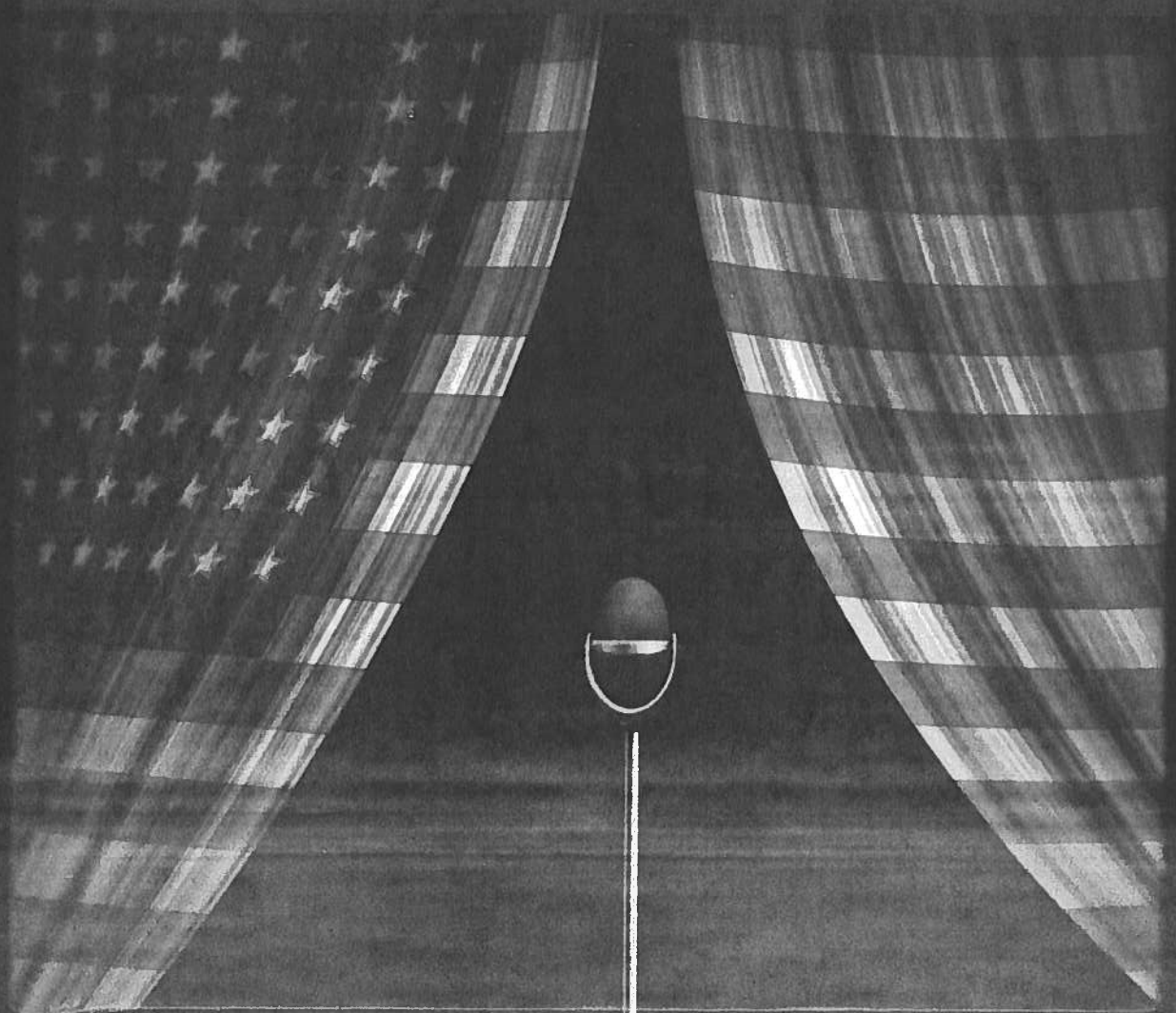


POLITICAL HUMOR IN A CHANGING MEDIA LANDSCAPE

A NEW GENERATION OF RESEARCH

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Chapter 1

The Rise of Advocacy Satire

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Several decades ago, if I'd told you that a public figure had bought up to \$15 million in medical debt and paid it off for 9,000 people, you'd have guessed that the source of this deed could be traced to a wealthy businessperson, a major philanthropist, or some kind of nonprofit or charity dedicated to helping the disadvantaged. The idea that a comedian would have been responsible for this act—as a routine feature of their television programming, no less—would have been difficult to believe. But that's exactly what John Oliver, the cheeky host of HBO's *Last Week Tonight*, did to spotlight how easy it is to start up a debt collection company that targets low-income communities. Oliver's act moved beyond the distanced irony that has constituted much political comedy programming,¹ instead intervening directly into public affairs and "making \$15 million the biggest TV show giveaway in history (adding a 'BLEEP you, Oprah!'" after beating her TV giveaway record)."

Although he appears to be leading the way in these efforts, Oliver's performance isn't an isolated incident. In recent years, above and beyond their roles as commentators, political comedians of all kinds have emerged as activists, pushing beyond the boundaries of their television studios and other, typical spheres of influence to engage in the public arena. Given these developments, I argue that a qualitative shift has been occurring in contemporary political humor toward greater uses of "advocacy satire."³ I define advocacy satire as the use of political humor to take action on behalf of disadvantaged individuals or groups, lending force to their voices by making a direct intervention into public affairs. At a minimum, advocacy satire can mean using a humorous platform to speak on behalf of disadvantaged individuals or groups. Yet what's particularly distinctive about the concept is how comedians are now engaging in actions in the public interest—the kinds of actions that were

formerly the exclusive preserve of lobbyists, movement leaders, investigative journalists, and others.

In doing so, comedians have updated satire for the twenty-first century by engaging in a biting and immediate form of advocacy that invites citizens to get more involved in politics. From Jon Oliver's clear uses of long-form investigative journalism wrapped in comedic garb, to Bassem Youssef's *The Daily Show (TDS)* imitations that put both his show and his life at risk in Egypt, much current political humor is rising to a level of political advocacy seldom seen in previous years. This chapter will provide some background for the rise of advocacy satire, highlight several factors that have likely contributed to its use, and reflect on the future challenges and opportunities for this form of activism in public affairs.

