work related reasons. However, since its introduction, the Nexus program is being expanded to include 'low-risk' travellers or tourists who would like to benefit from using specifically designated border crossing zones. In a report titled 'Perimeter clearance strategy: to realize a Smart Border for the 21st century', the Coalition of Perimeter Clearance, composed of members of the Canadian Tourism Commission, have recommended an extension of the Nexus system to foreign travellers and tourists. The Coalition is a broad based group composed of 'industry and public-sector' representatives and was formed into order to 'assist the governments of Canada and the United States to develop exemplary methods to manage their shared borders and perimeter'. The guiding question of the coalition's mandate in their role as consultants to government is: 'how do they (the governments) protect themselves from the ravages of terrorism *and* expedite an unprecedented free flow of people and goods?' (Perimeter Clearance Coalition, 2003) This is a clear illustration of how a market system rationality is foundational to the practice of ensuring national state security and sovereign borders. Through the introduction of the Nexus system, the preliminary apparatus/technological infrastructure has been put into place. This voluntary based program, which privileged citizens who are categorized as 'low-risk' and who willingly submit bio-metric information to secure their identities against potential theft and increased risk, has paved the way for making this technology an acceptable and enforceable technology. Through the habituation of this voluntary program, there is an act of conditioning that leads to accepting this technology, relying on this technology,

and ultimately normalizing the use of this technology. The potential of all foreign travellers/tourists to submit to this securitizing of the border is already made possible through the introduction of the Nexus system and this will be expanded through the initiatives of the 'Securing an open society: Canada's National Security Policy' document of April 2004 (Privy Council Office, 2004).

Securing Identity: Bio-metric/BioPower and the Cult of BioTechnology

How useful is my abiding suspicion that 'biology'—the historically specific, congealed embodiments in the world as well as the technoscientific discourse positing such bodies—is an accumulation strategy? The point is less disreputable if I write that 'biotechnology'—both the discourse and the body constituted is a biotechnics—is an accumulation strategy. But much of what is accumulated is more strange than capital, more kind than alien, more alluring than gold. (Haraway, 1997, p. 14)

Statistics has helped determine the form of laws about society and the character of social facts. It has engendered concepts and classifications within the human sciences. Moreover, the collection of statistics has created, at the least, a great bureaucratic machinery. It may think of itself as providing only information, but it is itself part of the technology of power in a modern state. (Hacking, 1991, p. 181)

Nikolas Rose and Carlos Novas have argued that the 'language with which citizens are coming to understand and describe themselves is increasingly biological' (Novas and Rose, 2002, p. 8). The description of what they term the emergent 'biological citizenship' illustrates the biological encoding or calculation of 'biovalue' that is currently being produced through regimes of biomedicine, bio-science and biotechnology. They argue:

And we make a more general claim: specific biological presuppositions, explicitly or implicitly, have underlain many citizenship projects, shaped conceptions of what it means to be a citizen, and underpinned distinctions between actual, potential, troublesome and impossible citizens. (Novas and Rose, 2002)

In their study, Novas and Rose argue that the emergent biological citizenship is not simply a citizenship that is 'imposed from above', but rather it marks a particular set of practices, whereby individuals and collectivities assemble to demand rights on the grounds of life. As identity is increasingly securitized through biological sets of indicators, it is possible to imagine how bio-metric codes could be used to designate particular characteristics, and modes of classification that emanate from the epistemological foundations upon which the question of the biological rests. Through the further deployment of neo-liberal rationalization, the shift to *homo-oeconomicus* refers also to a shift in the foundational status of what is *human*. The category of human has never been a historically universal or all-inclusive category, but rather has operated through

systematic technologies of inclusion/exclusion.¹² In debates regarding the use of bio-metric identification and the determination of who is a risk to society, whether this risk is embodied by the asylum seeker, refugee, transnational migrant worker, the Nexus-class business person, or the investor-class immigrant, one result of the practice of classifying and securing identification on the basis of a secure bio-scan is the deeper ontological project of asserting random biological markers as the 'fixed' form by which human beings can be the most accurately identified. The further techno-capitalist rationalization of the border and acts to secure the border has led to an ideological reconceptualization of being human. One of the more striking features of the 'new normal' is the careful amalgamation between techno-scientific capitalist progress, forms of patriarchal violence, and indeed the re-mapping of the human body through the expansion of biotechnologies.

