

on same-sex marriage around the world that covers the establishment of domestic partnerships and then marriage globally. This chapter notes that the United States is somewhat unique in that the courts have been more central to the process of establishing relationship recognition than they have been in other countries. In contrast to some earlier volumes that have focused more on North America and Europe, Pierceson's chapter also includes information about the status of relationship recognition in the global South, aided by his previous research on this topic.

The heart of the book, however, is the comprehensive discussion of developments in the United States. Pierceson divides this story both temporally and regionally. The second chapter of the book discusses developments from the 1950s through 1990, laying the background for chapter four, which covers the developments beginning in the 1990s in Hawaii, Washington D.C., Alaska, Vermont, and Massachusetts. The remaining three chapters on developments in the states are divided regionally.

Pierceson concludes the book with an extremely useful and prescient chapter about marriage equality and the Supreme Court. He discusses the federal cases relevant to Court decision-making on the 2013 marriage cases, including cases related to the right to marry, as well as the *Romer v. Evans* (1996) and *Lawrence v. Texas* (2003) decisions. He also explains clearly and concisely the federal lower court decisions in Proposition 8 and DOMA cases, as well as the legal and policy shifts of the Obama Administration and the role of the House Bipartisan Legal Advisory Group (BLAG). The chapter concludes with a (correct) prediction of the outcome of the two cases. The brief concluding chapter of the book revisits the themes of the role of courts, of federalism, and of religion and political culture in bringing about social change.

It is challenging to write a book on a rapidly changing subject, and challenging to frame the argument when the ground is constantly shifting. Pierceson's book is firmly grounded in the literature on the role of courts in U.S. political practice, and this literature shapes the analysis throughout the book. He also makes clear that the unique federalist structure of marriage policy in the United States has shaped ongoing political controversies, and will continue to shape political and legal process in this policy arena for many years to come. Thus, it is a demonstration of the way that political science can make an important scholarly contribution to our understanding of American public life.

Given this discussion, the reader might be tempted to surmise that the book tries to do too much. On the contrary, I think Pierceson has made a valuable contribution to political science research on the subject of marriage equality. This volume, given its comprehensive nature, also provides much material for further work across the discipline. I would especially like to see more work from normative political theorists about the legal and policy developments discussed here. There is a great

deal to be examined in this arena about courts and the meaning of democracy, about the role of religion in American political life, and about the place of marriage in a polity that is fully inclusive of women and of people who identify as LGBT. Feminist political theory has taken up many of these questions for decades. Some of these insights have made their way into "mainstream" normative political theory, but there is still much progress to be made here. And queer theory has had much to contribute, but for the most part it has taken place at a great remove from normative political theory.

So what I suggest here is more of a challenge to political scientists across the discipline than any criticism of this book. The controversies over equality for LGBT people, and the highly politicized and normative nature of these conflicts, have led many scholars in many disciplines to study aspects of social, political, and cultural change in this arena. Political science and political scientists have a great deal to contribute to this discussion. As I argued some years ago in the pages of this journal, this is a debate at the heart of political life: What kind of polity will we be? Who is included and who is excluded, and why? What does it mean to be a citizen of a regime that rests its legitimacy on the voices of its citizenry, a regime that has both historically and presently continued to exclude many of its citizens from the full rights of citizenship? The debate over same-sex marriage—marriage equality—is a deeply normative as well as a deeply practical debate. Pierceson's book is a useful contribution to this ongoing discussion in the discipline and in the world of practical politics.

Gender, Violence, and Popular Culture: Telling Stories.

By Laura J. Shepherd. New York: Routledge, 2012. 154p. \$130.00 cloth, \$44.95 paper.

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— Jeffrey S. Lantis, *The College of Wooster*

In a provocative 1947 article in the *American Political Science Review*, John D. Millett argued that the effectiveness of the latest technologies—statistical charts, filmstrips, and even motion pictures—in training soldiers during World War II meant that they should be embraced for political science education as well. He dismissed critics who termed this a "softening" of the classroom experience, stating, "There seems little reason today why in our concern for preparation we should ignore or belittle commonly accepted media for effective presentation" ("The Use of Visual Aids in Political Science Teaching," *American Political Science Review* 41 [1947]: 527). Laura Shepherd's *Gender, Violence, and Popular Culture: Telling Stories*, published nearly seven decades later, shows just how far we have come in the journey toward active teaching and learning, as well as critical thinking about the mutually constitutive relationship between popular culture and politics.