ADVOCACY SATIRE'S EMERGENCE

The exponential increase in political comedy programming is a relatively recent historical phenomenon, a rise that has been covered by many scholars.⁴ Given the number of late-night shows and other platforms for political humor (e.g., online sites such as *Funny or Die*), this trend shows no signs of abating. What's new is the development of action-oriented advocacy within these structures. Working hand in hand with advocacy, "satire" is used deliberately here as the use of humor to target and lambaste the substance of some entity.⁵ Overall, I find that four factors have set the stage for the development of advocacy satire in contemporary political humor: (1) new forms of media advocacy, (2) the comic precursors to this type of activism, (3) international political humor shows that have been influenced by the general advance of satire in public affairs, and (4) the neoliberal accelerations that all political comedians now must contend with at a structural level. To understand how advocacy satire has evolved, it's first useful to attend to how advocacy itself has developed in the modern world, especially in its relationship with a changing media environment.

New Media Advocacy

Advocates "adopt a stance, advance a cause, and attempt to produce a result [on] behalf of an interest of a person, group or cause."⁶ G. Thomas Goodnight finds that advocacy's historical roots tie back to the classical world, with the relationships between dueling adversaries, pleaders, and judges in a court of law as one example of the form that has carried through to the present.⁷ During the enlightenment and modernity, advocacy became much more

of a social phenomenon, and in a globalized world, it has become a rapid, complex, hybridized, swirling assemblage of technologies, symbolic forms (i.e., images, texts, etc.), and representations that defy traditional standards of reasoning or logic.⁸ As Manuel Castells notes, a shift from media systems structured around one-way broadcast messages to a "global web of horizontal communication networks that include the multimodal exchange of interactive messages from many to many both synchronous and asynchronous" and defined by "mass self-communication"⁹ now constitutes the horizon of our media, politics, and public cultures.

The shift from comedian as commentator to comedian as advocate runs parallel to these developments. Late-night shows now get as much traction from having particular segments uploaded to YouTube and shared across collapsing media boundaries as they do via their television broadcasts. Although many political humorists rely on the tried and true convention of performing long-form comedic monologues at the camera in each of their shows, there's been an environmental pressure to get beyond this format and engage in two-way interactions with viewers and diverse publics at a greater level.