As various commentators on immigration policy, refugee movements, and migrant workers have illustrated, the collapse of the understanding of being human to notions such as 'human cargo' (in the case of international smuggling) or 'human capital' (in the case of migrant workers) leads to the development of an institutional language and strategy to regularize and marketize the category of 'being human'. This shift in the regularization of the category of being human is also highly racialized and gendered. This is reflected in the social policies that regulate immigration, migrant labour and refugee access. The marketization of human capacities under neo-liberalism is clearly exposed when examining the labour position of the migrant labourer and those who work within border zones (including Free Trade Export Zones or *Maquiladoras*), who are reduced to their labour and productivity (Biemann, 2000). When human beings become cargo and are reduced to a form of capital that is moved across borders, there is an intrinsic loss of agency. Indeed it is through this act of the rationalization of the border that the human being experiences a pronounced shift in his or her ontological status.

Through the debates regarding security specifically positioned in a post-September 11, 2001 Fortress North America, the concern regarding 'identity theft' has been highlighted through various government documents both in Canada and in the United States of America. This concern regarding 'identity theft' has arisen in the face of the 'new normal' through a call for a system to regularize and stabilize identity. Indeed through an elaborate set of debates regarding securitizing the border, Canadians were placed in a position to simultaneously require rigid controls of its borders, maintain that its borders and immigration policies were not weak or open, and reflect that its increasing border controls were not the product of threats from the United States, but a show of Canada's own sovereign power.

'The best way to do it is to have this perimeter concept', he said. 'It doesn't mean we have to be exactly the same, but I think the more common the immigration and refugee laws are the easier it is to have this perimeter which will protect both countries.' (Paul Cellucci, US Ambassador to Canada)¹³

‘I understand what the ambassador is saying, and I agree that we need to work as closely together as possible’, she said. ‘We’re separate countries, so it’s unlikely that we’ll ever have identical laws.’ (Elinor Caplin, Minister of Immigration and Citizenship, 2001)¹⁴

In a series of statements to the press in the aftermath of the events of September 11, 2001, USA Ambassador Paul Cellucci made the direct implication that Canadian ‘liberal’ immigration and refugee policies, and a ‘leaky’ border between Canada and the United States of America, were potentially contributing to an insecure state. Through these statements, Cellucci articulated the need for a security perimeter model that is the foundation for Fortress North America. The security perimeter would act through modes of surveillance, intelligence sharing, joint border patrol agencies, and the harmonization of refugee laws, such as the controversial ‘Safe Third Country Agreement’ signed by both governments. The rationalization of the North American security perimeter that was instantiated through the 30-point scheme of the *Smart Border Declaration* between Canada and the United States is a stark example of the operation of a neo-liberal form of logic. This logic has been carried through in the development of the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada.¹⁵ Through this declaration, the issue of security and national border security has paved the way for an increasing techno-scientific capitalization of the border. Through the deployment of private security agencies, research and development of technological forms of security, the investment in border security and technologization is a key feature of both the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Public Safety and National Security and the Canadian Ministry of Immigration and Citizenship. In each of these acts of rationalizing the border, a re-definition of democracy has taken place. The rhetoric surrounding the increasing security and surveillance of the border was couched in a language of securing the freedom and democratic way of life shared by both nations. However, the feeling of insecurity and risk is also invoked through the rationalization of this security perimeter. A risky game was played, as the sovereignty of each nation was to remain, at least at some level, ideologically intact. Overwhelmingly, this sense of control and security has led to the use and development of new technologies to enable the state to protect itself from human beings.

The debates that are most significant to note are focused on the introduction of bio-metric encoded identification cards. By gathering and organizing information linked to your identity (as a consumer, a worker, a taxpayer, a bill payer, a patient) in conjunction with biological information, such as a retina scan, fingerprints, or facial recognition, it has been argued that one’s identity cannot be stolen, misused, or misappropriated. Through the process of securing one’s identity, it might be argued here that there is another act of security that is taking place. In this state of the ‘new normal’ when life is potentially in flux, and the everyday is invested with a sense of the unexpected, which contributes to a feeling of unease and anxiety, the act of securing identity takes on a deeper ontological meaning and importance. I suggest that this development of bio-met-

ric information gathering is another form of categorizing, organizing, and potentially determining the capacities of human beings. In examining the debates regarding bio-metric and identity cards, the overwhelming focus has been on the determination of civil liberties, and potential loss of individual autonomy from the state. In my mind, this is only a very partial view to take in the examination of bio-metric data collection and storage. As an apparatus that claims to stabilize and secure identity, bio-metrics relies on biology's epistemological foundation. In the context of understanding the ramifications of bio-metrics, it is necessary to examine the techniques of bio-metrics, the engineering of the social and productive ability of this technology.

