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Brune, J.A., & Wilson, D.J. (Eds.) (2013). *Disability and Passing: Blurring the Lines of Identity*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. ISBN 978-14399-0980-5

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This anthology by Jeffrey A. Brune and Daniel J. Wilson brings together essays that push against the idea that there can be an easy definition of disability, wherein disability can be identified and cut out from the social surroundings in which it is situated. The editors look at the costs and benefits of passing as able-bodied and/or sane in an American context. The authors in this collection suggest that passing has the potential to be a transgressive act, as it draws attention to the precarious and permeable boundaries between what is “normal” and what is not. They argue many books have attended to passing in terms of gender, race, or sexuality to the exclusion of disability.

Given that there are infinite types of impairments and ways of being in the world, I can appreciate how difficult it must have been for the editors to select essays. The authors covered a broad range of topics from political figures attempting to hide the traces of illness, the ironies of conducting a social experiment in an attempt to understand the experiences of a marginalized group while denying one’s experience of oppression, the desirability of passing as a non-menstruator, the mobilization of impairment categories by slaves as a way to regain their freedom, the pride and shame of attempting to pass as (in)sane, social location and passing in professional sport, passing and intellectual disabilities, and the complexities of attempting to navigate the world as a Deaf woman.

The first essay, by Daniel Wilson, looks at how polio left traces on ex US president Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR)'s body, while his privilege enabled him to be a "super cripp" (14) who was celebrated for overcoming his disability. FDR as the "passer in chief" (14) embodied the subject position of what Rosemarie Garland-Thomson (1997) calls the "normate," because as president, he was able to set the standard of the norm. This ultimately led to many people abandoning him as a role model (23). One cost of passing is that it precludes the creation of what Eliza Chandler calls "crip community" (2012, para. 2), a community built on shared experiences of disability and interdependence. Interdependence is after all what helped FDR pass as nondisabled (27-8).

In the chapter that follows, Jeffrey Brune focuses on the life of one white impaired man who worked for the government. John Howard Griffin changed his skin tone for six weeks in an attempt to understand what it was like to "be" a person of colour in the southern United States. While Griffin was very forthcoming about this experience, he did not speak of his experiences trying to pass as sighted. Griffin's attempt to construct himself as a person who did not need support speaks to the extent to which we are taught in North America to associate asking for help with weakness. Brune believes that although Griffin's visual impairment was situational and ultimately temporary, it motivated him to learn more about stigma and oppression. I wonder what would change if we were to spend more time thinking through the ideas of what it means to write about the embodied experiences of someone else, what we owe the people whom we are writing about, and how we can give back to the people whom we use to gain knowledge. Without examining our own positionalities, we run the risk of unconsciously generalizing

from our own experiences. For example, Griffin believed that his blindness taught him that colour does not matter (48).

David Linton writes about menstruation and the expectation that passing as a non-menstruator is desirable. After the end of the Second World War, many menstruators were stripped of their duties and had to re-adjust to the idea that menstruation was a problem. Considering this is a book about positionality, it is curious that he chooses neither to locate himself, nor to explain why menstruation as a topic caught his attention. To his credit, he observes that it is erroneous to assume that all people who identify as/are read as women menstruate. Had he taken the time to locate his writing, he would perhaps have been able to avoid making Eurocentric generalizations such as referring to “post tribal societies” (65). Linton provides a useful historical analysis of how menstruators have been (and still are) pathologized, even if technologies exist to make menstruation itself invisible. This results in many menstruators feeling as though we cannot speak back to accusations of being on the rag. At the same time, the stigma associated with menstruation despite its invisibility was and is sometimes used strategically by menstruators.

Dea H. Boster looks at how slaves in the US in 1839 strategically acted as if they were “deaf and dumb” in an effort to regain their freedom and maximize their chance of survival (71). She says that they feigned various impairments or inflicted impairments so that they would be considered “valueless” and gain their release. Like other essays, Boster uses Tobin Siebers’s understanding of “masquerade” to examine how slaves used disability to make their “difference impossible to ignore” (72), thereby ensuring that they were recognized as being bodies unfit to work.

