THE LOGIC OF IRONIC APPROPRIATION:
CONSTITUTIVE RHETORIC IN THE STEWART/COLBERT UNIVERSE

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ABSTRACT

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Scholars have long considered myth to be the driving force of rhetorical constitution. While myth has and remains a key logic that aids rhetoric in the formation of audiences, Roland Barthes argues that myth is a tool best served to produce right-leaning political discourse. As such, the shared logic of myth has encouraged the constitution of audiences that are positioned to act in ways that lead to predetermined judgments of politics and society that reinforce current power structures. Yet, Barthes argues that, despite myth's dominance in discourse, another logic must exist that is better suited for left-leaning political purposes.

Looking at the related paratexts from Jon Stewart, Stephen Colbert, and the entire Stewart/Colbert universe, I argue this universe utilizes such an alternative logic to produce left-leaning constitutive rhetoric. This logic of ironic appropriation serves to hail an audience into being, position that audience toward action, and uses that action to make judgments about the world in which the audience lives. Using the three principles of ironic appropriation—irony, intertextuality, and interactivity—the Stewart/Colbert universe produces texts that encourage individuals to come together into an audience that questions the normalization of incommensurability in discourse and, instead, seeks to find ways to build bridges and increase political activity. Far from producing a cynical audience, the Stewart/Colbert universe uses ironic appropriation to help the audience see democracy as an interactive experience that truly serve the needs of the people when the people are willing to work together.

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INTRODUCTION.

A LOGIC FOR LEFT-LEANING CONSITUTIVE RHETORIC

"Stephen Colbert commemorates the passing of the U.S. Postal Service with this actual U.S. postage featuring Stephen sending an email to the Post Office. (A 'stamp' is a picture you affix to a 'letter' before you drop that letter into a 'mailbox.' Ask your parents, who are probably younger than Stephen.)"

– Product Description for Stephen Colbert's
"Farewell to Postage" Postage Stamp[1]

On the September 14, 2011 episode of *The Colbert Report*, Stephen Colbert ran a story on the seemingly imminent downfall of the U.S. Postal Service due primarily to budgetary issues.[2] Stephen Colbert, a social critic who performs as a right-wing political pundit on his program, argues during the episode there is only one reason to lament the loss of mail service: He has not been on a stamp yet. In true Colbert fashion, he provides the solution by offering his viewers an actual U.S. postage stamp available for purchase that features his picture.

By offering a stamp for his audience to purchase, Stephen Colbert provides a means to save the institution his character is proposing the American public let die. Yet, the audience is aware of Colbert's real intention. Despite everything Colbert says on his program, the audience somehow can separate the literal message from the one Colbert intends to send. In other words, it appears that Stephen Colbert and his audience share a similar logic as to how to comprehend the media.

In this dissertation, I argue this is the logic of ironic appropriation. Ironic appropriation is a rhetorical logic that encourages constant questioning and critique of prevailing discourses and the pursuit of shared ground in arguments in an effort to reduce the normalized assumption of incommensurability. The logic is composed of three key principles: irony, intertextuality, and interactivity. Rhetorical messages constructed and interpreted under the shared logic of ironic appropriation allow producers and audiences of the media to understand messages with

multilayered levels of meaning, as in the case of Colbert here. This logic helps producers construct messages in a way they can be relatively certain audiences will understand, and helps audiences make sense of messages that otherwise may be too polysemous to interpret. The use of irony, for example, in this product description immediately points to the double-codedness of the message. The fact that the picture shows Colbert sending an email is an immediate cue to the audience this is more than just a stamp. This juxtaposition of images indicates that a critical argument is being made. Of course, the image alone may possibly suggest that Colbert is legitimately mocking the death of the post office. Colbert makes an intertextual reference by placing the image on a stamp itself, drawing on the audience's understanding of the U.S. postal system and helping guide the interpretation of the stamp toward delegitimizing a literal interpretation of the image. Furthermore, the stamp itself is an interactive element. A stamp can sit in a drawer or a collection, but combined with the other elements on the stamp, not to mention the product description above and the segment discussing it on *The Colbert Report*, it becomes clear that the stamp is to be used.[3] By using the stamp, the audience participates in the actual message: The U.S. Postal Service should be saved. In what at first seems like merely a joke, Stephen Colbert produces a message that not only brings his audience together but encourages it to take specific political action that expresses judgment about current U.S. policy.

The analysis provided here treats this stamp in a relative vacuum, but, in fact, this commentary by Stephen Colbert is just one part of a much larger set of texts produced on *The Colbert Report* and the related program *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*. Each of these programs uses the "fake news" format to provide humor for the audiences. However, scholars have often argued "fake news" or "soft news" does not necessarily mean no news. Rather, "soft news" programs are often quite skillful in drawing attention to political issues the public would

otherwise ignore.[4] While some have suggested that drawing attention does not equate to an audience's desire to act and often produces cynicism in the audience, others point out that such cynicism does not necessarily draw audiences away from political action and may instead push audiences to challenge the power structures they (often rightfully) distrust.[5] Many others have argued that these programs are successful in teaching audiences about information in the news and politics, the need for a critical media, the importance of ethics in journalism, and how the carnivalesque nature of these programs encourages media literacy and the challenging of official discourse.[6]

Combined, the Stewart/Colbert universe, as I call it in this project, has produced nearly a decade's worth of material.[7] While the shows use different forms of irony in their approach to textual construction, the Stewart/Colbert universe works together to create a fairly consistent commentary on the nature of media and politics in America. I argue that, over the years, this material has come to be produced under the logic of ironic appropriation. This logic is a constitutive rhetorical force that brings people together into an audience and helps guide that audience toward political action and moral judgment. As is the case with the Colbert stamp, in a simple move this logic can guide a collective people toward action that not only provides social commentary but also has material consequences. As opposed to the logic of myth, the most common tool in rhetorical constitution, which leads its constituted public toward actions that reinforce a predetermined social reality, the logic of ironic appropriation encourages the constituted public to question and challenge dominant views of determined reality and make efforts toward social change.[8]

In this dissertation, I argue the logic of ironic appropriation is a real factor in today's media and politics and plays a pivotal role in creating citizen activity. As a constitutive force that

guides audiences toward action and judgment, ironic appropriation provides a means for people to see a political world in which they can become active participants. I argue the Stewart/Colbert universe provides a large set of texts that demonstrate the prevalence of the logic of ironic appropriation in contemporary media. Furthermore, both the Stewart/Colbert universe as well as the audience constituted by it uses this logic to encourage political and social engagement. While the Stewart/Colbert universe is not likely alone in the use of the logic of ironic appropriation, it provides the most diverse and influential set of texts.[9] The focus of this dissertation will, thus, be twofold. First, I use the Stewart/Colbert universe to develop a theory regarding the logic of ironic appropriation and its three guiding principles. Second, I use the Stewart/Colbert universe for the purposes of critiquing the usage of ironic appropriation and its rhetorical impact on society. As I have mentioned, what makes the logic of ironic appropriation so important to study is that it is, in fact, a constitutive rhetorical force. Therefore, before expanding upon the logic of ironic appropriation further, it is helpful to explain what is meant by constitutive rhetoric.

Constitutive Rhetoric and the Media

For many, forms of popular entertainment exist for pure pleasure, or at least it seems to them to be the case. Scholars like Naomi Rockler have argued people must overcome the "it's just entertainment" mindset and see the powerful effects the media has on people in their everyday lives.[10] Such concerns are by no means new. Early Frankfurt School scholars such as Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno, and Max Horkheimer have critiqued popular media and its impact on society. Although these scholars are often important to the rhetorical tradition, their efforts are not specifically from a rhetorical perspective.[11] As a field, rhetoric was slow to turn attention away from formal speeches. Various factors like the rise of new social movements in the 1960s forced attention to the other texts.[12] This expansion of what counts as rhetoric allowed

scholars to focus on popular media as a site of investigation. Since that time, it has become clear that popular media contributes to the constitutive effects of rhetoric. Thus, it is important to understand the significance of the audience in the media and the way audiences interact with media texts to guide both individual lives and large portions of society.

The focus on the audience in rhetorical studies marked a significant turning point in the relationship between rhetoric and the media. Edwin Black's book, *Rhetorical Criticism,* propelled a shift in rhetorical studies away from what he labeled neo-Aristotelian criticism. Included in this shift was a turn toward audiences. A few years after writing *Rhetorical Criticism*, Black argued rhetorical criticism must shift its focus from the speaker to the auditors, what he labels "the second persona." This second persona is the person in the crowd (to maintain the still speech driven focus of rhetorical objects at the time) who hears the speaker. By focusing on the implied auditor, the rhetor shifts the emphasis of the rhetoric from instrumental to constitutive.[13] A focus on the second persona forces rhetoricians to consider the moral dimension of a text. Related to this concept of focusing on the moral dimension is a second key contribution: influence. Focus on the rhetor and the effect of the rhetoric assumes quite a lot about the influence of that rhetoric. The audience complicates this assumption. Black notes that rhetoricians cannot assume the rhetor and auditor share the same ideology and that rhetoric "rather should be viewed as expressing a vector of influence." Vector is an important term, as it implies both direction and magnitude. Questions of direction would arise again a decade later when Philip Wander theorized a "third persona," suggesting that rhetoric aims at certain audiences and, thus, obscures others. The third persona is an important rhetorical consideration and one I return to in Chapter II. Black's focus, however, is on the magnitude component of this vector of influence. Analyzing the metaphor of communism as a cancer, Black shows how

certain audiences, particularly the Radical Right, are more disposed to subscribe to the ideology inherent in the metaphor than others. Black's influence on rhetoric moves the focus to the audience and, in the process, draws attention to the ideology of the rhetorical message and need for judgment in rhetorical criticism. These areas prove to be essential components of the constitutive effect of popular media.[14]

Michael McGee expands this rhetorical focus on the audience. McGee argues rhetoricians have too often assumed audiences are merely objective or gullible. Instead, McGee feels audiences should be looked at as collections of individuals that react to rhetorical messages. McGee also addresses the need for moral concerns in rhetorical criticism, arguing that rhetoricians have failed to make some essential connections between rhetoric and social consciousness. "The people," he argues, have no real connections to each other than the "mass illusion" of connection. McGee notes "'the people' are more a process than a phenomenon." Seeing audiences constituted by a process and not as preexisting suggests they must be formed into being over time by a variety of rhetorical texts.[15]

McGee specifically focuses on the notion of myth, suggesting rhetors use myths to create shared understandings of the world. These myths serve as the glue that binds the mass illusion of "the people." Without even basic myths, "one senses a crisis which can only be myth with a new rhetoric, a new mythology."[16] Myths are found throughout much of popular media. The media perpetuates myths like American individualism and exceptionalism, feminism, and heroism in society.[17] Important to the process of audience constitution, McGee reminds us, is "there are several myths and several political generations at any one time, each with a modicum of influence in society." Multiple texts using a variety of myths are, thus, employed to help guide individuals into peoples. Thus, "'the people' exist, not in a single myth, but in the competitive

relationships which develop between a myth and objective reality, and between a myth and antithetical visions of the collective life." If rhetoricians are, as Black and McGee argue, to turn their focus to the social implications of rhetoric on audiences, rhetoricians must look at the variety of places these myths compete for attention and influence. The popular media supplies a space for rhetors to share their myths in society, making it an important area of study for rhetorical critics.[18]

McGee's description of the myth as a means to connect certain individuals and exclude others parallels much of the work of Kenneth Burke. McGee also invokes Burke in his argument that reality is a social construction shared by others with the same perspective.[19] This draws the discussion back to some of Burke's key contributions to rhetoric as it pertains to popular media. One such contribution is the notion of equipment for living, a concept central to how the logic of ironic appropriation places a constituted audience into action. Burke notes "art forms like 'tragedy' or 'comedy' or 'satire' would be treated as equipment for living, that at times size up situations in various ways and in keeping with correspondingly various attitudes." Equipment for living is the means by which people, either individually or collectively, use discourse to approach the complexities of life. Burke's specific analysis is of proverbs as equipment for living, but various art forms can serve as such equipment. Scholars such as Barry Brummett and Brian Ott have used film and television as mediated examples of such equipment for living, suggesting the media plays a vital role in this rhetorical phenomenon.[20]

Further understanding of equipment for living can be found elsewhere in Burke's canon as well as some of the work directly or indirectly inspired by his writing. Of notable importance to the argument is Burke's conceptualization of identification. Burke sees identification as a precursor to persuasion, acting as an essential component of rhetoric. As such, identification

between the text and the audience(s) is a necessary component of any rhetorical act. It is a necessary early step in the process of forming "the people" as McGee conceptualizes it. Equally important, though, is that to identify with one thing is to disassociate with another. As Burke famously put it, "identification is compensatory to division."[21] When McGee sees competing myths fighting to create peoples, he sees a battle over identification. McGee argues that even though certain people commonly subscribe to certain mythical conceptions of reality over others, those understandings remain constantly challenged by new myths and personal experiences. In other words, identification does not remain stable. Popular media are just that—mediums— where such competing myths are distributed to peoples. Given the proliferation of media, rhetorical critics cannot ignore this influence on how people identify with certain ways of seeing the world and reject others. Thus, identification is one significant factor in how media act as equipment for living.

The focus on the audience has drawn attention to the basic need of identification between audience and text. Given this unstable nature of identification, the concept of identification alone does not sufficiently serve as equipment for living. The media serve as equipment for living by going further, directing attention to certain ways of seeing more often and to greater degrees for certain audiences than for others.[22] This does not happen because of a single rhetorical act, mediated or not. Instead, rhetoricians find that identification with a combined set of rhetorical texts that reinforce similar ways of seeing the world helps form peoples and produce equipment for living. Put simply, this is a rhetoric of socialization, of how people come to see themselves in the world and how they should live within it. Such claims are the foundation of constitutive rhetoric.[23]

Maurice Charland's essay on constitutive rhetoric formally identifies how rhetorical texts function together to shape and reshape peoples. Drawing from Black, Burke, McGee, and other scholars, Charland challenges the idea that rhetoricians can assume an already existing audience. Charland argues that some rhetoric "calls its audiences into being," forming "the people" through the rhetorical act itself. For Charland, the ideological effect of constitutive rhetoric plays three key roles: 1) the process of constitution in terms of collective subjects, 2) the "positioning of a transhistorical subject," and 3) the construction of an illusion of freedom for those constituted.[24] Using the theoretical framework established by Louis Althusser, Charland argues the first ideological effect hails people into being through an ideology that places the individuals into a collective experience. They see themselves as part of a larger narrative of what it means to be a part of that collective. It is the ideology of the (seemingly) existing narrative that draws their attention in the first place. The second ideological effect extends the narrative. The story is not a recent one but a narrative with a long history in which the ideology has had time to grow roots and become normalized. Finally, the third ideological effect produces the illusion of freedom. Peoples are constituted in opposition to other possible constitutions, seemingly giving them agency. However, Charland notes such constitutions rely on narratives that, like stories in movies, are already directed toward an ending point. "Constitutive rhetorics…have power because they are oriented towards action," but those rhetorics prescribe a course of action for the constituents. People feel they have the ability to act, but the ideological effect of constitutive rhetoric forces them "to act as to maintain the narrative's consistency," driving them down a set path with little room for deviation.[25]

As McGee notes, the constitution of a people is a process. Charland goes further, exploring that process in terms of three ideological effects of constitutive rhetoric. A

contradiction seems to arise here: How can a process be determined by its own effects? The answer is found by remembering identification is in flux. Charland uses Burke's notion of identification as the means by which individuals connect together to constitute a people through the rhetoric's ideology. If that identification is in flux, the process of constituting a people remains an ongoing concern, in constant need of new rhetorical interaction in order to continue to thrive. Charland argues this is a result of the way new constitutive rhetorics build on old constitutions.[26]

One of the most important characteristics of the media is that often media texts produce messages that center on similar concepts. McGee, for example, notes the significance of multiple rhetorical messages appearing simultaneously in the process of shaping a people. Using myth specifically, McGee sees the constitution of an audience as arising from this competition of myths. He argues, "It is difficult to get a clear view of a 'people' by analyzing a single myth."[27] The media are useful to rhetorical critics because it becomes easy to see how media texts combine with or oppose other texts to construct meaning or are influenced by existing ideologies already formed through such interaction. As I argue in Chapter I, this combination of texts within the media is an important reason to consider the Stewart/Colbert universe as a whole.

The literature on constitutive rhetoric shows the production of peoples and the way they adapt over time are often the result of the circulation of myths. Cultural narratives spread a variety of similar and often competing myths. While the narratives play an important role in how the myths circulate, to function as myth the narratives require a shared understanding of the nature of myth. This is something that is so common it is often taken for granted, quite probably due to the age of myth and its frequent use in cultural discourse. However, understanding how myths are constructed and that they are used to guide people to action, an essential characteristic

of myth's function as constitutive, requires a way of understanding how thoughts are constructed and how they are to be applied. In other words, myth is a logic shared among people. While specific myths shape peoples, myth as a logic is a necessary precursor that needs to be present before individual myths can function as constitutive.

In *Mythologies*, Roland Barthes does not use the term logic to describe myth. However, his construction of the function of myths provides an important framework in seeing how myth is a logic. Barthes describes myth as "a *system* of communication."[28] While a system is not the same thing as a logic, systems function with an internal logic that allows them to continue. The leap to logic from Barthes' system is not a large one, and one that is made more justifiable if Barthes' emphasis on myth as a semiotic system is considered. Semiotics is an inescapable consideration for ironic adaptation because, like myth, it is based on a double-codedness of meaning as the myth stands in for a larger cultural directive.[29] Also like myth, it requires a shared relationship of understanding between producer and audience. It is the shared logic of myth that provides the reading code people use to understand how a myth functions. The same will be said for ironic appropriation. The established reading code for myth and ironic appropriation make them logics that must be shared by the producers and the audience for meaning-making to occur. This is, of course, not to suggest that a person may only comprehend one logic. In this dissertation, I address moments where producers and audiences may make the rhetorical choice to switch between logics to best suit their needs. This also does not mean that someone who understands how a logic functions must buy into it.[30] In fact, many of the texts used in this dissertation base their textual content off of mocking the logic of myth. The point is not to assume that producers or audiences are dupes who do not understand a competing logic,

but instead that they make active choices to employ one logic over another for their own constitutive purposes.

This highlights one of the significant contributions of this dissertation: to show how logic functions in the rhetorical process of constitution. Previous research on constitutive rhetoric has focused on myth as the driving constitutive force and making a jump to logic might seem quite radical. As I argued above, however, myth functions in a way that requires shared logic among people. I argue myth remains the driving link in how scholars have considered constitutive rhetoric is because, until recently, it has been the most obvious and frequent logic applied to how ideas are circulated among people. There is little reason to downplay the role of myth as a constitutive force in today's society and, in fact, myth will be referenced throughout the dissertation as vital to how conservative news media guides its audiences. In the 21st century, though, it seems as if myth may no longer dominate the logic of constitution as it has in the past. As mentioned at the beginning of this introduction, I argue that the alternative logic ironic appropriation now exists that also serves as a constitutive rhetorical force.

Barthes notes at the end of *Mythologies* that myth functions best for right-leaning rhetorical arguments. Barthes argues "the Left always defines itself in relation to the oppressed."[31] In contrast, the Right aligns with the powerful, and it is through myth that the powerful, or oppressors as Barthes calls them, is able to reproduce a world that reinforce that power.[32] Barthes' characterization of the Left and Right stems from the historical origins of the terms. During the French Revolution, politicians in support of French king and his policies took to the right of the National Assembly, while those that encouraged revolution moved to the left.[33] Barthes refers to the oppressed the Left aligns itself with as the "proletarian or colonized," linking the historic French roots of the term with its then-contemporary equivalent.[34] These

terms, as used throughout this dissertation, apply Barthes' distinction with left-leaning politics as those that encourage the questioning of normalized power structures and right-leaning politics those that serve to endorse those institutions.[35]

Barthes saw myth as depoliticized speech where "the oppressor conserves [the world as it is], his (sic) language is plenary, intransitive, gestural, theatrical; it is Myth."[36] Myth eternalizes, a rhetorical effect desired for right-leaning discourse. Barthes acknowledges, of course, that leftist views do circulate through myth as well, and that myth remains a common option for those who attempt to share leftist messages with society. Left-leaning myths, however, are "inessential" according to Barthes, unable to relate to the same shared human experience as right-wing myths. Barthes notes this is because the left-leaning myth always sides with the oppressed and is unable to present the same shared myths as those who possess power in society. The shortcoming of myth for leftist politics described by Barthes opens the door for an alternative logic that can be better suited to meet the needs of leftist politics. Such politics in today's society are often marked with diverse and potentially contradictory messages, a desire to link peoples, and an understanding that the world is more complex than it seems. A coherent, unifying myth often flies in the face of these trends, leaving myth to be less useful for left-leaning politics than it is for the politics of conservatives. Thus, if myth is depoliticized speech, Barthes argues, "There is therefore one language which is not mythical, it is the language of man (sic) as a producer; wherever man (sic) speaks in order to transform reality and no longer to preserve it as an image."[37] I argue the logic of ironic appropriation is just that, politicized speech that places people in the roles of producers who wish to transform reality. While there may be more than one non-mythic approach to communicating, the logic of ironic appropriation addresses these common trends in left-leaning politics and is an important alternative to myth in

American society. By exploring the logic of ironic appropriation and how it functions as a constitutive rhetorical tool for those who choose to follow it, I argue this logic places the formed publics toward a path of citizen engagement and political action, and that engagement impacts the peoples' attitude toward political judgment in society.

　　Ironic appropriation is best illustrated in terms of its relationship to the most common constitutive rhetorical tool: myth. While I argue that ironic appropriation shares many similar functions as myth, particularly as a constitutive force, it differs greatly in how messages are constructed, shared, and consumed. Myth is circulated through narratives. While there are many myths that may have complimentary and/or competing narratives, each narrative and myth functions in a similar way. As Charland notes, myths are seemingly transhistoric. Myths pull from a longstanding history where past events relate to present-day situations in the effort to guide peoples.[38] Think, for example, of the myth of the Western frontier. Life in America during the time of Western frontier is often masked with confusion and fuzzy details, at least according to the myth. There is no specific start date of America's Western expansion nor is there an end date. This is because, according to the myth, America has always been about the Western frontier. With no beginning or end, the guiding principles of the myth, namely the pride and power of individualism and the destiny of expansion, are as applicable today as they were in the "beginning." Janice Hocker Rushing explains that while the dusty West may be long gone, the myth has adapted to include things like space. This is how myths function. When contradictions emerge or questions arise, myths adapt to ensure they continue to make sense. However, while the myth is malleable, the values of the myth are often more rigid. The Western frontier myth, for example, may move from the West to space, but it always remains guided by the notion of expansion and individualism and continues to encourage those who subscribe to the myth to

strive for those goals on both individual and national levels. For myth, confusion does not change the values of a myth, but, instead, the myth is adapted to make sense of the confusion.[39] Myth is depoliticized speech, for it gives things "a natural and eternal justification, it gives them a clarity which is not that of an explanation but that of a statement of fact."[40]

Unlike myth, ironic appropriation is about questioning and adaptation. As I argue throughout the dissertation, ironic appropriation sees gaps in logic and contradictions in discourse that produce confusion. Myth, according to Barthes, "could not care less about contradictions so long as it establishes an euphoric security," but ironic appropriation chooses to question the prevailing discourse and address contradictions head-on. [41] It is willing to recognize hypocrisies and the limitations of the circulating narratives which employ the logic. Such problematization allows for peoples to question why they believe as they do and search for answers to these questions that may inevitably alter the guiding values of the narrative. Thus, unlike myth, which adapts to keep people on the same path, ironic appropriation adapts to guide people toward a path that more appropriately addresses the concerns that have been raised.

The prevalence of myth in American culture makes finding an example such as the myth of the Western frontier that readers will recognize simply. The logic of myth also allows for more concrete and stable narratives that are easily relatable and identifiable. The logic of ironic appropriation permits no such luxury and remains an important consideration as to its rhetorical effect that will be addressed in this dissertation. Furthermore, explaining this logic and how it is constitutive will be one of the essential contributions of this dissertation. However, to help form a brief understanding of the logic of ironic appropriation, let me return to the site of textual analysis that will be used throughout much of this dissertation: the Stewart/Colbert universe.

Ironic Appropriation and Politics

While the obvious connection between the shows is that *The Colbert Report* is a spin-off of *The Daily Show*, both are also connected, I argue, because they constitute an audience with a particular political agenda by employing the logic of ironic appropriation. Although the shows take different approaches in terms of usage of irony, both shows create an almost identical audience.[42] These shows are antithetical parallels to the Fox News myth approach. While Fox News employs myth to encourage audiences to continue down a right-leaning conservative path, the Stewart/Colbert universe employs the logic of ironic appropriation to encourage audiences to question the media, politics, and their relative position in the world. The Stewart/Colbert universe is willing to recognize the gaps in logic that are produced by supporters of their own political agenda and, at times, themselves. This reflexive, critical approach to politics is one essential characteristic of ironic appropriation's constitutive nature.

To be constitutive, the logic must hail its people. This is accomplished by the use of a shared ironic sensibility, a collective understanding of intertextual readings and allusions, and the encouragement of interactivity. However, it must also guide its audience toward a particular course of action.[43] A rhetorical logic that creates a public with members who simply enjoy the same type of media fails to serve a critical function that has implications on society. By examining the logic of ironic appropriation and how it not only creates an audience but guides them toward action, I argue this logic serves a purpose in society that may serve to counter much of the prevailing mythic discourse. Of the three principles of ironic appropriation addressed in this dissertation, interactivity is the most explicit in providing a call to action for the people. Take, for example, the large political rally held by both Stewart and Colbert in Washington, D.C. known as the Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear. The rally provided a space for the constituted

members of the audience to gather and interact with each other. However, both irony and intertextuality also contribute to the way ironic appropriation provides equipment for living, encouraging audiences to be active political participants. Participants at the rally, for example, wore costumes and produced ironic signs to parallel and critique similar actions performed by participants in the Tea Party rallies held in 2009-2010. Irony as a textual device is inherently political. While those politics may serve to subvert or reinforce dominant power structures, irony's purpose is to place the audience members in a position where they go beyond the text to apply the concepts to their lives. Similarly, intertextuality encourages audience members to make connections for the purposes of understanding their position in the world. Although less inherently political than irony, intertextuality can be used to allow audience members to see beyond a particular text and encourages them to seek out how various texts can be interpreted and connected to shape and reshape meaning. Each of the three principles can thusly be employed under the logic of ironic appropriation to place a public into action as both an intellectual endeavor as well as a physical production of political participation.

Until this point, I have written about ironic appropriation with an optimistic tone. The principles of irony, intertextuality, and interactivity on the surface all seem to lend themselves toward this tone as they are often associated with progressive change. Forms of irony are often seen as subversive, intertextuality encourages open reading, and interactivity provides agency for people.[44] Although these readings are possible, the logic of ironic appropriation shows that the material consequences of these principles do not always match the theoretical possibilities. This limitation draws attention to the final contribution of this dissertation, how ironic appropriation positions its audience toward judgment. Constituting a public and putting it into action are important rhetorical effects of this logic, but they do not necessarily ensure that action will, in

fact, bring about positive social change. As I pointed out above, the logic of ironic appropriation and myth function in many similar ways. Myth points its audience toward a particular set of actions that reinforce a preexisting set of principles. While ironic appropriation encourages dialectic thinking and consideration of alternative and shifting cultural values, it remains a logic that must be accepted in order to function. Just as people may not buy into mythic logic, people may not subscribe to ironic appropriation even if they understand how it functions. Throughout this dissertation, I take the process of constitutive rhetoric a step further by considering how the constituted public is positioned to make judgments about the world, to take action on those judgments, and how those judgments support or challenge a trend toward incommensurable viewpoints in today's political climate.

Since Aristotle, rhetoric has been connected to concerns of judgment. Aristotle spoke of rhetoric as a *techne*, an artistic endeavor for argumentation that is used by rhetors to guide their audience toward judgment.[45] For Aristotle, judgment was a necessary tie to rhetoric as rhetoric played an important role in the courts. Barbara Warnick argues rhetoric's role in judgment, if it is to be for the public good, must be tied to *phronesis*, a practical wisdom that ultimately leads to action. As she puts it, "Rhetoric's aim as a *techne* is systematically to produce and judge arguments that can be applied by *phronesis* to produce right action."[46] As I have argued, the logic of myth serves as a guide toward *phronesis*, helping rhetors "produce and judge arguments" about their world and lead a constituted public toward action. The logic of ironic appropriation, I argue, performs the same function, helping rhetors produce arguments and simultaneously judge them and others based on that logic.

Considering the history of rhetoric, there is no reason to accept that myth alone is the only constitutive force. As John Sloop and Kent Ono remind us, "there are no absolutes, that it is

the human condition to be caught within conflicting logics of justice that are culturally struggled over."[47] Myth and ironic appropriation, I argue, are two such conflicting logics that ultimately lead toward judgment. Such logics produce texts with rhetorical messages that help guide their constituted peoples to see the world in particular ways and guide them toward action, the sort of equipment for living mentioned earlier with Burke. James Jasinski argues rhetorical texts produce the standards of judgment with which people are expected to proceed. He notes, "[I]mplicit (and occasionally explicit) standards of judgment are established through rhetorical performances, revised and/or rejected as a result of argumentative exchanges, and—finally— employed by audiences as a resource for apprehending and resolving the issue(s) in dispute."[48] What this means is that, through rhetoric, the principles of judgment can emerge, and rhetors can use their rhetoric to establish a differing standard of judgment than perhaps otherwise expected. This is what Sloop and Ono mean when they refer to "logics of justice that are culturally struggled over." Bonnie Dow and Mari Boor Tonn provide one such example in their study of former Texas Governor Ann Richards. Dow and Tonn argue Richards' rhetoric consistently used a feminine style that was ultimately able to establish her logic of judgment, something that was used to help her make many successful arguments as a politician. The significance, according to Dow and Tonn, is that Richards' style was not an adjusted rhetoric that succumbed to the masculine style that dominates politics but instead was an entirely separate style, one with which many in the public identified, that permitted her to make judgment on her own terms.[49] As I mentioned above, there is no reason to doubt that the logic of myth continues to dominate how peoples are constituted. However, as Sloop and Ono argue and Bow and Tonn point out, alternative logics, such as ironic appropriation, exist not only to constitute an audience but also guide them toward a specific form of judgment.

If many alternatives may exist, then why focus on the logic of ironic appropriation? A significant reason ties back to judgment, rhetoric, and the problem of incommensurability. Nola Heidlebaugh uses that exact phrasing as the title of her book about contemporary rhetoric and judgment. Her subtitle points to her solution to the problem: recalling practical wisdom. In doing so, Heidlebaugh returns us to the issue of *phronesis* pointed out by Warnick. In terms of judgment, incommensurability is the notion that two sides are disparate down to a philosophical core rendering effective judgment about the issues impossible. Scholars like Heidlebaugh and Sharon Crowley have argued that, in contemporary society, such incommensurability is not only believed to exist but dominates public discourse, resulting in an inability to discuss issues and make judgment across lines as well as the elimination of any desire of the public to bother discussing the issues in the first place.[50]

Heidlebaugh argues the desire for consensus is a significant cause of incommensurability. An adherence to consensus presupposes a "correct" way of being and knowing. Holding onto such Enlightenment ideals, Heidlebaugh fears, will forever perpetuate the current discourse on incommensurability.[51] Crowley's focus on incommensurability, specifically between liberalism and Christian fundamentalism discourses, stresses a need for an agonistic turn. Drawing heavily from Chantal Mouffe, Crowley acknowledges the discourses circulating in each sphere are damaging to democracy because of their inability to see past the naturalization of their own belief systems. What is lacking, according to Crowley, is an American ability for rhetorical invention to work through such conflicting discourses.[52] Heidlebaugh attempts to provide a means to achieve such rhetorical invention in the hopes of disrupting the dominant discourse about incommensurability. She proposes a shift from a rule-driven "spectator judgment" to "active artistic judgment," where people must judge what they say and hear, or more

importantly, how people go about the choice of what to say next.[53] The result of such a shift provides a means for artistic rhetorical invention that may allow society to remove the barrier against political progress that results from current views of incommensurability that halts discussion.

The concern over rhetoric, judgment, and incommensurability is a primary concern of this dissertation. As Barthes points out, myth is a tool best suited for the right.[54] I argue that ironic appropriation is one of the alternative logics Barthes suggests may be better suited for the left. Such a logic, which separates one public from another, has the potential to further push the sides apart and perpetuate incommensurability to a higher degree. However, the logic itself is based on values of inclusion and provocation. Such values suggest the logic of ironic appropriation would produce and encourage active artistic judgment and potentially diminish the view that the opposing sides are incommensurable. Exploring how the rhetoric of ironic appropriation functions regarding judgment and incommensurability is an important component of this argument, as a better understanding of the relationship between ironic appropriation and judgment will help society know if subscribing to this logic is helping encourage healthy political activity or, perhaps, strengthening one of the key reasons for current political tensions.

Thus, the goal of this dissertation is to explore the logic of ironic appropriation as a constitutive rhetorical force in contemporary media and society. My argument is guided by the desire to explain how this logic is constitutive, how it places formed publics into political action, and how that action guides judgment, positioning a public more or less toward incommensurability. While these three concerns anchor the project, they cannot be understood without a clearer understanding of the logic of ironic appropriation and its principles. To help

illustrate the logic and its constitutive effect, the dissertation is organized around each of the three principles: irony, intertextuality, and interactivity.

Explaining Ironic Appropriation

Before introducing these three principles, I want to explain why I have chosen to call the logic ironic appropriation. The choice is made with the admitted understanding of the slippage of most of the terms involved. As will be described below, neither the concept of irony nor appropriation (or the two term, intertextuality and interactivity, that make up its application here) has any sort of stable meaning in academic research or in everyday discourse. To apply the term ironic appropriation to the logic described in this dissertation accepts the limitations inherent in each of its composition terms, but also serves to explain what is occurring in the media and society. Thus, while there is a multitude of different ideas as to what irony is or what interactivity is, to name just two of the many complicated terms, it is the purpose of this dissertation to draw attention to a logic that uses particular applications of these terms for specific purposes, while acknowledging other functions of these terms remain valid for other uses in society that do not fall under consideration here.

While the choice of the term ironic will be made clear in the discussion of irony below, the choice of appropriation requires explanation. Appropriation as is used here is made up of two concepts: intertextuality and interactivity. Intertextuality, as will be used, draws from two strands of scholarship that present two interrelated but different meanings. On the one hand, intertextuality is used to describe the way texts borrow from and reference each other. On the other, intertextuality includes concerns of how texts do not have fixed meanings but, instead, are open to a variety of interpretations. In many ways, both of these definitions relate to the concept of interactivity. As I show below, interactivity is perhaps the least definable of all the terms used.

