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Brown Bodies, White Babies: The Politics of Cross-Racial Surrogacy, by
Laura Harrison, New York, New York University Press, 2016, v+287pp.,
\$30(paperback), ISBN 978-1-4798-9486-4

This book will be of interest to scholars of race, gender, family and kinship. It is a welcome contribution to feminist analysis of surrogacy, which has tended to marginalise race. Through focusing on surrogacy, Laura Harrison considers how contemporary ideas about race are influenced by scientific developments, principally in human biology and genetics. The book focuses on cross-racial gestational surrogacy, when a surrogate is not genetically related to a foetus and carries a pregnancy for intended parents categorised as being of a different racial background. In short, and as the book title suggests, how brown bodies are utilised in creating white babies. It covers surrogacy in the United States, yet the issues it addresses are relevant to exploring the wider implications of reproductive technological developments for race, gender and kinship relations. The author acknowledges differences in the regulatory frameworks governing surrogacy in various countries, indicating that the politics of cross-racial surrogacy is likely to vary across different national contexts and that there is potential for further comparative analysis. The book is not based on original qualitative research carried out by the author as the project on which the book is based is described as a 'multi-sited, qualitative analysis of sources' (p10).

The first substantive chapter examines responses to the development of reproductive technologies from the late 1970s onwards. Through detailed, comprehensive analysis of primary research and sources, it provides a revealing insight into the social landscape of surrogacy in the United States. For example, it illuminates the intersection of race and nation arising from the disproportionate number of American military wives who act as surrogates. It begins with a reminder of the tendency for infertility to be represented as a white issue, in contrast to racialised representations of problematically fecund black families. It then explores how surrogacy is a polarising issue among feminists, with a lack of consensus about its potential to challenge or reinforce patriarchy. The chapter highlights how women's biological capacity to reproduce and the social role of motherhood are distinguished by separating motherhood into multiple components (biological, genetic, embodied and social). This raises complex legal, political and cultural questions regarding gender, family and kinship. Ultimately, these centre on what it means to be a parent.

The second chapter presents a detailed analysis of media reporting on surrogacy. The author focuses on women-helping-women altruism narratives that prevail in popular representations, arguing that this naturalises and normalises surrogacy. The chapter is notable for the finding that race is virtually absent in media coverage of surrogacy in the US, which focuses instead on class differences between surrogates and intended parents. This reveals the

dominance of colour-blind versions of reality, ignoring the operation of white power and privilege.

The book draws attention to how surrogacy represents another way in which racially dominant/white groups rely on the labour of 'women of color'. This is particularly evident in chapter three, which explores the history of racialised reproductive labour, from pregnancy and (wet) nursing to birth and childcare. The author provides examples to show that, in the case of surrogacy, genetic essentialism prevails because it matches dominant ideas about kinship, which are inextricably linked to race. She argues that racial difference between surrogate and intended parents is advantageous because it helps maintain hegemonic kinship structures.

The scope of the book is extended in chapter five as the author turns her attention to reproductive tourism and the transnational construction of kinship. It provides a stark illustration of the relevance of racial and economic inequalities to cross-racial gestational surrogacy, resulting in the relatively low cost reproduction of whiteness. Popular ideas about women helping women and 'sisterhood' are shown to be especially problematic in the transnational context as a result of considerable inequalities. Whilst drawing attention to the exploitative nature of such relationships, the author acknowledges the agency of surrogates and their choice to engage in this form of labour in the context. The chapter draws attention to how surrogacy is part of the global reach of racism. The final chapter explores the growing influence and far-reaching implications of ideas about foetal personhood or 'pre-born Americans'. These prioritise the rights of the foetus over the rights of women in ways that reinforce inequalities based on gender, race and class.

Laura Harrison shows an awareness that surrogacy is arguably relatively less important as a feminist issue compared with key contemporary feminist battles over, for example, abortion rights and contraception. Despite this, its key arguments are valuable in highlighting the resilience of a biological framework for race. This is most clearly demonstrated in chapter 4 in which the author analyses databases of egg donors and surrogates created by agencies and highlights how scientific knowledge is used to code traits as having racial origins. Overall, the book shows how various actors and agencies are involved in supporting a form of genetic determinism by propagating the belief that race is reproduced genetically, through attributes carried by sperm and egg. It reinforces how enduring beliefs about the biological basis of racial difference undermine scientists' claims that race is a social construct. It indicates that cross-racial gestational surrogacy does not disrupt notions of racial purity and instead supports dominant ideologies of racial difference and kinship. The book is a valuable contribution to debates about the capacity of new or evolving reproductive technologies to challenge and reinforce inequalities based on ideas about racial difference, suggesting that a post-racial world is far from being realised.

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