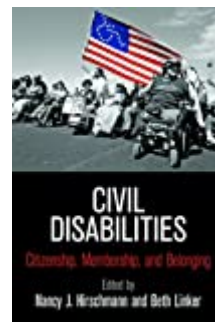


Nancy J. Hirschmann, Beth Linker, eds. *Civil Disabilities: Citizenship, Membership, and Belonging*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015. 320 pp. \$65.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8122-4667-4.



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The cover of *Civil Disabilities: Citizenship, Membership, and Belonging* features a photograph by Tom Olin, a long-time photographer of disability rights actions. It shows a group of protesters calling for 25 percent of Medicaid funds spent on nursing homes to be redirected toward services that allow clients to remain in their communities. Some are visibly disabled, some are not. Standing out in color from this black-and-white photograph is an US flag held by protesters. The stars in this particular flag are in the pattern of a person in a wheelchair. It is a perfect image to showcase this rich collection of essays about the intersection of disability and citizenship. After all, the photograph recalls the ways in which disabled persons are included in and excluded from citizenship in the United States. These protesters are likely legal citizens of the United States, but they are also clearly fighting for a greater sense of citizenship, a form of inclusion, an engaged membership within their communities, a self-assumed visibility. In the very act of protesting, they have formed a community with one another. These senses of citizenship, among others, are thoughtfully developed throughout the essays in this collection.

In their rich and clear introduction, editors Nancy J. Hirschmann and Beth Linker begin by summarizing and then problematizing the common historical narrative

according to which disabled bodies were excluded from citizenship by the demands of industrialist capitalism, and then gradually, through the efforts of the disability rights movement, gained measured inclusion when laws were passed in which disabled persons' rights to housing, employment, access, and so on became protected. As Hirschmann and Linker discuss, a central problem with this narrative is that it suggests both citizenship and disability to be stable and unproblematic. To aid readers unfamiliar with disability studies or theories of citizenship, the introduction includes concise and helpful discussions of the differences between the medical model of disability and various social models of disability, and of the various senses of citizenship which go beyond national identity to multiple levels of group membership and senses of belonging. These summaries are followed by some helpful illustrations of the ways in which disability and citizenship intersect and how understanding disability and citizenship in the broader ways previously developed may be necessary for working toward justice.

The essays collected in this volume are interdisciplinary and consider many of the aspects of disability and citizenship previewed in the introduction. Chapters 2-4 challenge various histories by moving disability to the center rather than relegating it to the margins. Douglas

C. Baynton's chapter argues that the conventional history of US immigration policy—which divides the policies into a selective period and a later restrictive period (based on racism and eugenics)—maintains a distinction that is in fact problematized by concerns about abnormalities and slippery associations between "defects" and certain races in both periods. The following chapter by Susan Burch and Hannah Joyner, a particular strength of the volume, begins with an interesting reflection on what it means to remember. These theoretical reflections are then applied to a particular case, the life of a deaf black man from North Carolina, Junius Wilson. Focusing on the life of a particular individual reveals the complexities of identity, race, disability, and gender in a way that even intersectional analyses of oppression often miss. These chapters are helpful contributions to the growing literature on the ways in which disability and race have converged and diverged in the history of the United States. The chapter by Beth Linker and Emily K. Abel reconsiders the history of tuberculosis by focusing on its non-pulmonary forms, showing the ways in which the exclusion of these other forms of tuberculosis and the narratives of curing and conquering tuberculosis (rather than, say, caring for the ill) mutually reinforce one another.

The next three chapters, along with chapter 1, analyze various media and their relationships to belonging, group membership, and disability. The first chapter, by Susan M. Schweik, is a discussion of the disabilities, lives, and stories of dissent that were excluded in the making of *The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946), a film about the return home of a physically disabled veteran. This chapter would be of interest to those researching media portrayals of disability, or the relationship between disability, war, and citizenship. The chapter by Faye Ginsburg and Rayna Rapp discusses the promise of various forms of visual media for disability activism. Particularly interesting here are their analyses of brain imaging and the virtual world of Second Life. Alex Lubet's chapter illustrates his "social confluence theory" through Leon Fleisher, Horace Parlan, and an electronic dance music collaboration called *Mindtunes*. The seventh chapter, written by Catherine Kudlick, is a fascinating investigation of "an intriguing architecture book titled *Des clés pour bâtir* (Keys for Building)" (p. 143). This essay, one of the highlights of *Civil Disabilities*, considers the book from two possible perspectives, not seeking to reconcile them, but to show that it exists in a complex history of

attempts at inclusion and challenges to the goal of inclusion.

As the book comes to a close, the concerns move in a more theoretical (but that is not to say abstract) direction. Allison C. Carey helpfully distinguishes between different "rights" to analyze the ways in which parents have organized with and on behalf of disabled children and to better understand the potentials for and obstacles to future coalitions. Chapter 9, written by Lorella Terzi, argues that capability theory is better suited than other theories of justice to understanding justice for disabled persons in general and those with cognitive disabilities in particular. Nancy J. Hirschmann's contribution to the volume is another highlight. In a lucid exploration, she synthesizes insights from a variety of thinkers to offer eight types of invisibility that aid in understanding the complex ways in which bodies, knowledge of disability, and power interact. This essay offers a helpful organizational schema that will benefit scholarship, but it is also written accessibly enough to introduce its themes in undergraduate courses considering disability. The final essay in the volume is by the late Tobin Siebers, and it focuses on two particular arguments against identity politics to reveal how they use assumptions about disability to make identity politics as a whole appear pathological. While the argument here will be familiar to readers of his *Disability Theory* (2008), it is an interesting development upon his previous work and a fitting conclusion to the volume.

Civil Disabilities is an important, interdisciplinary scholarly contribution. Its essays will be of interest to historians, artists and those in media studies, philosophers, and sociologists, not just to scholars of disability. While the chapters develop new arguments, they are written accessibly and, paired with the incredibly helpful introduction, could be used in a variety of undergraduate courses. I suspect that activists would also find the essays helpful, whether in remembering oft-neglected histories (chapters 1-4), understanding contemporary forms of resistance (chapters 5 and 7), or thinking through the role of theory in activism and advocacy (chapters 8-11). *Civil Disabilities* makes a convincing case that neither disability nor citizenship can be understood in isolation from the other. One can only hope that the research building upon the insights of this volume continues to be developed in equally lucid and thoughtful ways.

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