Here, I focus on interactivity as a process of establishing a link between producer, text, and audience as well as one that encourages the generation of discourse, often through the creation of related intertexts. This connection between interactivity and intertextuality is the reason I have chosen to use one term to represent them both. The choice to use appropriation stems from the way the logic encourages critical (re)production. Unlike adaptation, for example, which may result in an uncritical direct copy, appropriation implies the borrowing of something existing for the creation of something new. [55] Throughout the dissertation, I argue the principles of intertextuality and interactivity encourage the production of new texts that extend critical discussion and encourage political action. Because of this, appropriation, I argue, is the most fitting term for this logic. That does not, of course, negate the necessity of differentiating the usage of these complex terms. In the following chapters, I explore each of the three primary principles of the logic of ironic appropriation separately in terms of their usage in the Stewart/Colbert universe.

For some, it may seem that *ironic appropriation* is an unnecessary term and that the logic of *irony* alone permits authors and audiences to create constitutive texts. This point is duly noted, as inherent to irony is the double-codedness (having more than one signified meaning for a particular signifier) of intertextuality that requires a degree of interactivity between text, author, and audience.[56] I argue, though, variations of intertextuality and interactivity go beyond their involvement in ironic discourse. While irony requires these other principles, intertextuality and interactivity have gained a complexity that requires a deeper understanding of how each function individually and in relation to each other. The Stewart/Colbert universe is not simply ironic. Intertextuality and interactivity play an essential role in not only helping constitute an audience but also provide key tools for encouraging the audience members to become participants in the

political process. Therefore, it is important to understand specifically what role irony plays in the process for it has been shown through centuries of usage that irony alone cannot produce an alternative to the myth.

Principle 1: Irony

The problem with writing about irony as a rhetorical process is the complexity of the concept. For example, is irony a process which is shared between producer and audience? While this is an important assumption about irony upon which the arguments contained in this dissertation hinge, Linda Hutcheon's study of irony reveals this has not always been the case, with producers often seeing irony as a tool of textual construction. In fact, while it has often been acknowledged the audience is a part of irony, its function in the process of irony has not always been of concern.[57] That is as much a product of rhetorical criticism itself as it is irony in general, but the inclusion of the audience in recent years complicates the matter further.[58] Yet these are in some ways the simple complexities of irony. I have yet to mention the various types of irony such as situation irony, dramatic irony, or irony of fate. Other common concerns exist as well. David Kaufer and Christine Neuwirth, for example, point to the fact that irony can be broken down into usage as reinforcing, ridiculing, or refuting a target audience or audience's point. Elsewhere, Kaufer breaks down these uses of irony further, suggesting rhetors can use irony to create bonds between the rhetor and the audience, separate the two, or keep multiple potentially hostile audiences at bay from the rhetor or each other.[59] This, of course, assumes at least two audiences exist and returns theory back to the concerns of rhetorical personae. While not placed in the language of the rhetorical personae in scholarship, it can be seen how irony may, in fact, produce a third persona that is not acknowledged by irony. But as Kaufer and Neuwirth remind us, irony has certain norms, of which the norm of irony is getting the non-literal interpretation.

So, unlike Charles Morris' fourth persona, in which the in-the-know audience is not the primary target but the one that could read through the literal to find another meaning, with irony the fourth persona *is* the intended audience.[60] Does this make those that "get it" the primary audience? If so, what becomes of those that do not get it? Certainly they do not simply switch places and become the fourth persona, as this would not meet any of the criteria set forth by Morris. They are also not ignored by the rhetor, making a third persona perception illogical. Is this, then, a fifth persona? However, as we will see below, irony requires a double-codedness of the message. If the rhetor must be double-coded, then are these questions even relevant? Should irony scholars be concerned more with perhaps two simultaneous rhetor positions than another audience one? Would such a focus take the direction of research back away from the significance of the audience? I have intentionally troubled the issue here to illustrate the point quickly that even if irony is studied from a strictly rhetorical point of view (which, again, is not the only option), it is a deeply complex concern.

In Chapter II, I address these concerns about rhetorical personae in terms of irony and intertextuality, but it remains to be explained how irony functions as part of the larger logic of ironic appropriation. This will, of course, necessitate the consideration of the producer-text-audience relationship, the use of irony, and its rhetorical effect. However, my goal is not to break down irony into another taxonomy or argue that one particular use of irony is better than another. Hutcheon's study of irony has shown that to be a fruitless game. In fact, what makes irony in the current age of media interesting is that the various forms and usages of irony are employed in such a way they are difficult to distinguish from each other. Kaufer argues this is a common occurrence with irony, as rhetors may attempt to address multiple audiences at once for quite different purposes.[61] As I argue, though, texts that employ the logic of ironic appropriation limit

the number of audiences to the ones that share the same logic. This fact will prove significant to the concerns of this dissertation, especially the way ironic appropriation impacts the ability of subscribers to make judgments. Therefore, while I recognize the vastness of irony, this dissertation will focus on a much more narrow use of irony, one in which it is assumed the producer and audience comprehend and agree upon the logic in which the texts are produced.

While this narrows the focus of irony, another problem arises: Is what I have observed in the logic of ironic appropriation really irony? I argue the answer is yes, although the reality is much more multifaceted. In fact, I use the term irony here as a specific concept, but also as a blanket term that incorporates several other rhetorical strategies that are interrelated, namely parody, satire, and pastiche. David Kolb has critiqued such a blanket use of irony. He argues, "Too many critics and philosophers class every kind of doubling as irony. This collapses a wide variety of attitudes and stances into one opposition between simple inhabitation and ironic distance."[62] To a degree, I agree with Kolb. As this dissertation reveals, the texts that employ the logic of ironic appropriation slip in and out of these strategies, at times combining two or more at a time. Calling it all irony oversimplifies each concept as well as their interaction. However, needing a term for the set of interrelated concepts, irony seems to be the best choice. With Kolb's criticism in mind, I have made the distinction between irony as the principle of ironic appropriation (the blanket term) and irony as the rhetorical trope as clear as possible. The choice of the term irony as the blanket over parody or satire (pastiche is not a viable option as will be shown below) stems from the fact it is a necessary element within the other three while irony itself is not reliant upon the others. As Hutcheon puts it, "[O]ne of the reasons for the confusion in terminology between satire and parody lay in their common use of irony as a rhetorical strategy."[63] Thus, as the dissertation shows, some texts will emphasize certain strategies of irony

over others (for example, Colbert uses parody primarily while Stewart is mainly satire), the textual slippage between the rhetorical strategies requires a broader concern than, say, a study of satire alone. Later in the dissertation, I go into greater detail regarding the usage of these strategies in ironic appropriation in general and the Stewart/Colbert universe specifically. Now, however, I want to provide a brief introduction of each of these strategies to differentiate their usage in ironic appropriation.

Irony

It is necessary at this point to settle on a definition of irony as a specific concept to be used throughout the dissertation. As Hutcheon's work reveals, there are too numerous of conceptualizations of irony for any single definition to encompass every theoretical component.[64] Thus, any commitment to a definition of irony (or satire, parody, or pastiche for that matter) will inevitably omit or contradict facets of the concept held dear by irony theorists. Having made that caveat, I propose to treat the term irony, one component of the principle of ironic appropriation, as *a rhetorical trope used to suggest an alternative to a literal interpretation for the purposes of judgment through dialectical thinking*. It is worth stressing here this does not encompass a general definition of irony intentionally. What is presented here is a definition of irony as it relates to the *principle* of ironic appropriation. To understand why this is the definition chosen to represent this part of the principle, it helps to return briefly to the larger theoretical discussion of irony.[65]

In her book *Irony's Edge*, Hutcheon details the theory of irony and its shifting usage throughout history. Hutcheon argues that irony has always had what she calls an edge to it. By edge, Hutcheon refers to the fact irony exists for the purposes of contrasting viewpoints and providing a sharp criticism. Even the simplest use of irony, such as saying "Nice weather!" on a

particularly snowy day, draws barriers and makes judgments. In this specific example, there are

few that would not align themselves with the ironist as few people would consider a blizzard nice

weather. But it is making a judgment about the weather and, in some ways, those that would

support such weather. Hutcheon argues what makes irony a unique and useful rhetorical strategy

is this inherent criticism and judgment that accompanies its usage. "The dominant view of

classical rhetoricians," Hutcheon says, "has been that irony involves certain judgmental attitudes

(beyond simple criticism) on the part of the ironist."[66] What Hutcheon means by "classical

rhetoricians" is not made clear, but it should be noted that many contemporary rhetoricians agree

that irony may help produce politically productive judgment. Scholars such as Kenneth Burke,

Wayne Booth, David Kaufer, and James McDaniel have all contributed to the understanding of

how irony helps produce judgment. Other scholars like Richard Rorty have written about irony

as an idealized form of political engagement that has significant benefits for making judgment.[67]

Of course, not everyone sees irony as a productive political tool. Jedediah Purdy has

argued irony necessarily weakens its critique because of the dual nature of the message.

Judgment from irony becomes diluted because irony stems from an already hesitant ironist.[68]

Critiques of irony have gained some traction in the past decade. James McDaniel, for example,

notes that some have "hailed 'The End of the Age of Irony' and the return to political certitude

has become again fashionable 'post-9/11,' in part because nationalistic self-certainty better than

self-doubt provides the faster, surer, and more potently persuasive means by which to counter

public terror and terrorism—or so the story goes."[69] In the past decade, it has been seen how

such nationalistic self-certainty, promoted through myths about America, has brought trouble to

the American public. Yet during that time, shows like *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report*,

not to mention other ironic "news" sources like *The Onion*, have gained popularity. These shows,

which I argue use the logic of ironic appropriation instead of myth, provide an outlet for those who are unsettled by the unquestioning support for America and its policies. Thus, the concern over irony's function as a tool for judgment permeates this dissertation.

Hutcheon suggests the criticism and judgment inherent to irony makes irony a valuable tool for political discussion, especially because communication occurs in a system where power dynamics are by no means equal. The edge of irony provides a means for marginalized voices to enter into conversations.[70] Of course, the political function of irony is not limited to the oppressed. In *A Theory of Parody*, Hutcheon notes that parody and the irony inherent in it can be used as a tool to reinforce power structures as much as it can be used to subvert them. As she puts it in *Irony's Edge*, "Since irony involves social interaction, there is no reason for it to be less implicated in questions of hierarchy and power (in terms of either maintenance or subversion) than any other form of discourse."[71] Irony is, thus, a rhetorical tool for producing political discourse, yet it holds no inherent political affiliation.

Still, despite irony's edge, it does not necessarily encourage acrimonious opposing viewpoints. Hutcheon notes, "Irony can be both including and excluding as it suggests both complicity and distance."[72] It is both dialectic (Hutcheon's term is inclusive) and differential.[73] Irony is "not a static rhetorical tool to be deployed, but itself comes into being in the relations between meanings, but also between people and utterances and, sometimes, between intentions and interpretations."[74] In other words, while irony produces judgment it also links the various sides of an argument. Such relations give hope to the possibility that irony, and in turn ironic appropriation, may build bridges and reduce incommensurability.

Therefore, I do not treat irony as a barrier between those who subscribe to the logic of ironic appropriation and those who do not. The aim of my criticism is to show how ironic

appropriation is constitutive, and, therefore, I do endorse the claims of scholars such as Wayne Booth, who sees irony as concerned with producing what he calls "amiable communities" as it is with deriding victims.[75] Yet this view of irony needs to be matched with the view of Kenneth Burke, who treats irony with the assumption that those who use irony do so having a "fundamental kinship" with the object of their criticism. Jeffrey Murray sees Burke's take on irony as being distinctly concerned with ethics. Burke argues that irony is dialectical. By being dialectical, Burke argues, "True irony, however, irony that really does justify the attribute of 'humility,' is not 'superior' to the enemy."[76] Burke here sees value in irony as a means to see the mistakenness of society. Irony, thus, can function to encourage an active artistic approach to judgment that sees the other as not evil but mistaken. As Murray puts it, "[T]he trope of irony is the constant reminder that the plot is still unfolding and that the final act has not yet been written."[77] This will play an important role in how the irony principle influences judgment and civic action from the perspective of ironic appropriation subscribers.

As I have described above, there are many different perspectives on irony and its function in political discourse and judgment. It is, however, this Burkean sense of irony that is of particular concern to my arguments. If the logic of myth is to guide people toward action that points to a predetermined conclusion, the logic of ironic appropriation requires a path that leaves those conclusions mystified. Therefore, Burke's true irony, which possesses a kinship with both those who subscribe to the logic as well as those who do not, will be the idealized form of irony emphasized in this dissertation.

However, as I have stressed, irony's function is neither necessarily transformational nor destructive. It is not the purpose here to glorify ironic appropriation as an idealized rhetorical logic for positive change, one that is incapable of problems. As McDaniel puts it, "Liberal irony

hardly guarantees a more loving and just world. In fact, it can seem to defer it all too effectively."[78] While it would be nice to hope ironic appropriation is a logical solution to improving society's material conditions, such is not necessarily the case. Throughout the chapters, I refer to several examples throughout the Stewart/Colbert universe of moments where the apparent kinship between the ironists and object of criticism appears questionable. I argue, theoretically, Burke's version of irony is ideal to ironic appropriation. But as McDaniel is quick to point out, while scholars like Richard Rorty can produce a theory of irony that presupposes a positive social change, real application of irony slips in and out of the idealized form.[79] Therefore, what theoretical developments regarding irony made in this dissertation will explore how the Stewart/Colbert universe exemplifies Burke's true irony in the logic of ironic appropriation, but the criticism of this dissertation addresses how other uses of irony, such as irony that paints its target as villainous, impacts the rhetorical effect of ironic appropriation.

Such failures of rhetoric arise often when the irony is applied in parody, satire or pastiche. That is not to suggest these three strategies are necessarily counter to the rhetorical purposes of ironic appropriation. In fact, they are necessary for its success in most cases. Again it should be reiterated that irony is an essential component of parody, satire, and pastiche. A further distinction between these terms will help illustrate their relationship to each other as well as irony, and explain how their limitations may impact the rhetor's effective use of ironic appropriation.

Satire

If irony is a trope of double interpretation for the purposes of making judgment, then satire is argument that employs irony for the purposes of specific inquiry and critique. Recall the example of irony from before about saying "Nice weather!" when it is snowing. If saying "Nice

weather!" when it is snowing is ironic, a related satire might involve a narrative where climate conditions have become so horrible that the characters involved truly do feel the snow is nice weather. Such a satire, perhaps about global warming, would use irony to provide a specific critique about a social condition.

In *Satire: A Critical Reintroduction*, Dustin Griffin traces the history satire theory from its classical roots to its contemporary uses. While no single definition of satire traces through history, what is clear from Griffin's analysis is that satire is focused on expressing judgment of social concerns. As Hutcheon puts it, satire "is both moral and social in its focus and ameliorative in its intention."[80] Amber Day, for example, points to several examples of how mainstream media producers as well as smaller groups and individuals have used satire as a means to dissent and contribute to the political discussion. Christine Harold has also discussed the ways activists used satire to produce alternative media that challenge the status quo.[81] Specific to the concerns here, Robert Hariman has argued that the satire in *The Daily Show* encourages an active dissent against dominant power structures among its audience. Satire, thus, is made for the purposes of leading toward social change that, in at least the mind of the satirist, will improve the conditions of the people.[82]

Not all scholars necessarily agree, though, that the result of satire matches its seemingly altruistic intent. Kenneth Burke labels satire a frame of rejection, seeing satire as a means of attacking "*in others* the weaknesses and temptations that are really *within himself* (sic)."[83] For Burke, the satirist sees him- or herself as someone above the critique, creating a sense of superiority and moralistic right and wrong. This is an important concern regarding the use of satire. In Chapter I, I argue the nature of ironic appropriation provides a sense of checks and

balances where this is concerned and allows and encourages a higher degree of reflexivity in ironic rhetoric than seen in Burke's time.

Griffin argues that, in the traditional sense, the satirist is assumed to be "quite certain in his (sic) own more position; he (sic) also assumes such certainty in his (sic) readers."[84] Here the relationship between satirist and audience, what Booth labeled an "amiable community" for irony, is again assumed to exist where the degree of uncertainty between two parties involved is relatively low.[85] My argument that the logic of ironic appropriation is constitutive aligns in some ways with Booth's view. The notion of a shared logic implies to at least some degree the producers, audience, and texts must share a sense of how texts are to be encoded and decoded. However, Booth makes his claim based on the assumption that irony is relatively stable. In Griffin's words, Booth's belief is "that the use of irony does not plunge us into a sea of doubt and indeterminacy."[86] Griffin disagrees with Booth, arguing contemporary satire involves an unstable irony where the author is unable to maintain control of the meaning-making process. This is because various social and cultural conditions permit a given ironic statement to have more than two signified meanings. As a result, Griffin argues, audiences can only feel relatively confident in determining what the satire is critiquing and not necessarily what alternative is to be supported. Furthermore, such instability also muddles how far the satirist is going in the critique, leaving audiences unsure as to whether the object of satire's criticism is to be completely discounted or not.[87] As such, without further clarification the satirist is unable to constrain meaning. Christopher Tindale and James Gough argue if irony is required to be spelled out, it loses much of its rhetorical effect.[88] Authors, thus, must find a way to incorporate into the satire a means to help with the meaning-making process without diminishing the effectiveness of their rhetoric. Furthermore, such instability in the irony suggests that irony alone is insufficient to

constitute a people. I argue the other principles of intertextuality and interactivity serve to aid the principle of irony in the process of constitution to better direct the people toward a shared understanding without diminishing the rhetorical effectiveness of the message. This is true for both satire as well as parody.

Parody

To define parody in its simplest agreed upon terms, one would say parody is irony through imitation. However, few would probably argue is sufficient to summarize the practice of parody. While satire is, for the most part, accepted as a criticism of society through irony, parody theory is less certain of what it is. Parody may exist on its own terms. However, parody is often used to produce satire, leading many to conflate the two terms. Given both are tied to irony, it is reasonable to see why some may choose parody to produce the criticism found in satire and why some may not recognize the differences between the two. Yet, some significant differences exist. Most notably, satire uses irony to make a broader critique of society, whereas parody makes a direct imitation of something for the production of criticism. Some may say this means parody is necessarily satirical. However, as Hutcheon points out, the act of imitation in parody creates what she calls the paradox of parody. By imitating another text, parody reinforces the reality of that original and in some ways necessarily normalizes its existence. In other words, a parody loses its function if the object of imitation is erased; therefore, the original must in some way be maintained if the parody is to persist. As a result, Hutcheon argues some have seen parody as potentially being used to reinforce problematic systems of power instead of being a tool that necessarily challenges them.[89]

While it may not be apparent at first, a dispute over whether or not parody is necessarily humorous is tied to this concern of how parody is used.[90] This is no trivial point, particularly as it

pertains to the consideration of parody here as most of the texts which follow the logic of ironic appropriation incorporate humor. Gérard Genette argues parody that lacks humor is possible, yet it is, thus, immediately different than parody and becomes a concept which has no label. Hutcheon, however, takes the opposite stance, suggesting that placing humor as a defining characteristic of parody limits its critical function and, therefore, serious parody is as much parody as humorous parody.[91] The point Hutcheon is trying to make is well-argued and well-taken. It does seem irresponsible to discount a whole series of texts because their approach is serious, especially since much of what would be of interest to imitate in life is also serious. Margaret Rose argues that, for a time, period Hutcheon's humorless parody was a reality. However, that is no longer parody's function in society. Rose, a historian of theory, traces the history of parody through ancient, modern, and post-modern usage. Humor, Rose notes, was an important factor in parody through ancient times but began losing its emphasis during modern artistic movements. With the rise of postmodernism, however, Rose argues humor has returned as a vital component in parody. "[The] reaffirmations of the laughter of parody," Rose states, "have all been 'post-modern' in returning some recognition of the comic or humorous aspects of parody to it, and together with an understanding of its more complex, intertextual, meta-fictional or 'double-coded' characteristics and potential."[92]

To take the humor out of parody is to take out much of its critical power of derision. While I believe that such a thing as serious parody as Hutcheon describes it may exist, I agree with Genette that it perhaps should have another name other than parody. The humorous nature of parody adds to its judgment by creating further critical distances between the imitation and the original. Serious parody runs the risk of being too similar and allowing the parody to be mistaken for metaphor, which may be seen as an endorsement of the original. As Hutcheon pointed out,

parody can normalize the original through its imitation, but this is done as an often unintentional consequence of the open reading potential of parody. Eliminating the humor runs the risk of emphasizing the similarities between the original and the imitation instead of the intention of parody, which is to mark the differences.[93]

Because of this, parody will be treated in this dissertation in more specific terms than I originally laid out in this section. Having considered the theory of parody, the term will be used here to represent *the critical use of intertextuality through humorous irony*. I have switched the term "imitation" in this definition to "intertextuality." Below I explain what I mean specifically by intertextuality as it better encompasses the complexities of parody than imitation alone. However, before explaining this second principle of ironic appropriation, there is one more use of irony that must be addressed.

Pastiche

Of all the strategies placed under the principle of irony, pastiche is the one which has been paid the least theoretical consideration. While the term itself has a long history, pastiche as it is used in contemporary studies of irony almost always refers to Frederick Jameson and his critique of a particular type of parody in postmodern art. Jameson argues:

> Pastiche is, like parody, the imitation of a peculiar or unique, idiosyncratic style…But it is a neutral practice of such mimicry, without any of parody's ulterior motives, amputated of the satiric impulse, devoid of laughter and of any conviction that alongside the abnormal tongue you have momentarily borrowed, some healthy linguistic normality still exists.[94]

As Genette puts it, "[P]arody is transformational in its relationship to other texts; pastiche is imitative."[95] I question Jameson's assumption that pastiche is "devoid of laughter" necessarily.[96]

However, the bulk of his argument remains a concern for studies of irony such as this one. As I have argued throughout, while I am setting up a theory of the logic of ironic appropriation, there is no reason to assume that it functions perfectly at all times. Just as certain narratives may advertently or inadvertently stray audiences away from a myth's determined course of action, texts constructed under the logic of ironic appropriation may employ irony in a way that is not conducive to its larger purpose. Therefore, although pastiche does not figure prominently in this dissertation, its occurrence in the Stewart/Colbert universe is pointed out to illustrate how pastiche impacts the effectiveness of an ironic appropriation text.

As a principle of ironic appropriation, irony has been shown to have a large degree of complexity. I have narrowed the focus of irony for the purposes of this study and provided four uses of it that will be found in the Stewart/Colbert universe. Although I have gone into detail here, much more needs to be said about how the principle of irony functions for ironic appropriation. This will be done in Chapter I, where it can be better contextualized in the Stewart/Colbert universe. I now turn to the second principle of the logic of ironic appropriation: intertextuality.

Principle 2: Intertextuality

Media scholars drawing from cultural and literary theory adopted the term intertextuality to reference an audience-centered focus on meaning making. Graham Allen explains this version of intertextuality "reminds us that all texts are potentially plural, reversible, open to the reader's own presuppositions, lack in clear and defined boundaries, and always involved in the expression or repression of the dialogic 'voices' which exist within society." Brian Ott and Cameron Walter explain that while media scholars see intertextuality in this light, a separate branch of scholars, drawing heavily from the rhetorical tradition, have noticed an occurrence of mediated texts

referencing each other within the texts themselves. This was also given the term intertextuality.[97] The former concept of intertextuality endorses the notion that the "inter-" refers to the audiences' interactions with the "textuality" of the world. The latter use of the term, however, relies upon a different interpretation of the prefix "inter-," instead using it to mean how various texts interact with each other. With these foundational meanings established, it is possible to explore the relationship between the two concepts.

There is a particularly notable word missing from the glossary in the back of Graham Allen's book *Intertextuality*. Between "invariant" and "jouissance" is no mention of the term intertextuality, but there is a fairly good reason that a book about intertextuality cannot define it. Allen's book traces through the history of the term, tracing its origin to Julia Kristeva in the 1960s. Yet Kirsteva, according to Allen, draws on work even further back, suggesting that the concept of intertextuality begins with the work of Mikhail Bakhtin. From Bakhtin to Barthes to structuralism to postmodernism, Allen argues for a conceptualization of intertextuality that is bound to how audiences interact with texts.[98] Yet, even this construction of textuality is tied to something outside of the audience alone. Bakhtin, for example, notes that languages (for the purposes here, texts) "may be juxtaposed to one another, mutually supplement one another, contradict one another and be interrelated dialogically."[99] This is no trivial point. If the cultural/media side of intertextuality begins with Bakhtin, we see from the beginning a simultaneous focus on the text.

Bakhtin also talks about the hybrid construction of parody as an example of this function of language. Throughout intertextuality studies on both sides, parody plays a prominent role including being a major focus in Jonathan Gray's work on *The Simpsons* and Ott's vision of intertextuality in films such as *Spaceballs*.[100] Bakhtin notes that parody has a hybrid

construction, where "an utterance that belongs, by its grammatical (syntactic) and compositional markers, to a single speaker, but that actually contains mixed within it two utterances, two speech manners, two 'languages,' two semantic and axiological belief systems."[101] Envisioning this "speaker" as author, the author of the text combines in parody two visions of similar events, his or her own with that of the vision of the original author.

As Allen notes, though, the introduction of Barthes' work fundamentally shifted the direction of this version of intertextuality. Interestingly, Barthes' specific use of the term intertextuality seems to be closer to the rhetorical usage that emerged decades later than the audience-focused interpretation that would emerge after Barthes. Barthes notes:

> [T]he intertextuality in which any text is apprehended, since it is itself the intertext of another text, cannot be identified with some origin of the text: to seek out the "sources," the "influences" of a work is to satisfy the myth of filiation; the quotations a text is made of are anonymous, irrecoverable, and yet already read: they are quotations without quotation marks.[102]

Although Barthes here uses the term to reference the interaction of texts, his purpose is to undermine the "myth of filiation," a notion that one text is a child to another and can somehow be explained by understanding the parent text. It is through this understanding of intertextuality that we can see the deviation toward audience interpretation. Barthes sees texts, not works. Works are author-driven, texts are open to interpretation. Intertextuality in this sense encourages an understanding that meaning does not come from the author alone, but from the perspective of the audience, which is nuanced with unique cultural experiences.

Furthermore, in Barthes we see the foundational understanding of polysemy, the concept that a text has multiple meanings. If the parent-child nature of intertextuality is a myth, if there is

no hierarchy to a text, then audiences are able to find varying meanings in texts. According to

Barthes, a work is intended to be consumed by an audience. "The Text…decants the work (if it

permits it at all) from its consumption and recuperates it as play, task, production, practice."[103]

When texts become the objects of play for audiences, the idea there are intended or "correct"

readings of a text is cut off, leaving audiences with the freedom to find alternative usages for a

text. Gray summarizes these competing notions of textuality nicely: "Often, though, the attempt

to understand the text has taken the form of examining it as a singular autonomous entity, and as

a sealed packet of meaning. Another tradition of research has examined the interrelation between

this packet of meaning and its audience."[104] With the fundamental notion of the text altered,

there is diminished reason to focus on it as a scholar. As literary theory and cultural studies

turned to the audience, the description of intertextuality shifted with it.

The polysemous nature of the text permitted audiences to find alternative readings. The

nature of these alternative readings was perhaps made most famous by Stuart Hall. Hall

acknowledges the complexity of the televisual sign system. The way signs are encoded (by

producers) and decoded (by viewers) are by no means the same. Meanings of these signs become

dependent on the code system of the user in the process of interpretation.[105] While Hall

acknowledges the existence of multiple codes, he further argues that codes are not necessarily

open or individualized. The codes through which people interpret the texts, thus, lead to various

possible reading positions. Others have extended Hall's work on reading codes. In *The*

Nationwide Audience, David Morley provides an empirical study of these reading codes, using

his ethnographic research to support Hall's claim that subordinate classes may find readings in

texts that best suit their needs.[106] John Fiske optimistically argues that texts needed to contain

multiple, perhaps even contradictory, readings from which a mass audience could select

oppositional readings. Fiske recognizes that hegemonic ideologies are reinforced though the dominant reading position encouraged by texts. However, Fiske argues that audiences are able to use a text in its entirety, including its connections to other texts to find other meanings.[107] Fiske relies upon Althusser's notion of ideology, suggesting that audiences are hailed by ideologies and, at the moment of hailing, become subjects to that ideology. It is worth noting that this was the same concept used earlier by Charland to argue how rhetoric is constitutive.[108] If prior to reading the text audiences see themselves as somehow distinct from the ideology of the text, though, Fiske argues they escape that subjective position and are, thus, able to open up a text to alternative readings.

Deriving from this history of research, Gray offers several models of intertextuality. While the first three models have little bearing on how intertextuality will be used in my arguments about the logic of ironic appropriation, the fourth model is worth considering in some detail.[109] Gray proposes a fourth model, the one he develops in his research, which draws from Fiske. In this model, Gray describes intertexts as "'ghost texts,' but these ghosts come from the reader, and from other texts the reader has encountered."[110] For the Fiske-inspired Gray, intertextuality is a result of audiences' experiences with other texts. It is important to note that, in this quotation, Gray acknowledges the text-to-text component of intertextuality. How these texts relate to one another would become vital to the rhetorical side of the term. However, here Gray refers less to that in-the-text reference to other text and more to the various audience-to-text interactions. For Gray, all meaning-making goes through the reader. This is a stark difference compared to the rhetorical conceptualization.[111]

It was around the time of Hall and later Fiske that the emergence of the referencing of texts within texts that would ultimately come to be the focus of rhetorical studies of

intertextuality began. This was, of course, not a new phenomenon. I have used Bakhtin to show how the audience-centered strand of intertextuality originally was concerned specifically with the text. The foundations of the producer-centered rhetorical interpretation can similarly be traced back to one of the founding scholars of the audience interpretation. Although Kristeva's explorations of intertextuality led to the audience-centered perspective, her work speaks to textuality as well. She writes, for example, "[A]ny text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another."[112] Although Kristeva's quotation shows the age of this phenomenon, it is through postmodernism that it saw a dramatic increase in the media. Jim Collins is one of the earliest scholars to talk about intertextuality in this form, discussing how shows such as *thirtysomething* and *L.A. Law* would reference each other, despite being on different networks, to boost the authenticity and "quality" of the programs. At first Collins is specifically focused on the text. However, later in his essay he argues this sort of referencing has a specific effect on the audience, including how they use these texts to create meaning.[113] Thus, from the beginning both strands of intertextuality recognized the significance of the other. What prevented a merger of intertextuality at this time was that neither side took consideration of the other much further than a basic acknowledgement of its significance.

Just as media scholar Gray proposes four models of intertextuality, rhetorical scholar Frank D'Angelo describes six modes of intertextuality, which I argue can be narrowed down to a single conceptualization of the term: textual allusion.[114] These forms of intertextuality fit into Ott and Walter's rhetorical conceptualization, which they define as "an identifiable stylistic device consciously employed by the author or in the case of media texts by the producer, to invite a particular audience response." [115] The media scholars have remained focused on what

audiences do to texts. Ott and Walter position rhetoricians to look at intertextuality as what texts do for audiences.

As I have shown, both concepts emerged out of the same phenomenon of textual referencing. When media scholars took the concept down the path of the audience, they did not return to focusing on the root association to the text. With the rise of postmodernism in the 1980s, the focus on the text returned. Many media scholars, already ingrained with a specific focus, continued down the audience-centered path. Rhetorical scholars, however, who picked up on the text-driven form of intertextuality, have been more willing to address the other side.

Perhaps the most sensible reason for this inclusion of the audience in the rhetorical construction is that the audience-focused conceptualization outdates the rise of intertextual references. Thus, when scholars like Collins write about intertextuality in the text-centered sense, he also acknowledges that audiences use these texts to create meaning. From the perspective of rhetorical criticism, this focus reflects much of the work of Kenneth Burke, particularly his argument that texts provide "equipment for living."[116] Ott, a Burkean scholar and an authority on the rhetorical side of intertextuality studies, has written extensively about the way intertextuality functions to provide equipment for living. Ott writes that intertextuality is composed of three different stylistic strategies. The first mode, explicit reference, "involves a character explicitly commenting on some other media text, and often in a manner that is ironic."[117] As the examples used throughout will show, this is done frequently in the Stewart/Colbert universe as the hosts will often provide commentary to the audience about other texts. The least common, according to Ott, is direct appropriation, where texts embed another text within itself. In this Stewart/Colbert universe, this is not so uncommon. Often in the Stewart/Colbert universe direct appropriation is used to support the explicit reference commentary. The final mode of intertextuality is parodic

allusion, where texts parody other texts to provide social commentary. *The Daily Show*-created book *America: The Book* is an excellent example of such parodic allusion, as it both parodies the typical history textbook in general and its content parodies specific moments and texts found throughout American history. It is through the patterns of these appropriations and allusions that a connection is found between the rhetorical function of intertextuality and the audience who uses that intertextuality to create meaning.[118]

Ott notes understanding these patterns often requires a deep knowledge of the show, television, and culture in general, but those who can grasp the intertextuality develop an understanding of the text owing just as much to their own work as it does to the producers'. Their reward for this effort, according to Ott, is a relief from the guilt of watching television in a world where it seems people must be constantly working. This intertextuality also acts as a moment of rhetorical invention, encouraging viewers to think in non-linear ways, make connections and judgments out of disconnected concepts, and debate these connections with others who enjoy the programs.[119]

But where does that debate occur? As noted earlier in regards to irony, the ability to "get" the references and jokes made in these programs often creates a bond between the fans and the show. Fandom often leads to participants trying to play out various roles with the texts, such as expanding the original material with fan fiction, seeking out information about the program before it airs, and willingly responding to calls-to-action made by the programs themselves.[120] This extra work strengthens the bonds between the program and the fans. More importantly, though, it creates a community of people with a shared understanding of the world working together to approach the puzzles life throws at them. This collective activity encourages

rhetorical invention, allowing audiences to work together to create new meaning that can go significantly beyond the constraints of original texts.[121]

The principle of intertextuality provides an important contribution to how the logic of ironic appropriation constitutes a people and provides them with equipment for living in a fragmented world. This is a result of how it leads toward a relationship between text and audience. Intertextuality forces a critical engagement with the texts. Because there is no simple narrative to accept, audiences must negotiate the gaps in logic in order to find meaning. While the text may open a path down which audiences may travel, there is no guarantee the gaps will be filled the same way each time. As intertextuality has a given emphasis on reflexivity, the audiences may not only turn a critical eye on the subject of the text but also the text itself. Also, the idea of being active and artistic in looking at the world is exactly the kind of mindset Heidlebaugh proposes is necessary for people, both individuals and groups, to find ways of breaching seemingly incommensurable viewpoints found in current debates.[122] Finally, it provides a means for people to "re-find" each other. Fragmentation of both individual and group identity has occurred, and intertextuality allows audiences to bridge those gaps *together*. I highlight these three impacts of intertextuality because they emphasize another principle of the logic of ironic appropriation: interactivity.

