Black Women, Work, and Welfare in the Age of Globalization. By Sherrow O. Pinder. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2018. 196 pp. $95.00 (hardcover).

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Sherrow O. Pinder's book explores the connection between globalization and the United States welfare system as we know it today, "workfare," with particular attention to its impact on black women. Although black women are by no means the largest welfare recipient group, Pinder highlights the irony that poor black women have become the face of welfare and are disadvantaged by the United States welfare system. Throughout the book, Pinder interrogates what it means to have a quality life in a neoliberal state and argues for a welfare system that provides universal benefits to all, such that who receives what from the state might one day lose its stigma. However, in advancing the argument of what the welfare state should be, she does not lose sight of what it is for poor black women.

In the first chapter, Pinder lays out the theoretical underpinnings of the book. She makes it clear from the start that this is a work that seeks to discuss how poor black women are situated in the welfare state. Black women are both hypervisible due to the trope of the "welfare queen," and also invisible concerning the labor they are forced to engage in to remain welfare recipients. She asserts that we cannot understand the current welfare state without considering the role of globalization. At a time in which corporations have the autonomy to move, both domestically and internationally, in search of cheap labor and lower costs to production, the welfare-to-work system acts a source of low-skilled labor. Furthermore, the ethos around the "deserving poor" and the fact that low-skilled work does not lend itself to opportunities for advancement leave us with a welfare system that does not adequately meet the needs of its recipients.

In the second chapter, Pinder provides a discussion of the history of globalization and the welfare system in the United States. She notes the important shift from a goods production to service production economy — the former being a way forward to the middle class that was lost in the transition to the latter. In this service based economy, consumer service jobs are accompanied by high wages and personal service jobs are not.

Poor black women are positioned in the personal service job industry, which means that the question of a livable wage here is an important one. As the economy transitioned, so too did the policies around welfare. In Pinder's words, "…we no longer live in a society where welfare is a right for the poor" (44). The 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act created a major shift in how welfare benefits were administered as well as the requirements to be a recipient.

The third chapter provides a close discussion of black women and the welfare system. Important to this chapter is a discussion of the perceptions of black women on welfare. Although the discussion of black women in the welfare state is not new, this is important work because Pinder offers a different lens of analysis here than in previous work by Hancock (2004) and Jordan-Zachery (2009). Hancock focuses on understanding how the public discourse, particularly around the imagery of the welfare queen, was used to frame welfare reform and get legislation passed. Jordan-Zachery uses the social construction of womanhood to explain how the negative tropes about black women have developed, persisted, and subsequently served as a mechanism to inform welfare reform policy. What Pinder brings to the table is an understanding of why the notions of a paternalistic and disciplinarian state as well as offerings of low-skilled labor work will not be the means by which poor black women are able to break the cycle of poverty.

The fourth chapter engages the idea of the undeserving poor. Most intriguing here is the discussion of a "liveable life" and how poor black women on welfare are not afforded the means to live a life in which they have access to resources to act on their desires, such as to attain some self-defined measure of happiness. Poor black women face the pressure to provide necessities, like food and shelter, for themselves and their family. The attainment of these necessities is tied to a work requirement, yet they must maintain the status quo, underemployment, to continue receiving the benefits needed for survival. Herein lies the crux: Black women in the welfare system are punished for the assumption that they might take advantage of the state, thereby leaving them in the condition of "death-in-life" (17). The dominant political ethos in the United States that hard work is the means for advancement assumes that one can economically advance, when really this ethos dictates policy that constrains one's economic opportunities and the chance at a liveable life. As the wealth gap continues to grow, the work opportunities for the poor do not offer possibilities for advancement or even basic protection.

Pinder puts the discussions of neoliberalism, globalization, and the existence of poor black women in the welfare state in conversation. This work is a valuable way of understanding how poor black women fit into the United States political economy. The "workfare" system requires that recipients work to receive welfare benefits, and in this globalized political economy the type of job available to recipients is the low-skilled service work that comes without benefits and protections, like healthcare and sick leave. Altogether, recipients have enough to get by, but not enough to have a quality life. Pinder makes it clear that the welfare system as it stands not only stigmatizes black women but also results in what she calls "death in life."

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Gender and the Abjection of Blackness. **By Sabine Broeck. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2018. 238 pp. $22.95 (paperback), $90.00 (hardcover).**

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Sabine Broeck's *Gender and the Abjection of Blackness* is an ambitious undertaking. Using a "hermeneutics of absence," a method of reading against the text, Broeck contends that Western modernity has ignored, and continues to ignore, the black[1] experience (46). She suggests that taking the history of slavery seriously challenges the binaries that inform most theories of human intersubjectivity within the theoretical canon of Western modernity. These include the master/slave and subject/object

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1. Broeck is explicit in her capitalization of Black, and lower-case presentation of white. However, per *Politics & Gender* journal style, black and white are both uncapitalized in this review.