

teach a ten-week term could run out of room unless they are very selective and manage classroom time efficiently.

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■ *Agendas and Instability in American Politics*. Frank R. Baumgartner and Bryan D. Jones. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1993. 298 pages; \$14.95 paper.

This book provides a glimpse into how the agenda-setting process in American political life can be viewed from the perspective of political scientists rather than communication scholars. The view of political science, at least in this example, is concerned with how power is distributed within the political system. Authors Baumgartner and Jones, both political science professors at Texas A&M University, are far more concerned with relationships among power groups than with a single institution, such as the press, however powerful.

As a result, this book indirectly emphasizes that the larger purpose of communication scholarship is to help us understand the role of the press in improving and expanding our democracy. Really, we are still examining the issues raised by de Tocqueville, among others, more than a century ago.

These authors use content analysis with *Readers' Guide* to explore the spread of big issues over long periods of time. Like others, they discover that the press more often follows than leads on public issues. For example, the use of some hard drugs was in decline before the issue became important in the mass media. One also can see the force of the market place when the dangers of cigarette smoking are far less clearly presented in the press than the threat from asbestos. In the real world, of course, one is many times more likely to die from cigarette smoke than from asbestos. One can find many examples of mass media selective attention. One would almost suspect that the press is reluctant to bite the hand that feeds it.

Our political system is able to handle many issues at once – at least until the recent explosion of single issue groups – and this

book shows how issues can persist within the political system despite the transitory attention of the mass media. Thank goodness for that, at least theoretically, because the authors argue that the press focuses on problems a short while then moves on, long before social problems can be solved.

Walter Lippmann called this the spotlight function of the press. These authors attempt to answer the question they ask: "Does the American political system provide safe haven for privileged economic interests, or does it ensure competition among political ideas, constantly providing opportunities for those on the losing side of the political debate to reverse their fortunes?" In this book, there is evidence for both sides at different times. Although the press plays only a part in this, it is an important part.

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■ *Aunt Jemima, Uncle Ben, and Rastus: Blacks in Advertising, Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow*. Marilyn Kern-Foxworth. Westport, CT & London: Greenwood Press, 1994. 205 pages; \$49.95 cloth; \$18.95 paper.

If, indeed, a picture is worth a thousand words, Marilyn Kern-Foxworth's book is more than its 200 pages suggest. Aside from twenty years of research on the portrayal of African Americans in American advertising, *Aunt Jemima, Uncle Ben, and Rastus: Blacks in Advertising, Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow* contains twenty pages of thought-provoking reproductions of ads portraying African Americans from the turn of the century to 1993.

Actually, this book is in fact three volumes in one. As the rest of its title suggests, it is a history of African Americans in American advertising. But because it is as much a discussion of advertising and its role in society as it is a history, it is a valuable research tool for scholars of media studies. Lastly, its strong text and analysis and compelling advertising reproductions make it an ideal teaching and training tool for understanding cultural diversity.

As a historical work, it is a completely readable account of the African American