Principle 3: Interactivity

While it may be seemingly self-explanatory, the term interactivity has become so open to interpretation that scholars seem to find it necessary to explain their conception of interactivity from the rest of the pack.[123] Unfortunately, these scholars address an important hiccup with the term, one that cannot be ignored here. Interactivity can be seen and studied from a variety of viewpoints. One popular approach is to study different types and functions of interactivity

possible in new media. Studies of this type draw heavily on authors like Sheizaf Rafaeli who sees interactivity as a specific process in which information must be able to engage in a three-step back and forth message transmission. According to Jennifer Stromer-Galley, interactivity research of this kind focuses on "the quality and prevalence of features site producers make available (e.g., multimedia, click polls, hyperlinks feedback forms) and how users engage those features." Authors like Gi Woong Yun have taken this approach to expand on theoretical understandings of various components of interactivity.[124]

Stromer-Galley compares this interactivity-as-product perspective with an interactivity-as-process approach. Seeing interactivity as a process highlights human interaction and social implications of interactivity. This social component of interactivity has been shown to have a significant impact on both individuals as well as groups both on- and off-line. Sherry Turkle shows that the internet provides such opportunities, using examples of how online interaction impacts identities of those with off-line impairments and how online funerals ease collective pains for gamers. Barbara Warnick connects interactivity back to Kenneth Burke's view that identification with some is connected to the separation from others. Rhetorically, people find meaning in themselves and their world through how their interactions bring them together or separate them.[125]

It is not quite as simple as a "product" versus "process" binary, however. Yun, for example, uses both Turkle and Rafaeli to study how the components of interactivity impact and reflect the social dimensions. One important area in this overlap discussed by Yun is the concept of active and passive users.[126] From the product perspective, a passive user could still interact with the system yet little meaningful social contribution may come from it. Of course, active and passive usage is not a binary but instead a spectrum of possibility. Sally McMillan's work, such

as her models of interaction possibilities, shows one way activity varies. Users can engage with the system (such as font size), each other (such as in chat rooms), or with the text itself (such as wikis or discussion forums). Given the nature of the system, however, user-to-user may become user-to-document interaction. Think of social networking sites like Facebook, where a wall-to-wall conversation may appear on the news feed of a third party outside of the ensuing discussion. This example brings to the forefront the problem of a product/process binary, as the *process* of interacting with each other *produces* new information (which is then subject to interactivity). Russell Richards argues, however, that it is active use of interactive elements that is most useful to researchers, educators, and users. In fact, Richards proposes a focus on interactivity-as-generation, where interactivity is more concerned with how users contribute to texts than how the simply use them.[127]

As a principle of ironic appropriation, interactivity is defined here as the *sharing and construction of meaning-making through exchanges between producers, texts, and the audience*. This includes how producers deliver their rhetorical messages (for example, through television, websites, political rallies), how users are able to interact with the text, and how users are able to interact with each other. Each of these plays a pivotal role in not only spreading the constitutive messages but also provides the opportunity for the public to become active citizens in the group by discussing the messages and, at times, even become textual producers themselves. In the latter case, interactivity-as-generation becomes a very useful conceptualization. The interactive principle of ironic appropriation allows for the generation of two different forms of text: "original" content and discussion about other texts, both of which contribute to public discourse.[128] In this way, the logic of ironic appropriation is not only a constitutive force but one that creates a participatory culture, where, according to Henry Jenkins, varied users can converge

to produce a collective intelligence that is greater than the sum of its individual parts. Interactivity, thus, plays a significant role in guiding the public toward political action and moral judgment. Interactivity, thus, rhetorically functions as a means to social and media criticism that reflects and challenges discourse and helps users make sense of their world. In other words, it helps provide equipment for living.[129]

Interactivity has not played a significant role in rhetorical studies at this point. While it is not an explicit concern often, some scholars have noted the significance of interactivity to rhetoric. Thomas Farrell argues that, for example, constitutive rhetoric is necessarily interactive, stating, "[Constitutive rhetoric] also brings the audience more directly into the picture as a co-participant in the emergence of such identity."[130] In his discussion of the rhetoric of intertextuality, Ott comments that oftentimes audiences will need to work together with the text in order to decipher meaning. Harold has written about how culture jamming as an interactive process provides rhetorical opportunities that would be unavailable through traditional messages. Similarly, scholars like Day and Joshua Atkinson have written on how the rhetoric of alternative media, itself an interactive practice, affords marginalized publics the opportunity to speak when traditional media would otherwise silence them.[131] Rhetorically, we can see that interactivity serves to introduce the public into the conversation and allows for messages that would otherwise be ignored.

It is for these reasons that interactivity is a necessary principle of the logic of ironic appropriation. I have argued the logic of ironic appropriation is an important rhetorical tool that constitutes audiences and guides them toward action and moral judgment. After exploring the rhetoric functions constitutively and how ironic appropriation is an increasingly prominent alternative to myth as a constitutive logic, I have described the three guiding principles of the

logic of ironic appropriation: irony, intertextuality, and interactivity. This dissertation focuses on each of these principles in turn, illustrating not only the theory behind them but also critically analyzing their function in the Stewart/Colbert universe to explore the rhetorical effectiveness of ironic appropriation. In the following pages, I explain how this is accomplished in greater detail.

Preview of the Critique of Ironic Appropriation in the Stewart/Colbert Universe

In this dissertation, I examine how the logic of ironic appropriation functions as constitutive rhetoric using the Stewart/Colbert universe as a guide. The Stewart/Colbert universe is meant to include not only *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report*, but the many related books, websites, political rallies, political advertisements, merchandise and appearances on other programs. Because of the principle of intertextuality, it would be illogical to ignore the many intertexts that exist within the larger universe of Stewart and Colbert. Each of the three principles of ironic appropriation has emphasized the relationship between producer, text, and audience. Therefore, at times, particularly in Chapter III, it will be important to examine how the audience consumes and extends the textual universe by employing the logic of ironic appropriation itself.

The Stewart/Colbert universe as a whole has produced over a decade's worth of television programs combined, three bestselling books, several audio CDs, two primary websites both of which include discussion forums, one political rally, dozens of interactions on other programs like *The O'Reilly Factor* and *Late Night with Jimmy Fallon*, congressional testimonies, and, most recently, a Political Action Committee (Colbert Super PAC). While a comprehensive analysis of *all* of this material would strengthen the arguments I make throughout the dissertation, such an analysis is neither feasible nor necessary. Therefore, the texts will be limited to some degree. This limiting will primarily be on the television programs, as I focus primarily on the Stewart/Colbert universe from 2010-2012. This choice has been made to

provide not only a more reasonable set of texts to consider, but also because both shows had a change in tone and focus at this time. The shift from a Republican to a Democratic presidency meant a shift in attention away from criticizing the Bush administration and the media's depiction of him toward a sense of possibility. The uncertainty at the time as to how the American public would come to accomplish the "Hope" and "Change" Obama promised was matched quickly with the switch to a Republican controlled House of Representatives in 2010. During this time period, political discourse escalated and extremist thinking began to become a regular marker of mainstream media. This makes this time period well suited for the study of the logic of ironic appropriation, a logic that endorses critical questioning of society and its political climate with the hopes of overcoming incommensurability.

Essential to the arguments made throughout this dissertation is an understanding of the audience. I argue the rhetoric of the Stewart/Colbert universe is constitutive. Furthermore, because that rhetoric is constructed through the logic of ironic appropriation, the audience members share that logic and are provided by the Stewart/Colbert universe with the equipment for living necessary to participate as critics in their everyday lives. Thus, it is the logic of ironic appropriation and the rhetorical construction of the audience through the Stewart/Colbert universe that forms the audience of which I critique. However, this audience is not of my own creation. The longevity and success of *The Daily Show* provides some justification of the audience's loyalty to the universe, but research conducted by Harris Interactive Research suggests the Stewart/Colbert universe's audience is devoted, engaged, and politically active. Beth Coleman, Vice President for advertising sales for MTV Entertainment Networks, which owns Comedy Central that airs *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report*, told the *New York Times* the audience members "have a deep personal connection to the shows…'they wear these

shows like a badge.'" According to the Harris poll, around 40% of the audience watches the show two-to-four times a week and both hosts beat out all other late night competition in terms of how the audience loves the programs. The audience, at least according to how MTV Entertainment Networks presents it to advertisers, is intelligent, clever, and ready to support the Stewart/Colbert universe.[132]

My argument coincides with these claims. I believe an understanding of why the audience is constituted in this way and has such loyalty to the Stewart/Colbert universe can show the power of the logic of ironic appropriation in the process of rhetorical constitution. This dissertation is organized around the three principles of ironic appropriation, irony, intertextuality, and interactivity, so that I may illustrate and critique the rhetorical effectiveness of each of these principles. While each chapter focuses on a specific principle, throughout it should become obvious these principles rarely work alone. Therefore, while in the chapters I address the principle on its own terms, in the Conclusion I analyze the way in which the principles can come together in order to form a logic that can serve as a constitutive force for left-leaning rhetoric.

Chapter I centers on the principle of irony. As I have shown, irony as a blanket term is composed of ironic strategies such as satire, parody, and pastiche. In this chapter, I critique how the combined use of Colbert's parody and Stewart's satire forms the Stewart/Colbert universe. In this universe, the different forms of irony play off each other in order to position the audience to identify with the rhetoric. I argue the varied uses of irony in the Stewart/Colbert universe hail an audience tuned into the double-codeness of the message and encourages rhetorical constitution.

As I mentioned earlier, however, it is not the goal of this dissertation to propose that ironic appropriation is a perfect process. While I do argue it is a better solution for left-leaning rhetoric than myth, like mythic narratives, ironic appropriation messages vary in degrees of

effectiveness. As a logic, ironic appropriation must be generally shared among producers and audience if constitution is to be possible. This is true for the logic of myth as well. However, unlike the logic of myth, which allows for a variety of different and competing myths, I argue the logic of ironic appropriation encourages a different ideological mission: questioning and, if necessary, adapting and altering discourse and power structures.

Therefore, in the second section of Chapter I, I critically analyze the effectiveness of the irony principle when used toward this ideological mission as well as the limitations that arise when irony is used in ways that betray the purpose of ironic appropriation. Specifically, this second section examines how the rhetoric of the Stewart/Colbert universe places the audience into action. Focusing heavily on two of the books in the universe, *America (The Book)* and *I Am America (And So Can You!)*, I argue the use of irony helps the rhetoric of the Stewart/Colbert universe serve as equipment for living. As such, the audience members can engage with the rhetoric to produce a mindset that encourages criticism of media and discourse in their lives. However, such equipment for living is not produced without flaws. In this section, I argue that the use of pastiche as an ironic form limits the ability for rhetoric to serve as equipment for living and distracts the audience from the ideological purposes of ironic appropriation.

In the final section of Chapter I, I continue this criticism of irony as a constitutive principle by exploring the way irony can be used to position a constituted audience toward judgment. I compare the noted successful use of irony in the Stewart/Colbert universe to the ½ *Hour News Hour*, a program that aired for a year on Fox News that was intended to serve as a conservative alternative. As a logic, ironic appropriation encourages audiences to build connections between seemingly disparate standpoints, and the double-codedness of irony combined with its built-in critique of society encourages the same sort of bridge-building

between perspectives. The logic of myth, however, encourages audiences to travel down a predestined path toward judgment, normalizing current perspectives along the way. Thus, as the *½ Hour News Hour* shows, when irony is used in a way that betrays its ideological purpose, the result is a failure of irony as a rhetorical tool.

Chapter II explores the second principle of the logic of ironic appropriation: intertextuality. Intertextuality encourages lateral thinking and consideration of how ideologies seemingly outside of the current narrative may, in fact, be shaping how an audience sees the world. Like irony, intertextuality is a rhetorical tool that aids in rhetoric becoming equipment for living for the audience. In the first section of Chapter II, I examine the varied uses of intertextuality in the Stewart/Colbert universe and how this usage encourages the audience to engage with the rhetoric to make meaning on its own. This use of intertextuality positions the audience to bridge gaps in logic and use the openness of texts to find connections that may otherwise be hidden beneath layers of ideology and discourse.

The chapter continues by expanding the critique of ideology and intertextuality. Here, I argue the use of intertextuality relies upon a shared relationship between the producers and the audience, something that is assumed throughout the dissertation. However, what makes intertextuality important is that understanding the cultural references in intertexts requires a level of cultural capital that not all audience members possess. Furthermore, because the rhetoric is presented through the perspectives of two middle-aged, (seemingly) upper-middle class, heterosexual, white males, the rhetoric is constructed in a way that privileges that perspective. This includes not only the types of intertexts with which this subsection of the audience would identify but also an understanding of the ideology behind those intertexts and the significance of the relationship between them. As such, I argue that the use of intertextuality runs the risk of

producing a third rhetorical persona outside of the producers (first persona) and the audience that most identifies with the hosts (second persona).[133] This third persona, essentially negated from consideration in the rhetoric, may be left out of the conversation entirely or, perhaps more problematically, may use the openness of the intertexts to read its own message into the texts and lead toward a reading that reinforces the literal message instead of the ironic criticism.

Because intertextuality requires a high degree of cultural capital, there is necessarily a spectrum of understanding of the intertexts. As a result, certain subsections of the audience are better positioned to "get" the intertextual references, privileging a fourth persona who is best situated to use the rhetoric as equipment for living. The fourth persona involves an audience that understands a message that is hidden within the rhetoric.[134] This fourth persona also constitutes the audience in such a way as to give the audience a potential sense of superiority over those who fail to understand the message in the same way. Using an example from *The Daily Show* in which Stewart gloats about conservative TV host Glenn Beck's cancellation, I argue that a lack of humility in the use of intertextuality, just as Burke argues it can for irony, can produce a fourth persona that runs the risk of reinforcing the viewpoint that those that do not get the message of the Stewart/Colbert universe are evil and ignorant.[135]

Chapter II concludes by exploring how the use of intertextuality can serve to encourage judgment that challenges the normalization of elevated discourse and incommensurability. Here, I argue that while intertextuality is an important rhetorical tool to bring in outside texts for the purposes of combining ideological perspectives and making social critique, creative use of intertextuality is not limited to bringing texts inward. The Stewart/Colbert universe makes use of the logic of ironic appropriation to create what I call outward intertextuality. Traditional intertextuality makes social criticism often by making references to the objects of criticism.

Because this criticism is contained within the universe, the objects are free to ignore the criticism levied against them. Outward intertextuality occurs when the critic inserts him- or herself into the object of criticism's text, making it difficult for the criticism to be ignored. Using Stewart's appearance on the CNN television show *Crossfire* as well as Colbert's testimony before Congress, I argue this outward intertextuality requires both the audience of the universe as well as the object of criticism to reflect upon the rhetorical message, ultimately taking a step closer towards reducing incommensurability.

The final principle of ironic appropriation, interactivity, encourages the audience to become more directly involved in the construction of the rhetorical message. In Chapter III, I explore the use of interactivity in the Stewart/Colbert universe and how interactivity plays a vital role in how ironic appropriation serves to constitute and guide its audience. The prevalence of interactivity in the Stewart/Colbert universe has not always been as predominant in terms of the universe's usage of the logic of ironic appropriation. This is not to say interactivity has never been a part of the universe. The shows are taped before live audiences with which the hosts can interact, a reality that often has some implication on how the material is delivered to the camera. Furthermore, both shows have user forums on their webpages where audiences can interact with the show as well as each other. Also, the programs have a number of taped segments where the hosts or anchors interact with members of publics (not necessarily *their* shows' public) that, inevitably contribute to the political message of the shows. While these are important areas of interactivity, the Stewart/Colbert universe has become increasingly interactive in recent years. *The Daily Show* has called on its audience for specific political participation, such as when it asked the audience to address their congressperson in response to the 9/11 First Responders Bill. Colbert's Colbert Nation (what Colbert calls his devoted followers) has been encouraged to do

everything from donate money to help keep an American Olympic team afloat to raise money for the education of American soldier's children through the website DonorsChoose.com. Lately, the Stewart/Colbert universe has increased the level of interactivity with the audience tremendously, producing the well-publicized joint effort The Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear as well as through Colbert Super PAC. By encouraging interactivity, the Stewart/Colbert universe encourages its public to take an active, participatory role in the formation of the rhetorical message.

In the first section of this chapter, I argue the varied uses of these interactive modes serve as part of the constitutive process. Often, the producers of the shows use these interactive forms to hail the audience into being. However, I argue the principle of interactivity permits the audience to participate in the rhetoric of socialization associated with constitutive rhetoric.[136] Furthermore, the audience members can use interactive modes to hail the producers as well as each other. As a result, the principle of interactivity contributes to rhetorical constitution in ways that go beyond what the producers' create for the Stewart/Colbert universe and allow the audience greater impact on the rhetorical message of the universe.

This critique of interactivity continues by considering the ways the principle places the audience into action. I argue that the audience is encouraged to become creative engaged citizens. While this sometimes involves the use of consumerism to encourage civic engagement, the audience is also put into action to participate in rhetorical pranks that shake up the meaning-making process and challenge presumed norms in society and politics.

Finally, the chapter concludes by analyzing the Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear. The Rally was a literal call to action in an effort to reduce heightened extremism in discourse. The Rally provided for the audience a number of interactive tools such as websites, mobile phone

applications, and the Rally itself to encourage the audience to generate new rhetoric that would challenge incommensurability. While I argue the Rally itself had a fundamental limitation, namely its insistence in the pretense it was apolitical, the use of interactivity in the Stewart/Colbert universe to produce the Rally shows an important way ironic appropriation can be used to turn the constituted audience into active participants in democracy.

The Conclusion brings together all of the material presented so far and reiterates the significance of the logic of ironic appropriation as a rhetorical tool. This chapter reviews the theoretical impact of ironic appropriation as a constitutive force that guides its citizens toward action and political judgment. Here, I return to the conclusions drawn about ironic appropriation in the Stewart/Colbert universe, highlighting both the way in which the producers and audience in this constituted public use the logic of ironic appropriation to shape and share their ideological position as well as the rhetorical limitations that arise when messages deviate from principles of the logic. Using the constantly evolving Colbert Super PAC as an exemplar, the Conclusion shows how the three principles of ironic appropriation can combine to act as a constitutive rhetorical force that can have important consequences on American society and politics. In the end, I argue that, by creating its rhetoric through the logic of ironic appropriation, the Stewart/Colbert universe does not constitute the cynical audience feared by some like Hart and Hartelius, but instead produces an engaged audience that desires to take the equipment for living provided by the universe and challenge incommensurability in discourse in the hopes of real social change.[137]

This dissertation contributes to rhetorical theory by introducing the concept of the logic of ironic appropriation and how it is playing a significant role in American politics by constituting an alternative public guided toward political action and judgment. The critical

component of this dissertation shows how each of the three principles of ironic appropriation, as well as the combined effect of the principles, act as rhetorical tools used to influence how the audience participates as politically active American citizens. Whether it is through postage stamps, political rallies, or PACs, the Stewart/Colbert universe has inserted itself in American politics. This dissertation examines how these producers have done this effectively, and the influence the Stewart/Colbert universe on making its constituted audience members active critics in society.

As a constitutive force, the logic of ironic appropriation has entered into society and began to play a role in the politics of the media and American citizens. While I have chosen to highlight the Stewart/Colbert universe here, this logic goes beyond these media texts. Other shows like *Family Guy*, *The Simpsons*, *American Dad*, and *South Park* also appear to follow the logic of ironic appropriation, using the logic's principles to varying degrees to bring an audience together and present an alternative means to see the world that guides them toward action.[138] The logic also permeates late night talk shows like *Late Night with Jimmy Fallon*, which in the past years has frequently featured Stephen Colbert. Each of these programs are ironic in tone, however, the increase of intertextual references and opportunities for audience interaction with this media shows how texts are not isolated, but are yearning to work off of one another to finding meaning. This is, of course, a drastic alternative to mythic constitution, which is focused on producing meaning.

The difference between a logic *producing* meaning and one with a *produced* meaning is of utmost importance here. Myth, which brings an audience together to point it down a produced path, limits the need for real citizen involvement other than to support existing power structures without question. By encouraging its public to producing meaning, rhetoric that follows the logic

of ironic appropriation produces a need and a desire for active citizenry. As the chapter on irony shows, this rhetoric is capable of encouraging the members of the constituted public to see themselves in others and, yet, still feel the need to question what seems normal about society. Looking at intertextuality in the Stewart/Colbert universe shows the interconnectedness of thought and the responsibility of an active citizen to recognize there are meaningful connections between seemingly disparate aspects of society and culture. Interactivity provides a means for those audience members to become active and incorporate their own voice into the discussion, providing informed and concerned judgment on issues impacting the world. Combined these three principles produce a logic that encourages the audience to see texts as living and adapting, a necessity in today's society because the world of that public lives and adapts as well.

McDaniel notes that some feel there is no place for irony in a post-9/11 America. The rise of mythic media since 9/11 appears to support this observation. McDaniel disagrees this is a necessary condition, arguing that instead irony can be used to challenge the accepted normalcy of power structures.[139] I agree with McDaniel, and argue that irony combined with intertextuality and interactivity has become an alternative logic in post-9/11 America that seeks to improve society. Studying that logic provides a means to understand how this media produces citizens that feel a responsibility to engage with the media, politics, and each other, in the hopes that, perhaps, they may find a way to renew an informed, active, and socially-conscious political body and diminish the normalcy of incommensurably in American life and politics.

Notes

[1] As of September 23, 2011, this product, an actual accepted US postage stamp, is available at

http://shop.comedycentral.com/Stephen-Colberts-Farewell-to-Postage-Postage/

M/B005MZHEW0.htm?utm_source=com:tcr:postagestamp:siteintegration:colbertnationcom:hp.

[2] The Colbert Report, "Return to Sender," *The Colbert Report* video, 3:42, September 14, 2011,

http://www.colbertnation.com/ the-colbert-report-videos/396672/september-14-2011/return-to-

sender.

[3] The Colbert Report, "Return to Sender."

[4] Matthew A. Baum, "Sex, Lies, and War: How Soft News Brings Foreign Policy to the

Inattentive Public," *American Political Science Review* 96 (March 2002): 106.

[5] Critics of these programs include Jody Baumgartner and Jonathan S. Morris, "*The Daily Show*

Effect: Candidate Evaluations, Efficacy, and American Youth," *American Politics Research* 34

(May 2006); and Roderick P. Hart and E. Johanna Hartelius, "The Political Sins of Jon Stewart,"

Critical Studies in Media Communication 24 (August 2007). For arguments in support of these

programs, see W. Lance Bennett, "Relief in Hard Times: A Defense of Jon Stewart's Comedy in

the Age of Cynicism," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 24 (August 2007); Robert

Hariman, "In Defense of Jon Stewart," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 24 (August

2007); and Don J. Waisanen, "A Citizen's Guide to Democracy Inaction: Jon Stewart and

Stephen Colbert's Comic Rhetorical Criticism," *Southern Communication Journal* 74 (April-

June 2009).

[6] For how these programs teach audiences, see Paul R. Brewer and Emily Marquardt, "Mock

News and Democracy: Analyzing *The Daily Show*," *Atlantic Journal of Communication* 15

(2007). For critical media concerns, see Geoffrey Baym, "*The Daily Show*: Discursive

Integration and the Reinvention of Political Journalism," *Political Communication* 22 (2005). For ethics in journalism, see Sandra L. Borden and Chad Tew, "The Role of Journalist and the Performance of Journalism: Ethical Lessons From 'Fake' News (Seriously)," *Journal of Mass Media Ethics* 22 (2007). Finally, for concerns of the carnivalesque and challenging discourse see, Paul Achter, "Comedy in Unfunny Times: News Parody and Carnival after 9/11," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 25 (August 2008); Mikhail Bahktin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (Bloomington, IN: Midland Books,1984); Zoë Druick, "Dialogic Absurdity: TV News Parody as a Critique of Genre," *Television & New Media* 10 (May 2009); and Priscilla Marie Meddaugh, "Bakhtin, Colbert, and the Center of Discourse: Is There No 'Truthiness' in Humor?" *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 27 (October 2010).

[7] Throughout this dissertation, I refer to the Stewart/Colbert universe. This is meant to include not only *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report*, but the many books they have also produced as well as their websites, political rallies, political ads and websites, and appearances on other programs. In Chapter 1, I argue why it is important to consider the Stewart/Colbert universe as a whole instead of separate texts.

[8] For discussions of myth and constitutive rhetoric, see Michael C. McGee, "In Search of 'The People': A Rhetorical Alternative," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 61 (October 1975); and Maurice Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric: The case of the Peuple Québécois," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73 (May 1987).

[9] Without further rhetorical criticism of existing media texts, it is difficult to suggest other texts that use this logic. Interested scholars should focus on texts that make use of the three principles of ironic appropriation: irony, intertextuality, and interactivity. As I argue here, they do not have to be used at the same time. However, the three principles should all be used to some degree as

the influence the general direction of rhetorical constitution. Some texts to consider may be *The Onion* or *Cracked*.com.

[10] Naomi R. Rockler, "Overcoming 'It's Just Entertainment': Perspective by Incongruity as Strategy for Media Literacy," *Journal of Popular Film & Television* 30 (Spring 2002).

[11] Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproduction," in *The Cultural studies Reader*, 3rd ed., ed. Simon During, 405-415. (London: Routledge, 2008); and Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (New York, NY: Continuum, 1972).

[12] See, for one example, John W. Bowers, Donovan J. Ochs, and Richard J. Jensen, *The Rhetoric of Agitation and Control*, 2nd ed. (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1993).

[13] Edwin Black, *Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method*, 2nd ed. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978); and Edwin Black, "The Second Persona," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 56 (April 1970).

[14] Herbert A. Wichelns, "The Literary Criticism of Oratory," in *Readings in Rhetorical Criticism*, 4th ed., ed. Carl R. Burgchardt, 3-28. (State College, PA: Strata, 2010); Black, "The Second Persona," 113; and Philip Wander, "The Third Persona: An Ideological Turn in Rhetorical Theory," *Central States Speech Journal* 35 (1984).

[15] McGee, "The People," 242.

[16] McGee, "The People," 245.

[17] These are not necessarily mutually exclusive myths. In fact, many overlap. Consider, for one example, how the myth of the Western frontier shapes heroism, feminism, and American identity simultaneously. For a few examples of each of these myths at work, see Michael L. Butterworth, "Race in 'The Race': Mark McGwire, Sammy Sosa, and Heroic Constructions of Whiteness,"

Critical Studies in Media Communication 24 (August 2007); Bonnie Dow, "Feminism, Miss America, and Media Mythology," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 6 (Spring 2003);

Thomas S. Frentz and Janice Hocker Rushing, "'Mother Isn't Quite Herself Today': Myth and Spectacle in *The Matrix*," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 19 (March 2002).

[18] McGee, "The People," 246.

[19] McGee, "The People," 236, 244.

[20] Kenneth Burke, "Literature as Equipment for Living," in *The Philosophy of Literary Form*, 3rd ed., 293-304. (Berkley: University of California Press, 1973), 304; Barry Brummett, "Burke's Representative Anecdote as a Method in Rhetorical Criticism," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 1 (June 1984); and Brian L. Ott, *The Small Screen: How Television Equips Us to Live in the Information Age* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007).

[21] Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 1969), 22.

[22] Despite my best efforts, the language of this statement still may be read as suggesting that the media as an industry is intentionally trying to form peoples. This is not my intention. As a rhetorical text, media texts reflect society as much as they serve to (re)produce it. I am not denying that certain mediated texts make strong ideological arguments. Quite to the contrary, such realities will play a major factor in the consideration of constitutive rhetoric later in this dissertation. However, each media text is but one way of many that certain rhetorical arguments are made. Rarely, I believe, the authors of these texts are trying to form new ways of seeing the world. The media acts as equipment for living to audiences precisely because the message of the media often serving as equipment for living for the author(s).

[23] Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric," 138.

[24] Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric," 138.

[25] Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," in *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, 2nd ed., eds. Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan, 693-702. (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), 699; Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric," 143.

[26] McGee, "The People," 242; Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric," 133.

[27] McGee, "The People," 247.

[28] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, Translated by Annette Lavers (New York, NY: Hill & Lang, 1972), 109.

[29] Paul Cobley and Litza Jansz, *Introducing Semiotics* (New York, NY: Totem Books, 2010).

[30] Linda Hutcheon, for example, writes of how it is possible to "get" parody without necessarily buying into it as a functional rhetorical tool. See Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms*, 2nd ed. (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2000).

[31] Barthes, *Mythologies*, 148.

[32] The theoretical developments and criticisms presented here are primarily concerned with the constitutive nature of rhetoric produced through the logic of ironic appropriation. The distinction between Left and Right, however, brings up a concern over the way ironic appropriation as a rhetorical tool presents a particular orientation toward democracy. Although it remains an important aspect of the rhetoric examined in this dissertation, this concern is large enough to warrant its own volume. It is my hope that the developments made here allow for such a study to occur in the future.

[33] Marcel Gauchet, "Right and Left," in *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past, Vol. 1 – Conflicts and Divisions*, eds. Pierre Nora and Lawrence D. Kristzman, trans. Arthur Goldhammer. (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1996), 242-245.

[34] Barthes, *Mythologies*, 148.

[35] The choice to continue the use of the terms Left and Right throughout this dissertation was made to extend Barthes' argument into contemporary constitutive rhetoric as seamlessly as possible. It is worth noting, however, that such a distinction between Left and Right is not as easily made in contemporary American politics. In fact, as I will argue, the nature of ironic appropriation is to encourage finding bridges between the two sides, at least for the purposes of creating meaningful and useful discourse. Thus, such a clear dichotomy goes away when ironic appropriation is used in an idealistic world. Of course, such an idealistic world does not exist. The rise of neoconservatism throughout the past century of American history, from McCarthyism to the power of conservative think tanks, has made liberalism as a modern construct nearly indefensible. This has made the gap between the Left and Right that rhetoric produced through ironic appropriation attempts to bridge that much wider. Thus, as I will argue in Chapter II, the left-leaning rhetors have to make compromises that privilege certain viewpoints and limit or negate others in the attempt to find some connection between today's Left and Right equivalents.

[36] Barthes, *Mythologies*, 149.

[37] Barthes, *Mythologies*, 146. For a complete discussion of myth and right/left politics see pages 142-156.

[38] Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric," 138-139.

[39] Janice Hocker Rushing, "Evolution of 'The New Frontier' in *Alien* and *Aliens*: Patriarchal Co-optation of the Feminine Archetype," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 75 (February 1989).

[40] Barthes, *Mythologies*, 142-143.

[41] Barthes, *Mythologies*, 70.

[42] The different in the shows' use of irony is discussed at length in Chapter I.

[43] Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric," 141.

[44] As I argue below, these are common assumptions, although certainly not always the case. In the pages below, I explore further the discussion of the three principles and their function as rhetorical tools.

[45] Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, trans. W. Rhys Roberts (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2004).

[46] Barbara Warnick, "Judgment, Probability, and Aristotle's Rhetoric," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 75 (1989): 309.

[47] John M. Sloop and Kent A. Ono, "Out-law Discourse: The Critical Politics of Material Judgment," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 30 (1997): 50.

[48] James Jasinski, "Rhetorical and Judgment in the Constitutional Ratification Debate of 1787-1788: An Exploration in the Relationship Between Theory and Critical Practice," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 78 (May 1992): 197.

[49] Bonnie J. Dow and Mari Boor Toon, "'Feminine Style' and Political Judgment in the Rhetoric of Ann Richards," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 79 (August 1993).

[50] Nola J. Heidlebaugh, *Judgment, Rhetoric, and the Problem of Incommensurability* (Columbia, SC: The University of South Carolina Press, 2001); and Sharon Crowley, *Toward a Civil Discourse: Rhetoric and Fundamentalism* (Pittsburgh, PA: The University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006).

[51] Heidlebaugh, *Judgment*, 1.

[52] Crowley, *Toward a Civil Discourse*, 16, 26.

[53] Heidlebaugh, *Judgment*, 142-143.

[54] Barthes, *Mythologies*, 142-146.

[55] Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* (New York: NY: Taylor & Francis, 2006).

[56] Hutcheon discusses this concept throughout, although she does not reference interactivity by name. Linda Hutcheon, *Irony's Edge: The Theory and Politics of Irony* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1995).

[57] Hutcheon, *Irony's Edge*. See also Margaret Rose, *Parody: Ancient, Modern, and Post-Modern* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) for a detailed discussion of the use of irony in parody throughout history.

[58] See the earlier section on constitutive rhetoric for a full analysis of incorporating the audience into rhetorical criticism.

[59] David S. Kaufer and Christine M. Neuwirth, "Foregrounding Norms and Ironic Communication," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 68 (1982); and David Kaufer, "Irony and Rhetorical Strategy," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 10 (1977).

[60] Charles E. Morris III, "Pink Herring & the Fourth Persona: J. Edgar Hoover's Sex Crime Panic," in *Readings in Rhetorical Criticism*, 4th ed., ed. Carl R. Burgchardt, 595-613. (State College, PA: Strata, 2010).

[61] Hutcheon, *Irony's Edge*; Kaufer, "Irony," 94-98.

[62] David Kolb, *Postmodern Sophistications, Philosophy, Architecture, and Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 133.

[63] Hutcheon, *Parody*, 52.

[64] See Hutcheon, *Irony's Edge* and Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody*.

[65] Again I must stress that my purpose is not to explore the various types of irony such as dramatic, Socratic, irony of fate, etc. While such distinctions have value to some scholarship, it is the overall theoretical function of irony that is of concern in this dissertation.

[66] Hutcheon, *Irony's Edge*, 38.

[67] See Kenneth Burke, *A Grammar of Motives* (Berkeley, CA: The University of California Press, 1969); Wayne C. Booth, *A Rhetoric of Irony* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1975); Kaufer, "Irony"; James P. McDaniel, "Liberal Irony: A Program for Rhetoric," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 35 (2002); and James P. McDaniel, "Speaking Like a State: Listening to Benjamin Franklin in Times of Terror," *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 2 (December 2005).

[68] Jedediah Purdy, *For Common Things: Irony, Trust, and Commitment in America Today* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999).

[69] McDaniel, "Speaking Like the State," 328.

[70] Hutcheon, *Irony's Edge*, 17.

[71] Hutcheon, *Parody*, 69-83; and Hutcheon, *Irony's Edge*, 40.

[72] Hutcheon, *Parody*, 67.

[73] Hutcheon, *Irony's Edge*, 58-59.

[74] Hutcheon, *Irony's Edge*, 13.

[75] Booth, *Rhetoric of Irony*, 28.

[76] Burke, *Grammar*, 514.

