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**Parker, K. (2015). *Making Foreigners: Immigration and Citizenship Law in America, 1600-2000*. New York: Cambridge University Press. (xii + 259 pp., ISBN: 978-1-107-69851-2).**

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*Making Foreigners* by Professor Kunal Parker condenses four centuries of American immigration and citizenship policy to make a case for how Americans have historically rendered entire groups of people living both outside *and* inside of the U.S. as “foreign.” Parker links the history of immigrants with that of women, political nonconformists, the poor, and persons of colour to develop new ways of comprehending what it means to be an outsider. Various scholars have referred to America as a ‘gatekeeping nation’ that excludes explicit groups of people. Parker brings a fresh perspective by combining a wide range of literature from several fields—immigration policy, citizenship law, and studies of race, gender, and the poor—to challenge readers to think differently about notions of belonging, subordination, and citizenship.

Citizenship is often viewed positively because it brings with it a sense of shared identity and the ability to participate in communal affairs, but Parker considers the acquisition of citizenship in a different light. He posits that it is the process of an outsider becoming *less* foreign (Parker, 2015: 12). Parker considers historical laws and landmark Supreme Court cases that show how, over time, different groups of people have been considered less like aliens due to shifting societal conceptions that altered the definition of what it means to be an outsider. Throughout his book, Parker shows how the subjection of foreigners is based on the false platform that they come from a far-off land. Parker claims that “a foreigner might come from across the ocean, from relatively nearby, or nowhere at all” (Parker, 2015: 25). Since the beginning, America’s federal immigration laws had exclusionary aspects. For example, the 1790 Naturalization Act, which set the criteria for naturalization to free, white males of good moral character. Selective deployment of civil liberties and limited avenues for naturalization imposed a distinct kind of non-belonging to all of those that did not fit within the narrow mould outlined by the law. Although the 1790 Act is considered the first formal citizenship law, many restrictionist immigration controls preceded it. Parker emphasizes these within the first half of his book, which he dedicates to an exhaustive coverage of state-level immigration control activities during the Antebellum Period in America.

Parker demonstrates how restrictionist policies were not only used against those seeking to migrate into the country, but also against those already inside. In the beginning, the poor were designated as foreign due to Elizabethan poor laws that sought to regulate the poor by giving the town in which they were settled financial responsibility over them (Parker, 2015: 32). This resulted in mass exclusion of the poor and the adoption of practices that facilitated the influx of more “desirable” settlers. Following the Revolutionary War, the notion of citizenship, and subsequently the face of what was considered an outsider, changed. In Chapter 4, in particular, Parker details the many exclusions that free blacks were subjected to such as their characterization as “occupants” or

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“denizens”—rather than citizens—and the travel restrictions imposed upon them (Parker, 2015: 89). Parker also considers how women were excluded through the continuity of *baron* and *femme* laws, whereby a woman’s legal rights, property, and status were subsumed by her husband upon marriage (Parker, 2015: 29). The Expatriation Act of 1907, for instance, stripped American women that married non-citizen men of their citizenship.

The second half of the book covers the Post-Civil War period. Parker outlines the rise of the federal immigration system and the emergence of novel forms of discrimination against different targets such as Asian-Americans due to the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882. As the federal immigration structure grew, nationality-based immigration quotas were established and deportation was frequently used as a tool for social control—a tool that is still heavily applied to this day. Parker also covers the expansion of general grounds of exclusion to show how practices have evolved throughout the years. For a time, the most important reason for barring entry into the U.S. was based on whether the individual would become a public charge (Parker, 2015: 153).

In the book’s coda, Parker reiterates his goal of redirecting the immigration conversation to consider the history of not only those coming from the territorial “outside,” but also those already residing within (Parker, 2015: 221). Parker states that “the object of tracing this historical trajectory has been to reveal the manipulability of the border between citizen and alien” (Parker, 2015: 225). Based on this goal, *Making Foreigners* is a great success. Parker’s coverage of so many groups over such an extended period does, however, cause him to glide over details that experts may wish for him to elaborate on. Furthermore, Parker’s work would benefit from a review of immigration policy variations among the states during the Antebellum Period, particularly those with relatively friendlier immigration laws than what he described during his examination of the state of Massachusetts (Parker, 2015: 108). Nevertheless, Parker makes a compelling case against the enduring myth about America being a nation that has historically welcomed all immigrants.

For some, citizenship is little more than an option on a form; for others, it can shape their entire lives. Parker persuasively argues how public sentiment during a given time can have a profound impact on entire groups of people residing both inside and outside of America. *Making Foreigners* is a thoroughly researched work that challenges readers to rethink the conventional meaning of the word “foreigner” and re-examine historical instances when groups in the territorial ‘inside’ may have been subject to the same legal constraints as those typically considered non-citizens.