Many comedians have subsequently shifted to political humor 2.0, as seen in the calls to action through the "Green Screen Challenge" on *The Colbert Report (TCR)* during its tenure on *Comedy Central*.¹⁰ Consistent with expectations for mass self-communication, comedians have become a locus around which people and causes can be centered amid the swirl of information in an attention economy.¹¹ From this perspective, the move from comedic commentary to actual political advocacy has been forwarded as much by contextual changes as desires to reach more audiences and make a greater impact in public affairs.

Comedians like John Oliver have made advocacy satire a staple feature of their programming, but this blend of comedy and activism didn't emerge in a vacuum. Turning some attention to what came before in the landscape of political comedy programming can also help us understand more about the rise of this kind of rhetoric.

Comic Precursors

Surveying political humor in the last several decades, it's clear that advocacy satire has come about in fits and starts leading to our current moment. Where comedians such as Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert could previously be counted on to berate the media, government administrations, and more, they only had limited moments of actual public "advocacy" on their shows. For example, Jon Stewart's advocacy on behalf of 9/11 first responders or Stephen Colbert's political intervention of starting a Super PAC to draw

attention to campaign finance issues were ultimately fleeting moments given most of their programming. The goal here is less to document everything that's been done along these lines than to highlight some key moments in the emergence of this type of persuasive humor.

Stewart's case is illustrative. The former host of *TDS* reached a moment in his career when an issue of personal and geographical concern became too important not to do something about. Rather than stare at the camera and make jokes about the lack of Congressional action in getting 9/11 first responders funding for the healthcare they needed, Stewart decided to devote an entire show to having a dialogue with a group of four such men about their health problems and the need for policy action. In fact, one of the most noticeable features of this show was the absence of humor and laughing.¹² To meet the political exigency Stewart and his team felt a pull to use their powers for good, becoming public advocates by using *TDS*'s platform to foster change. That the satire and advocacy were separated so starkly on the show, however, shows that the potential relationship between these two realms had not been worked out in practice.

More so, that journalists and others saw the moment as distinctive speaks to how the segment broke from routine. Once the bill had passed in Congress, Bill Carter and Brian Stelter noted how "there have been other instances when an advocate on a television show turned around public policy almost immediately by concerted focus on an issue—but not recently, and in much different circumstances."¹³ The bill's passage led public figures such as then New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg to remark further that, "Success always has a thousand fathers. . . . But Jon [Stewart] shining such a big, bright spotlight on Washington's potentially tragic failure to put aside differences and get this done for America was, without a doubt, one of the biggest factors that led to the final agreement."¹⁴

Although Stewart had ventured outside the boundaries of his show before—such as during his 2004 appearance on the CNN show *Crossfire*¹⁵—something new and different was happening within the show's contours. In the former *Crossfire* appearance, Stewart appealed to the need for a general civil discourse in the media. But in the 9/11 responder segment, the advocacy was on behalf of a time-sensitive, specific political issue: the kind that lobbyists undertake to get representatives to take immediate actions on their respective causes.

Stephen Colbert also tested the boundaries of advocacy satire in his previous *Comedy Central* show. Much scholarly work has analyzed how Colbert's formation of a Super PAC taught citizens about campaign finance laws, promoting a counterfactual vision of the ways that these laws could operate in a democratic society.¹⁶ Colbert and Stewart's Washington, DC event, *The Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear*, similarly broke beyond the boundaries of both

comedians' shows to advocate for reasonability and less political polarization throughout the land.¹⁷

Yet the emergence of advocacy satire on *TCR* was most epitomized in Colbert's visit to the US Congress to advocate on behalf of migrant farmworkers in 2010. Desiring to help the United Farm Workers (UFW) push "for a bill that would give undocumented farm workers currently in the United States the right to earn legal status," Colbert "told members of a House Judiciary subcommittee that he hoped to bring attention to the workers' hardships," and joked that, "I certainly hope that my star power can bump this hearing all the way up to C-SPAN 1."¹⁸