This book presents an engaging critique of portrayals of gender and violence through the medium of television. Shepherd addresses themes of power, politics, gender, philosophy, and violence—as well as their interconnections—through the narratives and counternarratives found in popular television series and miniseries, including *Angel*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Firefly*, *Oz*, *The Corner*, *Generation Kill*, and *The West Wing*.

There is much to recommend in this thoughtful exploration at the intersection of popular culture studies and feminist gender theories. Shepherd's book definitely makes a valuable contribution to the Routledge series *Popular Culture and World Politics*, which is designed as a forum for interdisciplinary research and innovative critiques of the relationship between new technologies and media and representations of political meaning. Here, the author employs a poststructural discourse analysis of representations of gender and violence through popular culture. She draws in contemporary perspectives from critical theory in international relations and media studies to convincingly illustrate the interdependent relationship between culture and politics.

Critical theoretical perspective aside, this book is about telling stories—and the normative significance of select stories and the act of storytelling. By examining both narratives and counternarratives of gender, violence, and power, this study expands perspectives on the stories being told in these popular cultural illustrations. A survey of dominant narratives describes overt messages of the television series just mentioned, while counternarrative analysis helps us explore the (often more important) critical perspectives therein. In the process, the author seeks to highlight how “our cognitive frameworks are (re)produced in and through the stories we tell ourselves and others. We glean ideals about the world and our place in it from the stories we are told; we reproduce these ideas and ideals in the stories we tell” (p. 3).

Gender, Violence and Popular Culture first highlights themes of morality, legality, and gender woven into two series developed by Joss Whedon, *Angel* and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Shepherd employs feminist and poststructuralist critiques to what are clearly postmodern narratives in the series. The author's treatment of counternarratives in *Angel* is particularly insightful given that academics have heretofore directed most of their attention to its progenitor series, *Buffy*. While *Buffy* is most often read as a story of postmodern empowerment for women—Buffy as subversive female heroine, slaying evil where'er she finds it—*Angel* is something quite different. Here, gender and violence, and gendered violence, are key motifs, but the intent of the series seems to be to raise ambiguity versus “simple” solutions of good over evil. If *Buffy* is meant to be subversive, *Angel* is designed to subvert the subversion and raise more questions than it answers regarding gender and violence.

Shepherd later shifts attention to themes of post-modern security and order in a different genre, science fiction, through an insightful survey of the series *Firefly*. While there is no shortage of academic works on the intertextuality of science fiction and world politics (Jutta Weldes, *To Seek Out New Worlds: Exploring Links between Science Fiction and World Politics* [2003] is perhaps the best recent example), Shepherd offers interesting portrayals of patriarchy and colonialist discourse in this series. Here, narratives represent and even constitute alternative imaginings of identity, community, and authority. *Firefly* seems to revel in juxtapositions of order and disorder, authority and sexuality.

Later chapters on gender, violence, and security in the television series *Oz* and *The Corner* are especially engaging. The author mines lessons from episodes of the six seasons of *Oz* (1997–2003), a seeming treasure trove of explicit and implicit representations of gender and violence. Shepherd characterizes the prison world as a graphic depiction of “violence as a pervasive, even constitutive, aspect of the human condition” that pulls no punches (p. 70). For example, the series develops a very complex approach to the subject of rape, especially regarding how it is viewed by different characters and the extent to which its performative function is “normalized.” The author weaves discussions of the philosophical insights of Michel Foucault with characterizations of this other world, where horrors like rape are seen by one authority figure as having a “leveling effect” in the prison population by providing social structure and “order.” Also fascinating is the discussion of examples of power, hierarchy, and sexual violence in *The Corner*, a miniseries portrayal of harsh insights from ethnographic journalism.

Case studies of the miniseries *Generation Kill* and the longtime popular show *The West Wing* are interesting, but receive perhaps more predictable treatments in this analysis. *Generation Kill* depicts the experiences of a U.S. Marine battalion during the invasion of Iraq in 2003, and is part of a broader and much-studied genre of war films. The author does bring up interesting ways that emotional attachments are masculinized in this story, as well as the role of some protagonists as “truth-seers, seekers/speakers” who try to make sense out of the invasion and their lot in life. Exploration of themes of feminism and political strategy in *The West Wing* raise the somewhat counterintuitive notion for longtime fans of C. J. Cregg (the fictional female White House press secretary, and later chief of staff) that Aaron Sorkin's series is far less supportive of liberated feminism than one might imagine.

