disrupting capital, he argues, can racial disparities be mitigated.

In many respects, both are correct. Given that the status quo remains so taken for granted, and we live in a deeply depoliticized society, culture unfortunately is the primary vehicle by which politics is made legible for most people. Moreover, the prevalence of what Barbara Fields and Karen Fields refer to as "racecraft" (*Racecraft: The Soul of Inequality in American Life,* 2012)—the reflexive acceptance of "race" as a natural rather than ideological phenomenon—means that universal programs, regardless of their merits, will be easily dismissed as failing to deal with racial inequality effectively. Be that as it may, the fact remains that culture does not arise spontaneously but is instead an outgrowth of a given society's predominant mode of production and reproduction; in a word, economics. Consequently, if we are to fashion a politics that can truly get at the core of racial inequality, we must understand the mutually constitutive nature of economics and culture. *The Struggle for the People's King* and *After Black Lives Matter* are well suited for the task.

LGBT Inclusion in American Life: Pop Culture, Political Imagination, and Civil Rights. By Susan Burgess. New York: New York University Press, 2023. 232p. $89.00 cloth, $28.00 paper.
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The rapid transformation in how LGBT persons are viewed by governing authorities and in the public approval of various LGBT rights concerns such as access to marriage and service in the military preoccupies political scientists. Public opinion scholarship explores experiments that might uncover the precise mechanisms of opinion shift (see Brian F. Harrison and Melissa R. Michelson, *Listen, We Need to Talk: How to Change Attitudes about LGBT Rights*, 2017). Sociological work draws attention to either or both visibility and representation; that is, larger numbers of people coming out of the closet increased the visibility of the LGBT population to fellow Americans and thereby shifted views on same-sex intimacy, equal rights, and marriage access, or increased representation of LGBT characters in films and television shows brought the humanity of LGBT people into our living rooms (see Jeremiah J. Garretson, *The Path to Gay Rights: How Activism and Coming Out Changed Public Opinion*, 2018)

In tackling this question anew with her new book, Susan Burgess's *LGBT Inclusion in American Life* offers a remarkable integration of political science and popular cultural studies. Linking ideas from American political development, political thought, queer theory, and critical race studies, Burgess showcases why political scientists must attend to the dynamics of cultural change if they are to provide any full explanation.

Burgess frames her paradox: "In a period of just twelve years, LGBT people had been transformed from dangerous perverts who threatened family and state, to military heroes and respectable married couples and parents" (p. 1). She states her question as "How did such enormous skepticism about recognition of LGBT rights turn into inevitable acceptance?" (p. 3). Although the suggested "inevitability" must be evaluated, one of the more innovative elements of Burgess's account is her abstraction from three canonical LGBT rights recognitions of the early twenty-first century—decriminalization, military service inclusion, and marriage—to the underlying values of which each is a manifestation; namely, privacy, masculinity, and family. By focusing on the value underlying the rights claim, Burgess compels us to consider how understandings of those values changed over time, and she highlights pop culture's role in both promoting and reflecting those shifts. In other words, making sense of this transformation relies less on LGBT characters and storylines that came into public view on shows like *Will and Grace*, or *Glee,* or *Heartstopper*, or *Pose*, or films like *My Best Friend's Wedding*, or *Carol*, or *Moonlight*, or *Love, Simon.* Focusing on representation merely begs another of Burgess's questions: "Why were mainstream outlets receptive to including representations of LGBT people in the first place?" (p. 4).

Burgess tracks changes in understandings of privacy, masculinity, and family by conceptualizing an initial traditional period, a transitional period of norms contestation, and a concluding period during which new definitions are offered and increasingly accepted. In so doing, she draws our attention to films and television shows that seem wholly unrelated to LGBT concerns at first but that have implications for tracking the changes in LGBT legal and political recognition.

Burgess first traverses three films—*Casablanca*, *An Officer and a Gentleman*, and *Brothers*—to trace shifting notions of individual privacy and relations with public responsibility. Through a detailed narrative analysis, she demonstrates how more recent films bolster the conceptualization of same-sex intimacy as a private right, rather than an immoral act properly sanctioned by state law. Her captivating rollick through the James Bond films showcases not only how they depict changing norms around gender equity, power, and sexuality but also how masculinity rather than sexuality becomes the primary threat to the state and the individual. Although Burgess points out that the most recent Bond, as played by Daniel Craig, may be bisexual, what matters is less this bi-inclusion in a representational sense and more that toxic masculinity, and not sexuality, is the real threat to the state. The films thereby undercut the long-touted rationale for the unjust exclusion of LGBT people from military and civil service.