[77] Jeffrey W. Murray, "Kenneth Burke: A Dialogue of Motives," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 35 (2002): 30.

[78] McDaniel, "Speaking Like the State," 336.

[79] McDaniel, "Liberal Irony," 302-305.

[80] Dustin Griffin, *Satire: A Critical Reintroduction* (Lexington, KY: The University of Kentucky Press, 1994); and Hutcheon, *Parody*, 16.

[81] Amber Day, *Satire and Dissent: Interventions in Contemporary Political Debate* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2011); and Christine Harold, *OurSpace: Resisting the Corporate Control of Culture* (Minneapolis, MN: The University of Minnesota Press, 2007).

[82] Hart & Hartelius, "The Political Sins"; Hariman, "In Defense of Jon Stewart."

[83] Emphasis is in original text. Kenneth Burke, *Attitudes Toward History*, 3rd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 49.

[84] Griffin, *Satire*, 35.

[85] Booth, *Rhetoric of Irony*, 28.

[86] Griffin, *Satire*, 65.

[87] Griffin, *Satire*, 65-67.

[88] Christopher W. Tindale and James Gough, "The Use of Irony in Argumentation," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 20 (1987): 6.

[89] Hutcheon, *Parody,* 69-84.

[90] Theorists use the terms humorous, comedic, and comic in this debate relatively interchangeably. In this project, I reference the work of Kenneth Burke and at times his notion of the comic frame. However, Burke's notion of comic does not equate to comedy. Therefore, to avoid confusion, I have chosen to use the word humorous to describe the debate over whether or not parody is necessarily funny.

[91] Gérard Genette, *Palimpsestes* (Paris: Seuil, 1982), 36; and Hutcheon, *Parody*, 21.

[92] Rose, *Parody*, 271-272.

[93] In fact, it is in some ways quite odd Hutcheon endorses a serious parody, as she too defines parody as "marking difference rather than similarity." See Hutcheon, *Parody*, xii.

[94] Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991), 17.

[95] Genette, *Palimpsestes*, 34; quoted in Hutcheon, *Parody*, 38.

[96] Some question might arise as to seeing pastiche as necessarily humorous. I think immediately to the television show *Family Guy*, which I would also argue follows the logic of ironic appropriation. *Family Guy* will often provide the sort of neutral mimicry intermixed in with parody and satire. In the episode "I Dream of Jesus," for example, the characters on the show visit a diner made to look like the 1950s. The visuals and dialogue parody the depiction of such diners, which satirizes society's ability to ignore things like the racial tensions of the era. Along with all of this criticism intended to help the audience make judgments about how past prejudices are ignored, the main character Peter becomes enamored with the song "Surfin' Bird." The song is used throughout the episode (and later in the series as well) as neutral mimicry. Yet it is hard to deny the humor of its usage. This is, perhaps, a trivial point, but one worth noting if we are to clarify that pastiche needed necessarily be dull nor that humor necessarily leads to criticism.

[97] Graham Allen, *Intertextuality* (London: Routledge, 2000), 209; and Brian Ott and Cameron Walter, "Intertextuality: Interpretation Practice and Textual Strategy," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 17 (December 2000): 429.

[98] Allen, *Intertextuality*.

[99] Mikhail Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," in *Literary Theory: An Anthology*," 2nd ed., ed. Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan, 674-685. (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), 676.

[100] The complex nature of parody, including its relationship to similar concepts like satire and pastiche, is important to the nature of intertextuality but goes beyond the scope of this

Introduction. See, Jonathan Gray, *Watching with The Simpsons: Television, Parody, and Intertextuality* (New York: Routledge, 2005); and Brian L. Ott and Beth Bonnstetter, "'We're at Now, Now': *Spaceballs* as Parodic Tourism," *Southern Communication Journal* 72 (October-December 2007).

[101] Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," 680.

[102] Roland Barthes, "From Work to Text," in *The Cultural Studies Reader*, 3rd ed., ed. Simon During, 81-87. (London: Routledge, 2008), 84.

[103] Barthes, "From Work to Text," 85.

[104] Gray, *Watching with The Simpsons*, 3.

[105] Stuart Hall, "Encoding, Decoding," in *The Cultural Studies Reader*, 3rd ed., ed. Simon During, 477-487. (London: Routledge, 2008), 483.

[106] David, Morley, *The 'Nationwide' Audience: Structure and Decoding* (London: BFI, 1980).

[107] John Fiske, "Television: Polysemy and Popularity," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 3 (December 1986).

[108] Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," 699; and Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric," 138.

[109] In the first model, Gray argues that genres have been seen as intertexts, serving particular functions to shape meaning. A second model involves George Gerbner's cultivation analysis, suggesting that texts combine to form a larger meaning. Although certainly related and worth considering in more detail, these two conceptualizations are of lesser concern here. A third model takes the form of Hall's encoding/decoding. However, this model leaves the text in relative isolation.

[110] Gray, *Watching with The Simpsons*, 27.

[111] Gray, *Watching with The Simpsons*, 21-25.

[112] Julia Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, and Novel," in *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi, 34-61. (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1986), 35.

[113] Jim Collins, "Postmodernism and Television," in *Channels of Discourse, Reassembled*, ed. Robert C. Allen, 327-354. (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 333-337.

[114] Some of D'Angelo's modes refer to specific, detailed forms of textual reference like adaptations of preexisting texts. Others are quite general, such as when a text invokes nostalgia for the past. Just as some of Gray's conceptualizations of intertextuality stretch the concept a bit far, I would argue these modes push intertextuality beyond its usefulness. D'Angelo's other three, appropriation, parody, and pastiche, can all be subsumed under what I have called textual allusion. Frank J. D'Angelo, "The Rhetoric of Intertextuality," *Rhetorical Review* 29 (2010): 31-47.

[115] Ott and Walter, "Intertextuality," 430.

[116] Collins, "Postmodernism and Television," 337; and Kenneth Burke, "Literature as Equipment," 304.

[117] Ott, *The Small Screen*, 65.

[118] In Ott and Walter, the authors propose another style of intertextuality: self-reflexivity. Later, Ott would separate reflexivity from intertextuality in Ott, *The Small Screen*, 65-70. Reflexivity, however, remains an important concern for both irony and intertextuality as it pertains to the Stewart/Colbert universe.

[119] Ott, *The Small Screen*, 95-102.

[120] One specific example of this last possibility would be voting for reality programs.

[121] This is a central argument in both Jonathan Gray, *Show Sold Separately: Promos, Spoilers, and Other Media Paratexts* (New York: New York University Press, 2010); and Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2008).

[122] Heidlebaugh, *Judgment*.

[123] For only a few of many examples, see Mark Andrejevic, "Critical Media Studies 2.0: An Interactive Upgrade," *Interactions: Studies in Communication and Culture* 1 (2009); Sheizaf Rafaeli, "Interactivity: From New Media to Communication," in *Advancing Communication Science: Merging Mass and Interpersonal Processes*, eds. R. P. Hawkins, J. M. Wiemann, and S. Pingree, 110-134. (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1988); Russell Richards, "Users, Interactivity, and Generation," *New Media & Society* 8 (August 2006); and Gi Woong Yun, "Interactivity Concepts Examined: Response Time, Hypertext, Role Taking and Multimodality," *Media Psychology* 9 (2007).

[124] Rafaeli, "Interactivity"; Jennifer Stromer-Galley, "Interactivity-as-Product and Interactivity-as-Process," *The Information Society* 20 (November/December 2004): 392; and Yun, "Interactivity Concepts Examined."

[125] Stromer-Galley, "Interactivity-as-Product"; Sherry Turkle, *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1995); Barbara Warnick, *Rhetoric Online: Persuasion and Politics on the World Wide Web* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), 70; and Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives*, 22.

[126] Yun, "Interactivity Concepts Examined."

[127] Sally J. McMillan, "Exploring Models of Interactivity from Multiple Research Traditions: Users, Documents and Systems. In *The Handbook of New Media*, eds. Leah A. Lievrouw &

Sonia Livingston, 163-182. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002); and Richards, "Users, Interactivity, and Generation."

[128] Here I mean "original" in the sense of a new document. However, as we saw in the discussion of intertextuality, it is hardly truly original.

[129] Jenkins, *Convergence Culture*, 4; and Burke, "Literature as Equipment," 304.

[130] Thomas B. Farrell, "Rhetoric in History as theory and Praxis: A Blast from the Past," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 41 (2008): 327.

[131] Ott, *The Small Screen*; Harold, *OurSpace*; Day, *Satire and Dissent*; and Joshua Atkinson, *Alternative Media and Politics of Resistance* (New York, NY: Peter Lang, 2009).

[132] Bill Carter, "Comedy Central Tries to Gauge Passion of Its Viewers," The *New York Times*, August 25, 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/26/business/media/26adco.html?_r=1, ¶16.

[133] Wander, "The Third Persona," 197-216.

[134] Morris, "The Fourth Persona," 595-613.

[135] Burke, *Grammar*, 514.

[136] Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric," 138.

[137] Hart & Hartelius, "The Political Sins."

[138] This is not to necessarily lump these four together. While there are similarities between them, such as they are all cartoons, the creators of these shows have had noted disagreements with how the other presents their material. While sometimes this is a commentary on the art itself, some of the discussion revolves around the messages sent. Comparison of these shows would also contribute to our understanding of this logic, its variations, and its impact on society.

[139] McDaniel, "Speaking Like the State," 328.

CHAPTER I.

HUMBLE IRONY & EQUIPMENT FOR LIVING

"I hear people say [*The Daily Show* is a valid news source]. It's a repackager of news. In that way, I suppose, it is in some ways a valid source. As long as people can understand when we're goofing and when we mean it. If they're not reading the normal news, I doubt that they can. People say, "Was that story real?" And I've thought, "Oh, you should really watch the real news before you watch our show, if you can't tell whether our stories are real."

– Stephen Colbert discussing *The Daily Show*, 2003[1]

Before he moved on to *The Colbert Report*, Stephen Colbert did a now rare out-of-character interview with the website IGN about his role on *The Daily Show*. The above passage from this interview reveals some interesting insight into how the Stewart/Colbert universe sees its role in the process of rhetorical constitution. Colbert calls *The Daily Show* a "repackager of news." As a repackager of news, the program creates a double-codedness of meaning. It is not the news, but it cannot be separate from it either. While the program constructs a rhetorical message, it is a message that places itself in connection with another rhetorical message. As Colbert suggests, such repackaging of the news requires the audience to be aware of what is being said in the discourse outside of *The Daily Show* before the audience can effectively understand the rhetoric of the program. I argue throughout this chapter the reason for such a requirement for the audience stems from the first principle of the logic of ironic appropriation: irony.

As a principle of ironic appropriation, irony plays a vital role in the constitutive process. Below, I address this role by showing how the various uses of irony throughout the Stewart/Colbert universe interact with each other to constitute an audience. Furthermore, I argue that such uses of irony create a rhetorical identification between Jon Stewart and the audience. It is this identification that helps the audience understand the purpose of irony in the Stewart/Colbert universe and positions the audience toward action.

Maurice Charland argues rhetorical constitution is not just about forming an audience, but putting that audience into action.[2] The principle of irony, I argue below, creates a sense of mental action that forces the audience to think critically about the subject of the ironist's attention. The double-codedness of irony puts two viewpoints on the same concept into conversation with one another in such a way that encourages the audience to consider alternative perspectives at the same time. In the pages below, I emphasize Burke's focus on irony as a rhetorical trope. Burke warns "true irony" permits the rhetor to create a message that positively connects the ironist to the object of criticism, but deviations from what he calls the humility of true irony often ignore the problem found within the ironist's perspective. The humility of true irony that Burke refers to is the idea that the ironist recognizes that the object of criticism is not evil but mistaken. This idea arises again with Burke in his discussion of frames of acceptance and rejection in *Attitudes Toward History*, where Burke argues that satire is irony without such humility.[3] In this chapter, I use texts throughout the Stewart/Colbert universe including two of the books, *America (The Book)* and *I Am America (And So Can You!)*, to argue the Stewart/Colbert universe uses irony in its rhetorical messages that ensures humility in its criticism and, by extension, in the criticism the constituted audience members perform in their own lives.

Such humility is essential to the way ironic appropriation in the Stewart/Colbert universe encourages the audience members to make judgments about the rhetoric they encounter in their lives. However, it is through humble uses of irony that such judgment eschews the notion of incommensurability and strives to have the audience find ways to connect with the object of criticism. Through the comparison of the use of irony to position the audience toward judgment as seen in the Stewart/Colbert universe with the use of irony in the failed Fox News alternative

the ½ *Hour News Hour*, I argue that irony is a rhetorical trope best served for left-leaning

rhetoric because irony that encourages incommensurability betrays the philosophy behind irony,

specifically the edge of irony described by Linda Hutcheon.[4]

The principle of irony has many characteristics. In this chapter, I focus on those

characteristics of this principle that relate to the three key concerns of the logic of ironic

appropriation: rhetorical constitution, placing the audience into action, and positioning that

audience toward judgment. The use of irony is essential to the logic of ironic appropriation.

Without irony, the other principles, intertextuality and interactivity, may fail to serve the same

rhetorical function. Thus, in this chapter I examine irony as a constitutive tool and, in the

process, argue why the rhetoric is best understood as emerging from the Stewart/Colbert universe

as a whole.

Rhetorical Constitution: Irony and Why it is the Stewart/Colbert Universe

As I mentioned in the Introduction, this dissertation is based on an assumption that the

producers and the audience comprehend and agree upon the logic in which the texts are

produced. Clearly there will be those that fail to share the logic. Heather LaMarre, Kristen

Landreville, and Michael Beam's experimental study of viewers of *The Colbert Report*, for

example, suggests that viewers who watch the show read their own political leanings into the

show, including seeing Colbert merely joking on his program about not being a conservative.[5]

The methodological requirement of LaMarre, Landreville, and Beam's experimental study,

however, requires participants to be viewers without preexisting familiarity with *The Colbert*

Report. Here, a fundamental difference between viewing *The Colbert Report* and being a

member of the audience can be seen. While conservative *viewers* who come across *The Colbert*

Report may see their own politics as affirmed by the program, the *audience* of the program must

share the logic of ironic appropriation, which constrains the potential reading of the program. Furthermore, while this problem exists for *The Colbert Report*, *The Daily Show*'s straightforward approach to its political leanings generally does not open itself up to a positive conservative reading. The political perspective helps ground the assumption of a shared logic between producers and audience, but this assumption is further supported by the use of irony.

Given the results of the LaMarre, Landreville and Beam study, it is clear the two shows take quite different approaches to achieve the same ends. In fact, their different uses of irony as defined here place them down different paths toward those ends. The question then arises, is it fair to lump the work of the producers of *The Daily Show* together with *The Colbert Report*? In the early years of *The Colbert Report*, such a question held more weight as *The Colbert Report* was more of a spin-off program than directly linked to *The Daily Show*. Colbert's conservative news anchor character came to prominence as a correspondent on *The Daily Show* even before Jon Stewart joined the program.[6] Colbert's character rose in popularity, leading to the formation of *The Colbert Report* program in 2005.[7] During the next few years, the programs interacted occasionally but remained fairly separate. Since the start of the Obama administration, however, there has been significant overlap between the programs, noticeably first with the organization, promotion, and execution of The Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear in 2010 and, more recently, through interactions between Stewart and Colbert regarding the Colbert Super PAC.[8] The recent events have linked the two programs and helped establish a Stewart/Colbert universe that extends beyond the television shows. As I argue later, all three components of ironic appropriation further establish and support the linkage of these programs. However, exploring the role of irony in this universe helps explain why it is important for rhetoricians to consider the Stewart/Colbert universe as a whole.

At first it may appear that different uses of irony separate the programs. Yet, I argue that irony links the two television programs and their related paratexts into a vast like-minded universe.[9] As I explained in the Introduction, the principle of irony in ironic appropriation can be broken down into four different strategies: irony, satire, parody, and pastiche. In this chapter, I discuss the use of these four strategies in the universe. However, it is important to begin by addressing that what opens *The Colbert Report* up to a conservative reading and not *The Daily Show* is that *The Colbert Report* takes a *parodic* approach to irony, while generally *The Daily Show* is *satirical*.

Parody, defined in this dissertation as the critical use of intertextuality through humorous irony, is the guiding principle of *The Colbert Report*. In the early years of *The Colbert Report*, Stephen Colbert the person was more accessible and drew distinctions between himself and the on-screen character that he described as "a fool who has spent a lot of his life playing not the fool."[10] In recent years, it has become more difficult to find instances of Stephen Colbert the person in public. Instead, he has immersed his public persona in this idea of playing the fool who does not see himself as the fool, a concept that speaks to the heart of the intentions of irony. What makes *The Colbert Report* parodic as opposed to satirical is the imitation of pundit news programs seen on channels such as CNN, MSNBC, and, most notably, Fox News. Colbert the character makes this imitation quite explicit when referring to his personal inspiration, "Papa Bear" Bill O'Reilly.[11] O'Reilly's program is filled with fear appeals that demonize people and perspectives for the purpose of promoting a particular political stance.[12] While there is no reason to see Bill O'Reilly as a character akin to Colbert, he is nonetheless performing a particular identity that promotes a perspective. This performance goes well beyond his Fox News program, *The O'Reilly Factor*. Through radio and television appearances, a web presence, and many

books, O'Reilly extends his message to a universe not unlike the one proposed here created by Stewart, Colbert, and company. The difference is O'Reilly's universe relies upon an audience that shares a mythic logic that wants to eliminate challenges to his set of conservative values.[13] O'Reilly's extended performance may suggest a reason for a loss of the real Stephen Colbert in public discourse. By extending the imitation of O'Reilly and other pundits beyond the television show to his entire public persona, Stephen Colbert the person legitimizes the character of Colbert and makes his voice in popular discourse as relevant as O'Reilly himself.

The Colbert Report and the Colbert character are, thus, inescapably ironic because of this perpetual parody. There is no Colbert without the allusion to O'Reilly or punditry in general. As Hutcheon notes, parody reinforces the original in the process of commenting upon it.[14] Therefore, the rhetorical impact of Colbert on society is tied to O'Reilly-like people remaining influential in society.[15] Authors of works on parody, including Hutcheon, discuss this paradox of parody in a relatively negative light, suggesting that this paradox limits the ability of parody to function in society without maintaining the original. In other words, a parodist cannot win his or her argument without destroying the need for the parody.

However, this perpetual parody performed by Colbert gives cause for considering the paradox of parody in a different light. It is worth noting that Stephen Colbert referred to his character as "a fool who has spent a lot of his life playing not the fool."[16] Colbert's character is a commentary upon that which he imitates. The mythic nature of O'Reilly's approach encourages what Kenneth Burke would call a tragic frame of acceptance, since O'Reilly presents his detractors and opponents as villains.[17] Burke calls satire a frame of acceptance that limits the rhetorical function of an author to improve relationships between seemingly incommensurable views because those that use this form of irony often deny that they are susceptible to the same

problems as those they attack in their commentary.[18] Colbert's fool, however, directs the audience toward seeing the point of commentary as not an attack upon the O'Reilly-types and their supporters but instead toward seeing them as flawed in thinking. Colbert performs this in a quite believable manner, which suggests this may be the reason LaMarre, Landreville, and Beam's sample population was unable to see the commentary for what it was. While Colbert's performance may not be necessarily celebratory of the punditry, it nevertheless approaches it in a way that accepts it is reasonable to see why people buy into the views of O'Reilly and his colleagues.

This characteristic of Colbert's ironic performance can be seen in most any of the segments featured on *The Colbert Report*. One such segment is "Tip of the Hat/Wag of the Finger." The "Tip of the Hat/Wag of the Finger" segment is a take on similar segments in many other pundits' programs such as Bill O'Reilly's "Pinheads and Patriots," Keith Olbermann's "Worst Person in the World," and Anderson Cooper's "Ridiculist." In this segment, Colbert metaphorically tips his hat at those things he approves of in culture and society and literally wags his finger at those things he sees as challenging his viewpoints. For example, during the "Tip/Wag" segment on the December 12, 2011 episode of *The Colbert Report*, Colbert tips his hat to Newt Gingrich for "repeatedly alerting the nation to an unreported threat: the electromagnetic pulse." Colbert recognizes such a threat was the plot of the James Bond film *Goldeneye*. Because of this, Colbert labels Gingrich America's James Bond. Colbert then goes on to tip his hat to Gingrich for his plan to colonize the moon for resources and his proposal of putting giant mirrors in space to create a new source of light and energy. These are, Colbert recalls, the plots of two other Bond movies: *Moonraker* and *Die Another Day*. This realization, however, forces Colbert to recognize that Gingrich's ideas are not the ideas of Bond but the

villains. Thus, Gingrich is not Bond but his arch nemesis: Blofeld. Colbert quickly spins this conclusion to support his beliefs, though, by pointing out this means that Gingrich would have the financial means to hire workers to complete these projects, making him a right-wing hero. In another example, on the July 11, 2011 episode, Colbert tips his hat to the relatively unsubstantiated claim John Lennon was a closet conservative by rereading Beatles songs as supportive of conservative political agendas. Thus, according to Colbert, "'Lucy in the Sky With Diamonds' was just a coded message secretly supporting supply-side economics because sooner or later Lucy's diamonds would trickle down, and obviously when John sang 'I am the eggman, I am the walrus goo goo g'job' he meant…(pauses to think)…tort reform." This spin is also used to turn things that Colbert would seemingly support on their heads. On the November 16, 2011 episode, for example, Colbert wags his finger at Republican Presidential hopeful Ron Paul's "Pin-Ups for Ron Paul" calendar because it acknowledges all of the federal holidays, including those that Colbert opposes.[19] Throughout these segments, Colbert transforms any comment or position into something he is for or against by filtering the information through his logic of extremist politics.

Real pundits on their respective programs often spin even the most minuscule issues into something that strongly supports or opposes the presumed agenda. The hyperbolic labeling of these items as either being strongly endorsed or ridiculed positions the audience to see everything in extremes. Such extremes encourage the audience to see its view of the world as heroic while any opposition as fundamentally evil. Moreover, these segments encourage the audience to see wild conclusions as logically sound, a fallacy of logic Colbert parodies on the February 12, 2012 episode when he wags his finger at a woman for marrying a building she has assigned as female, not because that act is ridiculous, but instead because "woman on female-

building marriage is just a slippery slope to man-on-doghouse."[20] This extremist mentality

hinders the ability for audiences that subscribe to the logic of the real pundits' programs to see

beyond their own points of view. These examples from the "Tip of the Hat/Wag of the Finger"

segments point to the ways Colbert draws attention to how real pundits create a sense of

incommensurability over the simplest of issues and encourages their audiences to see similar

conclusions in their own lives. Colbert's twisted logic to get anything to be for or against his

perspective highlights for the Stewart/Colbert universe audience how easily an audience can be

directed toward wild conclusions and how the media punditry often encourage their audiences to

see themselves as divided and separate from those who have oppositional political viewpoints.

Being aware of these issues forces members of the Stewart/Colbert universe's audience to

consider their own media consumption and helps them be as critical of the reasoning for their

own personal and political endorsements as they are of the object of Colbert's criticism.

However, Colbert is only able to make this segment work by positioning his parody as

empathetic of the original pundits' viewpoints on judging the issues.

Colbert's performance gives reason to be suspicious of the conclusion parody's

reinforcement of the original is a rhetorical limitation of the trope. Considered in a different way,

should Colbert succeed in his performance, the public would be suspicious of the blind trust and

acceptance put into political punditry. Such a success would negate the need for the parody to

exist in the first place. Instead of being a limitation, then, this paradox of parody is a marker of

rhetorical effectiveness. Colbert the character may reinforce the existence of O'Reilly and others

like him, but this reinforcement is the intention of his parody. When comparisons fail to be

drawn between the parody and its object of attack, the object becomes a natural part of culture

and discourse. A character like Colbert challenges the normalization of political punditry in

American politics and reminds his audience and, if successful, the public in general, that the absurdity in Colbert's performance is a parody of something else that may be equally absurd. Eliminating the object of attack may destroy the original, but, given the political nature of parody, it is doubtful this is not the end goal of the parodist anyway.[21] Social concerns, such as the problem of political pundits in democracy, are often temporal. There is no reason to believe that the commentary on those concerns should remain timeless. Through Colbert's performance in the Stewart/Colbert universe, the audience is encouraged to rethink the paradox of parody as a key component of parody's rhetorical function, something that, despite some arguments to the contrary, may make parody the most critical strategy of irony.[22]

Colbert's performance also compels a return to Burke's conclusions about irony in terms of frames of acceptance and rejection. In *A Grammar of Motives*, Burke argues, "True irony, however, irony that really does justify the attribute of 'humility,' is not 'superior' to the enemy."[23] Conservative pundits may argue Colbert's performance is an effort to mock right-leaning viewpoints, a perspective O'Reilly asserted by questioning Colbert why his supposed loving emulation of O'Reilly was supported by "every leftwing critic in America."[24] Yet O'Reilly never calls out Colbert as villain in the same way he attacks Stewart. This is, perhaps, because in Colbert's performance viewers can see elements of Burke's "true irony" in parody. The "Tip/Wag" examples above point to the way Colbert maintains an understanding of where the object of attack's perspective emerges. The performance of the fool by Colbert maintains the humility Burke strives for throughout his writing. In this way, Colbert's parody presents the audience with a comic frame. While those like O'Reilly use the notion of myth to promote individual superiority and reinforce a tragic frame of acceptance, Colbert encourages us to laugh instead of hate. Thus, while there may be reason to be suspect of the conclusions drawn by

LaMarre, Landreville, and Beam's experiment, their study may give hope that Colbert's actions may be able to help the object of attack to laugh with Colbert and not see him as a villain.

In his writing on irony in *A Grammar of Motives*, we find a Burke that sees irony as a potentially useful rhetorical trope. In *Attitudes Toward History*, however, Burke remarks, "The satirist attacks *in others* the weaknesses and temptations that are really *within himself* (sic)."[25] Unlike his views of irony in *A Grammar of Motives*, here we see a much more skeptical Burke. For Burke, satire is a frame of rejection that positions the other as inherently separate from the producer simply for the purpose of debunking the other's position. Satire, thus, assumes a sense of superiority that Burke shuns in his definition of true irony. Unlike *The Colbert Report*, *The Daily Show* does not present itself as an extended parody. Jon Stewart the host is Jon Stewart the person, a politically left-leaning comedian whose career is based on social commentary. While *The Daily Show* format may be seen as a parody of traditional news sources, the content itself does not imitate a news program but instead provides commentary on it. It is not itself an ironic text, but a text that uses irony to make a critique on society. In other words, *The Daily Show* is satirical in nature. Returning to Burke, this would suggest *The Daily Show* serves a distinctly different purpose than *The Colbert Report* based on the differences between true irony and satire. However, just as Colbert encourages a reconsideration of the rhetorical implications of the paradox of parody, *The Daily Show* invites rhetoricians to rethink how to interpret Burke's reading of satire.

While Colbert's rhetoric requires an extended use of irony through parody, Jon Stewart and *The Daily Show* use irony to punctuate a more direct approach. The Stewart component of the Stewart/Colbert universe does not hide its political leanings. *The Daily Show* was originally hosted by comedian Craig Kilborn from 1996-1998. When Jon Stewart took over hosting in

1999, politics in general and the news media specifically became the objects under attack by the show's commentary. Since Stewart took over the program, the focus has remained on political discourse in the media and society. Stewart's program has features that may initially suggest it is a parody of pundits like Bill O'Reilly. The set for *The Daily Show*, for example, is composed primarily of a desk the host sits behind, and, like the cable news pundits, flashy graphics appear below Stewart with each new topic of discussion. However, unlike Colbert, who speaks out on the subject from his own point of view, Stewart and company spend their time on the program reflecting upon the recent opinions given during the political and news cycles. Take, for example, a segment on the February 1, 2012 episode of *The Daily Show*. In this segment, Stewart shows a clip of Republican Presidential hopeful Mitt Romney suggesting he was not concerned about the poor because they "have a safety net." Stewart, in a typical fashion, provides a direct commentary on Romney's stance and asks if anyone else caught Romney's words. The show then goes on to show the remainder of the clip where the CNN interviewer Soledad O'Brien calls Romney on his comments and asks him to explain himself. Here, we see the use of irony for satirical purposes take effect. The show cuts back to Stewart, who has a stunned but giddy look on his face. Stewart says, "TV news person…just…heard…what candidate said…then stopped him…and made him 'splain himself! Like a flower blooming in the desert. Quick! Someone dig that up and get it away from CNN before one of their giant holographic monitors falls and crushes it!" In this example, it can be seen how Stewart uses irony in the commentary to make a point, namely that it is now shocking to see media personalities step out of the role of panderers to the power structure instead of journalists who seek out information for the public, and, thus, creates satire.

The same February 1, 2012 episode shows another example of the commentary on politics. Here, Stewart discusses the results of the recent Florida Republican primary and Mitt Romney's comments after the victory. Romney notes, "Like his colleagues in the faculty lounge who think they know better, President Obama demonizes and denigrates almost every sector of our economy." The show cuts to Stewart, doing an intentionally poor Romney impression, where he continues, "Whereas I Mitt Romney only demonize and denigrate people who work in a faculty lounge. Teachers! With their five figure salaries!" Stewart critiques Romney's comments, arguing what Romney is really saying is, "Obama is an elitist with an advanced degree from Harvard…Says the man (Romney) with two advanced degrees from Harvard."[26] Throughout the program, *The Daily Show* uses satire in these manners to make critiques of the media and politics. This is a very different approach than Colbert, who satirizes through parody and never slips out of the role of parodist.

Satire also emerges in the pre-recorded correspondent news segments of *The Daily Show*. During these segments, *Daily Show* correspondents go out into the field to address issues both serious, such as Wyatt Cenac's investigation into the controversy over building a mosque near Ground Zero in New York City, and silly, such as former correspondent Ed Helms' travels to Florida to see the "Cooter Fest" (a turtle) celebration.[27] This blend of serious and silly in the news segments performs several important functions that influence the rhetorical force of satire in *The Daily Show*. First, this approach deemphasizes the object of criticism as villainous. When those that want to stop a town from celebrating a regional turtle are treated with the same disdain as those that vehemently opposed gay rights, the audience is positioned to see the object of criticism as merely misguided. Keeping the ironic tone that permeates the satire, placing both silly and serious stories in the same program (although rarely in the same episode) guides the

audience toward a reading that suggests the object of criticism is foolish in much the same way Colbert performs the fool on his program. By stripping away the idea these objects of criticism are evil, these news segments are presented through Burke's comic corrective to the tragic frame of acceptance. Through the comic frame, the audience members can begin to see the views of the object of criticism are not altogether incommensurable with their own views.

Just as these news segments disrupt the notion the objects of criticism are entirely different from their own views, they also remind the audience that it must remain critical of things that become normalized. While the double entendre found in Inverness, Florida's Cooter Festival and the apparent inability of its citizens to see the sexual connotation is humorous, segments such as these serve a rhetorical function by reminding the audience that many of the concerns of democracy are found in the unchallenged mundane aspects of culture. For example, take the segment "The Forecl">oser" in the August 8, 2011 episode. Here, John Oliver covers a story about foreclosures in America, an occurrence that unfortunately by August of 2011 was tragically common. This segment, however, takes an interesting twist when Oliver discovers the homeowners had been foreclosed on by Bank of America when they did not even have a mortgage with the company. The family sued and won damages, but Bank of America refused to pay, so the family decided to foreclose on the Bank itself and were allowed to repossess the Bank's belongings. In segments such as these, *The Daily Show* uses the edge of irony discussed by Hutcheon to draw attention to the things that are often dismissed as normal in society and, thus, not worthy of critique.[28] By bringing attention to situations such as the one seen in "The Forecl">oser," the audience members are presented with a new way of thinking about the role of government and corporations in their lives.[29] As such, the audience is given a chance to rejuvenate its desire to participate in democracy. Through these news segments, *The Daily Show*

encourages the audience members to laugh at the minor absurdities they find in their own local

cultural practices. Not every town may have a Cooter Festival, but most towns have cultural

events and markers that have become normalized throughout time and remain unchallenged.

Similarly, the nation has become more accepting of foreclosure as a reasonable consequence of

economic downturn because stories such as "The Forecloser" do not appear in the mainstream

media. By drawing attention to these issues through the news segments, *The Daily Show* uses

irony to build an audience with members that think critically about the impact these normalized

elements of culture have on the citizens of their communities.

The correspondents use irony to provide another element in *The Daily Show*'s

construction of the audience. Unlike Colbert, *The Daily Show* correspondents slip in and out of

personae. While they often play up certain traits to individualize themselves (John Oliver

consistently reinforces his Britishness, Samantha Bee claims to speak for women), the

correspondents, whether in the news segments or talking to Stewart at the news desk, often range

in job titles as well as performance of personality. From 2011-2012, for example, Jason Jones

has filled the role of a traditional journalist seeking to understand the voting habits of women in

Florida, a passionate spokesperson for fruit farmers, a "Senior Military Correspondent" playing

up an outbreak of "gayness" after the repel of Don't Ask Don't Tell, and a "Senior White House

Correspondent" who wants to keep the Birther movement against Obama alive.[30] This

inconsistency is often ironic in nature, which helps audience members remove themselves from

seeing *The Daily Show* or the correspondents as fixed narrative characters in a coherent story.

Instead, audiences must remain alert as to what is being said and presented at all times. Through

observing the correspondents, the audience learns it must be constantly thinking critically about

what is being said because the joke is often dependent upon understanding the juxtaposition

between what appears to be an obvious conclusion about the correspondents' opinions and the "reality" presented on the program. Thus, these news segments and correspondent discussions help construct an audience with members that remains diligently aware of what is happening and forces them to think critically in order to ensure they maximize their pleasure from the humor and, in the process, their understanding of the critique being presented.

This slippage of personae found among the correspondents points to a final and vital component of the role *The Daily Show* fills in creating the audience of the Stewart/Colbert universe. That is, the inconsistency of correspondents' identities is an important element in how the Stewart/Colbert universe rhetorically establishes identification between itself and the audience and simultaneously curbs a percolation in the audience members' minds that may encourage them to see themselves as different from or superior to the objects of criticism. Before addressing these points, it helps to add to the understanding of the role identification plays in rhetoric and audience building brought up in the Introduction.