Although the visit earned him mixed reactions from Congressional members (Colbert went into Congress in his conservative blowhard character, only dropping the veneer at a few points to make some serious points), he earned much praise from the UFW and supporters for bringing attention to an issue that they had struggled to advance. Writing about Colbert's intervention, Sarah Bishop argues:

While Colbert may venture into territories where no comic has gone before, his persona is so predictable that even in unfamiliar contexts the audience knows exactly what to expect. Because he offers this assurance in any circumstance, Colbert is able to surpass the typical territorial boundaries of comedy. Colbert has run for President, stuffed his mouth impossibly full of Cheez-Its, created a Super PAC that raises over a million dollars, interrogated world leaders about the validity of war, . . . and none of it appeared to be outside of his purview. He is, in effect, the master of all of these ceremonies, managing to infiltrate each with the kind of good-natured optimism his audience both expects and respects.¹⁹

In essence, Colbert's interactions with audiences and ability to cross and adapt across boundaries made advocacy satire a natural next step in the evolution of his comedy and programming. When Colbert transitioned from cable to his mainstream late-night show on *CBS*, he largely abandoned the former character that had provided him with an ability to flex easily across a variety of political spaces. This relates to a problem that comedians have faced since ancient times, namely, how to use humor persuasively between the poles of free expression and structural expectation.²⁰

As time has gone on, however, and particularly with the advent of the Trump administration, Colbert's *CBS* show has arguably become more political and satirical. As he experiments with the boundaries of what is permissible on the mainstream network, the comedian may perform more advocacy satire in the future. New media advocacy and comic precursors have certainly played a part in the rise of advocacy satire, but a third development also provides insight into how and why this type of activism is being advanced by political humorists.

International Political Humor

There have always been satirical political shows in international contexts—for example, the British television show *Spitting Image*, which used puppets to mock political leaders in the 1980s and 1990s.²¹ But the move to advocacy satire appears to be a newer development across the globe. The internet and other spaces with a global reach have made the ability to imitate what's happening in other countries both more accessible and less costly.²² As the stakes for comedy shows to make actual political interventions have been raised, in international contexts comedians have both recursively mimicked and invented new models for political engagement, normalizing advocacy satire as a technique across borders. Although there are many examples that could be cited in support of this idea, I see two as key in illustrating the emergence of this critical practice.

Probably more than anyone else, former heart surgeon turned political comedian Bassem Youssef crossed the lines between satire and advocacy by starting a political humor show during the Egyptian revolution in 2011. In the midst of life and death circumstances, Bassem was inspired by shows such as *TDS*, but took the format to a new level by putting political humor in the service of changing a decades-long regime. In effect, "from a laundry room in his apartment he started a political satire show that captured the passion of the 2011 uprising and turned him into one of the most influential voices in the Middle East," yet once the new government was in place, the military takeover of President Abdel Fattah Sisi and continual threats to Youssef's life forced the comedian to leave the country.²³

Youssef's *The Show* went viral on YouTube, becoming the country's most viewed program and reaching about 40 percent of Egyptians, but "in 2013, after mocking Morsi—he made fun of his hat—the comedian was arrested for insulting Islam and the president. He was released, but when Sisi and the army came to power . . . there was even less tolerance for dissident humor."²⁴ While political jokes have long played a role in overthrowing regimes, gradually chipping away at the façade of societal power structures in an everyday, subversive manner,²⁵ Youssef's situation and actions stand out as distinctive for how much he was seen as a leader in his efforts. In recent histories, champions for the people have come in the form of figures such as Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Among the many other leaders and movements that formed to topple Mubarek's regime, that a comedian was called to speak on behalf of Egypt's citizens is no small thing. Overall, the claim that "comedy is the soft spot of all dictatorships"²⁶ has taken on greater meaning with such international examples. At the same time, Youssef's show certainly highlights the limits of advocacy satire—despite making a contribution to the politics of the moment, humor ultimately had to retreat in the face of violence.

