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News Parody and Political Satire across the Globe. Eds. Geoffrey Baym and Jeffrey P. Jones. London and New York: Routledge, 2012. h/bk 184 pp. ISBN 0-4156-9293-8. Price $145.00.

This tightly edited volume, originally published as a special issue of the journal *Popular Communication* (February 2012), explores the contemporary cultural history of fake news and political parody in a wide range of countries, finding the genres to be global, adaptive, censor-prone, and context-dependent. The text is clearly a post- *Daily Show/Colbert Report* creature: references to these well-known programs abound and anchor a collection that, by virtue of its mandate, bounds across countries and formats. As such, the volume can be read productively against US-centric collections such as *Homer Simpson Goes to Washington* (2008) and *The Stewart /Colbert Effect* (2011). In addition to its transnational focus, the collection is also commendable for not suffering from the theory-ridden dryness that accompanies much scholarship on comedy and for sustaining a high quality of scholarship throughout.

The essays focus respectively on the United Kingdom, Australia, France, Italy, Germany, India, Israel, Palestine, Iran (more accurately, Persian-language *Voice of America* programming), Hungary, Romania, Denmark, and the United States. Editors Baym and Jones begin by defining the key loci of inquiry and set the terms of the debate. The focus is not just on fake news but generally on shows that use "humor to engage with, and offer critiques of, contemporary political life and current events" (3). The editors make two helpful interventions here. First, they point out that news parody can function as a critique of the machinery of news as well as the machinery of public political discourse. They also underline the potential paradox between the economic role of parody as a lucrative genre for private networks and its promise as a progressive political tool. These themes recur throughout the collection, as the respective authors provide analyses of specific shows that lean one way or the other in different national contexts.

The inclusion of abstracts (the hallmark of the collection's origin as a special journal issue), allows the readers to pick and choose the order of essays based on interest. There does not seem to be an organizing logic at hand dictating a specific method of engagement with the text. All essays

are on the same time period (late 20th and early 21st centuries), although several, including Doyle's work on the French show *Les Guignols*, Kumar's essay on hybridity in Indian television parody, and Imre's analysis of late socialist-capitalist Hungarian political satire, mention local, pre-televisual roots. The collection coheres methodologically as well. Each essay starts with a historicizing and contextualizing account followed by formal textual analysis. Readers looking for viewer-response criticism will be disappointed; however, the methodological unity across the board does create a thematic unity of sorts and allows the essays to be read against each other in novel ways.

The collection would work well as a whole in an undergraduate contemporary media or humor course with transnational leanings. One can image assigning Meikle's essay on England's *Brass Eye* alongside Day and Thompson's analysis of *Saturday Night Live* in a course emphasizing different political uses of televisual satire, or asking learners to consider France's *Les Guignols* against Italy's *Striscia la Notizia* as explored by Cosentino, with regards to the political economy of television comedy in the neoliberal age. An emphasis on linguistic politics connects Kumar's analysis of postcolonial linguistic fissures in India with Bardan's exploration of "national linguistic intimacy" in Romanian fake news. Similarly, Sienkiewicz's essay on a Palestinian satire show that became "unbounded" in the digital age can be assigned alongside Semati's study of Voice of America's use of digital and satellite technologies to trouble Iran's political system in a course on new media and the Middle East.

Given the collection's title, readers will immediately notice the absence of East Asia, Africa, and Latin America in this version of "the Globe" — an absence the editors do not address explicitly. To be certain, some essays do mention that the format they are exploring has been exported to, say, Cameroon, and the introduction cites the popularity of El Mañanero in Mexico. However, given these gaps, the introduction makes a bit too much of its semi-peripheral offerings on Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and South Asia, playing off of lay perceptions of such geographies as "humorless" and "unlikely places" (2, 7). Thankfully, these essays stand on their own merit with or without such advertising; they make valuable theoretical interventions that are all the more powerful because they emerge from the globalized local context.

With a few exceptions emerging from postcolonial and post-socialist contexts, "politics" are conceived rather narrowly in the collection in general and in the introduction specifically. In this vision, race but also gender, sexuality, and even class are often subsumed, references to Bakhtin notwithstanding. These omissions might be more reflective of the state of the field of media studies than editorial decisions, but they are worth noting nevertheless. What sets Eric Lott's *Love and Theft* or John Limon's *Stand-Up Comedy in Theory* apart on these counts might just be the American Studies difference. As such, it will be interesting to see how transnational American Studies scholars delve into the issue of comedy and politics (broadly conceived) as our subfield continues to develop.

Works Cited

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