

and question whether or not there might be something for white rural Oregonians to learn from traditions of Black organising that could allow them to 'address their own conditions of precarity' (p. 18). The authors conclude this book by reflecting on different modalities of identification that allow and encourage white subjects to align with progressive political projects that are often led by communities of colour.

While this book might not seem directly relevant to scholars whose interests lie within the sociology of health and illness, it provides a useful foundation for those who are chiefly concerned with the social and political drivers of current levels of poverty and inequality in the USA. At times this book seems to undermine the material benefits that whiteness continues to bring to its bearers, but overall it offers a clear and unique understanding of how the state of contemporary politics necessitates a re-thinking about the ideological barriers that we often assume polemically separate the political left and right. I would recommend this book to sociologists, anthropologists, historians and geographers who are interested in the rise of black conservatism in the USA, and the ideological shifts that many argue have taken place over recent years in far-right political groups.

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Atanasoski, N. and Vora, K. *Surrogate Humanity: Race, Robots, and the Politics of Technological Futures*, London and Durham: Duke University Press, 2019. 240pp \$99.95 (cloth) \$25.95 (pbk) \$25.95 (ebk). ISBN 978-1-4780-0386-1

*Surrogate Humanity* is an insightful analysis of humanity's relationship to technology under racial capitalism. It draws on case studies ranging from technologies care and domesticity, to those of killing and warfare. The book does not reify technology, but rather explores the conditions under which human-robot relations are complicit in perpetuating oppression. The book's first chapter grounds the work historically. It charts the development of technoliberalism; a racial capitalist ideology which conceals present inequalities through its creation of an aspirational post-gender and post-race humanity linked to technological changes. It questions technoliberalism's premise whereby full humanity can

only be achieved through a reliance on those made subservient.

The book centres on the surrogate effect, the relationship between the liberal subject and subservient others. Each chapter examines the multiplicity of ways through which the liberal subject cannot exist outside of this subservient relationship to those considered less-than-human or non-human. Atanasoski and Vora's use of the surrogate effect is an analytical strength. It draws attention to the racial and gendered epistemological and ontological assumptions built into and reiterated by current human-technology arrangements. This framing highlights how technologies (or their illusion) are utilised to devalue and make invisible forms of labour historically carried out by women, colonised people, and people of colour. It underscores how this ongoing devaluation is crucial in the creation of a future where devalued humans are replaced by technologies. As well as, how notions of autonomy are used to entrench racial capitalism dynamics. For example, chapter five explores how semi-autonomous killer robots are constructed to sanitise the deaths of people in previously colonised countries. These robots mask the agency and responsibility of those who operate them and grant the liberal subject power over the lives of those considered less-than-human.

*Surrogate Humanity* calls into question the so-called novelty and radical difference of technological developments such as the second technological revolution or fully autonomous killer robots. It illustrates how these developments do not break away from past histories, but rather build on and (re)entrench historic oppressions. The book explores the values inbuilt to different technologies, focusing on robots aimed to replace human labour as well as those designed to work 'collaboratively' with humans. It illustrates how the ontologies and epistemologies that underpin historical and ongoing racial and gendered oppression inform both robotic developments. Raising questions (such as in chapter four), about how social robots undermine and recreate our understandings of care in ways that (re)produce capitalist logics.

In addition to illustrating how so-called novel technologies further structural oppression, Atanoski and Vora highlight technologies countering this logic. The book draws attention to theoretical, activist and artistic efforts to create technologies outside of the use, productivity and value paradigm of racial capitalism. These alternate human-robot relationships offer a glimmer of hope and encouragement for ongoing resistance against racial capitalism.

The book contributes a strong analytical approach to race, unpacking how race (as a function not an essence) constructs technologies underpinned by the logics of productivity-use-value that result in exploitation and differentiation under capitalism. However, it would benefit an in-depth discussion on the intersection of gender and race under technoliberalism, as these axes are mostly discussed as separate strands. For example, drawing on global care chain literature in the book's discussion of technologies of care and domesticity (Hochschild 2000, Parreñas 2001) could have tied together *Surrogate Humanity's* theoretical contributions on gender and race. It would additionally benefit from acknowledging the multiple other axis (such as class or disability) that structure inequality in human-robot arrangements, explaining why these will not be discussed at length in the text in favour of a more in-depth exploration of race and gender.

Furthermore, whilst Atanasoski and Vora skilfully draw on historical, material and symbolic understandings in their analysis of the surrogate relationship between humans and technology, this analysis could have been strengthened with an exploration of the environmental dimensions of robot-human relationships. Acknowledging the oppressive dynamics behind the labour that sources the materials for technologies, the racialised and gendered environmental toll of this production, and crucially the long-term untenable nature of a reliance on continuous technological development given the earth's limited resources.

*Surrogate Humanity's* insightful contributions would be recommendable to a heterogenous academic audiences wanting to gain a deeper understanding of the inequalities concealed within technology, the histories underpinning these and the consequent futures these technologies create.

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## References

- Hochschild, A.R. (2000) Global care chains and emotional surplus value. In Hutton, W. and Giddens, A. (eds) *On The Edge: Living with Global Capitalism*. London: Jonathan Cape, pp. 130–46.
- Parreñas, R. (2001) *Servants of Globalization: Women, Migration, and Domestic Work*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- String, S. *Fearing The Black Body: Origins of Fat Phobia*, New York: New York University Press. 2019. 283pp \$27.99 (pbk) ISBN 987-1-4789-8675-3
- Sabrina String's *Fearing the Black Body: The Racial Origins of Fat Phobia* is a comprehensive review and critical analysis of historical evidence and contemporary debates of the partiality for slimness and repugnance for fatness, and emphasises the racial, gender, class and medical influences. Within this text, String secures her status as an expert scholar on black embodiment. Drawing on an integrated theoretical approach using Pierre Bourdieu and Michael Foucault, String anchors how fatness became linked to blackness within the multilayered racial, gender and moral structures that shape fat phobia and thin fetishism. Artfully weaved, String uses comparative historical methods of process tracing and historical narrative to identify a gap in scholarship on the extent, gravity, complexities and controversies of the pro-thin anti-fat bias. String efficaciously interprets art, religion, philosophy, medicine and media propaganda to identify the roots of the ostensible obesity epidemic.
- String's main argument is that the historical development of fat phobia is rooted in racist rhetoric that manifested through pro-thin movements in the Western hemisphere that serve patriarchal ideologies and white supremacy. String successfully brought together a range of historical and contemporary evidence that reveals the relationship between body politics of race and beauty. For instance, String tracks discrimination against fatness beginning from the Renaissance period all the way up to the 1990s. String does so by documenting the development of ideals surrounding beauty that are shaped by race. For example, how white women were historically depicted in art and literature as slim, and woman of colour as plump. Each of the contributions in String's volume exposes how white European and Anglo-Saxon influences have shaped society's obsession with slim white women and prejudice against black women's bodies. The book is organised in three sections: *The Beauty of the Robust*; *Race, Weight, God, and Country*; and *Doctors Weigh In*. Throughout each of these sections, readers learn more about how race, religious institutions and medicine serve as moral gatekeepers, how these groups use power to shape and control beauty ideals of women, and how dominant ideologies surrounding fatness became linked to blackness.