The idea that "identification is compensatory to division" presented by Burke suggests a rhetorical identification between rhetor and audience is necessary to building the relationship between them.[31] In his construction of constitutive rhetoric, Charland relies upon this notion of rhetorical identification as much as he does Althusser's hailing in the process of rhetoric forming an audience.[32] Burke, however, warns his readers to be cautions of identification through rhetoric. The formed audience may identify with the rhetorical discourse, but, by being "compensatory to division," audience-building rhetoric runs the risk of separating the formed audience from others outside of the constituted audience. This is particularly true with ironic rhetoric, which, if we return to Burke's view of satire in *Attitudes Toward History*, may intentionally separate the satirist, and in return the satirist's audience, from the object of

criticism, failing to turn the mirror of critique back upon themselves. Such a concern is seen from Burke in *A Rhetoric of Motives* as well. Burke warns one "aspect of identification, whereby one can protect an interest merely by using terms not incisive enough to criticize it properly, often brings rhetoric to the edge of cunning." Such cunning identification can be used by a rhetor to limit the audience's desire to think back on the rhetoric with a critical lens. It is, thus, not hard to imagine from this why Burke was so critical of satire, whose very purpose appears to separate the perception of the satirist from the object of criticism.[33]

A closer examination of the Stewart/Colbert universe reveals, however, that such cunning identification is not a natural extension of satire, but a rhetorical choice made by the satirist. Looking at the universe further, the Stewart/Colbert universe provides an alternative vision of satire than what Burke assumes, one in which the satire encourages the audience to remain as reflective as it is projective with its criticism. In doing so, we are also presented with an understanding as to how *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report* work together to curb such cunning identification and necessitate the examination of the Stewart/Colbert universe as a whole when considering a logic of ironic appropriation.

To see why the Stewart component of the Stewart/Colbert universe can be satirical and not strictly parodic, and yet fits rhetorically with the parody of Colbert, it helps to begin by returning briefly to *The Colbert Report*. *The Colbert Report* is a one man show that has spread into culture well beyond a daily half-hour program. While Stephen Colbert is aided by numerous writers, Colbert the character remains almost exclusively the image of that part of the universe. The audience of Colbert is in on the joke and gleefully goes along with the ride wherever he takes them. However, through all this love and admiration for Colbert, it remains that the audience maintains a distance from identification with Colbert. Certainly the audience members

may see bits of themselves in Colbert, but just as much of the audience of *The Simpsons* would not want to be seen as Homer, the audience of *The Colbert Report* does not want to be Colbert minus the ironic sensibilities. As a public figure and a cultural element, Colbert can maintain the parodic performance, but such a performance does not extend well for the audience members beyond the audience itself. As I argue more in Chapter III, the Stewart/Colbert universe encourages the audience to become participants in democracy, particularly in ways that can have true impacts on judgment in society. Colbert may be able to be Colbert and succeed, but that is because he is the figurehead of this ironic sensibility. The average audience member must then identify with another rhetorical text to lead their everyday action. Thus, they turn to *The Daily Show*, which birthed Colbert, to find that identification.

Unlike *The Colbert Report*, which is for most purposes a one-man show, *The Daily Show* has a cast of characters. Despite this, Jon Stewart is the point of identification between the show and the audience. His role as host of the program certainly helps cement this identification. However, the reasoning that eliminates identification with Colbert can also be applied to the many correspondents. The correspondents are often performing an identity that is clearly not themselves. Like Colbert, each of these performances presents a caricature of a real person that is identifiable through the irony of each segment in which they appear. Jason Jones, for example, did a segment where he saw his children as such a disease that he got a real vasectomy on camera to ensure he would not continue to spread the disease. In a segment discussing the causes for the rise of support for democracy in the Muslim world, Samantha Bee portrays a teenage-esque social media junkie who attempts to relay her messages through increasingly ridiculous Twitter posts. In another segment, Aasif Mandvi transforms himself into the Muslim Bill Cosby in order to cure Americans of racism against Muslims, just as he claims Cosby did for racism

against African-Americans.[34] Each of these examples demonstrates the way the correspondents'

performances use irony to generate humor and critique. The extended parody of Colbert forces

the audience to remember the object of criticism, but it also limits the audience's ability to see

themselves in the parodist because the parodist is unquestionably identified with the object of

critique. Similarly, these moments of parody occur when the correspondents perform as

journalists and limit the point of identification. This limitation to identification is further

compounded by the slippage of character consistency found in the correspondents mentioned

above. Combined, this has the rhetorical effect of minimizing the audience's ability to identify

with the correspondents as well.

Thus, the audience must return to Jon Stewart to find a consistent point of identification.

Like Colbert, Stewart has made a conscious effort to be his *Daily Show*-self throughout most of

his cultural appearances. It has been nearly a decade since Stewart's last film appearance where

he portrayed someone besides himself. Instead, Stewart has spent this time promoting the

Stewart from *The Daily Show* wherever he appears. Unlike Colbert, however, there is little

reason to doubt the legitimacy of Jon Stewart's words and intentions whenever and wherever he

appears. Historians of Stewart can support this by pointing out that *The Daily Show* is, in fact,

not Stewart's first attempt to create such a program. In the early 1990s, Stewart hosted *The Jon

Stewart Show* on MTV, which had similar satirical tones and also made efforts at social

commentary. Much of the last season of *The Larry Sanders Show*, an HBO series about a

fictitious late-night talk show host, is dedicated to Sanders' concern about Stewart taking over

for him and turning the show into a political-leaning program. Ironically enough, almost

immediately after the fake Larry Sanders Show was cancelled in TV land, the real Jon Stewart

took over for Kilborn on *The Daily Show*.

While history points the audience toward trusting Stewart as the guiding force for the audience, his performance on the show solidifies his position as the point of identification for the audience.[35] With limited exceptions, Jon Stewart does not become involved in the circus that surrounds him. Instead of hysterics or parodic performances, Stewart addresses the audience directly in each segment and provides a reasoned critique of a current social concern. Whereas Colbert becomes the parody to express satire, Stewart remains himself but uses irony in the construction of his argument to transform into a satirist. Stewart too may be a performance, but it is a reasoned performance that can translate into the real world. As I address in Chapter III, the logic of ironic appropriation in the Stewart/Colbert universe wants the audience to perform in the real world. Identification with Stewart is vital to positioning the audience toward this action.

One needs to look no further than title of The Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear to see how the Stewart/Colbert universe encourages identification with Stewart. To be a member of the Stewart/Colbert universe audience immediately clues the audience members they are meant to identify with Stewart's Sanity component and laugh at Colbert's addition of Fear. Yet, as ridiculous as it may seem to include the concept of "restoring fear" in the rally, Colbert was welcomed with open arms. His parodic performance is a necessary counter to the Stewart component of the universe. Colbert serves as a constant reminder of what Stewart and, thus, the audience are critiquing. I argued earlier the paradox of parody seen in Colbert's performance was a rhetorical benefit that required the audience to remember that the object of criticism is alive and well in society. By extension, Colbert's existence in the Stewart/Colbert universe reminds the audience that *The Daily Show*'s commentary is about real problems that still exist in society. Even before *The Colbert Report* began, Stewart's satire was regarded as an influential force in American politics even by those *The Daily Show* critiques.[36] However, in the past few years

Colbert's inclusion in the universe has acted as an important foil. Because Colbert's presence is a constant reminder of how diligent the object of critique is in society, Colbert serves as a means to keep the Stewart/Colbert universe's audience diligent as well. Colbert without Stewart loses the point of identification for the audience, the rhetorical element that the audience can latch onto to guide them toward action once constitution has occurred. Separate, they both may function as rhetorical critiques of society, but it is together that they can rely upon one another to call their public into being.

While I have argued the Stewart/Colbert universe is a necessary collaboration in creating a point of identification upon which the producers can call an audience into being, Burke's concern about cunning identifications and satire remains to be addressed fully. Stewart's direct approach in his performance, juxtaposed by the parodic nature of his correspondents and Colbert, makes it easy to assume he is speaking in a trust-worthy manner. But as Burke warns, the cunning identifications of rhetors permit them to share just enough information that the audience fails to see the problems in the rhetors' arguments.[37] It is not a requirement for the Stewart/Colbert universe to address this concern. A cunning rhetor is cunning for a purpose and, as such, the Stewart/Colbert universe may very well intend to be cunning to draw attention away from its own flaws. However, an examination of *The Daily Show* and Stewart reveals a reflexivity that cues the audience that it must be as critical of the Stewart/Colbert universe and its role in society as it is of the objects of criticism. By extension, this means the audience must also be constantly critical of itself.[38]

Reflexivity is the concept that a text is aware of itself as a cultural artifact. This reflexivity can come in several forms. Often, for example, programs will "break the fourth wall" and speak directly to the audience.[39] This type of reflexivity is most powerful in fictional

programs such as *The Simpsons*, which will often use its reoccurring chalkboard scene during the opening credits to comment on the show's perception in culture and the media.[40] The power of this type of reflexivity is somewhat lost on programs like *The Daily Show* or *The Colbert Report* because of the news desk and pundit formats where such direct address to the audience is expected. It does, however, pop up at times in the correspondent news segments on *The Daily Show* or when Colbert does field work. In these moments, the Stewart/Colbert universe characters will oftentimes give a knowing glance or nod to the audience to emphasize the absurdity of a point being made by the object of criticism. Most other times on these programs, however, the reflexivity takes other forms.

Perhaps the most explicit form of reflexivity seen in the Stewart/Colbert universe is the resistance of the producers to being seen as a legitimate news source. The quotation at the beginning of this chapter shows a rare moment when Colbert addresses this issue. In Colbert's mind, the value of their work is the critique that arises from the satirical commentary. Without an understanding of the object of criticism or the discourse that brings that object into consideration, the satire loses its function. Thus, for Colbert, to lose the original source of the news is to lose the focus on what is being critiqued in the first place. By having both the Stewart/Colbert universe and the traditional news sources, the irony creates a cycle of reflexivity that forces the audience to question both sources of information. Because of this, it has become a minor mission of Stewart to downplay the idea that what they do is to be the sole source of information. In the most famous instance of this, Jon Stewart appeared on the October 15, 2004 episode of the CNN show *Crossfire*. *Crossfire* was a program where pundits from the Republican and Democratic parties, Tucker Carlson and Paul Begala respectively, argued with each other about current political topics. This appearance is most famous for Stewart blasting the hosts for conducting

"partisan hackery" that caused much more harm than good to the American public and democracy, comments that then-President of CNN Jonathan Klein attributed to the cancellation of the *Crossfire* program shortly thereafter.[41] But what triggered Stewart's intense attack of the show was the implication by Carlson that the audience of *The Daily Show* was ignorant for turning to Stewart for the news. Stewart argued the context in which his program resided, on the Comedy Central channel, signaled the show was not to be taken as news, but the ridiculousness of the discourse on *Crossfire* was legitimized by its presence on a news network.[42] In this exchange, Stewart reinforces the notion that what is now the Stewart/Colbert universe exists to provide a criticism of politics and the news, not be the news itself.

Of course, such accusations about people turning to the Stewart/Colbert universe and *The Daily Show* specifically for news remain a constant concern for both the producers of the show and the detractors. People like Bill O'Reilly often accuse Stewart of manipulating his position as the leader of a leftist movement by repackaging information in a way that best suits his needs.[43] This is, of course, a somewhat valid accusation as creating a new perspective on existing discourse is what an ironist is intending to do. But, as I have argued, letting Stewart become the unquestioned leader of a movement would transform the Stewart/Colbert universe into the very thing it intends to criticize. While Stewart is the point of identification between the text and the audience, it risks becoming the cunning identification unless reflexivity occurs. Such a rhetorical move occurs in several ways. First, Stewart addresses the limitations of his own knowledge and influence during the nightly interview segments with politicians, scholars, and important members of politics and culture. In these interviews, the satire often stops or is at least restrained to take ten minutes to address something that is happening in the world seriously. During these interviews, Stewart continually downplays his significance and expertise. In interviews with

political leaders such as Elizabeth Warren or culture shapers like Lawrence Lessig who seem to

share the political leanings of the Stewart/Colbert universe, Stewart will often defer to those

leaders' knowledge in order to round out the message of the program.[44] However, often more

intriguing are Stewart's interviews with those who have oppositional political beliefs, such as

Bill O'Reilly, Tim Pawlenty, or Ron Paul.[45] While these interviews can often be biting and

challenging, Stewart remains respectful and insists on taking each point of view seriously. In

these interview segments, we see Stewart reflexively critiquing himself and the influence he

alone should have on the audience. On *The Colbert Report*, Colbert conducts similar interviews,

but because he maintains his character, any lack of knowledge on Colbert's part must be adjusted

to his preexisting narrative. For example, in early 2011 Bill O'Reilly, on his show *The O'Reilly

Factor,* used the ocean tides as an example of the proof of God. On the January 6, 2011 episode,

Colbert rousingly supported O'Reilly's claim until astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson appeared

to explain to Colbert it was the Moon that caused the tides. Colbert, maintaining the narrative,

concludes then the Moon must be God. When Tyson refutes this claim, Colbert comes to the

only logical conclusion he sees: Neil deGrasse Tyson must be God.[46] In moments like these,

Colbert reinforces his role as the parodist of unquestioned political voices, but does not directly

challenge the notion the Stewart/Colbert universe must be supported unquestionably. That is not

to say reflexivity is absent in *The Colbert Report*. This example as well as the above analysis of

the "Tip of the Hat/Wag of the Finger" segments shows ways *The Colbert Report* encourages

reflexivity in the audience. However, taken on its own, that reflexivity is lacking in the humility

desired by Burke. To find such humility, the "Tip/Wag" segments must be read as part of the

larger Stewart/Colbert universe. Thus, it is through Stewart's contributions in ways such as the

interviews that the audience is given a means to see the humility in the whole ironic

performance, a humility that attempts to reinforce the "true irony" described by Burke.

This reflexivity is further evidenced by Stewart's acknowledgement of the show's

prominence in culture. When Bill O'Reilly attacked Stewart for jokingly declaring war on

Christmas by saying, "We all know Jon Stewart is going to Hell," Stewart responded by saying

he was already in Hell having to watch Fox News all the time.[47] Fox News' attacks on Stewart

are not isolated to this incident. In another instance, Stewart appeared on *Fox News Sunday with

Chris Wallace*, where Stewart claimed Fox News viewers were the most consistently

misinformed in all polls, something that was not quite true. Stewart admitted his mistake on air,

but rebutted by pointing out many of the fact-checking errors found on Fox News programs.[48] In

another example, after being accused of failing to cover his friend Anthony Weiner's sex scandal

fully, Stewart held a fake press conference to discuss his decision not to address the issue more

on the program. Here, we see Stewart not only taking responsibility for the issue, but doing it in

a way that reinforces the satirical tone.[49]

Stewart also uses such reflexivity to acknowledge the limitations that arise from

assuming a left-leaning political stance from politicians. The January 3, 2012 episode of *The

Daily Show*, for example, starts a segment by Stewart joking about the Republicans' perceptions

of Obama as a "Socialist, Muslim, Kenyan, Christian," and sarcastically asking, "I wonder what

permanent damage he's done to our country in his laboratory of power grabbing that he inhabits

between the small window between Christmas and New Years that is so damaging?" The show

cuts to several news segments discussing Obama's signing of legislation that permits the

government to detain anyone indefinitely, including an American citizen, who is suspected of

terrorism. The camera returns to Stewart, who proceeds to explain much of what has been

discussed here about the use of irony on *The Daily Show*: "I was kidding about…I was ironically portraying a character who believes that the president is exercising executive power in an unwarranted power through the juxtaposition of…fuck!"[50] Such admission of the use of irony as discussed here not only reflexively addresses exactly how the show expects the audience to engage with *The Daily Show* but also reveals problems arise even with politicians that seem to align with the political leanings of the universe.

Such seeming inconsistency in political perspective is not limited to the politicians. Stewart has also used reflexivity to address his own political views. Although he leans politically to the left, he does maintain a willingness to side with issues typically associated with right-leaning politics. In a rebuttal to political pundit Bernie Goldberg's claim that Stewart was biased against those that supported anything other than left-leaning politics, Stewart accepted Goldberg's criticism but drew attention to views that are commonly perceived to be conservative, such as Stewart's adamant pro-military stance.[51] Addressing both moments where the universe fails to maintain a left-leaning message and where the politicians the universe supports fail to coincide with the political perspective adds a layer of self-reflexive criticism to the overall function of irony in the universe.

Reinforced in this way, the audience is brought together in a way that ensures the audience members use the ironic mindset to challenge themselves as much as they do others. This reflexivity becomes a necessary component to the logic of ironic appropriation, one that helps to encourage the audience to avoid the problems of satire seen by Burke and embrace the humility of true irony. The actions of Stewart, combined with the rest of the irony in the Stewart/Colbert universe, highlight the limitations to the audience members' own experiences and reinforce the notion that, as things change in politics and society, the audience must be

willing to look back at itself and ensure the audience members are reevaluating their own beliefs as they move forward. If we look back at Burke's concern about the satirist, he notes, "The satirist attacks *in others* the weaknesses and temptations that are really *within himself* (sic)." An initial reading of this statement, as Burke intended, is to see that the satirist is using a cunning identification to hide from the problems found within the satirist. But by using the logic of ironic appropriation, the Stewart/Colbert universe creates a complex and dynamic use of irony that challenges this assumption about satire. Through the analysis above, I have argued that by looking at the functions of irony throughout the Stewart/Colbert universe, a use of irony is found that the guides the audience toward a particular form of identification that employs a number of different reflexive strategies to encourage the audience members to be as critical of themselves as they are the ironic object of criticism. As a result, we can look at Burke's comments on the satirist in a new way. Instead of seeing the satirist as hiding behind "the weaknesses and temptations that are really within," the Stewart/Colbert universe gives the audience a means to embrace those weaknesses as a necessary component of satire, one that helps the audience embrace a comic frame of acceptance and eschew the notion of incommensurable politics.[52]

Active Rhetorical Engagement: Irony as Equipment for Living

Thus far, I have argued that the satirical and parodic uses of irony in the Stewart/Colbert universe complement each other in such a way as to produce a constitutive force that draws the attention of the audience and provides a point of rhetorical identification. However, as Charland notes, constitutive rhetoric produced through the logic of myth not only calls a public into being, but also positions it toward action that reinforces a predetermined endpoint.[53] Conversely, I argue the logic of ironic appropriation eschews such predestined thinking and encourages the formed audience to question assumptions about not only those that are criticized through irony

but also its own perspectives. In other words, irony forces the audience to take the mental action of examining culture and discourse from an alternative perspective. In Chapter II, I argue the principle of intertextuality extends this action by forcing the audience to make meaningful connections between texts and the ideology within them. In Chapter III, I argue through the principle of interactivity the logic of ironic appropriation as seen in the Stewart/Colbert universe encourages audiences to take more than philosophical action and, instead, take action that has material consequences. Taking the principle of irony on its own for the moment, though, I argue the theoretical function of irony pushes the audience toward an intellectual exercise that provides the basis for the action-oriented nature of ironic appropriation's constitutive rhetoric. In other words, irony remains an important rhetorical tool for rhetors who want to encourage the audience members to question their world and to help guide how they see themselves within it. Irony, thus, becomes a tool to supply what Burke called "equipment for living."[54]

In this section, I explore the second rhetorical function of the logic of ironic appropriation, placing the formed audience into action, by examining the way irony in the Stewart/Colbert universe attempts to provide the audience with equipment for living. Here, I not only draw from *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report* television programs, but also pay particular attention to two of the universe's most successful print components: *America (The Book)* and Stephen Colbert's *I Am America (And So Can You!)*. As print media beyond the television programs that the audience must purchase, these books provide one example of the ways a constituted public will seek out additional information, an action in itself. These books are also consumed differently than television media. The structure of media consumption is controlled more so with television than it is with reading, where the different audience members are given more autonomy to interpret the media and emphasize certain aspects of the information

than others. Through the comparison of media, some of the limitations of using various media to put the audience into any specific action can be seen, particularly a unified action that is shared across the entire audience. This also provides an opportunity to explore some of the failures of irony itself as a rhetorical tool, particularly the way pastiche can generate humor but limit the action-oriented nature of irony and, in turn, ironic appropriation as a constitutive force.

Earlier I noted that equipment for living is the means by which people, either individually or collectively, use discourse to approach the complexities of life. According to Burke, "art forms like 'tragedy' or 'comedy' or 'satire' would be treated as equipment for living, that at times size up situations in various ways and in keeping with correspondingly various attitudes."[55] Throughout the Stewart/Colbert universe, the producers use the logic of ironic appropriation not only to form the audience but to put that audience into action by providing such equipment for living. As Burke noted, satire is one such art form that can provide equipment for living, primarily because the dual nature of its message calls upon the audience to "size up situations in various ways" and consider the perspectives circulating in discourse. As I have argued, irony in any of its forms has such duality, but it is not neutral. Even true irony, which requires reflexivity to prevent itself from becoming what it criticizes, still maintains a strong political stance.

For members of the audience of the Stewart/Colbert universe, that left-leaning political slant is impossible to miss. To miss it is to not be part of the audience. But what are they to do with it? To consume such critique without action results in cynicism toward democracy and society, a disparaging claim levied at Jon Stewart and company by Roderick Hart and E. Johanna Hartelius.[56] However, I argue the constitutive nature of ironic appropriation discourages such cynicism. Instead, it encourages an active approach to being a part of the audience. Specifically, the Stewart/Colbert universe positions the audience to (re)consider the understanding of

democracy and society in both contemporary and historical contexts. The Stewart/Colbert universe, thus, provides texts that offer the equipment for living that helps drive this action. The principle of irony in this process serves to guide the audience on how to think about accepted knowledge and understanding. Irony, placed into context of particular elements of the Stewart/Colbert universe, becomes a means of helping the audience members maintain their ironist mentality beyond what the universe provides through the development of equipment for living.

There is little reason to doubt the majority of texts members of the Stewart/Colbert universe audience consume come from *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report*. In these programs, we see the foundation of how the audience understands irony as providing equipment for living. In the previous section, I discussed how the Stewart/Colbert universe combines the efforts of these programs to constitute the audience. This process also provides the basis for the use of irony to guide action by presenting the dual nature of the criticism. At the start of 2011, for example, there was an outbreak of pro-democracy feelings across much of the Muslim world. *The Daily Show* covered this movement by having the correspondents share with Stewart their beliefs as to why the apparently sudden shift in support for democracy occurred. Each of the pundits reflected an argument that was currently circulating in social discourse. Olivia Munn, for example, argued it was Obama's foreign policy which gave hope to Muslims, while Jason Jones claimed it was a result of actions set in motion by the Bush administration. Samantha Bee argued it was the rise of social media such as Twitter that allowed Muslims to share their true feelings with each other. Aasif Mandvi claimed it was not a sudden universal trend, however, but instead the result of longstanding regional tensions that had plagued the area, a viewpoint that was quickly dismissed by the rest of the panel.[57] In this example, we can see how these programs use

irony to provide the audience with a number of perspectives on important issues of the day. It also helps the audience reason for itself how to interpret not only the discourse it encounters but also how the media accepts or rejects political perspectives and then presents those accepted positions back to the public. In fact, for most of the examples provided in the earlier section, it can be argued *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report* use their shows to help provide the audience with equipment for living. These shows work individually as well as a universe to help audience members understand how to make sense of the world and live their lives within it.

While the television programs provide a clear understanding of the action-oriented function of irony, the books in the Stewart/Colbert universe provide an opportunity to address some significant aspects of the rhetoric of irony in positioning audience toward action. In 2004, the first of such books appeared. Written primarily by Jon Stewart, Ben Karlin, and David Javerbaum, but contributed to by much of *The Daily Show* staff, *America (The Book)* takes an ironic look at democracy in American history.[58] Unlike *The Daily Show* itself, which is relatively satirical in nature, *America (The Book)* is a parody of traditional textbooks given to high school throughout the United States. The switch to parody is indicated even before the first page of the book, as the inside front cover has the traditional "This Book is Property Of:" rubber stamp seen in the front cover of most every textbook in American schools. The emphasis on parody in this book is not without significance, as will be seen in the discussion of pastiche below. Yet despite this switch to parody, *America (The Book)* still functions to provide the audience with equipment for living that in most ways coincides with the efforts seen in the rest of the Stewart/Colbert universe.[59] The book contains the same structure as a traditional textbooks, with chapters broken down based on topic such as "Chapter 1: Democracy Before America" or "Chapter 4: Congress: Quagmire of Freedom." Chapters explore areas related to American democracy including the

foundation of democracy, the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, political elections, and the media. Each chapter is broken down by topic. Chapter 1, for example, contains subtopics like "Early Man: More Animal Than Political" and "The Magna Carta: Power to the Extremely Wealthy People." Each subtopic develops like a traditional textbook with an explanation of the concepts, albeit with an ironic twist. In the discussion of the Magna Carta, for example, the book notes, "In 1215, England's wealthy barons refused to give King John the money he needed to wage war unless he signed the Magna Carta. The document codified that no man was above the law. Unfortunately for the peasant class, it did little to address how many were below it (Fig. 1.8)." This irony continues in the many figures that are littered throughout the text. In figure 1.8 that is mentioned in the above quotation, for example, the reader is given a drawing of a feudal serf with a caption noting he is "unaware of a wonderful new document [that] is protecting his master's rights."[60] Along with the text and the related figures, the book also features numerous factoids that provide ironic and skewed trivia about a related concept. Interestingly, most of the content of the book comes in the form of graphics such as pictures, games, charts, maps, cartoons, quizzes, and other related images. Some of these graphics provide an opportunity for the reader to engage with the text beyond just reading, making them a part of the construction of the textual experience. In the chapter on the Supreme Court, for example, readers are encouraged to cut out the robes of the nine judges and dress the naked versions of the justices on the next page by pasting the robe on them.[61] Although it seems unlikely readers will actually cut up the book, it remains an opportunity for deeper engagement with the text because of the intertextual reference. This part of the book plays on the game commonly found in children's activity books where the children are asked to cut out different outfits for different characters. In *America (The Book)*, this same game literally sheds the justices of the robes that hide their power. This sort of

engagement removes the guise of flawless objectivity and superiority and reminds the audience those powerful nine are humans like everyone else and possess the same flaws and biases as others in government. Combined, the text, pictures, and other graphics reconstruct the textbook experience while adding the ironic tone seen in *The Daily Show* to recreate the overarching critique of society.

Another significant book in the Stewart/Colbert universe is Stephen Colbert's *I Am America (And So Can You!)*.[62] Unlike *America (The Book)*'s parody of a textbook, *I Am America* parodies the biographical form taken by pundits like Bill O'Reilly and Glenn Beck. *I Am America* is organized into units such as "My American Childhood," "My American Adolescence," and "My American Maturity." The chapters of each unit, however, do not actually correspond to Colbert's personal childhood, adolescence, and maturity into adulthood. Instead, these themes provide a thin veil for Colbert's critique on American society. In the unit on his childhood, for example, there are chapters on "The Family," "Old People," "Animals," and "Religion." Throughout the book, Colbert covers numerous other topics such as sports, dating, homosexuality, education, the media, race, immigration, class warfare, and science. The content of the book reflects the self-absorbed, self-assured personality of Colbert seen on *The Colbert Report*. For example, in the Introduction of the book, Colbert proudly claims, "This book is Truth. My Truth." and later notes that the readers should, "Read this book. Be me. I Am America (And So Can You!)."[63] The book even has instructions on how to read the book, including the direction that the "book should never be marked or notated. This means no highlighting, underlining, or margin doodles."[64] While these instructions are partially meant to keep the book pristine, they are also there because Colbert has done the highlighting, underlining, and margin doodling for the audience. In the left and right margins as well as the margins below the text,

Colbert comments upon his own comments, providing an extended commentary and further

attempting to establish for the reader how they are to understand the world only through

Colbert's eyes. Like *America (The Book)*, *I Am America* contains numerous graphics that

contribute to the overall text, although the ratio of graphics is noticeably less for *I Am America*.

Many of these graphics attempt to make the readers part of the project, encouraging them to take

the quizzes and play the games featured in the text. Just as *America (The Book)* extends the tone

of *The Daily Show* to the written text, *I Am America (And So Can You!)* reproduces the parodic

sensibility of *The Colbert Report* for readers.

Like their respective programs, both of these books use the irony within them to help

provide their audience with the equipment for living necessary for understanding the world

around them and how to live in it. In the chapter on the media in *America (The Book)*, for

example, readers are given a "sample" of how the news media creates a 24 hour news channel

when "[o]n an average day 7 minutes of news happens." This graphic of a supposed producer's

legal pad includes notes on what is supposed to fill the remainder of the day, including 25

minutes of news graphics, 15 minutes of faked satellite delays, 20 minutes of a "pop culture

minute," and 40 minutes of stock reports by a "hot chick" who's "not <u>too</u> hot – must be

believable."[65] Fake graphics like these use irony to force the audience to reflect on the actual

news cycle. Although seemingly ridiculous, an analysis of any of the major 24 hour news

channels would reveal similarities too significant to ignore. In other places, the authors of

America (The Book) use legitimate facts in ironic contexts to create a similar effect. The chapter

on Congress, for example, includes a subsection titled "Meet Your Lobbyists," where readers are

presented with twelve "Hello, My Name Is:" nametags from various lobbying organizations

including the environmental lobby, the gun lobby, and big tobacco. These nametags provide not

only detailed information on how much monetary influence these organizations have over

Congress, but also critical commentary on their agendas and hidden agendas. The AARP, for

example, is noted on having a stated agenda of "preserving the dignity of the elderly" while

having a hidden agenda of "'That cocoon is out there in someone's pool, and by Christ, we are

going to find it!'"[66] The blend of real information and humorous critique positions the audience

to be more critical of how these real organizations influence democracy and, in turn, their own

lives.

Similar examples can be found in *I Am America*. In Colbert's critique of the media, for

example, he poses the question, "Is the mainstream press too liberal?" To support his claim that

it is, Colbert uses for proof "some of the headlines [he's] able to imagine." Below this claim, the

reader is provided with four magazines and the Colbert-version of the headlines including "29

Ways to Make Your Man Renounce God" on *Cosmopolitan*, "Which Welfare State is Right For

You?" on *Consumer Reports*, and "Abortions at 70MPH!" on *Car and Driver*.[67] Trained to see

Colbert as the parody version of those he is critiquing, the reader is positioned to consider just

how ridiculous these imaginary headlines are. Removed from the logic of ironic appropriation,

the rhetorical construction here may lead the audience to interpret this portion of the book as an

example of the ridiculous of the other, making the object of critique easily dismissible. However,

positioned in the Stewart/Colbert universe, readers are instead guided to do two things. First,

they are positioned to consider the media itself and how headlines can be constructed to convey

particular messages that, although seemingly neutral, are guided by ideological perspectives.

Second, the audience is encouraged to consider how the mind of the other works and the reasons

those with oppositional politics may read their own agenda into the media. As in the rest of the

Stewart/Colbert universe, these books serve to put the audience members to work thinking not

only about the specific object of critique in the irony but also similar examples found in their own lives.

While these examples further explain how the irony in the Stewart/Colbert universe functions rhetorically to position the audience toward action, there are, however, some key differences between the television programs and the books. First, the relationship the audience has with the television program is much different from the relationship with the books. Although the audience lives in a digital world that allows it to watch *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report* on a number of devices, in whole or in chunks, the actual pacing of the program is controlled by the producers. With the book, readers have more ability to linger over topics and reread those things that cause confusion or pique interest. As such, readers are not guided by the same structure that keeps them as united and focused as the programs themselves. Similarly, the programs are quite temporal. While the examples provided so far are proof enough that previous episodes contain information that remains relevant in today's society, the irony of the television programs are driven by current political and social contexts. The books, however, are less timely. As a result, they function rhetorically similarly whether read when first published or today. Again, this creates a different experience for individual members of the audience whereas the programs' timing keeps the audience on a united page.

Because of these reasons, I argue the books in the Stewart/Colbert universe, while they contribute significantly to the application of the logic of ironic appropriation for the purposes of constitution, are limited in their rhetorical power of constitution if left on their own. As Charland argues, rhetorical constitution is not a single moment in time but an ongoing process that must adapt to changes and challenges from other competing rhetorical influences.[68] The books in the Stewart/Colbert universe encourage a more individualized interaction with the rhetoric than the

shows do, and may splinter the audience's understanding of the equipment for living. Fortunately for the Stewart/Colbert universe, there is a key rhetorical element that is missing from the books the draws readers of the books back into the overarching guidance found in the Stewart/Colbert universe. Namely, the books are devoid of the rhetorical identification that I earlier argued is found in Jon Stewart. *I Am America,* which pulls from Colbert, requires Stewart for identification for the same reasons I argued were in *The Colbert Report*. But the ironic switch in *America (The Book)* to parody from *The Daily Show*'s satire removes the point on which the audience can hinge itself to the larger message found in the Stewart/Colbert universe. In fact, *America (The Book)* makes almost no mention of Stewart himself and takes for granted a significant knowledge of *The Daily Show's* history and messages. As such, the books lose some of the rhetorical power of ironic appropriation if left alone. While certainly still humorous and positioned to guide an audience toward critique, the reflexivity found in the Stewart/Colbert universe that serves to encourage audiences to see the object of critique as flawed not evil is no longer obvious in the books alone. As I argue below, such reflexivity exists and is, in fact, at times even stronger in the books than the television programs, but the recognition of such reflexivity is tied to the audience's understanding of how the shows equips for living. Thus, to read the irony as equipment for living in the way positioned by the overall universe, the books must be put into the context of the television programs. Because of this, the lack of a central point of identification found in the books serves rhetorically to guide the readers back to the programs, whose more unified rhetorical messages serves to reconstitute the individuals back into an audience.

Understood as part of the Stewart/Colbert universe that cannot be separated out, books such as *America (The Book)* and *I Am America* use irony in ways that contribute to providing equipment for living that the programs alone cannot. As mentioned earlier, the individualized

attention paid by a reader allows for the reader to highlight those aspects of the messages found in the Stewart/Colbert universe that most resonate. While ironic appropriation encourages a prolonged project of questioning and criticism, one of the reasons this may not be more common is the shear vastness of such a project. Unlike the television programs, which are organized and produced based on the preferences of the producers, in book form, such equipment for living allows readers to dwell on those aspects of culture that are most relevant to them.

This leads to a general non-linear approach to consuming the texts that is emphasized throughout the books. To read the text by itself in any of these books is to miss a significant amount of the humor and critique. Instead, the margin notes, graphics, headers, and textboxes seen throughout the books encourage readers to skip around the book and play with the text, becoming an active part of it. Such non-linearity compliments the gaps in consistency brought forth by the use of irony. With irony the work required for the audience to consume these texts forces them to consider a number of different approaches to reading these texts. The similarities between this requirement and what the Stewart/Colbert universe expects from the audience are rhetorically significant and provide an example of reflexivity that forces the readers to reconsider their own interpretations of culture and discourse while simultaneously engaging with the critique of others.