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Finally, Burgess details how notions of family—through an extensive discussion of *Leave it to Beaver*, *thirtysomething*, and *The Americans*—have followed similar patterns of traditional definition, contestation, and radical transformation that correspond with and explain how acceptance of same-sex marriage and family forms has changed with such speed as family itself is increasingly presented as a precarious social construct. Our popular culture—even when it does not cover LGBT rights issues or provide representation—fosters reflection on our common norms and opens the doors to political possibility.

Although Burgess uses "pop culture to better understand political transformation" (p. 21), she accomplishes much more. She brings insights from queer theory and critical race studies—notions of nonlinear time and of pop culture as both sources of challenge and tools of status quo reinforcement—to bear on key concepts of American political development, including political time and cyclical patterns of political change. She highlights how pop cultural products and the ideas they promote into the national discourse can be a source of agency, contestation, and friction and thereby serve as catalysts of change when much political development scholarship focuses on institutions that would otherwise foster stability and stasis.

Nevertheless, from the vantage point of the summer of 2023, amidst much backlash evident in state-level anti-transgender legislation and anti-drag panic, it is jarring to read Burgess's assessment of the most recent Bond films: "It turns out that gay sexuality and gender aberration were not the threat they were once thought to be. Toxic masculinity lies at the root of the problem all along, threatening both the state and the family" (p. 85). In our political time, Republican presidential contenders such as Ron DeSantis consider transgender inclusion to be a national threat; he lays all the ills at the feet of drag performers entertaining at brunches or reading to children in local libraries. Or, consider the toxic masculinity on full display on January 6, 2021. Burgess does identify how "fear and a will to power have been particularly legible in US politics at least since the election of Donald J. Trump in 2016" and that this has been made manifest in a "failed attempt to restore him and his brand of straight white male masculinity to power" (p. 190). Yet, at times, her assessment of rights recognition seems more triumphalist than our most recent politics and Supreme Court decisions would support.

In reflecting on how privacy, masculinity, and family remain contested in ways that mostly support LGBT inclusion but are still vulnerable to backlash, Burgess concludes with a provocative meditation on the creative possibilities of imagined violence. Drawing on queer theorist Jack Halberstam's notion of fantastical violence as a tool to imagine responses to sexist, homophobic, and racist acts in our contemporary politics, Burgess provides a hopeful understanding of political founding—critiquing *Hamilton* in the process—that may counter an increasingly institutionalized and entrenched conservative backlash against individual autonomy (see the Supreme Court's 2022 *Dobbs* decision) or against LGBT inclusion in our political economy (see the Supreme Court's 2023 *303 Creative* decision). In a captivating analysis of the Netflix series *Sense8*, Burgess ultimately contends that pop culture is a repository of emancipatory and aspirational political ideas and that life can indeed imitate inclusive art if we have the courage to fight for it.

Closed for Democracy: How Mass School Closure Undermines the Citizenship of Black Americans. By Sally A. Nuamah. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2022. 240p. $90.00 cloth, $29.99 paper.
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Social and political scientists have long regarded the US public school system as the primary institution through which students and parents develop the civic skills and social values to become good, productive, and informed citizens. Schools also provide critical services to citizens, including meals, family planning resources, health care, and counseling. Yet, for more than two decades, policy makers across the United States have closed public schools at historic rates, which they contend improves school quality and student performance. How do mass public school closures affect the democratic participation of citizens most affected by these policies? Who do these affected citizens hold responsible for school closures in their neighborhoods? Do school closures have consequences for affected citizens' belief in American democracy? These are the central questions that animate Sally A. Nuamah's new book, *Closed for Democracy*.

With roughly 1,000 public schools shuttered annually, affecting more than 200,000 students, Nuamah argues that the increase in public-school closures across the United States over the past two decades reflects a "new era of mass school closure." Unlike the first wave of closures that primarily affected rural schools during the early twentieth century, the current wave of closures is greater in scale, is principally centralized in urban areas, and disproportionately affects low-income and Black communities. Nuamah further argues that closures have proceeded despite strong objections from these communities, finding that even when citizens successfully fight to keep schools open, their engagement with the closure process ultimately undermines their faith and participation in American democracy.

The current era of mass public-school closure was precipitated by federal education reform policies like the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and Race to the Top in 2009. These laws established new academic standards,

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