

Eugenics, Aristogenics, Photography: Picturing Privilege



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★★★★★ 5 out of 5
Language : English
File size : 46111 KB
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Eugenics, the study of improving the human race through selective breeding, was a popular scientific and social movement in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Aristogenics, a related field, focused on improving the breeding of the upper classes. Photography played a key role in both eugenics and aristogenics, as it provided a way to visualize and document the physical characteristics of individuals and families.

This book explores the complex relationship between eugenics, aristogenics, and photography. It examines how these fields intersected to create a visual culture that reinforced notions of racial and social hierarchy. The book includes over 100 images, many of which have never been published before.

Eugenics and Photography

Eugenics and photography first came together in the late 19th century, when scientists began using photographs to study the physical

characteristics of different racial and ethnic groups. These photographs were often used to support racist and discriminatory policies, such as immigration restrictions and segregation.

One of the most famous eugenicists of the time was Francis Galton, who developed a number of statistical techniques for measuring and classifying human traits. Galton also invented the composite photograph, which combined the features of multiple individuals to create an idealized type.



Composite photographs were used by eugenicists to illustrate the supposed physical degeneracy of certain groups of people, such as criminals and the mentally ill. These images were often used to justify discriminatory policies against these groups.

Aristogenics and Photography

Aristogenics, the study of improving the breeding of the upper classes, was also a popular movement in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Aristocrats and wealthy families often commissioned photographs of themselves and their children to document their lineage and social status.



Portrait of an aristocratic family, by Nadar

These photographs were often idealized and posed, and they presented a very different image of the upper classes than the photographs used by eugenicists to study the lower classes. Aristocratic families were often portrayed as healthy, beautiful, and intelligent, while the lower classes were often depicted as sickly, ugly, and stupid.

The Visual Culture of Eugenics and Aristogenics

The visual culture of eugenics and aristogenics played a key role in shaping public perceptions of race, class, and social hierarchy. These images reinforced the idea that certain groups of people were superior to others, and they helped to justify discriminatory policies against these groups.

The legacy of eugenics and aristogenics is still felt today. The visual culture of these movements continues to influence how we think about race, class, and social hierarchy.

This book is a valuable contribution to the literature on eugenics, aristogenics, and photography. It provides a comprehensive overview of the complex relationship between these fields, and it includes over 100 images that help to illustrate the visual culture of these movements.

This book is essential reading for anyone interested in the history of eugenics, aristogenics, and photography, and it is a valuable resource for scholars, students, and general readers alike.



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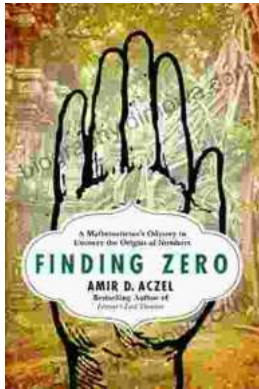
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