

the work is “who is the author in societies where knowledge and cultural artefacts are passed from generation to generation via oral testimonies”? This is the focus of Mudimbe-Boyi’s chapter “Whose Text Is It? Writing the Oral,” where the author interrogates the process of “authorship” while referencing Van Gennep, Barthes, Foucault, and Bourdieu.

“Copyright Africa” successfully presents an overview of the dynamics at work in realising a contemporary and Africa-centric solution to questions of ownership and copyright. It is a remarkable collection, wide-ranging in scope, with relevance to many sectors of the arts and cultural industries.

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Sa’ar, Amalia: *Economic Citizenship. Neoliberal Paradoxes of Empowerment.* New York: Berghahn Books, 2016. 248 pp. ISBN 978-1-78533-179-4. Price: \$ 110.00

The type of mixed welfare regimes currently operating in the global north, gives way to fragmented citizenship contracts responding to the intersectionality of gender/class/ethno-national/region/civil status and more. For low-income women who participate in a microcredit program, mixed welfare refers to the mixture of past and present entitlements and disentanglements reflected in their dialogues with both community activists and state representatives, all stating their commitment to future increases in the women’s income. Hope is cultivated in microcredit projects against a reality of restructuring, a shift to privatized services and shrinking forms of de commodification. The hope is promoted by a range of social forces suggesting that mixed welfare provides the opportunity to examine how notions of citizenship are formed. Amalia Sa’ar found in the Israeli shape of mixed welfare a particularly effective opportunity for studying these issues because of the sharp turn between a very generous welfare model of which Ashkenazy Jewish citizens (and others who managed to secure public sector jobs) benefited until the mid-1970s and a very stingy welfare model currently taking an indifferent stance towards food and housing scarcities as well as failing education and health systems. In her book, Amalia Sa’ar engages in a thorough analysis of the mixture of languages that reflect this shift in a specific project: she aims at understanding the process of localization of the discourse of economic citizenship from the point of view of the various carriers of its multiple, hegemonic and oppositional, meanings.

The localization of “economic citizenship,” defined by neoliberal morality as the possibility to politically organize social rights of citizenship and related budgeting as depending on individuals’ economic activity and income, is examined as evolving around “women’s economic empowerment” projects. These are local forms of the microcredit logic, where women who would receive a minimal loan, would be able to increase their income by turning the (feminine) skills they own into a small business. Several parties expose their understanding of economic citizenship in their various activities around these projects. These parties are: civil society organizations whose vested interests are in the rehabilitation of community eco-

nomics and solidarity; philanthropes donating to the projects funds; feminist activists and organizations involved in operating the project; and finally, the participants themselves. On the basis of a systematic ethnography, conducted in several sites over about a decade reinforced by discourse analysis of media and additional texts, Sa’ar reveals a vastly important social process of resistance: feminist activists, among quite a few other social and community activists, reject the hegemonic neoliberal idea of economic citizenship. Its rejection is enabled by the hope that social rights of citizenship protected by the older model of the welfare state can be recovered. Activists become proud by experiencing themselves fighting for such recovery and their pride creates a social space within which they work with women, socially very different from them, towards strengthening resistance. The social process that was found to characterize the projects’ participants echoes activists’ hopes to the extent that participants, with some differences between the Jews and Palestinians, are still confident that the welfare state should be there for them. However, to manage the gaps between their sometime severe poverty, their inability to extract state support and their (privatized/secret) sense of entitlement for human dignity and respectable citizenship they rely on a discursive coalition. That is, the mutual reinforcement between the neoliberal notion of self-development and the emotion saturated New-Age discourse of their femininity as flourishing in environments of love, care, and interpersonal intimacy and commitment. By achieving such conceptualizations of the hybrid forms of speech, which she found in the field, Sa’ar is able to argue that the Israeli field of social economy facilitates a dialogue between diversely located actors. Their dialogue reflects their insistence on creating a local, community-based, form of economic order that value human beings and their contribution and rejects the idea that social rights of citizenship should be contingent upon economic contribution. The hybrid discourses used by these actors cherish social justice, solidarity, and civil inclusion and is again used to ground optimism: as long as neoliberalism is unable to defy older ideological perceptions on women’s rights and strength, its progress can be slowed down.

The main discursive device in turning “economic citizenship” into a locally sensible one, according to Sa’ar, is the incorporation of collective belonging and heroic contribution to the nation, as part of it. While historically, motherhood itself would be a relevant contribution of heroic deeds, economic citizenship is perceived as associated with motherhood only by the feminist activists and the participants. Others maintain their insistence on such (empty) slogans as “diversity.” This allows them, explains Sa’ar, to replace their indifference towards women from deprived ethno-national categories, who live in poverty, with empathy. However, empathy is contingent upon their ability to label them “independent entrepreneurs” even if nothing has changed in their income. Economic citizenship becomes a powerful exclusionary device for many who cannot hide behind the “right labels.” What is so shaking in the analysis which this book presents is the fact that even the trainers of the economic empower-

ment workshop are too overwhelmed by the hegemonic discourse and basically exert symbolic violence on the participants to the extent that the latter must surrender by accepting the new lingual order in which “it’s all about” their power of will.

