

The Academy of Political Science

475 Riverside Drive · Suite 1274 · New York, New York 10115-1274
(212) 870-2500 · FAX: (212) 870-2202 · aps@psqonline.org · <http://www.psqonline.org>

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This account fits nicely with recent American studies of parties as rational institutions. What makes this book so absorbing is that Ware studies the details and explores ways in which politicians may have goals that are separate from those of the party as an institution while remaining party loyalists. In short, this is a nuanced, informative study that should be read by all those interested in American political parties, American political development, the Progressive era, and comparative parties.

JONATHAN BERNSTEIN
University of Texas at San Antonio

Pulp Politics: How Political Advertising Tells the Stories of American Politics by Glenn W. Richardson, Jr. Lanham, MD, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2002. 168 pp. Cloth, \$65.00; paper, \$19.95.

Here is a fresh look at political advertising and what has been written about it. Glenn Richardson, who teaches political science at Kutztown University of Pennsylvania, argues that most scholars misunderstand the messages conveyed by ads because they analyze them improperly. He suggests new approaches to political advertising scholarship and practices, buttressing his arguments with several small research projects. They include an analysis of twenty-six ad-watch stories from three newspapers and a comparative analysis of nine well-known ads that show how they would be classified under various types of coding schemes including genre analysis, which he prefers. News organizations use “ad watch” stories to inform news audiences about the correctness of the claims made in political advertisements. Ad watches may be a regular daily or weekly news feature. He also reports a comprehensive yet simple ad-exposure experiment which suffers from the common drawbacks of convenience samples of undergraduate college students.

According to Richardson, most researchers unfortunately ignore solid evidence that campaign ads work largely by stimulating viewers to draw on their pre-existing stores of knowledge, including popular culture, to develop reactions to the political situations covered by advertisements. Politics is theater and tells its stories through familiar genres using visuals, speech, and background sounds including music. Tying political figures to popular culture heroes, good or bad, invests them with the qualities and characteristics of their prototypes and rekindles similar emotions. The impact of advertisements must, therefore, be assessed by looking beyond the visual and verbal stimuli they contain to the associations these stimuli arouse collectively. Analyzing the genres created by ads, Richardson contends, is the only method that reveals the actual meanings of campaign spots.

Audiences understand ad messages because they are familiar with the genre and its usual features. Richardson describes genres used in well-known ads, including several from the 2000 presidential campaign. The Bush campaign

subtly tied candidate Gore to the image of his flawed predecessor by showing him in settings reminiscent of the Clinton years. In line with John Anderson's "spreading activation" principle, this tactic was expected to first arouse thoughts of Clinton followed by thoughts about the widely publicized Clinton scandals.

The book contains separate chapters on negative advertising and ad-watch journalism. Richardson contends that people's dislike of negative ads is partly based on unwarranted fears that such ads will arouse their emotions and dull their critical faculties. He points out that attacks on even vicious political opponents have a long historical tradition in the United States with no real proof of adverse effects on the quality of political judgments or election turnout. In support, he cites a meta-analysis of existing research which is equivocal on that score, partly because scholars disagree about what constitutes a negative ad. Richardson argues that a country that values freedom of speech must welcome all types of political criticism. In fact, stirring people through negative ads may actually be beneficial because it focuses their attention on politics when they might otherwise be disinterested.

Misunderstanding the meanings that ads convey by ignoring their genres also accounts for misguided ad watches that attempt to discourage factually incorrect advertising and correct misleading impressions. Richardson believes that it is pointless to dwell on questionable claims within the larger message if the impact of the ad springs from its overall effect, especially its audio-visual messages and their connotations. Genre analysis points to different solutions to the problem.

One may quarrel with Richardson's analysis of current practices, his complaints about the *status quo* in political advertising research, or his recommendations for reform. One cannot deny, however, that the great advances made in information processing research in recent years demand a rethinking of how people perceive political stimuli. Richardson's research-grounded book is a fine example of how such re-evaluations may proceed and the intriguing findings that may ensue.

DORIS A. GRABER

University of Illinois at Chicago

Averting 'The Final Failure': John F. Kennedy and the Secret Cuban Missile Crisis Meetings by Sheldon M. Stern. *Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2003. 504 pp. \$35.00.*

Reading the transcripts of the tapes of the famous ExComm meetings of the Cuban Missile Crisis is exhilarating because it is as close as we will ever come to being a fly on the wall for discussions at the tensest point in the Cold War, but it is frustrating because the conversations are so hard to follow. Sheldon Stern, for twenty years the historian at the Kennedy Library, has listened carefully to the tapes and interwoven them with oral histories and other sources