

***Embodied Archive: Disability in Post-Revolutionary Mexican Cultural Production.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2021.**

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Susan Antebi's *Embodied Archive: Disability in Post-Revolutionary Mexican Cultural Production* takes up the complicated relationship between temporality, disability, and race/racism to examine how nationalist attitudes are oriented to eugenicist futures. Combining close readings of Latin American literature and archived ephemera with critiques of social history and revolutionary politics, *Embodied Archive* provides a vital glimpse into the early 20th-century ideological milieu that continues to inform dominant-culture views of Mexican national identity. At the same time, the book aligns itself more generally with groundbreaking disability studies work by critics like Alison Kafer, Ellen Samuels, and Jay Dolmage, among others, to theorize how time, space, and movement prove matters intimately tied to disability.

Research on time and disability reveals how spaces are constructed to identify and ostracize disabled people. For example, Tara Wood, Margaret Price, and Stephanie Kerschbaum write about crip time in relation to affect and accommodations, which are often perceived by the academy as inconveniences, while Jasbir Puar and Robert McRuer discuss how the forces of colonial capitalism and globalization categorize and dehumanize people via their in/ability to embody labor-based temporalities. Like these authors, Antebi highlights the underlying significance of contingency in ableist constructions of normality and its safeguarding. That is, *Embodied Archive* reveals how contingency informs nationalist attitudes towards disability and race by making disability and racial difference paradoxically uncertain yet ever-present threats to the healthy—and health-giving—body politic.

Antebi begins by examining the fictional and scientific writings of Cuban-born Yucatec physician Eduardo Urzaiz whose novel *Eugenia* (published in 1919) depicts an ideal society cleansed of disability through a state-run system of regulated breeding. Critics have debated whether Urzaiz's novel should be read as satire or a critique of eugenics given its exaggerated descriptions of "inferior races" and an "improved" albeit unusual process for birthing children. Rather than argue for a definitive answer, *Embodied Archive* posits this ambiguity as proof of eugenics' popularity as a topic among transnational political and scientific circles. While *Eugenia* portrays an over-the-top social engineering regime, Urzaiz, inspired by figures like Jose Martí and Jean-Martin Charcot, uses his science writing to construct a diagnostic gaze trained on a healthier future. Antebi then juxtaposes the "hard eugenics" of *Eugenia* with the "soft eugenics" of anti-alcohol campaigns, "hygienic" school architecture, and social statistics to show how these movements coalesced to provide post-Revolution Mexico with a vision of its future self as a refined and advanced society purged of undesirable behaviors and bodies.

Embodied Archive critiques Urzaiz's works, architect Juan O'Gorman's built social geographies, and psychiatrist José Gómez Robleda's use of biotypology (a blend of statistics and biology) to show how specularities, racial and class taxonomies, and immigration inform perspectives on disability. In doing so, the book finds a home among historical studies by Dolmage (*Disabled*

upon Arrival), Nancy Ordover (*American Eugenics*), and Douglas Baynton (*Defectives in the Land*). However, by focusing on Mexico rather than the United States, Antebi's book fills a much-needed gap by uncovering the varied applications of eugenics in Latin America. Following the Mexican Revolution, nationalist rhetorics including José Vasconcelos' famous essay "La raza cósmica" ("The Cosmic Race") put forward the figure of the mestizo as *the* standard for the race of the future. According to authors like Vasconcelos—who, not coincidentally, was Mexico's Minister of Education in the early 1920s—the mestizo ostensibly incorporated all of the other races to create something "better." However, the figure of the mestizo has often been used to erase Afro-Latinx populations, appropriate Indigeneity even as Native communities are harmed, and mask associations between class mobility and whiteness in Mexican society. And, in orienting nationality toward a racially and culturally superior paradigm, such rhetorics have embraced the "soft eugenics" of hygiene to suggest that difference and disability must be contained in order to engineer a more ideal future today.

Antebi sheds light on this complex sociohistorical situation by exposing how Mexican eugenics have deployed race and disability as co-constitutive yet distinct forms of social classification. Not only are these categories constructed as social disorders to be contained—they are taxonomic frameworks used to restrict movement across borders, communities, and even across time. In other words, these identities are contingent in that they rely on one another for coherence, and they also create convenient temporal narratives that tie past and present conditions to moral and aesthetic futures. For example, these narratives conflate racial and cultural differences to frame both as symptoms of inferiority best left in the past, as when Gómez Robleda diagnoses Tarascan Indians as "autistic" due to a tendency toward introversion. Narratives of contingency also obscure the impact of social and material access on embodiment, instead rendering racial and class-based inequity as quantifiable matters of past biological causality. Thus, as in the case of O'Gorman's primary school buildings, social geographies are fabricated with minimal money and effort to correct "abnormalities" assumed to be already present rather than built to alleviate oppressive conditions.

Ultimately, *Embodied Archive* should prove an invaluable study to scholars of race and disability as well as those whose research addresses issues of nationalism, intercorporeality, and futures. It should be noted that beginning researchers may experience some difficulty contending with the ambivalence that characterizes a lot of eugenicist discourse and its examination. And, some familiarity with biopolitical theories by Puar, Foucault, and Deleuze and Guattari will definitely illuminate some of the book's case studies. That said, Antebi's painstaking blend of close reading, rhetorical analysis, and historical contextualization provides a useful model for researchers in disability studies seeking to ethically integrate studies of rhetoric, literature, and history. Moreover, *Embodied Archive* proves a necessary read for anyone working in Latinx Studies, since it illustrates so well how disability and ableism, and race and racism, have influenced our notions of citizenship and selfhood.