Where Youssef has been referred to as "Egypt's Jon Stewart," in a different context, "Mexico's Jon Stewart," Chumel Torres, has also forwarded advocacy satire as a legitimate tool for political humorists, especially through the massive following the comedian originally gained on YouTube that attacked "Mexican politicians and pro-government media."²⁷ Television stations in Mexico are well known for being channels through which the rich and powerful disseminate their messages. So Torres's use of an online platform to bring his pointed satirical show *The Pulse of the Republic* to citizens earned him much credibility among Mexicans.²⁸ Torres now has his own show on HBO Latino (*Chumel con Chumel Torres*) and has been riding high on the format that his tweets and YouTube videos first begun. Like Youssef, Torres jumped from a completely different career (as a mechanical engineer) into political comedy, given his developing interest and following.

Using a team of comedy writers, researchers, and journalists, Torres's show bears many of the marks of his US predecessors such as Stewart and Oliver. But the comedian also shows more restraint on some issues (e.g., drug cartels) and has exhibited decidedly conservative stances on other issues,²⁹ which may explain why he's yet to engage in the bolder uses of advocacy satire outside of his show that many other political comedians have demonstrated. Torres has been clear that his comedy programming is framed from an advocacy viewpoint, however:

If you talk about corruption, we may not say the same name, but we have the same situations and that doesn't change, not only in Latin America, I'm talking globally. And if it matters to you because it affects your children, or your health care system or your education or your retirement, at least you want somebody to say something, even if it's a clown on a television, you want him to say [something], to tell it like it is.³⁰

Implicitly, Torres's presence in Mexican and now larger Latin American media has also advocated on behalf of less censorship and expanded media options in the region. He has further contributed to the public discourse on a range of pressing political topics, such as sexual harassment in the workplace.³¹

As these international examples highlight, expectations for advocacy satire as a regular part of political communication hasn't been confined to insular locales, but has been flowing across borders as a legitimate form of marketing social change. As new media have opened opportunities for advocacy with audiences across regions, in particular, comedians have been both building an expectation for this form of activism and, as might be reasonably surmised, increasingly expected to engage in this kind of work to stay relevant in the overall political economy of media.

Neoliberal Accelerations

For the foregoing reasons, and especially since advocacy satire emerged prior to the 2016 US presidential election, we shouldn't see the actions of comedians in the civic realm as an effect of what's happened recently in US politics. Still, the Trump presidency, the rightward turns in many international elections, and developments such as Brexit have likely played a role in accelerating advocacy satire in our contemporary political climate. If anything, at least in the US context, given the break from the normality of political discourse (and that's surely a point that both supporters and detractors of Trump can agree on), the administration has offered more of a foil for political comedy than has been the case for some time.

There's also a larger way of looking at what advocacy satire responds to in this climate of government deregulation, tax breaks, and other forms of corporate appeasement: an accelerating neoliberalism. In the United States, for example, despite the changes from Democrat to Republican regimes and back, a consistent thread for the past several decades has been a move toward increasingly neoliberal policies and practices across society.³² Neoliberalism is "a philosophy viewing market exchange as a guide for all human action."³³ Neoliberalism hides "the means for redressing inequality and mobilizing diversity by weakening relations among people and devaluing coordinated design," since "public engagement draws on the promise of a public good, which neoliberalism disavows through its strict reliance on a narrow individualism."³⁴ Although there's much to debate about the term and its nuances, it can still provide an instructive perspective on how Trumpism and its offshoots have generally put neoliberalism on the fast track, subsequently providing humorists with clearer targets and raising the stakes for humor that works on behalf of public rather than private interests.

A CNN report recently urged viewers, for instance, to "Look at an episode of 'The Late Show' or 'Jimmy Kimmel Live' from before the election, and then look at a recent episode. The shows are more pointed now. Some of them could be called 'activist comedy.' At least a couple of the hosts are openly campaigning for Trump's downfall."³⁵ Ironically, Trump has also legitimized satire as a political weapon by bringing attention to how unfunny he finds Alec Baldwin's impersonation of him on *Saturday Night Live* (SNL). In making SNL a topic worthy for the president of the United States to talk about on a recurrent basis, Trump has framed political comedy as a central rather than peripheral forum for partisan, activist battles. Who is winning (and how much comedy can win) that battle is yet to be determined, though, as Amy Becker found in an experimental study that "viewing Trump's Twitter response accusing SNL of media bias inoculates viewers against Baldwin's anti-Trump satire that is present in the original skit."³⁶

At the same time, while advocacy satire can make small but important interventions into public affairs, it can additionally highlight how comedians are trying to find a way to have an impact in their own very neoliberal circumstances. While seldom pointed out, most comedy production is after all connected directly to advertising and corporate revenue streams. Larry Wilmore's post-*TCR The Nightly Show* got pulled from the airwaves as a "business decision," first and foremost.³⁷ On the other hand, although Trevor Noah had a tough start on *TDS* after Jon Stewart left, he has retained his position due to the show's ratings having soared over time.³⁸ Being on cable has provided Noah with a certain amount of freedom to find his voice in the crowded late-night landscape, but in both Wilmore and Noah's cases, what's clear is that *Comedy Central's* central concern has been the bottom line.