In the fifth chapter, Peta Cox writes about her experiences navigating the world as a mad person. Cox picks up on the theme of what is at stake when one passes or fails to pass as non-disabled/non-sane. Similarly to other chapters, she applies Siebers's theorizing of disability to her analysis by taking on the trope of coming out of the closet (101). She considers how although this thing called "mental illness" is widely accepted as something that exists, there is little consensus on how to define it (101). She tells us that to pass as sane, one has to know how one is situated (105-6). Passing as sane is labourious and can be deleterious to one's health. On the other hand, it can assist in avoiding the stigma directed at people who are thought to be insane (108).

Subsequently, Michael A. Rembis considers how disabled athletes are portrayed in popular culture in North America and England following the Second World War. He uses Siebers's notion of masquerade to examine how disabled athletes strategically highlight or downplay aspects of their disability depending on the situation (114). Rembis asks us to think about how our identities are socially constructed so that some people are able to pass, while others are not (117). Passing is about the visibility of one's disability, one's relation to other identity markers, and whether one chooses to disclose one's disability (114). Like Cox, Rembis examines both the negative and positive potentialities of passing. He argues that many disabled athletes want to pass, but they also want to hold onto their politicized disabled identity and community (134). Interestingly, he notes that while physically disabled athletes were segregated from the Olympic Games, cognitively disabled athletes were excluded from both events, and were denied the option to pass as professional athletes until 1996.

In chapter seven, Allison C. Carey argues intellectually disabled people have historically faced (and are still dealing with) the decision to pass as nondisabled, develop disability pride, or feel uncomfortable with both of these options, from the post-World War Two era to the present. Similarly to Rembis, she notes that whether a person is able to pass depends on how others perceive and relate to them. She describes how intellectually disabled people have long been understood as less-than-human. Historically, this led to their pathologization as “feeble-minded,” abortion, institutionalization, and sterilization. The fluidity and lack of consensus about how to define feeble-mindedness led to the pathologization of many people, as well as to tools that justified this pathologization, such as the IQ test (146-7). This test was a way to justify the social abandonment of people who failed to perform on the test.

Carey notes that in the 1950s, a parental advocacy movement evolved, and parents fought for their right to access services to help “normalize” their children so that they could pass as a functional family. Subsequently, this movement morphed into the disability rights and self-advocacy movements (154), wherein disability was seen as a valuable way of being in the world. For Carey, pride potentially gets in the way of enabling disabled people to be valued for who they are, since taking pride in something emphasizes positive feelings and identification to the neglect of other emotions. She asks us to consider whether, if we believe that the boundaries between disabled and abled are situational and blurry, passing is still a useful construct (158).

In the final chapter Kristen C. Harmon writes about her experience trying to pass as someone with a hearing impairment as opposed to a Deaf woman (167). While attempting to pass as hearing impaired, she relied on the support and cooperation of

others. When she began to use ASL, she had to accept that she was visibly deaf. Harmon draws on theories of performativity to explain how being a hearing person is enacted (169). Like other chapters, she describes how deafness reflects on the family as a whole (169). She notes that her mother, who was also Deaf, helped her to integrate into Deaf culture by making alternate understandings of her embodiment available to her. She continued this legacy of valuing Deafness by enrolling her son in ASL and English bilingual school. Like Linton's chapter, she provides an analysis of media representations of deafness wherein being hearing is framed as the ultimate dream, and the definition of the good life.

This book provides an analysis of passing as it relates to a wide range of topics, from a limited perspective. It provides a unique and nuanced understanding of the costs and potential benefits of passing as disabled and as non-disabled. This would be a useful resource for anyone drawn to thinking through and with disability beyond visible impairments. It would be interesting to see more written on environmental disabilities, the disabling effects of poverty, and chronic health pain or health conditions. If another book on this topic were to be created, I would very much look forward to seeing more articles written from people with lived and embodied experiences of disability and/or madness, especially contributions from racialized and/or trans people. Overall, the editors did a great job arranging the chapters in a cohesive way that allowed the reader to easily track themes such as coming out, risk, pride, shame, community, and identity, throughout the book thereby allowing one to develop a deeper understanding of some of the debates going on around passing in the field of Disability Studies.

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