In general, reflexivity is approached in the books in a different manner than the television programs. While the reflexivity on *The Daily Show* can be seen through Stewart, his absence in the book thrusts the action of being reflexive heavily on to the audience. From the start, it is made clear that these books are for the audience and is intended to put it into action. The subtitle of *America (The Book)*, for example, is "A Citizen's Guide to Democracy Inaction." Here, the authors highlight that the readers are, in fact, citizens of the democracy and are directly accused

of being irresponsibly inactive in the process. This fact is reemphasized in the dedication page, as the book is dedicated, "To the huddled masses, keep yearnin'!" These statements position the readers not to see themselves as mere readers but part of the audience intended to do something with the information included. What is intended is also made clear in the title: As citizens they currently remain passive. The first pages provide two uses of irony that highlight this intention. In two fake quotes, Pericles asks Socrates, "Is it true that we are called a democracy, for the administration is in the hands of the many and not the few," to which Socrates replies, "Yes, Pericles, but have you gotten a load of the many?" Here, the book asserts immediately that citizens, even the readers, are seen as unprepared to be active participants in democracy, a point emphasized in a graphic on the next page. In a pie chart showing "Reasons for Decline in Participation in Democracy," the reader is shown reasons such as 23% are too tired, 17% had the game on, 52% felt the monetary rewards were unsatisfactory, and 8% "had a thing."[69] Such a direct attack on inactive democratic participation forces the readers positioned in the Stewart/Colbert universe to consider their own excuses for lack of participation. Inclusions such as these may not resonate as clear drives toward personal reflexivity for a general reader, but audience members steeped in the equipment for living provided by the Stewart/Colbert universe are better positioned to see this as the producers calling them to action and to take personal responsibility for the problems of democracy instead of only finding flaws in others.

While these characteristics show unique contributions to the overall use of irony in the Stewart/Colbert universe, the books also highlight a problem of irony heretofore ignored: pastiche. Pastiche, according to Jameson, is parody without the ulterior motives.[70] For the Stewart/Colbert universe, parody and other forms of irony are used to provide a cautioned critique of problems in society and encourage the audience members to live their lives in such a

way that extends that critique. This equipment for living provided through the irony, however, is hindered when pastiche occurs and guides the audience away from critique. As I argued in the Introduction, I question Jameson's assumption that pastiche is "devoid of laughter," because it is through the humor for humor's sake where these books move from parody to pastiche. Given the Colbert team's familiarity with parody, there are few explicit instances of pastiche in *I Am America*. Colbert has created a world for the audience where every action and comment can be spun back into a positive contribution to the character's overarching conservative message. Thus, nothing can exist without the ulterior motive even if it appears as such. The authors of *America (The Book)*, less frequent users of parody, are not as successful at avoiding pastiche. There are moments where the pastiche is less impactful on the overall message than others. Take the "This Book is Property Of" rubber stamp that exists on the inside front cover. At first glance, it appears as if it identical to the ones found in high school textbooks. A closer read reveals the students are given the warning, "We are fully aware that Dick Hertz, I. P. Freely, and Haywood Jablome are not real people, so please exclude them." Combined with real instructions that would exist on the actual stamp such as "Teachers should see that the pupil's name is clearly written in ink in the spaces above," this joke about fake names is a moment of pastiche that adds humor but no real critique, particularly a critique on democratic participation.[71] In other places, however, moments of pastiche occur that do impact the overall message of the book. Take Chapter 8, "The Future of Democracy." While at some moments the chapter seriously addresses how the concerns seen in the rest of the book impact democracy, there are also frequent moments of pastiche that hinder the overall point of the book. A chapter about the future of democracy may serve to emphasize why democracy inaction is a problem that must be addressed, but such use of pastiche is "amputated of the satiric impulse," as Jameson puts it, and limits the rhetorical effectiveness of

irony.[72] Take, for example, one textbox in Chapter 8 that asks in its title, "Will You Be Aware?" that "The widely held perception that 'Congress is made up of blood-thirsty cannibals' placed the earlier, more genial perception 'Congress is inefficient.'" This text is accompanied by an image that indicates that, in fact, Congress is made up of zombie-like cannibals in the future, and this is not just a saying.[73] Another such box notes that, "The human mind didn't always operate on the Windows OS."[74] Although intended to create a vision of the future that is wildly unrealistic, the use of pastiche nonetheless distracts the audience from the continued critique found in the other uses of irony. In a book about repositioning the audience toward action from inaction, it is quite a loss of opportunity for such pastiche to dominate a chapter on democracy in the future. Whereas the authors could have used this chapter to solidify a real concern for democracy inaction, the choice for pastiche renders the book alone without consequence. As a result, the book cannot achieve the desired rhetorical impact by itself and instead must be read within the larger universe to overcome the choice for pastiche at this pivotal moment. Examples such as these demonstrate that just as the logic of myth may be faced with problems that negatively impact the rhetorical process of constitution, ironic appropriation is subject to similar problems when messages are produced in a way that does not serve the process of constant re-appropriation, including providing the audience with equipment for living.

Moments like these exemplify how rhetorical constitution is not a perfect process and is met with limitations. As Charland argues, though, because constitution is a process, new rhetorical texts are created to reposition the audience back toward the overall purpose.[75] Scholars of constitutive rhetoric have shown how this happens when myth is the driving logic of constitution. However, through this analysis I have argued that such actions are a necessary part

of the logic of ironic appropriation as well, particularly when use of rhetoric moves the audience away from the process of constant critique.

Recognizing these limitations, however, should not obscure the overall function of irony in ironic appropriation to position the audience toward action. As I have argued, texts in the Stewart/Colbert universe use irony to provide the audience with equipment for living. I have focused here on two of the books in the universe to emphasize not only the way the universe functions beyond the shows, but also to recognize the different rhetorical influences the varying media has on the audience. Irony in the Stewart/Colbert universe brings the audience together and guides those audience members toward reflexive consideration of their culture and discourse. The question remains, however, what is the purpose of this reflexive, critical action? I argue that the Stewart/Colbert universe provides this equipment for living to help the audience members make judgments about their role in the construction of culture and democracy. This, however, is not unlike the purpose of the equipment for living provided through the mythic-driven conservative rhetoric critiqued in the Stewart/Colbert universe. I argue that what separates these two forms action is the way the logics position the audiences toward judgment. In the next section, I explore how these logics handle the concept of incommensurability in judgment and how consideration of this idea ultimately separates the two logics.

Making Judgment: Irony, Incommensurability, and Rhetorical Effectiveness

The principle of irony in ironic appropriation serves an important role in helping constitute the audience and, as I argued above, provide it with equipment for living that oftentimes guides toward reconsidering perspectives on discourse and culture. While rhetorical limitations exist, the principle of irony is an essential foundation to the logic of ironic appropriation. As I argue in later chapters, it is through the basis in irony that intertextuality and

interactivity are able to contribute meaningfully to this logic of constitutive rhetoric. The principle of irony is fundamental to establishing a central tenant of ironic appropriation, namely that the audience examines how irony and its function in satire and parody provide an alternative to a literal interpretation for the purposes of judgment through dialectical thinking. Thus far in this chapter, I have focused on the constitutive nature of irony, including how this dialectic thinking places the constituted audience into action. What is left to discuss, then, is how that intellectual action places the audience in a position to make judgments about politics, culture, and discourse.

The previous discussion of irony and action hinted at how the principle of irony encourages the audience to make these judgments. The "Reasons for Decline in Participation in Democracy" pie chart, for example, encourages the audience members to not only to think about the double-codedness of the irony but provides them with the equipment for living to recognize the need to judge their own contribution to democracy in America.[76] In this section, I extend this analysis of irony in the Stewart/Colbert universe and how it positions the audience to make judgments about the news media, politics, and their place in democracy. Having the equipment for living, the ironic principle of ironic appropriation encourages the audience not only to recognize the duality of the irony and the object of criticism, but to make a conscious judgment about what should or should not be. To make this argument, I compare the Stewart/Colbert universe to the short-lived Fox News alternative to *The Daily Show*, the *½ Hour News Hour*.[77] Through a comparative analysis of these texts, I argue the Stewart/Colbert universe succeeds while the *½ Hour News Hour* failed because the principle of irony encourages questioning as a form of judgment, and this characteristic is betrayed when irony is used to reinforce incommensurability in democracy.

As I have argued, the principle of irony in the logic of ironic appropriation serves as a constitutive rhetorical tool by building an audience with members positioned with the equipment for living necessary to make judgments about democracy, culture, society, and their role in them. The nature of irony helps guide this judgment toward the consideration of an important problem facing democracy in contemporary society: incommensurability. Incommensurability is the idea that opposing sides of a viewpoint are so philosophically different that there is no way to bridge the gap between them. As a result, those that see their positions as incommensurable with an opposing argument assume there is no way to find any common ground to find a reasoned solution. Scholars such as Nola Heidlebaugh and Sharon Crowley have argued that the current political climate shows an increase in incommensurability and, more troubling, an increased expectation and acceptance of it. Reasoned democratic governance, however, does not allow for such incommensurability. As Heidlebaugh notes, the rise of incommensurability appears to stem from an increased desire for consensus in government, with citizens seeing any deviance from their political position as a direct threat to their ability to get their way.[78] This is, of course, not a ridiculous conclusion, but stems from a flaw in conceptualizing what democracy means. As such, the Pericles-Socrates exchange joked about in *America (The Book)* is not very far from the truth.[79] When the people adhere to a belief in democracy as "my way or no way," the purpose of a democracy disappears. I argue the Stewart/Colbert universe uses the principle of irony in the logic of ironic appropriation to guide the audience toward making judgments about the accepted assumptions of incommensurability in culture and politics in order to return democracy to the people and put it back into action.

Having established the desired push away from incommensurability in the Stewart/Colbert universe's use of ironic appropriation, it is important to note that Burke's

concern of the use of satire without humility shows how irony can be used to constitute an audience in a way that perpetuates contentious incommensurable discourse.[80] Thus, there is no reason to assume that irony is not capable of being used by subscribers of the logic of myth for the purposes of constituting a public. However, just as Barthes notes that left-leaning politics can use myth despite the relative ineffectiveness, I argue that the principle of irony is not well suited for right-leaning politics and instead functions most effectively through the logic of ironic appropriation.[81] In this chapter, I have argued extensively as to why irony is a fundamental principle of the logic of ironic appropriation as see in through the Stewart/Colbert universe. To help understand the limitations of irony outside of ironic appropriation and in mythic constitution, I now compare the effective use of irony in the Stewart/Colbert universe to the failed use of irony in the short-lived Fox News series, the *½ Hour News Hour*.

The *½ Hour News Hour* was a show on Fox News that aired from February 18, 2007 to September 23, 2007. Described by its creator Joel Surnow as "*The Daily Show* for conservatives," the *½ Hour News Hour* featured news desk reporting from co-anchors Kurt McNally, played by actor Kurt Long, and Jennifer Lange, played by actor Jennifer Robertson.[82] This reporting was combined with roundtable discussions between the anchors, correspondents, and fictional guests. The show also featured a number of fake commercials and skits that were more akin to *Saturday Night Live* than *The Daily Show*. The show's political lean was indisputably right. As Surnow put it, "You can turn on any show and see [then President] Bush being bashed. There really is nothing out there for those who want satire that tilts right."[83]

The show was an immediate critical failure. The show has one of the lowest average scores on *Metacritic*.com (12 out of 100) and was panned almost universally. *Philadelphia Inquirer* critic Jonathan Storm claimed, "The *½ Hour News Hour* is slow torture all by itself."

Boston Globe writer Joanna Weiss remarked, "In truth, there's nothing wrong with partisan humor, as long as it's actually funny. But here, even the less-political jokes are hopelessly obvious or old." The *New York Times* reviewer Alessandra Stanley noted, "Sometimes the humor is so heavy-handed that it seems almost like self-parody." Stanley's review points to where my criticism of the program falls: the failure of irony in rhetoric.[84]

I would argue with Stanley that, at times, the show did have a few rare moments of self-parody. For example, in the pilot episode, the viewers learn that Rush Limbaugh (played by Limbaugh) won the 2008 Presidential election and Ann Coulter (played by Coulter) is his Vice President. In an episode aired on February 18, 2007, President Limbaugh takes a vacation after 100 days in office because he "executed the office flawlessly." Limbaugh proceeds to state that he has fixed the economy, foreign relations, and all other problems facing America. When Limbaugh leaves for vacation and puts Coulter in charge, she immediately calls the Pentagon to see what other countries were available for her to invade.[85]

This segment demonstrates several moments of self-parody. First, the indisputable perfection of the Limbaugh presidency is an imitation of what Limbaugh himself has proposed for years he could do if given the power. Yet this fails as parody for several reasons. Most notably, the parody is a reflection of a proposed reality. Not only is Limbaugh not the president in real life, the imitation is of a fictional ideal he has constructed for himself. Thus, neither the parodist nor the object of parody is, in fact, real. The only thing that is real is Limbaugh himself and the audience is left with little in terms of criticism. The rhetorical identification is left to be with real-world Rush Limbaugh alone. The only form of critique that exists is as unquestionable endorsement of Limbaugh's right-leaning politics. As a result, it is no longer parody but, instead, pastiche. As Genette put it, "[P]arody is transformational in its relationship to other texts;

pastiche is imitative."[86] The pastiche seen in this segment is intentionally not transformational. Instead, it is intended to reassure the viewer that Limbaugh is, in fact, correct in his politics and the viewer would be best served to follow his lead. This is not the only time the show uses Rush as pastiche to reinforce his conservative politics. On the June 3, 2007 episode, Limbaugh reports from his vacation. Here, Limbaugh's success as president has allowed him to create a luxury "White House" in Cabo San Lucas. Rush reports that, by this point in his presidency, his entire Cabinet has retired due to boredom. To solve this problem, Rush hires a bikini-model to be his Secretary of State, and the two work to find a way to eliminate America's dependence on foreign baby oil.[87] Here, the show reinforces the ultimate correctness of Rush's politics, presenting a world where the president is so successful and prosperous that he can lounge with beautiful women, a reality that, by extension, should fall on most Americans who work as hard as Rush.[88]

Through Coulter, a second version of self-parody is found in an imitation of the military-drive, power-hungry Republican president. Coulter's character is imitative of the construction of then Vice President Dick Cheney as a warmonger. Cheney was depicted on the show elsewhere as a warmonger who, in his two hours as president when President Bush received a colonoscopy, started a nuclear war with Korea. Coulter's character is more self-parody than Limbaugh's in that Coulter was imitating a real perception of a Vice President. However, as seen in Limbaugh's character, there is nothing transformational about Coulter's imitation. Coulter specifically asks the Pentagon if there were "any other" countries for her to invade, suggesting that such invasion has not only proliferated throughout Limbaugh's presidency, but also that his success as president indicates this was a good policy to hold.

Pro-war politics were supported in another segment of the *½ Hour News Hour*. In a roundtable discussion on the September 9, 2007 episode titled "Informed Consent" moderated by

fake newscaster Kristen Kohler, the viewers are given a debate between Harrison Duncan, a military historian and retired general, and Evan Beatty, a guy who writes bumper stickers. Duncan, it is revealed, has an extensive history of expertise in war and foreign policy. Beatty does nothing but write bumper stickers. At each turn in the debate, Duncan provides coherent reasons why America should engage in as much war as possible. Beatty, however, is presented as a mindless leftist who can only respond with quotations from his bumper stickers, quotations that are revealed to be empty of real meaning or context.[89] While this segment is more parodic than the President Limbaugh sketches in the sense that it imitates real roundtable discussions on news programs, it fails to be effective irony because, again, there is nothing transformational about the parody. Here, the parody does not present dual perception of the object of criticism. Instead, what is being criticized is presented just as it is imagined. The audience members are given no reason to become critical thinkers themselves because their preexisting viewpoints are merely reproduced on the screen. In this way, for the far right audience, there is nothing ironic about the *½ Hour News Hour*. This depiction of leftists is as ironic as someone painting the afternoon sky blue.

As I have argued throughout this chapter, the Stewart/Colbert universe uses irony in a multifaceted and complex manner to constitute an audience with members that will recognize the function of irony in the universe and use that irony to critique the world around them. The *½ Hour News Hour* has no such subtlety in the construction of its audience. While the Stewart/Colbert universe employs the unique logic of ironic appropriation to create its constitutive rhetoric, the *½ Hour News Hour* relies upon the preexisting constitution of its audience derived from far right media channels like Fox News and Rush Limbaugh's radio program. A sketch on the June 10, 2007 episode makes such expectations for the audience clear.

As anchors McNally and Lange sit backstage waiting for make-up, their agent arrives and begs them to convince the writers to gear the politics of the show toward the middle to prevent being shunned by the rest of the liberal Hollywood media. When McNally and Lange refuse to compromise their principles, the agent removes his face mask to reveal he was, in fact, Limbaugh testing their loyalty.[90] Here, the show provides for the audience explicit instructions that any deviation away from the right is a sign of disloyalty that would not be tolerated. Just as Charland argues, the *½ Hour News Hour* produces a constitutive rhetoric that serves as a rhetoric of socialization, existing to bring the audience back into the shared narrative.[91] In trying to maintain the existing mythic logic, however, the show inevitably fails to be ironic because this mythic narrative requires the audience to see its current path as indisputably correct.

This certainty about their political views is reinforced throughout the entire series. In a segment on the July 15, 2007 episode, for example, anchors McNally and Lange interview three atheist authors about their recently published books. When two of the three authors die on camera, the third author immediately converts to Christianity in an attempt to save his life.[92] Here, we see the conservative viewpoint reinforced in several ways. First, this segment highlights the requirement that God must exist to guide the conservative narrative. Grounded in God, the narrative becomes as infallible like God. A more interesting conclusion to be drawn from this segment, though, is the assumption that God is synonymous with Christianity. The surviving author immediately begins to mimic rituals of the Christian church, an odd move for someone who moments before did not believe in God at all. In this short piece, the *½ Hour News Hour* reinforces two key aspects of their expected faith of the audience. As seen in the earlier examples, though, this fails to be ironic because the only commentary provided is a resounding reinforcement of current beliefs. As Hutcheon argued, irony, particularly through satire, can

serve to reinforce a perspective, but, without providing a double-codedness to its rhetorical message, the segment fails to invoke the edge of irony that requires the audience to think critically.[93] There is no reason provided for the audience members to understand why they are right to be Christians. Instead, the segment proposes the audience members are right because they are Christians and they are Christians because they are right.

Similar examples exist that reinforce beliefs of other conservative political stances. The May 13, 2007 episode features a story that mocks the notion that men can be victims of sexual harassment because, as the show depicts it, no man would see himself as a victim if a beautiful woman came onto him. On the June 3, 2007 episode, gun control advocates are shown as people who want to take guns away from the police, home owners, and the scared elderly. That same episode mocks academics and intellectuals as people who rewrite history for their own purposes by showing a presidential historian who has imagined every positive thing to happen in American history since 1980 as a result of Jimmy Carter's policies, including his "policy" to lose to Reagan. Other targets of far-right conservatism like feminism and the homosexual agenda are attacked throughout the series in an attempt to use the program as a means to reinforce the current political beliefs.[94]

The result of the *½ Hour News Hour* is an attempt at ironic critique that fails for numerous reasons. I have argued above such failure occurs because the parody imitates a fictional reality, making it meaningless. When such parody does imitate the real, it fails to provide any transformational critique. Instead, the use of irony on the program reinforces the mythic narratives already circulating in the rest of the constitutive discourse, namely Fox News. Thus, while the program serves a constitutive role, it fails as irony because there is no real criticism for the audience to engage with after consuming the text.

Where the show succeeds is in reproducing the desired form of judgment in the audience. I have argued the Stewart/Colbert universe uses the irony produce a form of judgment that eschews incommensurability and encourages the audience to find connections with the object of critique. Such incommensurability, however, is a desired characteristic of the far-right conservatism that guides the construction of the *½ Hour News Hour*. In this way, the program served its constitutive purpose of rebuilding the audience and reinforcing the predetermined action set forth by the mythic narrative of these politics.

Why, then, did the show fail? I argue its failure is likely due to two related factors. First, because the audience for this program was already constructed, it came into the program seeing the world as constructed in incommensurable extremes. The program adds no critique because this extremism is a reflection of the "real" reality presented on the news throughout the rest of the day. Thus, the Fox News universe had no need for the irony. This brings about the second reason. While the Stewart/Colbert universe uses the irony get the audience to think about the double-codeness of reality, such double-codedness does not exist in the Fox News universe. If the show failed to be humorous for the constituted audience, it was because, from its perspective, there were no jokes. The depictions of leftists, atheist, feminists, and others are barely exaggerations of how they are imagined in real life. Recall the magazine covers Colbert envisioned in *I Am America*. As part of the Stewart/Colbert universe under the logic of ironic appropriation, the audience is positioned to see these as the way others reinterpret messages to serve their own needs.[95] With the *½ Hour News Hour*, though, that audience does not see it as a reinterpretation but the legitimate meaning. As a result, what the *½ Hour News Hour* provided for its audience was 30 minutes of a fictional reality sandwiched among 23 and a half other hours

of actual reality. In a logic committed to seeing things as they are, such a fictional reality is but a distraction from the real problems it emulates.

The *½ Hour News Hour* was able to use the guise of irony to construct a rhetorical text that served to reconstitute the audience toward its supportive view of political inaction and incommensurability in judgment. However, I have argued, the failure of the program to succeed is a result of irony's inherent rejection of these principles. Irony may be used for conservative politics, but they must be moderately conservative politics that seek to find middle ground and eschew incommensurability in judgment. Yet there is something valuable gained by analyzing the failed use of irony in the *½ Hour News Hour*. The *½ Hour News Hour* serves as an important warning for those who want to use the logic of ironic appropriation for far leftist politics. As a principle of ironic appropriation, irony does not allow for extremes in either direction. The humble nature of true irony described by Burke attracts the ironist, the audience, and the object of criticism to each other.[96] I have argued throughout this chapter that the Stewart/Colbert universe uses the principle of irony for just such a purpose. If ironic appropriation is to become the missing logic of the left that counters the draw of mythic logic toward the right, these implications on judgment and incommensurability cannot be ignored.

Conclusion

Irony is a fundamental principle of the logic of ironic appropriation. As a logic, ironic appropriation must set for those who subscribe to it a vector of reasoning. As Black put it, rhetoric "should be viewed as expressing a vector of influence."[97] As I mentioned in the introduction, this vector is both direction and magnitude. Irony helps set both of these for rhetoric constructed under the logic of ironic appropriation. By bringing the audience members together in such a way as to see themselves as an active part of the rhetorical constitution, irony

puts the audience into action. It forces those audience members to analyze critically just as the ironist does. However, as I have argued here, it also shows the audience members that they must continue that critique in their own lives beyond what the universe does for them. As seen in the Stewart/Colbert universe, such rhetoric discourages audiences from being passive consumers of rhetorical messages and, instead, positions them to critique the world from a leftist perspective. However, that same rhetoric encourages the constituted audience to look back upon itself through reflexive thinking. Such self-criticism is necessary to the logic of ironic appropriation. It is through this reflexivity that the audience members are put into a position that sees the objects of criticism as not altogether different from themselves. While it maintains the leftist perspective, rhetoric constructed through ironic appropriation is designed to see the other not as evil but as mistaken. As such, ironic appropriation discourages any philosophical assumptions of incommensurability as normal to discourse. The principle of irony sets the foundation of this whole process. Without irony, the next two principles lose much of their rhetorical power as components of ironic appropriation.

That is, however, not to suggest that the logic of ironic appropriation is an infallible machine for the construction of leftist rhetoric. As I have argued here, the use of irony presents significant problems for any rhetor if not used consciously. First there is the problem of pastiche. As I have argued throughout this chapter, the use of pastiche as a form of irony limits the rhetorical effectiveness of any critique by removing the edge of irony and instead creating a double-codedness without any supporting commentary by the ironist. Using the Fox News counterpart, the *½ Hour News Hour*, I showed how this use of irony as pastiche can fail the rhetor in delivering effective rhetorical messages. While I have argued this is a key reason for why irony serves best as a tool of leftist rhetoric, I have also shown how the use of pastiche in

leftist rhetoric limits the influence of a larger rhetorical message. Unlike the *½ Hour News Hour*, which relied on pastiche much of the time, pastiche arose at isolated moments in the Stewart/Colbert universe. As I turn to the principle of intertextuality in Chapter II, however, I will argue that problems related to pastiche arise more often when irony is combined with intertextuality.

A second key concern of the principle of irony is the issue of true irony. As Burke argues in *A Grammar of Motives*, it is through a humble ironist that irony is rhetorically effective. Otherwise, the irony produces a problematic vision of the object of criticism that may serve to create a more contentious political environment rather than bridge the gaps that separate opposing viewpoints. I argue in this chapter that the concern over true irony in *A Grammar of Motives* is fundamentally linked to Burke's concern about satire in *Attitudes Toward History*. I have used the Stewart/Colbert universe to suggest that Burke's original language— "The satirist attacks *in others* the weaknesses and temptations that are really *within himself* (sic)"—while intended to be read as a critique of satire as rhetoric, can be reread as an indicator of satire's rhetorical power if such satire is constructed with true irony.[98] I have argued this reasoning is fundamental to why the Stewart/Colbert universe should be considered as a whole and also why the *½ Hour News Hour* failed. It is through this true irony that ironic appropriation constitutes an audience that sees opposing sides as bridgeable and discourages audiences from making judgments on a base assumption of incommensurability.

The characteristics of the principle of irony described here are paramount to the logic of ironic appropriation. While intertextuality and interactivity may exist without irony, it is through the irony of the rhetorical messages constructed by both the producers and the constituted audience that the logic of ironic appropriation functions effectively. Irony is what forces a

double-codedness to exist that has some meaning, and it is through the effective use of true irony that this double-codedness produces a critique of the other that puts the audience into action and encourages them to dismiss incommensurability. In the next chapter, I extend this argument to the principle of intertextuality, which, like irony, has a double-codedness. Unlike irony whose double-codedness positions the two perspectives in opposition to one another to produce criticism, however, intertextuality's double-codedness often serves to combine the sides of the message to increase the rhetorical power of a single perspective.

Notes

[1] Ken P., "An Interview with Stephen Colbert," *IGN*, August 11, 2003,

http://movies.ign.com/articles/433/433111p1.html.

[2] Maurice Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the Peuple Québécois," *Quarterly*

Journal of Speech 73 (May 1987): 143.

[3] Kenneth Burke, *A Grammar of Motives* (Berkeley, CA: The University of California Press,

1969), 514; and Kenneth Burke, *Attitudes Toward History*, 3rd ed. (Berkeley: University of

California Press, 1984), 49.

[4] Linda Hutcheon, *Irony's Edge: The Theory and Politics of Irony* (New York, NY: Routledge,

1995).

[5] Heather L. LaMarre, Kristen D. Landreville, and Michael A. Beam, "The Irony of Satire:

Political Ideology and the Motivation to See What You Want to See in *The Colbert Report*," *The*

International Journal of Press/Politics 14 (April 2009).

[6] "Stephen Colbert - The Daily Show News Team," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*,

http://www.thedailyshow.com/news-team/stephen-colbert.

[7] To provide some clarity as to whether I am referring to Stephen Colbert the person or Stephen

Colbert the character, throughout this dissertation I will refer to the person as Stephen Colbert

and the character as simply Colbert.

[8] The Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear was a political rally spearheaded by the

Stewart/Colbert universe. The rally was a response to Glenn Beck's "Restoring Honor" rally held

in Washington, D.C. The primary purpose of the Stewart/Colbert universe's rally was to

encourage more reasoned discourse in society. In Chapter 3, I explore the Rally to Restore Sanity

and/or Fear in greater detail, arguing that the use of interactivity to produce and promote the

event provided an opportunity for the audience to play a direct role in the constitutive process and shape the ideological focus of the Stewart/Colbert universe. Colbert Super PAC is a political action committee established by Colbert that allows Colbert to raise unlimited funds for the purposes of having a political influence. The Super PAC has evolved throughout its existence, shifting in focus during each of its phases. However, the general goal has been to expose the way in which Super PACs enable the rich to have significant power in political elections. In the Conclusion, I analyze the Super PAC, arguing that it is an exemplar of the Stewart/Colbert universe's use of the logic of ironic appropriation.

[9] In Chapter 2, I go into greater detail as to what is meant by paratexts. For the purposes here, paratexts are texts that are related to each other by some rhetorical manipulation such as intertextuality.

[10] James Poniewozik, "Television: The American Bald Ego," *Time*, November 5, 2005, http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1126747-1,00.html; and Ken P., "An Interview."

[11] Andrew Ramonas, "The Real Colbert Talks at Lisner," *The GW Hatchet*, October 22, 2007, http://www.gwhatchet.com/2007/10/22/the-real-colbert-talks-at-lisner/.

[12] Mike Conway, Maria Elizabeth Grabe, and Kevin Grieves, "Villains, Victims, and the Virtuous in Bill O'Reilly's 'No-Spin Zone,'" *Journalism Studies* 8 (April 2007).

[13] Conway, Grabe, and Grieves, "Villains," 205-217.

[14] Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms*, 2nd ed. (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 69-84.

[15] The Colbert character makes it clear many times on *The Colbert Report* that he is an imitation of Bill O'Reilly specifically. However, O'Reilly is just one of many political pundits that

represent the problems political pundits present to democracy in America and the power of American news. Others such as Glenn Beck, Ann Coulter, and Rush Limbaugh, common pundits on Fox News, are as influential as O'Reilly and are the objects of Colbert and Stewart's criticism frequently. Although purporting to acts as individuals, these pundits are key to the circulation of the narratives that aid in the process of normalizing mythic logic and the othering of alternative viewpoints.

[16] Ken P., "An Interview."

[17] Burke, *Attitudes*, 3-21.

[18] Burke, *Attitudes*, 49-52.

[19] The Colbert Report, "Tip/Wag – Liberal Dictionary & Newt Gingrich Alert," *The Colbert Report* video, 6:05, December 12, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/404097/december-12-2011/tip-wag---tip-wag---liberal-dictionary---newt-gingrich-alert; The Colbert Report, "Tip/Wag – Conservative John Lennon & Unfunny German," *The Colbert Report* video, 5:34, July 11, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/391553/july-11-2011/tip-wag---john-lennon---german-humor; and The Colbert Report, "Tip/Wag – Pin-Ups for Ron Paul, Movie Torture Tactics & Offensive Merchandise," *The Colbert Report* video, 6:02, November 16, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/402492/november-16-2011/tip-wag---pin-ups-for-ron-paul--movie-torture-tactics---offensive-merchandisee-mechandise.

[20] The Colbert Report, "Tip/Wag – Gay Building Marriage & Transportation Safety Board Cell Phone Ban," *The Colbert Report* video, 4:26, February 14, 2012, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/408348/february-14-2012/tip-wag---gay-building-marriage---transportation-safety-board-cell-phone-ban.

[21] An objection to this on the part of the parodist may exist, but would suggest a lack of knowledge of the parodist as to their function in society and a selfish desire for gains beyond the true function of parody. The death of a parody do to success would not necessarily mean the end of a parodist either. Since the parodist is a performer, she or he can exist by imitating other forms to produce commentary.

[22] For criticism of parody, see Hutcheon, *Parody*; and Margaret Rose, *Parody: Ancient, Modern, and Post-Modern* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

[23] Burke, *Grammar*, 514.

[24] *The O'Reilly Factor*, Fox News (May 3, 2011).

[25] Burke, *Attitudes*, 49.

[26] The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Indecision 2012 – Jump on the Blandwagon," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 6:41, February 1, 2012, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/wed-february-1-2012/indecision-2012---jump-on-the-blandwagon.

[27] While both serious and silly issues are covered, the serious has tended to outweigh the silly in recent years. The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Municipal Land-Use Update – Ground Zero Mosque," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 4:25, August 10, 2010, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/tue-august-10-2010/municipal-land-use-update---ground-zero-mosque; and The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Cooters!" *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 5:00, December 2, 2004, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/thu-december-2-2004/cooters-.

[28] See Hutcheon, *Irony's Edge*, 1-37.

[29] The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "The Forecloser," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 5:51, August 8, 2011, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/mon-august-8-2011/the-forecloser.

[30] The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Indecision 2012 – Florida's Women Voters," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 2:47, January 30, 2012, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/mon-january-30-2012/indecision-2012---florida-s-women-voters; The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Mexed Out," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 4:32, October 3, 2011, http://www.thedailyshow.com /watch/mon-october-3-2011/mexed-out; The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "A Few Gay Men," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 4:06, September 30, 2011, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/tue-september-20-2011/a-few-gay-men; and The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Believe It or Believe It – Birther Bullsh*t," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 2:40, April 27, 2011, http://www.thedailyshow.com /watch/wed-april-27-2011/believe-it-or-believe-it---birther-bullsh-t.

[31] Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (Berkeley, CA: The University of California Press, 1969), 22.

[32] Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric," 133.

[33] Burke, *Attitudes*, 49; and Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives*, 36.

[34] The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Uncensored – A Survivor's Tale of Survival – I Survived," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 4:34, August 4, 2011, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/thu-august-4-2011/uncensored---i-survived; The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "The Rule of the Nile," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 7:09, January 27, 2011, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/thu-january-27-2011/the-rule-of-the-nile; and The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Allah in the Family," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 5:46, February 17, 2011, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/thu-february-17-2011/allah-in-the-family.

[35] For the past half a decade, many sources have claimed Stewart as the "Most Trusted Man in America." Various polls have indicated the level of trust Americans have in Stewart. Other news reports have emphasized the influence Stewart and more recently the general Stewart/Colbert universe has had on the way people, particularly younger Americans, acquire their news. See Michiko Kakutani, "Is Jon Stewart the Most Trusted Man in America?" The *New York Times*, August 15, 2008, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/17/arts/television/17kaku.html ?_r=1&pagewanted=all; "Jon Stewart: Most Trusted Source," *60 Minutes*, CBS (April 1, 2009); Jason Linkins, "Online Poll: Jon Stewart is America's Most Trusted Newsman," *The Huffington Post*, August 22, 2009, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/07/22/time-magazine-poll-jon-st_n_242933.html; and John Harmon, "Why is Jon Stewart 'America's Most Trusted Newscaster?'" *News Flavor*, April 18, 2010, http://newsflavor.com/politics/us-politics/why-is-jon-stewart-americas-most-trusted-newscaster/.

[36] *The O'Reilly Factor*, Fox News (September 4, 2004).

[37] Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives*, 35-37.

[38] Zoë Druick, "Dialogic Absurdity: TV News Parody as a Critique of Genre," *Television & New Media* 10 (May 2009): 304.

[39] Brian L. Ott, *The Small Screen: How Television Equips Us to Live in the Information Age* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 71-76.

[40] Simone Knox, "Reading the Ungraspable Double-Codedness of *The Simpsons*," *Journal of Popular Film & Television* 34 (2006): 72-81.

[41] Bill Carter, "CNN Will Cancel 'Crossfire' and Cut Ties to Commentator," The *New York Times*, January 6, 2005, http://www.nytimes.com/2005/01/06/business/media/06crossfire.html.