One of the reasons John Oliver seems to be leading the way with advocacy satire is likely due to the advantage he has of working on HBO, a network less tied to advertising revenues and more free to experiment and engage in a variety of rhetorical practices.³⁹ Oliver aired a long segment urging his audiences to support net neutrality and asked viewers to go to the Federal Communications Commission site to signal their support for net neutrality, which led to so many people visiting the site that it became temporarily disabled.⁴⁰ With less neoliberal pressures directing the show (i.e., ties to particular advertisers), we've seen much bolder advocacy and active viewer responses on behalf of public interest issues on Oliver's show than many others.

Compare this to Colbert's *The Late Show* on CBS, where the host has ramped up his political critiques over time but, at least thus far, has not exhibited the same kind of public advocacy stunts that characterized Colbert's previous show. Having been trained in creative processes and divergent thinking, comedians will likely continue to figure out how to operate in an environment of accelerating neoliberalism. New ways of forwarding advocacy satire might be found, in the same way that Oliver's show took the benchmark features of *TDS* and *TCR* and adapted them to have more of a focus on public activism and long-form investigative journalism. From all appearances, though, the structural connections between politics and business will continue to play a part in influencing the extent to which the direct interventions of advocacy satire can be enacted.

WHAT NOW?

This chapter has explored the emergence of a remarkable form of comic activism in public affairs: advocacy satire. What developed on a sporadic basis has become a regular feature of comic programming, especially in John Oliver's work. Among other potential factors giving rise to advocacy satire,

four key developments have forwarded a qualitative shift toward its use, including (1) new media advocacy, (2) comic precursors, (3) international political humor, and (4) neoliberal accelerations. Taking action on behalf of disadvantaged individuals or groups and lending force to their voices by making a direct intervention into public affairs, advocacy satire moves comedians beyond simply making commentary at a distance. In essence, for many of our political humorists, advocacy satire has provided a way of more closely aligning comedy and civic engagement.

Where the path leads from here is unknown. Whether comedians will use more or less advocacy satire in the future may depend on a variety of factors. But from the foregoing analysis, a few concluding comments about the future of this practice are deserved. For one, more research examining how broad or narrow advocacy satire can or should be in its applications to a variety of political exigencies would be useful. Remembering that Jon Stewart had a difficult time performing humor on his show dedicated to advocating on behalf of 9/11 first responders shows that the laughs may, at times, get in the way of serious policy advocacy.⁴¹ Then again, that John Oliver has joined advocacy and satire with, from many indications, a great deal of success, suggests that there are times and places where these concepts can be fused well for political purpose and impact.

Just as *TDS* has inspired the rise of many new forms of political comedy across different contexts, we should also examine how a variety of political humorists, in turn, adapt and evolve advocacy satire. Both Bassem Youssef and Chumel Torres have taken the form as far as they can in their own countries, but in the swirl of new media advocacy, the crossings between advocacy and satire appear to be heading in an even more porous direction.

Take Samantha Bee's discovery that a job candidate for her show, *Full Frontal*, turned out to be a sting by a Project Veritas reporter, which turned into an unexpected comedic segment. In this instance, Bee moved beyond planned and strategic comedy, demonstrating how her show is playing such a part in politics that a counter-activist showed up at her very studio to create advocacy satire on the spot. Leading toward this discovery, Bee asked the candidate why he wanted to work for her, and his dumb response, "I just really love girl things and doing feminism,"⁴² further underscores the feminist theme that lies at the heart of much of Bee's advocacy. Satire and politics have generally had a masculine bent in the United States,⁴³ so given the additional coverage that such events tend to generate across media outlets, advocacy satire stands to be adapted and evolved, raising the status and stakes for this work.

