

The author refers throughout to the issue of women's intellectual abilities and proper roles as itself one of the topics debated by the republic's men and women, noting that sometimes male scholars who professed women's intrinsic limitations and unsuitability for this domain in their published works simultaneously encouraged individual women in their scholarly pursuits. The Christian norm of feminine modesty posed a challenge for these female scholars because it seemed to counsel against the sort of boundary pushing that defined membership in the republic of letters and against the pride in one's intellectual accomplishments that these women could justly take. But having said that this sort of internalized struggle "surfaces again and again in the correspondence of . . . female scholars" (p. 63), Pal observes shortly afterwards that "[b]alancing modesty and pride was a conundrum for all Christian scholars" (p. 65). She also notes that four of the seven women featured in her study never married, and that seems to have been a choice on each one's part. However, without knowing wider marriage rates at the time, particularly for their socioeconomic strata, it is hard to weigh the significance of this sample. Nor does Pal give comparable information about male members of the republic of letters: Perhaps many of them also remained unmarried?

Call me a social scientist, but I would have found it really helpful had Pal provided a chart with boxes and arrows indicating who was connected to whom and how in the republic (Networking? Mentorship? Correspondence?), or at the least among the seven women she spotlights in the book. It is hard to keep track of who knew who and how just by following the prose, even though her style is eminently readable. I would also have appreciated some pictures of the seven women, or as many as are available. We have images of male scholars of the seventeenth century, and it would be a great complement to have visual representations of their female counterparts. I suspect that the "rethinking" of Pal's subtitle is also a reimagining of the past, and it helps such exercises to be able to visualize female scholars, or at least representations of them.

I am also confused by the title of the book. As Pal is keen to emphasize, "The Republic of Women" is more of a county or neighborhood within the larger republic of letters. It is not a separate self-governing entity, so why call it a republic? The book is really about restoring our knowledge of women's role within the republic of letters, not as members of a separatist unit. In her conclusion, Pal explains that this idea of a republic of women dates back to the fifteenth-century humanist Laura Cereta, who in turn is harkening back to Christine de Pisan (pp. 278–79). But despite the appealing matrilineage of the ideal of the republic of women, it seems at odds with Pal's purpose. At one point, she describes her seven figures as "female fellow travellers" (p. 125), which strikes me as a better

image of what she is trying to convey about the place of these women in this larger network.

The details of this study will most likely recommend themselves to specialists in seventeenth-century thought. Even though some of the women studied were politically informed and active, there are few references to political theorists of this period. Like other feminist histories, Pal's larger project gives us all pause for thought before we generalize about women's exclusion from knowledge production and transmission in previous centuries. Pal teaches us that "posthumous obscurity" (p. 21) is not a reliable guide to what was actually going on at the time. Instead, she gives us a group of women who leaned in and linked in.

**Same-Sex Marriage in the United States: The Road to the Supreme Court.** By Jason Pierceson. Lanham, Maryland:

Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2013. 255p. \$45.00 cloth, \$24.95 paper.

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— Jyl Josephson, *Rutgers University*

For scholars who do research on same-sex marriage, the rapid changes in public policy in the United States and internationally over the past several decades have presented a dilemma: As soon as an article or a book is complete, it is likely to become outdated within a very short period of time. Jason Pierceson's comprehensive and well-documented volume is a welcome and essential addition to the literature on same-sex marriage, and will surely be widely used by scholars, in classrooms, and in particular as a very handy one-stop reference guide to how each state's policies came about. And it is timely.

Pierceson frames the book as providing the background for understanding the June 2013 Supreme Court decisions on marriage equality; clearly the book was completed about the time the Supreme Court agreed to hear *Windsor v. U.S.* (2013) as well as the California Proposition 8 case, and went to press before the decisions were announced. In his introductory chapter, Pierceson highlights the political, philosophical, and religious conflicts that are at the heart of debates over same-sex marriage. He notes that in the United States, federalism has been a key part of the story of marriage equality. He also addresses disagreements among scholars and advocates about the role of courts in social change—a central political issue raised by opponents as well as supporters of marriage equality. Pierceson notes in particular that some advocates for equality for LGBT people have been concerned about the backlash created by marriage equality litigation, and argues that the consequences of this advocacy have been more complex: "While litigation has created a backlash, it has also created tangible political change, in the form of policy change and shifts in public opinion. . ." (p. 5).

The book covers the period from 1950 to 2012 in the United States, and also includes a chapter (chapter three)

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.