[42] *Crossfire*, CNN (October 4, 2004).

[43] Likely due to the uncertainty of how the political right is to take Colbert, these accusations are not often thrown in his direction.

[44] See, for example, The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Elizabeth Warren," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 6:11, January 24, 2012, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/tue-january-24-2012/elizabeth-warren; and The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Lawrence Lessig," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 6:03, December 13, 2011, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/tue-december-13-2011/lawrence-lessig.

[45] See, for example, The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Bill O'Reilly," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 6:18, September 28, 2011, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/wed-september-28-2011/bill-o-reilly; The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Tim Pawlenty," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 9:30, January 12, 2011, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/wed-january-12-2011/tim-pawlenty; and The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Ron Paul Pt. 1," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 4:52, September 26, 2011, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/mon-september-26-2011/ron-paul-pt--1.

[46] The Colbert Report, "Bill O'Reilly Proves God's Existence – Neil deGrasse Tyson," *The Colbert Report* video, 3:59, January 6, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/370183/january-06-2011/bill-o-reilly-proves-god-s-existence---neil-degrasse-tyson.

[47] The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "War on Christmas – Bill O'Reilly Fires Back," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 2:01, December 8, 2011, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/thu-december-8-2011/war-on-christmas---bill-o-reilly-fires-back.

[48] The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Oh, for Fox Sake," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 5:52, June 27, 2011, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/mon-june-27-2011/oh--for-fox-sake.

[49] The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Jon Stewart Press Conference," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 5:51, June 7, 2011, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/tue-june-7-2011/jon-stewart-press-conference.

[50] The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Lockup Everyone," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 6:44, January 3, 2012, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/tue-january-3-2012/lockup-everyone.

[51] In the segment, Stewart also professes to have Libertarian views such as support for gay marriage and the legalization of marijuana, although these views are not entirely separate from traditionally left-leaning political views. See The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Bernie Goldberg Fires Back," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 11:54, April 20, 2010, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/tue-april-20-2010/bernie-goldberg-fires-back.

[52] Burke, *Attitudes*, 49.

[53] Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric," 143.

[54] Kenneth Burke, "Literature as Equipment for Living," in *The Philosophy of Literary Form*, 3rd ed., 293-304. (Berkley: University of California Press, 1973), 304.

[55] Burke, "Literature as Equipment," 304.

[56] Roderick P. Hart and E. Johanna Hartelius, "The Political Sins of Jon Stewart," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 24 (August 2007).

[57] The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "The Rule of the Nile."

[58] Jon Stewart, Ben Karlin, and David Javerbaum, eds., *America (The Book): A Citizen's Guide to Democracy Inaction* (New York: Warner Books, 2004).

[59] It should be noted that *America (The Book)* was published a year before *The Colbert Report* began airing. Thus, the book is technically a product of only *The Daily Show*. However, there are

moments in *America (The Book)* where Colbert directly inserts his voice. Furthermore, Colbert's

character had been a presence on *The Daily Show* by the time of the publication of *America (The*

Book) for many years. Its inclusion here as part of the Stewart/Colbert universe is indicative of

the evolution of the universe from a single television program to a collective of texts that use the

logic of ironic appropriation as constitutive rhetoric.

[60] Stewart, Karlin, and Javerbaum, *America (The Book)*, 10.

[61] Stewart, Karlin, and Javerbaum, *America (The Book)*, 98-99.

[62] Stephen Colbert et al., eds., *I Am America (And So Can You!)* (New York: Grand Central

Publishing, 2007).

[63] Colbert et al., *I Am America*, viii, ix.

[64] Note that in the original text, the word "highlighting" is highlighted and the word

"underlining" is underlined, Colbert et al., *I Am America*, x.

[65] Stewart, Karlin, and Javerbaum, *America (The Book)*, 138-139.

[66] Stewart, Karlin, and Javerbaum, *America (The Book)*, 70-71.

[67] Colbert et al., *I Am America*, 152.

[68] Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric," 133.

[69] Stewart, Karlin, and Javerbaum, *America (The Book)*, 1.

[70] Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, NC:

Duke University Press, 1991), 17.

[71] Stewart, Karlin, and Javerbaum, *America (The Book)*, front cover.

[72] Jameson, *Postmodernism*, 17.

[73] Stewart, Karlin, and Javerbaum, *America (The Book)*, 170.

[74] Stewart, Karlin, and Javerbaum, *America (The Book)*, 177.

[75] Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric," 133.

[76] Stewart, Karlin, and Javerbaum, *America (The Book)*, 1.

[77] There is some inconsistency as to whether the show was officially called the *Half Hour News Hour* or the *½ Hour News Hour*. In the quotations below, I have maintained the original author's choice in title. However, when referring to the show in my own words, I will use *½* instead of *Half* because this is how it appeared on the program's title graphics.

[78] Nola J. Heidlebaugh, *Judgment, Rhetoric, and the Problem of Incommensurability* (Columbia, SC: The University of South Carolina Press, 2001); and Sharon Crowley, *Toward a Civil Discourse: Rhetoric and Fundamentalism* (Pittsburgh, PA: The University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006).

[79] Stewart, Karlin, and Javerbaum, *America (The Book)*, 1.

[80] Burke, *Attitudes*, 49.

[81] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (New York, NY: Hill & Lang, 1972): 142-156.

[82] Michael Learmonth, "Fox News Preps News Satire Show," *Forbes*, November 20, 2006, republished at *Infowars*.com, http://www.infowars.com/articles/media/fox_news_preps_news_satire_show.htm, ¶ 3.

[83] Michael Learmonth, "FNC Takes Satire Out For Spin," *Variety*, February 12, 2007, http://www.variety.com/article/VR1117959328?refCatId=1300, ¶ 9.

[84] "The *½ Hour News Hour*: Season 1," *Metacritic*, http://www.metacritic.com/tv/the-12-hour-news-hour/season-1/critic-reviews; Joanna Weiss, "Fake News Entry Cranks Up the Volume, Not Laughs," *Boston Globe*, February 17, 2007, http://articles.boston.com/2007-02-17/ae/29233434_1_parody-hour-news-hour-political-perspective, ¶ 6; and Alessandra Stanley,

"*1/2 Hour News Hour*: It's Reported, They Mock, You Decide," The *New York Times*, February 17, 2007, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/17/arts/television/17stan.html?_r=1&ref=television &oref=slogin, ¶ 5.

[85] *½ Hour News Hour*, Fox News (February 7, 2007).

[86] Gérard Genette, *Palimpsestes* (Paris: Seuil, 1982), 34; quoted in Hutcheon, *Parody*, 38.

[87] *½ Hour News Hour*, Fox News (June 3, 2007).

[88] There is much to say about the assumptions made during the *½ Hour News Hour* involving masculinity, race, feminism, and dozens of other political issues. Given the depth of attention that could be paid to these issues, I have chosen to set them aside to remain focused on the use of irony. I encourage readers interested in these depictions to extend the argument made here about the program.

[89] *½ Hour News Hour*, Fox News (September 9, 2007).

[90] *½ Hour News Hour*, Fox News (June 10, 2007).

[91] Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric," 133-150.

[92] *½ Hour News Hour*, Fox News (July 15, 2007).

[93] See Hutcheon, *Irony's Edge*, 1-37.

[94] *½ Hour News Hour*, Fox News (May 13, 2007); and *½ Hour News Hour*, Fox News (June 3, 2007).

[95] Colbert et al., *I Am America*, 152.

[96] Burke, *Grammar*, 514.

[97] Edwin Black, "The Second Persona," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 56 (April 1970): 113.

[98] Burke, *Attitudes*, 49.

CHAPTER II.

INTERTEXTUALITY, INDETERMINACY, & IDEOLOGY

"According to a recent study published in *Mother Jones* magazine—I just buy it for the pictures of the mothers—there is a startling disparity in the distribution of America's wealth. It's easiest to illustrate with a pie chart, or better yet, a pie eating contest."

– "The Word," *The Colbert Report*, March 1, 2011[1]

Prior to his March 1, 2011 "The Word" segment "New Country for Old Men," Stephen Colbert cites an article in *Mother Jones* magazine about the gap in wealth among Americans. As Colbert paraphrases the article for the audience, the audience sees the "Barf-O-Rama" scene from the film *Stand by Me*. This juxtaposition creates a gap in logic as to why this random scene accompanies the text. However, of course, there is nothing random about the choice of the pie-eating contest, as it stands in as a visual representation of the gluttony of the American wealthy. However, the clip does more. In the scene, the audience sees the sole winner vomit his "earnings" of pie all over the others in the competition, which then inspires the rest of the crowd to begin vomiting on each other. The result is a clip that not only visually supports Colbert's commentary, but also provides a metaphor through intertextuality for the type of trickle-down economics that ultimately leads to the gap in wealth distribution in the first place.[2]

This brief quotation from *The Colbert Report* reveals three different intertextual references. First, Colbert directly refers to the magazine *Mother Jones* and an article in it. However, Colbert also makes a joke about buying the magazine "just for the pictures of mothers," an intertextual reference to a longstanding argument given for why people buy magazines like *Playboy*. Finally, the quotation transitions into the direct appropriation of footage from *Stand by Me*, which is used to support his larger argument. Combined, these intertextual

references allow Colbert to pull information from other sources both to make his point and provide humor in ways that he alone likely could not accomplish.

In the Introduction, I described the two uses of the term intertextuality. Intertextuality has been used to mean both the ability of a text to be open to audience interpretation as well as the way a text may refer to another. In his discussion of the text, Barthes notes, "The Text…decants the work (if it permits it at all) from its consumption and recuperates it as play, task, production, practice."[3] Whereas a work is intended to be consumed as is by the audience, a text challenges a rigid interpretation and encourages the audience to play with meaning. If such play is consistent among all readers/viewers, however, it would hardly be play at all. The production of meaning would simply be one step beyond the text, yet for all purposes still under the control of an author who can reasonably suspect how the readers/viewers will play with the text once it is in their hands. This sort of contained play clearly goes against Barthes' theoretical intentions. Yet, the construction of the audience for the Stewart/Colbert universe proposed here has been seen as an audience guided toward a limited perspective. As I argued in Chapter I, the principle of irony is used to position audiences back toward a centralized reading of the material for the purposes of maximizing the impact of the use of irony in ironic appropriation. This argument is consistent with the way the audience is constituted rhetorically through the principle of intertextuality. In this chapter, I discuss the rhetorical implications of this use of intertextuality. I argue that while the Stewart/Colbert universe promotes a leftist agenda through the logic of ironic appropriation, such an approach still limits what is being thought about and how it is thought about, often creating perspectives filtered through privileged lens.

Before exploring how the Stewart/Colbert universe uses the principle of intertextuality to constitute audiences, however, it is helpful to understand how intertextuality places the audience

into action. Unlike the principle of irony, where the rhetorical drive toward action in the audience is a result of the way irony constitutes an audience, the constitution of the audience through intertextuality is a consequence of the actions of the audience. Such actions are what segments the viewers into different audiences and privileges those audiences who have the cultural capital to understand the intertextuality to the fullest. Those who are unable to comprehend the intertextuality in its entirety immediately, often a result of ideological and cultural differences, are left with information that requires more work on their part to become full participations. Thus, while this principle of the logic of ironic appropriation is essential to creating the audience and guiding it toward a particular form of judgment, it also must be used cautiously, for it runs the risk of limiting democratic participation for certain populations in much the same way it purports to expand it.

Active Rhetorical Engagement: Intertextuality and Indeterminacy

In *The Signifying Monkey*, Henry Louis Gates, Jr. defines intertextuality as "a process of repetition and revision."[4] It is in the rhetorical act of repetition that audiences see intertextuality occur, but it is in the process of revision that audiences find the call to action in the hopes of producing new critical thought. In his analysis of intertextuality, Gates comments, "It is as if a received structure of crucial elements provides a base for *poeisis* (sic), and the narrator's technique, his or her craft, is to be gauged by the creative (re)placement of these expected or anticipated formulaic phrases and formulaic events, rendered anew in unexpected ways."[5] *Poiesis* is an important term here, because it translates to production. Aristotle wrote of *poiesis* as an action, but not just action in of itself. Instead, *poiesis* is a rhetorical transformation through action. According to Kelvin Knight in his book on Aristotelian philosophy, Aristotle thought of *poiesis* as action through production.[6] *Poiesis* is a means for the author to bring something into

life that is new and separate from the author himself or herself. That is what intertextuality aims to do. As Gates puts it, intertextuality aims to render something "anew in unexpected ways."[7]

Rhetors use a number of different rhetorical modes to create this transformative action, but, to understand these different modes fully, it helps to place intertextuality as defined here inside a larger umbrella of textuality known as paratextuality. The concept of the paratext emerges with Gérard Genette, who described paratexts as the texts that are associated with a given text.[8] Jonathan Gray takes up the term from Genette and describes paratextuality as system wherein the related "paratexts tell us what to expect, and in doing so, they shape the reading strategies that we will take with us 'into' the text, and they provide the all-important early frames through which we will examine, react to, and evaluate textual consumption."[9] Gray argues that texts are no longer singular because of the explosion of commodities such as board games, video games, toys, and movie posters that accompany a given text. For Gray, paratextuality is concerned with both the possible combinations of texts audiences encounter as well the process of such combination. Gray argues that each individual encounters any set of related paratexts from any number of possible starting points. Take the Stewart/Colbert universe, for example. Already in Chapter I, I have talked about *The Daily Show*, *The Colbert Report*, *America (the Book)*, *I Am America (And So Can You!)*, Colbert's interview with the website IGN, and Jon Stewart's appearance of *Crossfire* as related paratexts. Moreover, by writing this dissertation, I have not only created another paratext (the dissertation itself) but linked the universe to other texts such as Fox News' *½ Hour News Hour*.[10] As a result of the many possible entry points, there could never be a single audience for any text, because it is not just a matter of consuming all related texts but also a matter of how to consume them that changes meaning.

Yet despite this reality of paratexts, paratexts can also serve to push audiences into similar readings of texts because of how dominant a particular paratextual reading may be in society. Gray points to D. W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* as a clear example of this power of paratextuality. Gray notes, "[F]ew viewers can approach it expecting anything other than racist propaganda; due to critical paratextuality, its racism has almost subsumed the text before one can even watch it."[11] Thus, the possibility exists for paratextuality as a rhetorical tool to splinter a public into sliver-size audiences, but it also may serve as a tool to constitute audiences with a unified perspective.

Intertextuality is a subcategory of paratextuality. Paratextuality is about any relationship between texts, but intertextuality is about a specific, author-guided construction of this relationship in order to transform the meaning-making process through production.[12] Take, for example, the use of extra features found with nearly every home video release of movies since DVD first emerged in the late 1990s. Robert Brookey and Robert Westerfelhaus explored one such example: the *Fight Club* DVD. *Fight Club*, Brookey and Westerfelhaus argue, was initially read by many upon its theatrical release as a homosexual allegory.[13] When the film was released on DVD, it featured numerous special features that, according to the authors, served to constrain the homosexual reading of the film. Using what Brookey and Westerfelhaus called "extra-texts," the producers of the DVD relied on commentaries, documentaries, and liner notes to challenge the homosexual reading at specific moments.[14] As the extra-texts undermined the homosexual reading, the DVD as a whole became the textual experience that helped the audience understand a "true" meaning. Thus, while paratextuality aims at exposing the myth of filiation and eliminating the acceptance an intended reading, uses of intertextuality can encourage a reading process that in actuality directs audience toward a preferred reading.

This extra-textuality is one of three different modes of intertextuality described by Brian Ott. The mode seen in Brookey and Westerfelhaus' criticism, explicit reference, "involves a character explicitly commenting on some other media text, and often in a manner that is ironic." This mode of intertextuality was seen throughout much of the discussion of irony in Chapter I. For example, each of Colbert's "Tip/Wag" segments features such explicit reference intertextuality. In the Stewart/Colbert universe, this form of explicit reference intertextuality is present in almost every segment because it allows for the commentary necessary to produce ironic criticism. The second mode, direct appropriation, involves a media text reproducing a portion of a different media text within itself. This mode is seen frequently in the Stewart/Colbert universe, particularly when the television programs show clips from news channels. The final mode of intertextuality, parodic allusion, "describes the caricatures of memorable or representative features from another cultural text."[15] As the name parodic allusion suggests, this mode of intertextuality involves the imitation of another text within the text itself through parody, making it a staple of the Stewart/Colbert universe's rhetorical construction.[16]

This combination of texts serves to provide space for alternative interpretations through what Gates calls indeterminacy. While the literary tradition of research surrounding intertextuality has used this indeterminacy to argue that the text is open to the audience for meaning-making, Gates reminds us that the author can use this indeterminacy as well to shape meaning-making. The authors of the Stewart/Colbert universe are social and cultural critics. Gates notes, "It is the pleasure of the critic to open the text…and to shift metaphors."[17] That is exactly what occurs with the use of intertextuality as a principle of ironic appropriation. Because texts are indeterminate, the authors are free to use intertextuality as a rhetorical tool to alter and shift meaning. The indeterminacy allows intertextuality to become a means to stitch texts

together.[18] An intertextual reference creates at one specific moment a linking of texts. But just as a stitch in a garment is dependent upon the strength of the thread and the creative use of it, the impact of an intertextual reference depends on the strength of the connection between the texts and the creativity used to bring them together. This is likely why intertextuality is often ironic in nature, because irony provides a creative means to link texts in a specific manner that is backed by criticism.

This intertextual construction is a significant rhetorical act on the part of the authors, but it also places the audience into rhetorical action as well. By placing two texts into relations with one another, the authors signal to the audience that it is to recognize that a link exists between the texts. The clarity of a reference and, thus, the ability to take action with the intertextuality is based off the preexisting cultural capital of the audience members. According to Pierre Bourdieu, cultural capital is form of capital that is acquired through the possession and understanding of admired cultural artifacts that represent the culture of the dominant class.[19] For any number of reasons, one individual may possess much more cultural capital than another. Joseph Straubhaar argues audiences acquire cultural capital from "schooling, family practices, family networks, personal networks, travel, religion, groups, or associations." Here, it can be seen how other aspects of a person's life may impact their ability to gain cultural capital. Take, for example, a consideration of a person's economic situation. At one end, lower class audiences have experiences that limit access to cultural capital because of factors such as longer work days or the inability to afford access to higher-end media such as cable or pay television. At the other end of the economic spectrum, according to Straubhaar, economic "elites often have family and school networks that are global, leading them to direct personal experience with global friends and contacts, perhaps to minimize cultural proximity, acquire a more globalized sense of

personal identity, and pursue what they see as more cosmopolitan or global media choices."[20] Straubhaar's point in terms of economics is that poorer audiences will often turn to media that relate primarily to their own experiences and culture, while wealthier audiences are able to expand their cultural capital to a larger, more diverse set of media. This has significant consequences on the influence of intertextuality, because audience members with more cultural capital are not only more likely to recognize the reference, but they also have greater ability to research the reference if they do not immediately possess the necessary cultural capital. Being able to find these connections between texts, I argue, is a vital characteristic of the logic of ironic appropriation. Without the connections, the rhetorical power of intertextuality is lost. Since members of a given audience have varying levels of cultural capital, this means that the use of intertextuality leads to a spectrum of specificity as to exactly how these texts are related.

This range of cultural capital can have an impact on how the audience members come to make meaning from a text. While direct appropriation and explicit reference intertextuality limit this possibility for confusion by addressing the intertext directly, parodic allusion, one of the most frequently used forms of intertextuality in the Stewart/Colbert universe, intentionally assumes an understanding of the intertext. Colbert's persona is a large parodic allusion to pundits that the character of Colbert makes quite clear in almost every program. But while the overall performance of Colbert's parodic allusion is explained, the moments of criticism within the Stewart/Colbert universe produced by parodic allusion are not. Take, for example, the reoccurring Michael Steele puppet voiced by Wyatt Cenac on *The Daily Show*. Michael Steele was the Republican National Committee Chairman from 2009-2011. On the July 5, 2010 episode, *The Daily Show* began using a puppet to speak for Steele on the program. The puppet hyperbolically parodied Steele's use of language and speaking patterns typically associated with

stereotypes of African-Americans. While this intertextual reference was made quite clear by juxtaposing the puppet's words with video clips of Steele speaking in public, the puppet itself was also a parodic allusion to a reoccurring but often unnamed character on the television show *Sesame Street*. In this first appearance of the puppet, Stewart makes a brief reference to how similar Steele looks to the original puppet by suggesting Steele was, in fact, the puppet "complaining about a fly in his soup" to the character Grover on *Sesame Street*.[21] From there, *The Daily Show* proceeded with the parodic allusion with no further explanation. The allusion continued on multiple other segments in the next year and a half, none of which provided any explanation as to why they were using this puppet to stand in for Steele, perhaps because there was no specific reason other than to add humor, turning the parodic allusion into pastiche.[22]

This does not, however, mean to suggest a lack of clarity as to the purpose of intertextuality is merely a haphazard use of the rhetorical device. In fact, each episode of *The Daily Show* ends with such an open-ended use of intertextuality that rhetorically serves to put the audience into action. In the final moments of the program, Stewart presents to the audience the "Moment of Zen," a thirty second or less direct appropriation intertext that is presented with no explicit commentary and little to no connection to anything presented in the program. While it may be easy to disregard these moments as filler, they are, in fact, an important part of the Stewart/Colbert universe that requires the audience members to do their own thinking and find connections between the intertext, the program, and their own experiences. No matter the mode of intertextuality, the desire is for the audience to determine, at least to a reasonable degree, the intentions of the authors for combining texts.[23] Thus, intertextuality as a principle of ironic appropriation is not only rhetorical action on the part of the authors, but encourages rhetorical action on the part of the audience as well even when intertextual clarity is lacking.

In fact, it is often the lack of clarity in intertextuality that places the audience into real action. In the Introduction's discussion of intertextuality, I referred to the information patterning of intertextuality. Brian Ott and Beth Bonnstetter contend that intertextuality has three patterns of information production and processing—provocation, provisionality, and prosumption—that help guide the audience on ways of being and knowing. It is through these patterns that intertextuality drives the audience toward action.[24] As provocation, intertextuality forces one to think laterally instead of linearly. Audiences must be able to make the connections within and between texts, breaking apart information into fragments and then reconnecting them in wildly different patterns. This was seen in both *America (The Book)* and *I Am America (And So Can You!)*. The use of margins and footnotes forces readers to jump in and out of a narrative flow and make connections between the various sections of the text. Provocation is also seen in the television programs as well. This pattern of intertextuality is seen in the "Moment of Zen" segments at the end of each episode as audience members are encouraged to find direct connections across the program and their lives to the "Moment of Zen" clip. In fact, much of the use of intertextuality in the Stewart/Colbert universe makes use of the pattern of provocation. Both *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report*, for example, make it a practice to dissect other media and insert it into their own program to disrupt any linearity to the narratives circulated in traditional media. For example, on the January 31, 2012 episode of *The Daily Show*, Stewart discusses Mitt Romney's claim that his experience at financial firm Bain Capital makes him the most viable person to repair the economy. The segment uses intertextual references to Romney's speeches and news programs discussing Bain Capital's business practices, including leveraged buyouts that used borrowed money to pay back other debts. *The Daily Show*, however, disrupts Romney's narrative by then showing Romney discussing how identical practices by the

American government are immoral and unethical. Through the combination of intertextual references, this segment uses provocation to prevent Romney's narrative from going unchallenged and instead forces the audience to consider the ethical and logical qualifications of Romney as a candidate.[25]

Through the second pattern, provisionality, intertextuality eliminates the need for a fixed endpoint. The logic of myth drives a constituted audience toward a fixed endpoint. It is by having that end goal that myth can turn any conflicting or competing discourse back into the overall narrative. Through provisionality, however, the fixed endpoint is eliminated in exchange for an action-oriented drive to find connections between seemingly disparate concepts. In the Stewart/Colbert universe, such provisionality is best illustrated by the way the universe will return to previously discussed topics to develop understanding and promote engagement. For example, in March of 2011, a tsunami hit off the coast of Japan that ravaged the country, including leading to the eventual meltdown of several nuclear power plant reactors. When *The Colbert Report* next aired, Colbert began the show by arguing the impact of the tsunami on Japan was so devastating "France is sending robots to Japan" and encouraging the audience to donate to the relief effort through the Red Cross. In the next episode, Colbert again addressed the impact of the tsunami but from an entirely different angle. This time, Colbert talked about the depressing news that the disaster may lead to radiation traveling across the Pacific Ocean and contaminating Jamba Juices for Californians. In what may be seen as a rare hint at his out-of-character personality, Colbert the character uses the juxtaposition of the silliness of the Californians' response to urge the audience again to contribute to the Red Cross. The next day, Colbert again addressed the disaster, using "The Word" segment to argue there was no reason for America to use the disaster as a reason to force a critical reflection on the safety of its energy and

environmental policies. Through the parody, Colbert reminds the audience of how these types of

decisions are of global concern and uses that opportunity to push again for donations to the Red

Cross. On March 24, Colbert returned to the issue by playing CNBC's Larry Kudlow's

comments that it was better that the disaster in Japan would only result in a loss of humanity and

not be a major hit to the global economy. Again, Colbert uses his parodic "support" for

Kudlow's insensitivity to be a reason for the audience to support the Red Cross relief effort.[26]

By using the pattern of provisionality to return again and again to the story, *The Colbert Report*

was able to provide numerous perspectives on the issue while simultaneously reminding the

audience of their need to be a proactive part in the relief effort. By not having a fixed endpoint,

these types of examples in the Stewart/Colbert universe show how provisionality accepts

emerging changes in the discussion of topics and helps position the audience to keep an open

mind about possible alternative perspectives that may have yet to emerge.

As prosumption, intertextuality intentionally produces the gaps and jumps in logic that

force viewers to think, oftentimes critically, about what they are viewing and why. Recall, for

example, Colbert's use of the "Barf-O-Rama" clip from the film *Stand by Me*. Colbert's

argument that the *Mother Jones* argument could best be understood through a pie eating contest

is not explicitly explained. Instead, the clip airs while Colbert speaks, leaving the audience

without a direct link between the commentary of Colbert and the direct appropriation of the

Stand by Me clip. The result is a gap in logic that forces the audience to consider why this pie

eating contest relates to the gap in the distribution of wealth, ultimately helping the audience

recognize a connection between trickle-down economics and the current financial problems for

most Americans.[27] This prosumption through intertextuality seen throughout the Stewart/Colbert

universe provides space for the audience to perform the act of critical thinking and apply it beyond what is given by the media.

It is through these patterns that the intertextuality places the audience into action. In *The Small Screen*, Ott contends that, in the information age in which the Stewart/Colbert universe finds itself, audiences are filled with anxiety stemming from the false sense that they must always be working to be happy.[28] By creating media that use intertextuality to create these patterns, audience members are put to work. They become participants in the process of media construction. For the Stewart/Colbert universe, this principle of intertextuality again pushes for audience members to not be passive viewers but active participants in the meaning-making process. Like the principle of irony, intertextuality encourages audience members to think critically about the media and related discourse and to find connections that would otherwise go ignored. But it also encourages them to search for ways to do something about the problems they may discover. In other words, intertextuality also provides for the audience equipment for living.

One recurring segment on *The Colbert Report* mentioned already called "The Word" provides an example of how intertextuality is used to provide equipment for living to the audience. "The Word" is in itself intertextual, serving as a parody of similar segments seen on *The O'Reilly Factor*. In "The Word" segments, Colbert introduces a short phrase, usually something involving a pun such as "Due or Die," "Shock the Vote," or "Buy and Cellulite," which summarizes his stance on a particular issue of the day.[29] After a brief introduction, Colbert presents "The Word," which appears in a frame on the right side of the screen, to the audience. As Colbert proceeds with his explanation of and commentary on the subject at hand, the right side of the screen is filled with comments and visuals. Unlike any other part of *The Colbert Report*, however, these comments and visuals typically undermine the Colbert character's

perspective and instead provide a humorous criticism of Colbert's stance. As a result, Colbert on the left side of the screen is juxtaposed directly with commentary on the right that seems like it would more likely come out of Stewart's mouth than Colbert's. "The Word," thus, provides an opportunity to examine intertextuality on multiple levels. During these segments, both Colbert and the unseen right-side commentator use intertextuality to make their own argument or challenge another's.[30] The result is not altogether different than when Stewart interviews someone with an opposing perspective. Because of his persistent parody, Stephen Colbert the person cannot significantly undermine the argument of a guest the character would agree with in his interview segments. Thus, it is the use of intertextuality in "The Word" segments that provides an opportunity for *The Colbert Report* to challenge viewpoints directly in the moment they are presented.

"The Word" segment "New Country for Old Men" illustrates how the universe can use its rhetoric to provide the audience with equipment for living.[31] The construction of the argument in this segment uses intertextuality to examine the topic of the wealth distribution gap from a variety of perspectives, but ultimately positions the audience to be critical of perspectives that accept this gap as a natural part of democracy in America.[32] At the start of the segment, the two commentaries work together to form this position and provide equipment for living. Colbert's commentary begins by stating that he sees three choices to fix the problem of the gap in wealth distribution. His first option is to do nothing about it. On the right side of the screen, the unseen commentator quips, "Second Choice: See First Choice."[33] Here, the unseen commentator provides an argument through irony that the most common solution among elites and policymakers is to ignore serious issues in the hopes they will fix themselves. Moments later when Colbert states that the disparity of wealth would "lead to worker discontent," which is "the

seeds of revolution," the unseen commentator's response ("*That and Twitter*") uses intertextuality again to reference other significant revolutions such as the ones in Egypt and Libya, where social networking systems like Twitter were credited with providing protesters with a medium to spread their message to the world. The intertextual reference to Twitter here is not clear as to whether or not the unseen commentator honestly believes Twitter was a catalyst in these other revolutions, but it does draw attention to the fact that Colbert's concern of revolution is a legitimate concern in the present moment.[34]

After dismissing the second option of taxing the rich outright, Colbert states the he believes the solution can be found by remembering John Edwards' 2008 campaign slogan. The segment cuts to Edwards stating his slogan: "There are two Americas—One America that does the work and another that reaps the reward." Colbert then makes another intertextual reference to an article in *The Atlantic* magazine that states the wealthiest elites throughout the world have more in common with each other than their own countrymen.[35] Colbert argues, "A really rich American and a really rich Saudi have more to talk about than a really rich American and the 99% of other Americans." Colbert goes on to show an old video of people working in a factory, stating that in the past the wealthy "needed the rest of you to work in the factories and buy the products made by other Americans. Ask your grandpa about it" ("*Also, Ask Him What Unions Were*"). However, because we now live in a transnational community, the elites can hire people from anywhere in the world to work for cheap ("*Supply and Demean*"). The unseen commentator's reply to the "Ask your grandpa about it" remark reminds the audience about the declining rights of American workers. Similarly, the unseen commentator's response to Colbert's support for cheap labor, "Supply and Demean," reminds the audience about the lack of rights for overseas workers as well. While these remarks are humorous, they also provide a direct

intertextual commentary on Colbert's words reminding the audience that behind every argument is a wealth of history that cannot be ignored. These comments are vague enough that the audience members are required to fill in the gaps in logic with their own knowledge of the past and present. In doing so, the unseen commentator encourages the audience seek out links between ideas that may not otherwise be made explicitly clear.

As the segment continues, Colbert shows a graph from the Congressional Budget Office to indicating this gap in wealth has been noticeable for some time. The graph shows average household income from 1979 to 2007, with the top 1% averaging around two million dollars a year and the remaining 99% flat-lining substantially below the quarter of a million mark. According to Colbert, this is okay, because "sometimes income brackets just drift apart." Thus, Colbert believes Americans should take up Edwards' campaign slogan and officially make two Americas, one for the rich and one for everyone else. Colbert states the rich "already all live in gated communities. We just need to connect them with really long driveways. To visit you'll just need a green card" (*Displaces a picture of a $100 bill*). He reassures the remaining 99% that diplomatic relations would be maintained with "poor America" ("*On 'Undercover Boss'*"). The transition would be simple, according to Colbert, because most of the government institutions would be in place already. Colbert shows a Yahoo! News article that states that half of Congress is millionaires and, thus, "they're going with us" ("*Or to Fox News*"). Most importantly, Colbert argues that, because there are two Americas, poor America would be transformed into cheap foreign labor, and then rich America might start hiring them again.[36]

While Colbert wraps up the segment with confidence that the audience should listen to "The Word," in actuality, the presence of the unseen commentator has disrupted the linear logic of Colbert's argument and encouraged the audience to remain diligent in questioning the

reasoning presented to it by political pundits. For example, by suggesting that the green card to enter rich America is a $100 bill and that poor America would still be able to interact with rich America through the CBS television program *Undercover Boss*, the unseen commentator reminds the audience that the economic gap leads to an inaccessibility of the rich and, thus, stifles economic growth for the poorer.[37] The unseen commentator in this segment even drives home the point that the audience should continuously question the punditry's presentation of how things are by using an intertextual reference to Fox News that suggests the richest of Americans are the ones that shape the conservative perspective through the media. This intertextuality provokes the audience to dismiss linear thinking when it comes to the segment. Recall again from Chapter I that, in the Stewart/Colbert universe, the audience is positioned to like Colbert, but they are not positioned to identify with him. Instead, Colbert serves as a parody of that which is seen as mistaken. Thus, when watching a segment like "The Word," the audience members are positioned to take Colbert's argument and flip it to determine how to use the argument in their lives. The unseen commentator on the right side of the screen provides for the audience a critique of Colbert that represents the actual perspective the show hopes the audience acquires, thus, providing the equipment for living the audience members should take to guide them in the critique of their own experiences.

As equipment for living, it provides for the audience a focus of what to think about, and reinforces the general notion of ironic appropriation to consider alternative perspectives and to bring people closer together. It stands to reason that if Colbert or any other person involved in the Stewart/Colbert universe had a solution to the problem, they would provide it or enact it themselves. Even if the Stewart/Colbert universe does not have the solution, it can use its rhetorical power to help the audience begin to think about the problem and, perhaps, find a

solution. Just as irony encourages the audience to see the double-codedness of the world, the principle of intertextuality encourages the audience to find the connections between texts. The audience who understands intertextuality sees its presence in the universe and understands that the linking of texts provides further commentary beyond what the producers alone could do.

