

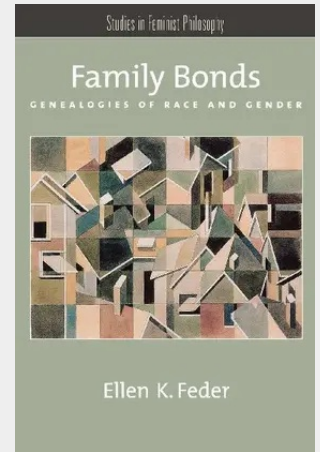
Feder

Family Bonds

Genealogies of Race and Gender

Feminist and critical race theorists alike have long acknowledged the "intersection" of gender and race difference; it is by now a truism that the ways we become boys and girls, men and women, cannot be disentangled from the ways we become white or Black men and women, Asian or Latino boys and girls. And yet, even as many have sought to attend to this intersection of difference, most critical treatments focus finally either on the production of gender or the production of race. Family Bonds proposes a new way to think about the categories of gender and race together. It first explicates and then puts to work Foucault's archaeological and genealogical methods to advance the main argument of the book: Gender is best understood primarily as a function of "disciplinary" power operating within the family, while race is primarily a function of a "regulatory" power acting upon the family. Each of the book's central chapters is an individual story, or history - the founding of Levittown, the definitive suburb after the Second World War (1950s and 60s); the development of the diagnosis of Gender Identity Disorder (1970s and 1980s); and the federal coordination of scientific research on violence (1980s and 1990s). Together they make up a larger story about the construction of race and gender in the U.S. in the second half of the twentieth century and demonstrate the centrality of the family in these constructions. Rather than a formal study of Foucault's own work, Family Bonds is an effort to produce genealogies of the sort that Foucault himself hoped his work would prompt.

Ellen Feder's monograph is an attempt to think about the categories of race and gender together. She explains and then employs some critical tools derived from Foucault (particularly his ideas about systems of knowledge and the power that governs them), in order to advance her main argument: that the institution of the family is the locus of the production of gender and race, and that gender is best understood as a function of a "disciplinary" power that operates within the family, while race is the function of a "regulatory" power acting upon the family from outside. Her interdisciplinary work will be of interest to feminist philosophers and theorists because it plays into a recent expansion of interest in the family, as well as to literary scholars of Foucault, to scholars of race and race theory, and to other feminist scholars in political science, sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies.



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