This book would become a precious asset for scholars and student in the field of gender relations who are interested in understanding how gender becomes crucial in the creeping in of neoliberal ideas. Sa’ar beautifully exposes the dynamics through which the gender contract of earlier political economies is transformed. The fact, that historically women were not expected to become primary breadwinners in their families, legitimizes the expectation that woman’s economic activity would become the sole definer of the services they are entitled to benefit of. As gender, says Sa’ar, is a structural mechanism of control and exclusion, the social organizations of jobs, services, taxes, and so on, reinforce women’s blaming of themselves and their family obligation when justifying their inability to increase their income. Their own “choice” of maternal practices is taken as an explanation rather than the gendered allocation of resources in society.

I believe that the book is an excellent account of the pressures characterizing women’s survival struggles in Israeli society today occurring in the context of arrogant rhetoric, which practically ignores their breadwinning efforts in dealing the needs of those dependent on them. But more so, it is an elegant application of critical discourse analysis taking a step forward feminist critical discourse analysis which focuses on the ways in which radical feminist notions are appropriated by conservative discourses and used against women, or in the case of Sa’ar’s study, against women’s entitlement to dignity-based citizenship. The book is a must read for anyone still insisting on thinking of neoliberalism as dual in its effects allowing some to benefit of the new “freedom,” while some lose. According to Sa’ar, even if the spirit of empowerment is emotionally energizing, it is, nevertheless, morally and interpersonally destructive in isolating women by a language of community and solidarity. Sa’ar’s writing is thoughtful and precise and I believe the book chapters could serve as important discussion triggers in courses and seminars on a variety of topics. Orly Benjamin

Schmidt, Bettina E.: *Spirits and Trance in Brazil. An Anthropology of Religious Experience.* London: Bloomsbury, 2016. 226 pp. ISBN 978-1-4742-5567-7. Price: \$ 114.00

The author presents her results of research among Brazilian spirit possession cults/activities in São Paulo in 2010. She attended ceremonies at various Afro-Brazilian communities (Candomblé and Umbanda *terreiros*), Spiritist centers, and Pentecostal churches, interviewed priests and priestesses as well as ritual members like mediums and *filhos/filhas de santo* (initiated persons in Afro-Brazilian cults) experienced in spirit possession during trance. The religious area has numerically shifted in the last decades. The Catholic Church, traditionally the dominant religious group, lost its all-embracing supremacy

from 89% in 1980 to 65% in 2010. In the same period, Pentecostal churches advanced from 3% in 1980 to 14% in 2010 and Spiritist communities (Kardecism and Afro-Brazilian cults) from 1% in 1980 to 2% in 2010. People without religion increased from 2% in 1980 to 8% in 2010 (cf. IBGE <<https://bresils.revues.org/docannexe/image/1843/img-1.jpg>>). The contact of the population with possession activities, however, is much higher than the census numbers indicate. One estimates that more than 50% of the population, i.e., more than 100 million believe in and participate to some kind of “spirit possession.” Alone in the city of São Paulo, 14,000 Umbanda houses, 2,500 Spiritist centers, and 1,400 Candomblé *terreiros* are registered. The neo-Pentecostal churches build and are building new temples with capacities for more than 20,000 participants.

The book is divided in five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the anthropological methodology the author adopted (participant observation, structured and informal interviews, biographies) and the main research fields of Candomblé, Umbanda, Spiritism and neo-Pentecostal churches. Though the structure of these communities differs widely and their religious background possesses different features, they have in common the experience of transcendental beings such as spirits, gods, ghosts, or spirits of deceased. The communication with these beings is essential for their self-understanding and identity. Therefore, the author focuses her attention to this experience of transcendental beings trying to understand, describe, and analyze the processes evolving inside the actors and outside the communities.

The second chapter analyzes the social setting of spirit possession. A shift also here from traditional participant groups of the lower class, principally black people, to the middle class of white people is a characteristic feature. The traditional overwhelming role of women as mediums changes to more diversity of people experiencing alteration of consciousness due to the loss of the African roots in which the social role of woman as marginalized and inferior person gained social power and prestige. Today, spirit possession received a broader acceptance in the society and became universal – therefore the shift in gender roles. My own experience in Candomblé *terreiros*, however, showed that the majority of mediums are still women and homosexual men, all induced to initiation in Afro-Brazilian cults through an overwhelming spirit manifesting itself by a mysterious illness. The illness only vanished through the acceptance of the incoming spirit by the possessed person. The question remains, therefore, why just women and homosexual men incline to such a “revelation” of a spirit. My impression was that the psychic predisposition for such an attitude belongs to the genetic matrix of that group of people and not to social or psychological factors of a reduced identity. Brazilians are adherent to a religious group, because they need help in cases of illness, misery, loss of employment, or family troubles. The religious mobility is very frequent. Not seldom the same person attends various religious groups in order to obtain the desired goal or he/she changes constantly the religious affiliation.