Finally, understanding advocacy satire and its potential conditions can lead us to new questions about similar concepts that focus whether or not political humor helps or hinders democracy and citizenship. Defining "advocacy" in

relation to its classic and contemporary understandings is critical, since it's a term that's often stretched far beyond its elastic. Getting more precise about the generic patterns and expectations of modern political comedy should help us see more about where these kinds of phenomena have come from and where they're going.

For example, after Colbert's Comedy Central show ran its course, as mentioned, the network put in place *The Nightly Show* with Larry Wilmore.⁴⁴ Although Wilmore engaged in a great deal of advocacy satire in his segments on, for example, the water crisis in Flint, Michigan,⁴⁵ much of the show also used a quasi-roundtable comic "dialogue" and "deliberation" format, which begs questions about different genres of humor and their political effects.⁴⁶ In general, we need to know more about how communication forms that are often in direct tension, such as advocacy and deliberation,⁴⁷ play out in late-night shows and their offshoots. Parsing the thresholds of these concepts, or even seeing how one genre of political humor blends into another, could help us further understand these pressures and how they ultimately advance or detract from political persuasion.

Regardless of how comedians will use strategy in the future, it looks like advocacy satire is here to stay. John Oliver once mentioned that "democracy is like a tambourine—not everyone can be trusted with it."⁴⁸ As long as our humorists are seen as trustworthy players among the cacophony of voices in public affairs, both their satire and their advocacy should be seen as significant interventions on behalf of democracy and the building of better worlds.

NOTES

1. See, for example, Richard Van Heertum, "Irony and the News: Speaking Good to American Youth," in *The Stewart/Colbert Effect: Essays on the Real Impacts of Fake News*, ed. Amarnath Amarasingam (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2011), 117–38.
2. Leslie Salzsillo, "John Oliver Buys Up \$15 Million in Medical Debt, then Pays off the Debt for 9,000 People in Hardship," *Daily Kos*, June 6, 2016, www.dailykos.com/stories/2016/6/6/1535091/-John-Oliver-buys-up-15-million-in-medical-debt-then-pays-off-the-debt-for-9-000-people-in-hardship.
3. I first came across this term in an article covering Jon Stewart's advocacy on behalf of 9/11 first responders. Bill Carter and Brian Stelter, "In 'Daily Show' Role on 9/11 Bill, Echoes of Murrow," *The New York Times*, December 26, 2010, par. 10, www.nytimes.com/2010/12/27/business/media/27stewart.html. Other scholars such as Joseph Faina have also used this emerging term to describe the parallels between advocacy journalism and comedians' contributions to public culture. Joseph Faina, "'Ballin' It Up: Ironic Intellectualism of Stewart Colbert and 'Advocacy Satire,'" *Dr. Joe*, January 7, 2011, <https://faination.wordpress.com/2011/01/07/ballin-it-up-ironic-intellectualism-of-stewart-colbert-and-advocacy-satire/>; Joseph Faina, "Public

Journalism is a Joke: The Case for Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert," *Journalism* 14 (2013): 541–55.

4. See, for example, Jeffrey P. Jones, *Entertaining Politics: Satiric Television and Political Engagement* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010).

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7. G. Thomas Goodnight, "The Duties of Advocacy: Argumentation under Conditions of Disparity, Asymmetry, and Difference," in *Pondering on the Problems of Argumentation*, eds. Frans H. van Eemeren and Bart Garssen (The Netherlands: Springer, 2009), 269–86.

8. Ibid. See also Bruce A. Williams and Michael X. Delli Carpini, *After Broadcast News: Media Regimes, Democracy, and the New Information Environment* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Michael Crozier, "Recursive Governance: Contemporary Political Communication and Public Policy," *Political Communication* 24 (2007): 1–18.

9. Manuel Castells, "Communication, Power and Counter-Power in the Network Society," *International Journal of Communication* 1 (2007): 247–48.

10. M. J. Stephey, "Colbert's Green-Screen Challenge," *Time*, November 3, 2008, http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1855948_1864122_1864113,00.html.