Finally, while the book provides an engaging survey of themes of gender and violence in popular television series, the readers may find themselves wanting more. This is a short book, and any one of the chapters could be more

fully developed. Alternatively, one could imagine a much more in-depth treatise focused on the three series by Joss Whedon, or perhaps the war genre in television and film. A second, albeit minor, quibble with the framing of the project relates to truth in advertising: This book is effectively about representations of gender and violence in a single medium of popular culture—television shows—and passes on the opportunity for links to a variety of related media. Third, a more fully developed comparison of frames and messages from the different series would be fascinating. Here, “modern” readers may struggle with the author’s avowedly post-modern approach, and they may wish to read a more fully articulated conceptual framework early on in the book.

That said, this book reminds us to think critically about the stories we tell, watch, and perpetuate. It makes a variety of interesting points that, taken together, offer a valuable contribution to the scholarship of teaching and learning, feminist theory and gender studies, and international relations theory.

Making Citizens in Africa: Ethnicity, Gender, and National Identity in Ethiopia. By Lahra Smith. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013. 252p. \$85.00 cloth, \$29.99 paper. doi:10.1017/S1537592714000176

— Patricia McGee Crotty, *East Stroudsburg University*

This book is important for three reasons. The first is its focus. It seeks to determine how meaningful citizenship can be fostered within Ethiopia. The second is its applicability to other nations. Because of Ethiopia’s history of repression, its multiplicity of ethnicities, and its artificial regional boundaries, the challenge that it faces of forging a national identity among equal citizens is replicated in many other Sub-Saharan nations. The third reason this book is valuable lies in its methodology. The author uses an anthropological approach based on extensive fieldwork and focus groups to support her conclusions.

Lahra Smith’s definition of citizenship goes beyond the legal and electoral spheres. For her, citizens are not merely subjects but meaningful and effective participants in an ongoing political process. Constructing this ideal is a challenge for multi-ethnic, hierarchical societies that are based on communitarian and traditional values. This text contends that language policy can play a role in reconciling regional and national loyalties while creating more equal citizens. The Constitution’s recognition of ethnic language rights in Ethiopia’s federal states (killiloch) allows group based identities to serve as a resource for structuring citizenship.

The first two chapters lay the groundwork for the study. In chapter one, the author reviews the legacy that colonialism and authoritarianism have had in creating unequal citizens and multicultural challenges in Sub-Saharan nations. In Africa, institutional and constitutional reforms

alone often fail to produce a democratic polity but rather result in hollow democracies whose political institutions do not deliver on their promises. Smith concludes that democratic political institutions are a necessary but not sufficient condition for both citizenship and a national sense of identity to flourish. However, she never clearly defines exactly what she means when she uses the term *democracy*.

The second chapter provides a brief history of Ethiopia. This history as well as the maps, glossary, and tables included in the text enable the reader to understand the challenges that face Ethiopia in constructing equal and meaningful citizenship opportunities. In order to mitigate Ethiopia’s unequal religious, ethnic, and class divisions, its 1995 Constitution acknowledged both individual and group based rights and created a federated system including the right to secession for its constituent states. Although many scholars believe such divisions hinder the creation of a national identity, Smith illustrates how the multilingual language policy the Constitution creates provides an opportunity for citizens to participate in the political process.

In chapter three, the author focuses on language choice in education. She believes that, in the past, having one official language generated both educational and social inequality in Ethiopia. Since 1991, rather than using one national language, Amharic, each region now determines the language it will use to educate its population. The 1995 Ethiopian Constitution formalized this multilingual policy. According to Smith, this aids the process of assimilating and integrating Ethiopian citizens into a national polity for three reasons: it grants states further self-governance and autonomy; it provides recognition to the different ethnicities that make up Ethiopia; and it enhances citizens’ access to communication and information channels that foster democratic participation. Literacy in their local language promotes citizens’ involvement in politics and social discourse and their access to the information the media provides.

The author uses carefully structured focus groups of parents, teachers, and school administrators in selected regions to support her hypothesis that, in Ethiopia, the use of regional languages in education can serve as a tool to foster egalitarianism and democratic participation and need not threaten the national unity of the country. This research design is well suited to gathering information on multi-ethnic societies in developing nations and allows the researcher to garner detailed information on sensitive topics in a natural setting. Although one cannot generalize from this study’s findings to all Ethiopians or to all of its regional subdivisions, it does generate hypotheses that can be further tested using research methods that allow for broader generalizations. By clearly delineating how she structured the focus groups, the author also provides a guideline that researchers can replicate in other policy areas and in other multi-ethnic societies.