Biology's epistemological and technical task has been to produce a historically specific kind of human unity: namely, membership in a single species, the human race, *Homo sapiens*. Biology discursively establishes and performs what will count as human in power domains of knowledge and technique. A striking product of early biological discourse, race, like sex and nature, is about the apparatuses of fabricating and disturbing life and death in the modern regimes of biopower. (Haraway, 1997, p. 217)

Bio-metrics, 'a rapidly emerging technology which uses physiological or behavioural characteristics to verify identity',¹⁶ has hardly been regarded as a benign technology. Its emergence in the field of national security has led to highly charged debates that have peripherally approached the topic of the individual, the relation between the private and the public, and civil liberties and rights. In Canada this debate emerged out of the 30-point agreement in principal made between Canada and the United States of America in the *Smart Border Declaration*. One of the main proponents for a national identification card, which included bio-metric information, was Denis Coderre (then Minister of Citizenship and Immigration). Throughout his campaign for a national bio-metric identity card, Coderre relied heavily on the function of the 'new normal' to justify the development and adaptation of this technology. In each of his speeches there is a collapse between the notion of 'technology', 'progress', 'development' and its structural inevitability.

One thing is certain. The biometric train has left the station. We have to ask ourselves, where do we want to sit on that train? ... This is a reality. It is part of how countries and the international community are trying to stop terrorists and others who are a threat to us. (Coderre, 2003)¹⁷

It remains to be seen as to whether the technology and threat is a runaway train that has left the question of the social or the act of the citizen/subject behind. This form of rationalization is embedded in the compulsion that we, as the 'human actors', must adjust to the demands of our biotechno-scientific capitalist society. These demands are made on the basis of progress, a shift in reality and the referent of the terrorist (human evil invader). The debate, on which this forum focused, was regarding the fear of the possibility of 'stolen identification', and was premised on a presumed civil liberty and system of ethics that has been

irrevocably compromised in the current practices of contemporary forms of democracy. The double move enacted through these debates focused on a prior conception of democratic freedoms, one which is an instantiation of a 'false' attachment that is no longer available in a new normal, and neo-liberal rationalized democracy. The debate itself signals to this mourning of the 'wounded attachment' to an empty vessel of liberal democracy as well as the changing expectations of a neo-liberal governmentality that informs concepts of the individual, private/public and ethical spheres.

The debate ensuing over the use of 'bio-metric' identification cards is occurring on an inherently false plane of reason. The debate regarding a bio-metric national identity card in Canada is occurring because of the sense of national insecurity and border control. For the purpose of determining sovereign control over the status of a citizen's or non-citizen's identity, bio-metric encoded applications affect the ways in which the human body is being identified, categorized and represented. In the report 'Biometrics: implications and applications for citizenship and immigration', Stephanie Perrin, President of Digital Discretion Company Inc., states:

... that there is a fundamental characteristic of biometrics which alarms many people: they pertain to the body. Similarly, biometrics cannot be revoked if they are compromised. Revocation is a key problem and challenge for any authentication system, but especially biometric systems. If the bit-stream is compromised, the biometric system will have to permit re-registration of the true individual. One of the big challenges with identity theft right now, she contended, is how does the individual get his own identity back once it is compromised? (Public Policy Forum, p. 27)

As noted here by an industry specialist, built into this technology is the catastrophic potential for failure. And yet, the drastic nature of this failure is simultaneously being calculated within the 'risks' of the adaptation of this technology. It is a technology that has already been put into wide spread use. It is being used voluntarily through the Nexus pass system, and also involuntarily through the introduction of Permanent Resident cards, issued by the Canadian Immigration and Citizenship department in 2003 to all permanent residents of Canada.¹⁸ The increasing implementation of bio-metric identification cards initially debated as a requirement for national security, is also intimately informed by the demand of the market place to securitize the identity of the client-citizen.

When bio-metrics is understood to be potentially fallible, but where it is deemed necessary, we can see the development of an internal imperative to take on more risk in the 'hope' of reducing our current perceived risk. This is the perfect illustration of how the risk society acts to elliptically produce subjects of insecurity and anxiety. The act of renormalizing life thus becomes the perpetuation of a cycle of hope and the desire to return to what has been lost.