11. For more on the "attention economy," see Marty Kaplan, "What Is Entertainment, Anyway? Welcome to the Attention Economy," *The Norman Lear Center*, n.d., <https://learcenter.org/video/entertainment-anyway-welcome-attention-economy/>; advocacy satire also fits within a media ecology and era defined by "celebrity advocacy." See G. Thomas Goodnight, "The Passion of the Christ Meets Fahrenheit 9/11: A Study in Celebrity Advocacy," *American Behavioral Scientist* 49 (2005): 410–35.

12. "9/11 First Responders React to the Senate Filibuster," *The Daily Show*, December 16, 2010, www.cc.com/video-clips/nuwe6u/the-daily-show-with-jon-stewart-9-11-first-responders-react-to-the-senate-filibuster.

13. Carter and Stelter, "In 'Daily Show,'" par. 11.

14. Ibid., par. 9.

15. See Paul Begala, "The Day Jon Stewart Blew Up My Show," *CNN*, February 12, 2015, www.cnn.com/2015/02/12/opinion/begala-stewart-blew-up-crossfire/index.html.

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23. Jeffrey Fleishman, "'Egypt's Jon Stewart' Is Living in Exile and Trying to Make His Satire Work in America," *Los Angeles Times*, June 29, 2017, <http://beta.latimes.com/entertainment/movies/la-ca-bassem-youssef-exile-20170613-story.html>, par. 2–3.

24. Ibid., par. 10, 7.

25. See Kerry K. Riley, *Everyday Subversion* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2008); Amber Day, *Satire and Dissent* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011).

26. This quote is from the movie *Red Chapel*, as cited in Nick Schager, "Red Chapel," *Slant Magazine*, March 12, 2010, www.slantmagazine.com/film/review/the-red-chapel.

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32. David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

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39. Don J. Waisanen, "The Political Economy of Late-Night Comedy," in *Political Comedy Encounters Neoliberalism*, ed. Julie Webber (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, forthcoming).
40. Deen Freelon, Amy B. Becker, Bob Lannon, and Andrew Pendleton, "Narrating the Gap: Gender and Mobilization in Net Neutrality Advocacy," *International Journal of Communication* 10 (2016): 5910.
41. For a similar point about the tensions between the "comic" and "counterfactual" parts of the "comic counterfactual" construct, see Waisanen, "The Comic."
42. Lee Moran, "Samantha Bee Expertly Trolls That Failed Sting on the Washington Post," *Huffington Post*, November 29, 2017, www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/samantha-bee-project-veritas-trolls-undercover-sting_us_5a1e6847e4b0dc52b02a4a28.
43. Jessica M. Peterson, "Funny in a Man's World: Women Comedians' Use of Political Satire at the White House Correspondents' Dinner" (Master's thesis, University of South Dakota, 2017), vii.
44. Eric Deggans, "Why Didn't 'Nightly Show' Connect with More Viewers? Larry Wilmore's Not Sure," *NPR*, August 16, 2016, www.npr.org/2016/08/16/490174005/comedy-central-cancels-nightly-show-with-larry-wilmore.
45. "The Larry People vs. Flint – Checking in on Michigan's Water Crisis," *Comedy Central*, August 9, 2016, www.cc.com/video-clips/u71f1w/the-nightly-show-with-larry-wilmore-the-larry-people-vs-flint-checking-in-on-michigan-s-water-crisis.
46. I should note that Bill Maher's long-standing discussion format has fared well on his *HBO* show *Real Time with Bill Maher* (and its prior incarnation on a mainstream network, *Politically Incorrect*), so there's further comparisons to be drawn between these shows. For another call to define political comedy's terms more precisely, see Lance R. Holbert, Jay Hmielowski, Parul Jain, Julie Lather, and Alyssa Morey, "Adding Nuance to the Study of Political Humor Effects: Experimental Research on Juvenalian Satire versus Horatian Satire," *American Behavioral Scientist* 55 (2011): 187–211.
47. See Don J. Waisanen, "Toward Robust Public Engagement: The Value of Deliberative Discourse for Civil Communication," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 17 (2014): 287–322.
48. Daniel Kurtzman, "John Oliver Quotes," *ThoughtCo.*, August 11, 2017, www.thoughtco.com/john-oliver-quotes-2734481, par. 19.

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