Society of Control

If it is true that law needs a body in order to be in force, and if one can speak in this sense, of 'law's desire to have a body', democracy responds to this desire by compelling law to assume the care of this body. ... *Corpus is a two faced being, the bearer of both subjection to sovereign power and of individual liberties.* (Agamben, 1998, pp. 124–125)

We are left to question this supposition of Agamben's, the relationship of the body is currently being rearticulated through evolving classifications, determinations and codifications of what is constituted as the body or human being. In the context of a neo-liberal rationalization of life within and without the perimeter of Fortress North America, the question of how the terms of biological citizenship are being securitized and functionalized is fundamental to the question of 'What's left of citizenship'. By taking up the challenge of viewing the present ramifications and consequences of the neo-liberal rationalizing biotechno-scientific global capitalism the various practices of citizenship might entail responding, converging and dissenting from the attachment to the enterprise of a concept of freedom and democracy that is complicit in institutional practices of injustice and inequalities. By taking the position that citizenship should be viewed from the position of the immigrant, migrant, refugee, what is recovered from the expression of the 'new normal' is the rethinking of what constitutes the *normal* conditions of life.

In the act of renormalizing life, the question remains about the power of the citizen to be constituted through the fundamental aspects of life (*bios*) as they are currently being rearticulated. In this sense the biological citizen articulated by Novas and Rose is central to the political terrain in which we are situated. To the extent that bio-metric identification requires stable 'bio' signs to be entered into the data stream, my argument here has been that there is potential danger in the act of creating 'stability' in a life that is unstable. The metaphorical use of the 'new normal' is centralized through the attempt to both control and articulate practices of citizenship. This metaphorical use of the 'new normal' conditions the citizen into an unremitting acceptance of a way of life that does not hold promise, but is rather continually resituated through the experience and the repetitive act of trauma or loss. In the act of shifting this discourse, in making the 'new' normal once again, the agency of the citizen/non-citizen to centralize the experience of life (*bios*), there is a potential for the activity of the citizen, to re-territorialize the political.

Through this act of re-territorialization the practices of citizenship re-shift the relation between sovereign power and the citizen. The debate regarding bio-metric identification reveals a particular set of tensions. If the debate remains at the level of potential loss of civil liberties, individual freedom, loss of privacy, the guise of a functioning liberal democracy will be maintained. In this scenario the act of detachment from the political is clear. The privileges of an unencumbered citizenship remains the central focus of these debates. Instead, if the debate shifts to the examination of the epistemological function of the *bios*, which is currently being used to encode identity, manage and control borders and designate human

beings, as was represented through the remarks by Stephanie Perrin, then the contingent nature of citizenship will remain in flux and open for debate. If biology has at its epistemological foundation the task of 'producing a historically specific kind of human unity: namely membership in a single species, the human race, *Homo Sapiens ...*' (Haraway, 1997, p. 217) and citizenship has acted historically on systematic inclusions and exclusions, then the conjoining of these regimes reveals the need for a critical and careful examination of the process by which the emerging acts of the collection of data, classification systems, and the creation of bio-metric significations of identity come into practice and being. It is in the promotion of the contingent nature of citizenship practices that the potential to disarm the ideologically driven subjectivization of the 'new normal' is made possible.

Acknowledgements

I thank Engin Isin for the suggestion of this title. A version of this paper was presented at the International Studies Association 2004 meeting in Montreal, Quebec on the panel 'What's Left of Citizenship' organized by Peter Nyers. I benefited enormously from the comments on earlier drafts of this paper by Barry Hindess, Michael Ma, Peter Nyers, and Daiva Stasiulis.

Notes

1. Various social historians and scholars examining the relationship between moral regulation, criminalization and citizenship have made this point. See particularly the work of Marianna Valverde, Tina Loo and Carolyn Strange. In addition, see Adamowski *et al.* (2002).
2. In articulating the position of 'citizen' I feel it is imperative to keep in mind the externality of the citizen embodied by the 'non-citizen'. This position is reaffirmed throughout my discussion, for instance, in taking up the discourse of citizenship from the position of the immigrant, migrant or refugee.
3. By emphasizing the centrality of the Fortress North America and the 'perimeter' debates with respect to the articulation of citizenship, I hope to emphasize the intimate relationship between citizens and non-citizens, that in fact one central feature in the articulation of the 'new normal' and shifts in citizenship regimes is the re-negotiation of not solely the meaning of citizenship, but also 'who' is able to achieve recognized status, the shifting importance of status in a society that is reaggregating modes of being a citizen.
4. I find Francois Ewald's discussion of 'risk society' to be particularly important to this definition: 'Nothing is a risk in itself; there is no risk in reality. But on the other hand, anything *can* be a risk; it all depends on how one analyzes the danger, considers the event. As Kant might have put it, the category of risk is a category of the understanding; it cannot be given in sensibility or intuition' (Ewald, 1991, p. 199).
5. One of these programs included a three part series that was produced by Thirteen/WNET New York and In The Mix. This series targeted a teenage audience and developed a series of documentaries. Included in this series were: 'Living with Change'; 'Media Literacy: Get the News'; and 'Dealing with Differences'. Each of the series was broadcast between September 14 and 28, 2002 (for more information, see: http://www.pbs.org/inthemix/newnormal_info.html).
6. Wendy Brown clarifies her use of 'governmentality' by pointing out the divergent reading of this term from social theorists such as Colin Gordon and Nikolas Rose, who have developed extensive analysis of Foucault's lectures on governmentality. In this article, Brown is relying extensively on the work of Thomas Lemke (2001) 'The birth of bio-politics: Michel Foucault's lecture at the College de France on Neo-Liberal Governmentality', *Economy and Society*, 30(2) (Brown, 2003).
7. Racial profiling at the border and within has become a 'normalized' practice. In response to this, and somewhat in order to maintain the national Canadian ethos of being a 'tolerant' 'diverse' multicultural nation, it is interesting to examine the policy framework announced in April 2004, *Securing an Open*

- Society: Canada's National Security Policy*. This policy initiative establishes a 'Cross-Cultural Roundtable which will be comprised of Canada's ethno-cultural and religious communities' (<http://pm.gc.ca/eng/news.asp?id=188>).
8. The Smart Border Declaration, signed in Ottawa on December 12, 2001, states that 'public security and economic security are mutually reinforcing'. Amongst the 30 points in the Action Plan that specifically relate to securing immigration and asylum seekers across borders, there strikingly is an emphasis on the implementation of bio-metric identification and permanent residence cards (see <http://www.canadianembassy.org/border/index-en.asp>).
 9. The Immigration and Refugee Protection Act came into force June 28, 2002 (<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/press/02/0218-pre.html>).
 10. It is interesting to note that the NEXUS system was first introduced as a 'Harmonized Highway Pilot Project' in November 2000 and was a joint initiative with 'United States Customs Service, United States Immigration and Naturalization Services, Citizenship and Immigration Canada and Canada Customs and Revenue Agency' (for further details, see: <http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/newsroom/factsheets/2002/jan/nexus-e.html>).
 11. For further details of the NEXUS program, see <http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/travel/nexus/faq-e.html#Top>
 12. Diana Fuss makes this argument in the introduction to her edited volume *Human, All Too Human*. She states 'In the past, the human has functioned as a powerful juridical trope to disenfranchise slaves, immigrants, women, children, and the poor. Some of the most ferocious and unthinkable events of our century—mass extermination in Europe, genocide in Armenia, apartheid in South Africa, repression in Latin America, ethnic cleansing in Bosnia—all have been waged passionately in the name of *humanitas*. In America, the human continues to be deployed as a weapon of potent ideological force, its unstable boundaries perpetually challenged and redrawn to exclude entire groups of socially disempowered subjects: the homeless, mothers on welfare, black in prison, people with HIV/AIDS, illegal "aliens". The human is not, and never has been an inclusive category' (1996, p. 2).
 13. <http://www.cbc.ca/stories/2001/09/19/canada/immigrat010919>
 14. <http://www.cbc.ca/stories/2001/09/19/canada/immigrat010919>
 15. This Department was introduced by Prime Minister Paul Martin in December 2003 as an innovation for the increasing harmonization of security regimes between Canada and the United States, as this mirrors in some instances the ideological work of the Department of Homeland Security. The Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness does not oversee an extensive budget, but it does coordinate various security sectors of the government, and most strikingly this Minister has extensive power over deportation orders and the management of refugees. In this sense there is a further indication of how the 'new normal' has completely shifted the understanding of a refugee or non-status person as a subject of fear, violence and terror, rather than a subject in need.
 16. This is cited from the forum 'Biometrics: Implications and Applications for Citizenship and Immigration' found on the Canadian Citizenship and Immigration website (<http://www.cic-forum.ca/english>).
 17. <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/press/speech/bio-forum.html>
 18. <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/press/speech/bio-forum.html>

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