Through the process of being shown how to make these connections with intertextuality, the audience of the Stewart/Colbert universe can see how seemingly unrelated concepts are often intertwined in ways that have direct impacts on the everyday lives of the audience. It is the logic of rhetorical construction employed by the producers, however, that shape this equipment for living. The theory of intertextuality as a tool of textual production suggests it opens up a text to interpretation and produces space for semiotic slippage, encouraging users to search for various reading codes which *may* open up alternative readings. As I have argued throughout this dissertation, the Stewart/Colbert universe encourages its audience to be critics and, as Gates argued, these critics are the ones that hold power over the indeterminacy of the texts. However, with intertextuality in the Stewart/Colbert universe, the indeterminacy of a text has gone through a filter. Just as the unseen commentator next to Colbert during "The Word" segments provides a filter to guide the audience on how to read the intertextuality, the producers' choices as to what texts to combine and how to combine them serves to narrow the possible readings of a text by filtering through the ideology of the logic of ironic appropriation. The intertextual references build upon one another to strengthen the perspective of the Stewart/Colbert universe, and, as a result, help place the audience on a particular course of action.

To understand why these references build upon each other to strengthen the perspective of the producers, recall, again, Edwin Black's argument that rhetoric "should be viewed as expressing a vector of influence."[38] I have touched already on the concept that vectors having

both magnitude and direction in the discussion of irony. However, another important trait of vectors is how they are combined. Vectors that run counter to one another can be used to minimize the force of a particular object. Take, for example, a segment on the April 13, 2011 episode of *The Daily Show* where Stewart uses intertextuality to comment on a media uproar brought about by an email sent to customers from the clothing company J. Crew. The email featured a picture of a woman smiling at her young boy lovingly. When it was noticed that the little boy's toenails were painted neon pink, however, conservative media pundits began to argue that something was wrong with the image. The responses were as if, in Stewart's words, this was not an image of a woman bonding with her child but instead "a story about incest or cannibalism." Some, like the group Media Research Center, called the advertisement "blatant propaganda celebrating transgendered children," while television personality and Fox News contributor Dr. Keith Ablow called the advertisement "psychological sterilization" and "an attack on masculinity." Here, *The Daily Show* uses intertextuality to challenge the claims levied by the detractors of the advertisement, in particular Ablow's words. Ablow's claim that painting nails is a direct attack on masculinity is matched by another video featuring Ultimate Fighting Championship legend Chuck Liddell, who is credited with being "so tough that he paints his [toe] nails."[39] A strong blow to Ablow's rhetoric, the use of intertextuality here is a vector of influence that flows in the opposite direction of Ablow's and with greater magnitude. Here intertextuality is used as a vector of influence to diminish the strength of opposing rhetoric.

Just as vectors can be combined to minimize force, however, they can be combined to maximize it as well. Stewart has shown throughout the history of the show sensitivity for those that aided the city of New York after September 11, 2001. On December 16, 2010, for example, the entirety of the episode was dedicated to challenging the way Republican senators were

filibustering to stop the passage of the Zadroga bill, legislation that would provide necessary medical relief to the 9/11 first responders. This episode was uncharacteristically aggressive in supporting the stance of Stewart, going as far as to drop the ironic tone almost in its entirety during the second segment, which featured 9/11 first responders explaining the seriousness of their health troubles. Perhaps due to the personal connection to the subject matter or perhaps because the producers honestly felt opposition to such a bill was beyond reasonable, the degree of humility and reflexivity touted in ironic appropriation was lost in this episode. The best example of this came through the use of intertextuality on the program during the opening segment. Stewart uses intertextual references to point to the fact that none of the major news sources had discussed the bill at all, instead opting to cover other stories like The Beatles' music becoming available on iTunes. Stewart then turns to Fox News to aid his argument, based on the belief supported by video intertexts of Fox News pundits not only invoking 9/11 rhetoric but also using 9/11 first responders to make their arguments, a fact proven by showing clips of those responders on Fox News challenging the proposed building of a mosque near Ground Zero. Yet Stewart claims only one person on the entire Fox News network discussed the filibuster at all, and that person failed to mention it was the Republicans doing the filibustering. In a final use of intertextuality to drive home the point this was a vile act of the media, Stewart shows a clip from the only news sources that would discuss the Zadroga bill and the filibuster: Aljazeera. A frustrated Stewart complains, "Our networks were scooped with a sympathetic Zadroga bill story by the same network Osama bin Laden sends his mix-tapes to."[40]

This use of intertextuality on *The Daily Show* shows one way the principle can be used to bolster an already established argument, but also highlights a potential rhetorical limitation to intertextuality as a principle of ironic appropriation. When used in this way, intertextuality may

serve to divide publics as opposed build bridges between them. Admittedly, there are issues where it seems reasonable for someone to take such an emotional stand against what appears to be an accepted injustice against society. By painting the Republicans as selfish and evil here, however, Stewart and company push the audience away from seeing the object of criticism as alike yet merely mistaken, potentially reinforcing the normalization of incommensurability in democracy.

This use of intertextuality to bolster a single position above another becomes even more complicated in the Stewart/Colbert universe when Colbert is considered. Take, for example, how *The Colbert Report* uses intertextuality in a segment on the June 22, 2011 episode. Colbert praises George W. Bush for making the most of his post-presidency by participating in a Guinness record breaking event: most people wearing sunglasses at night. Colbert uplifts this accomplishment, arguing that Bush is restoring the dignity of America while other ex-Presidents like Jimmy Carter are "wasting time building houses for the poor."[41] From the perspective of the Colbert character, this use of intertextuality, including footage of Bush breaking his record and Carter building homes combined with explicit reference commentary, is being done to bolster the vector of rhetorical influence. However, the constituted audience, made aware of how it is to read Colbert through the principle of irony, understands that it is not to identify with Colbert but instead take the leftist/Stewart perspective. Thus, while the intertextual reference within the text serves to bolster an argument, the paratextual relationship between the audience and the text encourages the audience to reimagine this intertextuality as an ironic commentary against the intertext, and, thus, the intertextuality serves as a rhetorical vector of influence that bolsters the viewpoints of the Stewart/Colbert universe.

In his discussion of intertextuality in the show *St. Elsewhere*, Ott comments, "intertextual gestures….provided both amusement and a sense of 'in-group' superiority for the viewers who 'got' them."[42] In *The Colbert Report* example above, it can be seen how the audience who "gets" the principles of irony and intertextuality in ironic appropriation as used in the Stewart/Colbert universe is given the opportunity to read the intertextual exchange in a way that is lost on those that do not get it. This distinction between those that "get" it and those that do not creates privileged perspectives for audience members with greater cultural capital. Intertextuality is thus a game of action in which the audience is encouraged to participate. It also produces a mental action that encourages audiences to find not just the ways the texts are connected, but also to scrutinize the purpose behind this combination. These intertextual references combine the ideologies behind the texts to strengthen and challenge arguments. In the process, it also impacts the rhetorical constitution of the audience itself. Below I examine intertextuality as a constitutive force in the Stewart/Colbert universe, and argue that, while intertextuality is often used to challenge opposing viewpoints with humility, it can also be used without humility to bolster its own perspective or minimize and ignore the perspectives of others by relying on its own ideological perspective and reinforcing that perspective above others.

Rhetorical Constitution: The 3rd and 4th Personae of Intertextuality

As a principle of the logic of ironic appropriation, intertextuality serves to place the audience into action to find connections between seemingly separate ideas and begin the process of making judgments about those connections. But intertextuality also serves in the constitutive process of ironic appropriation by creating an audience who understands the intertextual references. What hails the audience into being here is the intertextual reference itself. Unlike irony, which can often be subtle, intertextual is intentionally overt. If irony hails its audience by

waving it over, intertextuality screams for the audience to take notice. Like irony, someone can understand the intertextuality without being a member of the audience, but recognizing the intertextuality is a vital part of the constitutive process through the logic of ironic appropriation.

The constitutive effect of intertextuality on the audience serves to bring it together in a very specific way. As part of the audience of the Stewart/Colbert universe, individuals expect intertextuality and are likely able to recognize a reference when it occurs. Explicit reference and direct appropriation intertexts make this very easy for the audience to recognize. Parodic allusion is accompanied by signifiers, ranging from obvious characterizations of popular culture elements to extra-long pauses on the part of the hosts to direct commentary on the parodic allusion, which suggest an intertextual reference has occurred. That does not, however, mean that everyone in the audience can identify the intertextual reference. An important characteristic of intertextuality as a rhetorical tool is how the audience comes to understand these references and how that understanding impacts the constitution of the audience. Take, for example, two Colbert items sold through Comedy Central's website. The item description for the "Leather iPad 2 Smart case" reads, "Bring some much-needed gravitas and honor to your Angry Birds addiction with the Ronald Reagan of iPad 2 cases! Available in Navy Blue and bound in handsome leather, just like those 'book' things that used to exist before the iPad came along!"[43] Most readers in the audience would recognize the intertextual reference to Reagan as strong endorsement of the product by Colbert. Also, most likely, those interested in an iPad 2 case would recognize the intertextual references to the hugely popular game *Angry Birds*. The intertextual references here are, thus, common enough that the audience would be able to pull from the references to build an understanding of the product and its purpose. The description for the "Logo Light Up Pen," however, has intertextual references that are not quite as clear:

> This official Colbert Report light-up pen is the actual pen the founders would have used to sign the Constitution. It features the same frosted rubberized finger grip that Ben Franklin would have gripped, and the same blue LED glow light he would have patented if he hadn't been so distracted by French whores.[44]

In this example, most would recognize the intertextual allusion to the Constitution and even Ben Franklin's signing of it. However, a select few would likely immediately understand the reference to French whores, a sexual preference of Franklin's that emerged in the popular mythology of Franklin in the twenty-first century. Depending on how the individual audience members who do not understand the reference watch the show, they have options as to what to do with the intertextual reference next. If they have the luxury of watching the program with someone who does know the reference, they can gain the knowledge necessary to get the joke by asking. The intertextual reference also gives the audience enough clues to search for the meaning in other places such as through internet searches. Of course, the option remains the audience member will ignore the reference and proceed without ever having understood the meaning. In the "Logo Light Up Pen" example, knowledge of the intertextual allusion's reference point is relatively inconsequential to the overall purpose of the message—to sell a pen—but not all intertextual references are quite so innocuous.

This creates a gap between audience members. The producers constitute the audience in such a way to analyze critically the media the audience engages with on a daily basis. Such attention to being media-literate, however, can only be taught so much by the Stewart/Colbert universe. In American culture, where media literacy is undervalued, a specific privileged class of people becomes best suited to recognize not only an intertextual reference but also have the time and ability to read into it critically. This is not to suggest the Stewart/Colbert universe intends to

distance those that get the reference from those that do not. Using the logic of ironic

appropriation, it is rather obvious such a viewpoint goes against the larger project of bridging the

gaps that separate the general public. However, the Stewart/Colbert universe does not live in an

ideal world. Much like the parodist fails to have a reason to exist if the object of parody

disappears, the Stewart/Colbert universe would lose its value to society if the problems such as

incommensurability vanished. Thus, while the Stewart/Colbert universe works to improve a

major social problem, it must perform in the world which it challenges. This becomes a paradox

of intertextuality in ironic appropriation. As long as ironic appropriation is needed to bridge

these gaps, intertextuality is a useful tool to help audiences find connections between ideas. But

at the same time, these intertexts are part of a particular segment of the culture that only few may

comprehend, and when intertextuality is used as a rhetorical tool, it runs the risk of splintering

the audience it intends to bring together.[45]

Rhetorically, this paradox of intertextuality in ironic appropriation can be best understood

by examining the rhetorical personae involved in the process. In the Introduction, I briefly

introduced the longstanding discussion of persona in rhetoric scholarship. In early twentieth

century rhetorical studies, scholars focused almost solely the rhetorical performance of the

rhetor, the person giving a speech.[46] In the early 1970s, however, Edwin Black proposed that

scholars take a turn toward "the second persona," those that engage with the rhetor. Black's

proposal shifted the attention away from determining if the speaker delivered a good speech or

not to a consideration of the impact of the speaker on culture and society. Black's contribution

was part of a major shift in rhetorical studies and was followed by numerous discussions of

further personae, and it is the third and fourth personae that are particularly relevant to the

discussion of intertextuality.

Michael McGee took up Black's mantel and proposed this focus on the second persona provides scholars with an opportunity to see how rhetoric forms peoples, an idea that eventually lead to the concept of constitutive rhetoric argued for by Maurice Charland.[47] Constitution, however, is based on identification with the idea that calls the audience into being. Recall Kenneth Burke's words on identification: "Identification is compensatory to division."[48] Thus, when a second persona is constituted into being by rhetoric, a division must occur that separates others. This concern of the others separated by the rhetoric became the primary focus of Philip Wander's construction of the third persona and Charles Morris's development of the fourth persona.

The third persona is the audience left out of the exchange between the first and second personas. Wander argues that, in a cluster of discourses constructed by competing ideologies, the second persona exists as the audience asked to be seen as the audience by the rhetors, even if that request is extended to the object of criticism and is likely to be rejected. As a result, the second persona is asked to act upon rhetoric. If the second persona is called upon to act, the third persona is negated from discourse and history. According to Wander, "What is negated through the Second Persona forms the silhouette of a Third Persona—the 'it' that is not present, that is objectified in a way that 'you' and 'I' are not."[49] Driving the understanding of this process of negation of the third persona is the influence of ideology on rhetoric.

In the 1970s, sparked by Black's work, rhetorical criticism began a turn toward focusing on ideology.[50] Shortly thereafter, Forbes Hill engaged in a debate with a number of other rhetoricians, most notably of which was Karlyn Kohrs Campbell. The Hill-Campbell debate establishes the notion that criticism itself is a rhetorical act that impacts the audience as well.[51] Around the same time, Wander and Steven Jenkins discuss the relationship between criticism

and social critique. The authors argue that objectivity in criticism is unrealistic and, instead, rhetorical critiques should be reflective of social realities. "Through his (sic) criticism," they write, "the critic invites his (sic) reader to share in this reality." Wander and Jenkins emphasize the relationship between rhetoricians and their audience, arguing the true test of criticism is its usefulness to society.[52]

Such a relationship between critic and audience requires both to consider their ideological positions reflexively. Michael Calvin McGee, who introduced the discussion of "the people" as constructed by rhetoric, also argues that there is a direct link between rhetoric and ideology.[53] For McGee, ideology is always false, and

> [T]he falsity of an ideology is specifically rhetorical, for the illusion of truth and falsity with regard to normative commitments is the product of persuasion… ideology in practice is political language, preserved in rhetorical documents, with the capacity to dictate decision and control public belief and behavior.[54]

Ideology, in McGee's view, is all around and inescapable, cutting into the very language people use. Rhetoric works with ideology through what McGee calls the ideograph and becomes one way the trick of language is used to infiltrate seemingly free societies and normalize ideologies that would otherwise be seen as the destructive forces they are.

Wander endorses the ideological turn, arguing "criticism takes an ideological turn when it recognizes the existence of powerful vested interests benefiting from and consistently urging policies and technology that threaten life on the planet, when it realizes that we search for alternatives." The point of criticism becomes two-fold after the ideological turn: 1) find abuses of power that lead to oppression and 2) look for alternatives that may improve social conditions.[55]

While these arguments focus primarily on academic critics, this turn fits the ideology inscribed upon the logic of ironic appropriation. As seen so far in the Stewart/Colbert universe, these social critics search for abuses and misuses of power and encourage the audience to seek alternative perspectives to bridge gaps between people, not find ways to divide them. Thus, a third persona, which is formed by the negation of a part of the population's voice, would at first seem like a contradiction to the logic of ironic appropriation. In fact, it would be a contradiction to the logic if it operated in a perfect world. However, as I argued for with pastiche and the paradox of intertextuality, the logic of ironic appropriation and the media that use it functions in a world in which idealistic rhetoric is unrealistic. Although the Stewart/Colbert universe may strive to be inclusive, the principle of intertextuality shows one way a third persona is constructed.

Here, the relationship between ideology and intertextuality emerges. This does not, however, create one large third persona in the sense Wander defined it. I have argued that certain portions of the public are spoken to more directly than others as a result of differences in cultural capital, but those that do not comprehend the intertextuality in the fullest are not *negated* by the rhetoric. Their ability to use the rhetoric as equipment for living may be diminished, but those that recognize the intertexts are still hailed by the message and, thus, constituted into the audience. At some point, though, the understanding of the intertextuality and the ideologies behind it must reach a breaking point where the use of intertextuality is no longer a constitutive force. In other words, at some point people must not "get" it to the point they do not see themselves as part of the audience.

Because of the high degree of autonomy paratextuality gives individual audience members, it becomes difficult to claim that one particular demographic is completely negated

and, thus, becomes a third persona. Even the objects of criticism of the universe do not form a third persona, because the Stewart/Colbert universe's rhetoric addresses the audience being criticized even if that audience finds the rhetoric offensive.[56] As I have argued, the Stewart/Colbert universe uses the logic of ironic appropriation to build links between sides. Thus, by being the object of criticism, the rhetoric of the universe calls out to those objects as well as the actual audience in the hopes of bringing about change. Therefore, I do not argue the Stewart/Colbert universe forms a clearly identifiable or even consistent third persona. However, the nature of intertextuality implies such a persona must exist, because no intertextual reference can address all ideological perspectives.

Wander argues, "The Third Persona draws in historical reality…of peoples categorized according to race, religion, age, gender, sexual preference, and nationality, and acted upon in ways consistent with their status as non-subjects."[57] The Stewart/Colbert universe attempts to integrate each of these categorizations into the discourse of the universe, primarily through the rhetorical texts. Various segments on the television programs, including the correspondent and interview segments as well as the hosts' commentaries, include discussions of these categories and encourage audiences to consider multiple perspectives. Recall, for example, *The Daily Show* segment discussing the Egyptian revolution in 2011. While the other correspondents argued that it was U.S. influence or social media that inspired the revolution, Aasif Mandvi was brought in to speak for "the people," arguing it was years of social unrest that brought about the revolution. Mandvi is not the only correspondent that has been called in to speak on behalf of a larger population. In other segments, Olivia Munn interviewed her mom to talk about Asian parenting, Al Madrigal discussed varying Latino opinions of Barack Obama, Larry Wilmore was brought in

to discuss then presidential candidate Herman Cain and the black vote, and Kristen Schaal

provided the woman's perspective on HPV immunization mandates in Texas.[58]

However, the need to incorporate other voices into the universe points to where a third

persona may emerge. These examples suggest the Stewart/Colbert universe is aware of the

limitations of its rhetorical construction. Yet, despite this, the rhetoric is still presented from two

middle-aged, upper-class, white, heterosexual males. Of the two, I have argued Stewart is the

central point of identification for the universe as a whole. The universe attempts to direct other

perspectives back into the rhetorical texts, but those alternatives are always filtered through

Stewart. Stewart builds other perspectives into his critique, but again these are filtered through

the lens of Stewart. Even when the universe permits for others to speak for themselves, it is

usually a self-aware, isolated perspective (Larry Wilmore, Olivia Munn, and Al Madrigal are the

Senior Black, Asian, and Latino Correspondents, respectively) and does not truly attempt to

speak for larger populations. As I argued in Chapter I, these correspondent perspectives are

inconsistent and reach hyperbolic levels of absurdity that must be repackaged and re-presented

through Stewart's commentary. Thus, any intertextual reference, whether it is commentary from

correspondents or material from other media sources, is filtered back through Stewart's

ideological perspective. While the interview segments may seem to be an exception to the rule,

even when Stewart reflexively admits his lack of knowledge, the audience comes to understand a

concept as Stewart learns too. Even in the interviews, then, the audience learns through Stewart's

perspective.

This suggests the audience must be aware of the ideology of the universe (as seen

through Stewart), the intertextual reference, and the universe's (in particular, Stewart's)

perception of the other's ideological perspective. Furthermore, this is often done with Stewart

rather explicitly telling the audience how to analyze the situation from his perspective. For example, during February 2012, discussion flared throughout the media over the inclusion of contraception as part of insurance coverage. On the February 20, 2012 episode, *The Daily Show* brought together several of the correspondents to talk about the issue. Immediately, however, the audience is positioned to see the argument through Stewart's perspective with the show going so far as to call the segment "Jon Stewart's Eye on the Ladies." The subtle sexism of the title is intentional and supported by a black-and-white presentation and correspondents drinking and smoking on camera, an intertextual throwback to a time when sexism was accepted as normal. The three male correspondents, John Oliver, Jason Jones and Aasif Mandvi, have surprisingly little to say about the issue, reflecting a lack of concern about issues that involve women. When female correspondent Jessica Williams begins to speak, Jones cuts her off to say he "thought [birth control] was good for them." While the other men are playing up the sexist tone, Stewart enters into the discussion with his normal reasoned tone, arguing for women's need for the pill besides just birth control. When Stewart mentions ovarian cysts, Mandvi stops Stewart, telling him "not to sully a perfectly good conversation about what's good for women with talk of lady parts." Oliver replies that he believes "the female reproductive system is governed by the tides," a comment that is met with a few catcalls of support by the live audience. When Williams is finally able to speak, Oliver responds to her argument, "Looks like it's high tide again!" Mandvi also mocks Williams for what he assumes is her current menstruation. To make her point to the men, Williams adorns a fake mustache and is suddenly recognized as "Donny," a "man" that is immediately considered with respect. While the other correspondents suddenly accept Williams' position because she is now a man, Stewart too enthusiastically endorses "Donny" when early he felt the need to speak for Williams.[59]

From the beginning of the segment, the audience is told it would be looking at the issue through "Jon Stewart's Eyes." This is no surprise as all segments are positioned through Stewart's perspective. However, the filtration through Stewart is further emphasized later when it is Stewart, not Williams, who is permitted to speak for women. The intertextual reference to a somewhat idealized lost era of masculine domination brings in another ideology that shapes the reading of the segment. Here, the audience is expected to read the segment through Stewart's ideological perspective, understand the ideological perspective of the intertextual reference, and finally recognize Stewart would recognize that ideology as in opposition to his own. Throughout this process, the audience is positioned to see Stewart as the voice on the subject, a stance further emphasized by Williams' silence. The use of irony is clear throughout the segment, but irony is not a shield from problematic behavior. The segment could have been written in a way that permitted women to speak for women's rights. Instead, Stewart is given that opportunity. When Williams does speak as a man, her contribution is simply a rehash of what Stewart said earlier in the segment. The subject of this segment—the problems associated with men controlling the discourse of issues involving women—was a major concern in the public and media conversation. While *The Daily Show* addresses this immediate problem and condemns it through irony, it serves to reinforce the problem outside of the discussion of birth control by insisting that understanding of the larger problem be understood through male leadership such as Stewart and not from the female perspective.

This segment provides one example of how the third persona may emerge from intertextuality's role in rhetorical constitution and reveals how, even when the purposes behind rhetoric may appear otherwise, voices and perspectives can be diminished and silenced through the filter of Stewart. This is a particularly problematic issue when ironic appropriation is used,

because the formation of a third persona goes against the inherent intentions of the logic. The Stewart/Colbert universe has attempted to bring alternative perspectives into the texts, but this has not stopped critics of the universe from expressing concern over how the universe's rhetoric limits other perspectives. Scholars such as Michael Ross and Lorraine York, for example, have critiqued the depiction of non-Americans on *The Daily Show* for unfairly privileging the American perspective as natural and correct. Popular critical sources have also added criticism, such as in an article on *Jezebel*.com where Irin Carmon critiqued the show for being "a boys' club where women's contributions are often ignored and dismissed," a problem seen in the analysis of the segment on birth control.[60] Such dismissal is how a third persona emerges. Myth as a logic of rhetorical construction succeeds because it finds ways to bring competing discourses back into the main narrative.[61] Ironic appropriation, however, does not appear to have that luxury. Alternative perspectives, although a central component of the logic of ironic appropriation, can complicate the rhetoric to the point that, inevitably, voices will be shut out.

This is, of course, a major concern about the logic's viability as a left-leaning alternative to myth, but it is not the only problem that may emerge when a third persona develops. Recall that Wander argues that, through the ideological connection between the first and second personas, rhetoric becomes a call to action.[62] As I have argued here as well as in Chapter I, the constitutive nature of the Stewart/Colbert universe's rhetoric places the audience into action. But this action, which I have constructed here as equipment for living, may happen even within a third persona that is being negated. Because of the narrative transparency of the media that impacts the third persona, the rhetor loses most of the control over how the text is used for equipment for living with potentially disastrous results.

Scott Olsen describes narrative transparency as "any textual apparatus that allows audiences to project indigenous beliefs, rites, and rituals into imported media or the use of those devices."[63] Olsen's focus is on how narrative transparency allows for U.S. media to be easily used by cultures throughout the world as equipment for living. As Straubhaar put it, narrative transparency is concerned with "the audience's ability to interpret Hollywood films and television programs in a way that makes sense to their own lives and cultures."[64] In rhetorical terms, the global cultures presented with American media are a third persona that is negated from consideration. According to scholars like Olsen and Straubhaar, these cultures are still able to use the media in ways that make sense to them. Paratextuality serves as a means to narrative transparency because it permits audience members to interject themselves and their experiences from their own cultures into the reading to make sense of a text. Intertextuality exists as a specific component of paratextuality, and the indeterminacy of intertextuality allows the texts to be used in ways that may not create readings that would be aligned with the producers' desires.

This openness to reading is often seen as freeing for the audience and has been seen as a major asset of intertextuality in the audience-centered sense. However, depending on the ideological stance of the third persona, this can prove to be problematic especially when the textual producers are aiming for positive social change. Consider comedian Dave Chappelle's quick rise to fame and his sudden departure from the cultural spotlight in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Although Chappelle had become recognizable in the 1990s, it was in the 2000s when his show *The Chappelle Show* began airing on Comedy Central that he became a household name. There are many similarities between Chappelle's brand of comedy and the Stewart/Colbert universe, including an emphasis on ironic humor and intertextuality to produce social commentary. Like *The Daily Show*, *The Chappelle Show* pushed the audience to consider

alternative perspectives of society and culture, in particular the media. One memorable sketch, for example, featured a parody of the MTV show *The Real World*, which parodied what would happen if a house of strangers is filled with all African-Americans and one white houseguest, a flip on MTV's traditional formula.[65] Another sketch featured Wayne Brady, a black comedian oftentimes seen as "safe" to the white community, transforming into a multitude of stereotypes once he escaped the watchful eyes of whites.[66] As these examples show, *The Chappelle Show* relied heavily on intertextuality to create social commentary.

However, Chappelle soon began to believe his message was being lost on the audience. During a stand-up routine in Sacramento, Chappelle walked off the stage because the audience would not stop quoting from the show. Chappelle returned, only to tell the audience, "The network officials say you're not smart enough to get what I'm doing, and every day I fight for you. I tell them how smart you are. Turns out, I was wrong. You people are stupid."[67] Chappelle's frustrations grew, eventually leading to him walking away from the TV show and going into exile. When he returned to America after going to Africa, Chappelle talked to Oprah Winfrey telling her one of the major reasons for him leaving was an incident on the set of show that occurred while filming a sketch "about a pixie (played by [Chappelle]) who appeared in black face, which [Chappelle] describes as the 'visual personification of the n-word.'" Chappelle continued:

> There was a good-spirited intention behind it…So then when I'm on the set, and we're finally taping the sketch, somebody on the set [who] was white laughed in such a way—I know the difference of people laughing with me and people laughing at me—and it was the first time I had ever gotten a laugh that I was uncomfortable with. Not just uncomfortable, but like, should I fire this person?[68]

Chappelle went on to explain that the construction of the message permitted audiences who did

not come to the show from his same ideological perspective to read the show in ways that

reinforced the message he was criticizing, and this fear was enough to drive Chappelle away

from a lucrative career.

In Chappelle's case, a third persona that had what he feared was a racist ideological

perspective was given the opportunity to read that racism into his rhetoric and reinforce a

problematic message. The study of Heather LaMarre, Kristen Landreville, and Michael Beam

reveals a possibly similar tendency in the Stewart/Colbert universe, with the conservative

viewers reading Colbert's performance as merely joking and still in agreement with their right-

leaning perspective.[69] Conservative viewers who understand the parody would most likely fall

into the second persona because they are the object of criticism and, thus, invited to act on the

rhetoric even if that action is a rejection. However, if an invited audience can alter the reading of

intertextuality to suit its needs, the narrative transparency of texts in the Stewart/Colbert universe

also permits third personae to create readings that may stand in opposition to the producers'

purposes, just as Chappelle feared occurred with his messages. The Stewart/Colbert universe, as

well as any rhetors that use the logic of ironic appropriation, must be wary of these rhetorical

limits of intertextuality. Just as it was with irony, a humble, considerate, and reflexive use of

intertextuality is necessary to ensure the principle does not create a rhetorical backfire that

destroys the message in the ways Chappelle saw with his work.

While problems that emerge from the formation of a third persona may negatively impact

the usefulness of ironic appropriation as a logic of rhetorical constitution, another major issue in

the construction of rhetorical personae is brought about by the use of intertextuality. There is a

spectrum of "getting" the intertextuality. The audience members with the highest degrees of

cultural capital are the ones best positioned to read and understand the rhetorical messages. This also creates a hierarchy within the Stewart/Colbert universe audience. The degree to which one "gets" the intertextuality is driven by the ability to recognize not only the intertextual reference but also the ability to understand the usage of it. As I have argued, intertextuality is the combination of rhetorical messages to create a vector of influence. But to understand the summative rhetorical impact of that vector of influence, the audience must understand the ideologies that act as the magnitude of the vector. Therefore, it is not just a matter of understanding the ideology of the Stewart/Colbert universe but being able to identify the ideological perspective of the intertexts as well. Those members of the Stewart/Colbert universe's audience that have the cultural capital necessary to understand both the universe's and the object of criticism's ideological perspective are those best situated to get the most out of the intertextuality. The degree to which someone fails to comprehend the intertext directly impacts how much the show guides the audience members on how to approach their lives. Thus, the Stewart/Colbert universe speaks more directly to one subset of the audience compared to others. As a result, a fourth persona emerges.

According to Morris, "[T]he fourth persona is an implied auditor of a particular ideological bent." The fourth persona is the audience that is aware of what Morris calls "the textual wink," a means by which a text clues in an audience particularly suited to recognize and interpret a part of the text that may be completely obscured to a larger audience.[70] Morris' original essay on the fourth persona focused on the relationship between someone performing the identity of a heterosexual, a performance known as passing, and those aware of the indicators that this identity was, in fact, a deceitful performance. Morris argued, "Far from timid or willfully ignorant, the 'in-group clairvoyant,' one deeply intuitive regarding the tactics of passing

because 'it takes one to know one,' looms as the ubiquitous source of anxiety for this hopeful social passer."[71] Throughout the essay, Morris limits the construction of the fourth persona to a group tied to those who are "sexually marginalized, understands the dangers of homophobia, acknowledges the rational for the closet, and possesses an intuition that renders a pass transparent."[72] However, many of the characteristics of this fourth persona can be found elsewhere, such as with the audience of the Stewart/Colbert universe. Based in the logic of ironic appropriation, the Stewart/Colbert universe possesses the particular ideological bent, developed through the "textual winks" produced by intertextuality, of a fourth persona. These intertextual references serve to hint at the audience there is more than the surface reading. Thus, like Morris' fourth persona, the audience of the Stewart/Colbert universe must strive to be in-group clairvoyants as well, although this audience searches for additional meaning through intertextual references, not the performance of passing.[73]

One can find support for this extension of the theory of the fourth persona in Morris' study on adventurer Richard Halliburton. Morris argues Halliburton's recanting of his adventures features numerous references to exciting adventures and romances with heteronormative characteristics, but, in reading the stories through a queered lens, one can recognize how Halliburton winks to a knowing audience, revealing the fiction of the tales. Halliburton's works were, according to Morris, tall tales that spun a fantasy story for a larger straight audience but still could convey his messages to the queer audience. Thus, readers who possessed the necessary skills to separate fiction from fact were able to form a fourth persona that came to understand Halliburton's writing is a way much different than the straight audience.[74]

Interestingly, Morris' Halliburton essay reveals another creation of a fourth persona. Morris describes the writings of other writers such as Corey Ford who wrote about Halliburton

and his adventures in a way that hinted at the deceitfulness of Halliburton's writing and his sexuality. Ford, writing under the penname John Riddell, wrote in such a way as to provide the textual winks to those able to recognize the queering of Halliburton, while still allowing his work to be read by a larger audience.[75] Thus, not only did Halliburton create a fourth persona through his rhetoric, but Halliburton's critics, who recognized Halliburton's pass, did as well by using similar rhetorical tactics to subtly reveal Halliburton's deceitfulness. In both instances, the rhetors were simultaneously "on the run and desirous of being located."[76]

In the cases described above, the fourth persona was constructed from an intentional desire to hide a particular reading from a subset of the larger audience population. In the case of the Stewart/Colbert universe, the use of intertextuality produces this gap between readings not to hide information but to encourage the viewers to interact with the text to become part of the audience. Intertextuality is a constitutive force, but it constitutes a fourth persona that recognizes the existence of the textual wink and interprets its meaning. Thus, the fourth persona is the audience who, as Brian Ott suggests, "gets" the intertextuality and can use it to maximize the texts as equipment for living.[77]

Yet although intertextuality serves to constitute an audience into a fourth persona, it must also separate the audience. Intertextuality is an important principle of ironic appropriation to build the audience, but it also divides the audience based on how much cultural capital the individuals possess. While all audience members of the Stewart/Colbert universe will recognize the presence of intertextual references, it is less certain how much each audience member will understand the individual references. As I have argued, intertextuality runs the spectrum of clarity, and audiences with more cultural capital will be able to more quickly and effectively, if

at all, understand intertextual references, privileging audience members with more experience with and knowledge of media and culture.

Intertextuality may create another division in the public as well. While the nature of intertextuality may splinter an audience, the use of the principle may serve to separate the fourth persona audience from other personae. Recall that Morris' original construction suggested this is, in fact, an intentional act of the rhetor and separating those in-group clairvoyants from the rest of the audience is important to maintaining the pass. In the instance of the Stewart/Colbert universe, however, the purpose is to bring the public together to function effectively in politics and society. Just as I argued ironic appropriation must use irony humbly to achieve this goal, this humility must be maintained in the use of intertextuality in order to ensure the references do not become a means to simply ridicule the opposing side. This was Burke's concern about satire as a frame of rejection, and without such humility intertextuality can easily become a rhetorical device to produce frames of rejection, instead of serving as larger comic corrective to the tragic frame of acceptance.

Throughout this chapter, I provide examples of intertextuality, almost all of which use intertextuality humbly to help reach the larger goals of the Stewart/Colbert universe. However, just as moments of pastiche challenge the effective use of the principle of irony, moments exist that challenge the humble use of intertextuality. To illustrate the paradox of parody as well as the implications of using intertextuality without humility, I turn to a particular episode of *The Daily Show* featuring a rare extended parody on the part of Jon Stewart. Unlike Colbert, who maintains his extended parody in all aspects of his social life, Stewart almost always plays it straight in the comedy. Twice, however, Stewart broke this trend to parody a frequent target: Glenn Back.

Glenn Beck is a conservative television personality and author, who is perhaps best known for his television program *Glenn Beck*, which ran from 2006-2008 on HLN and from 2009-2011 on Fox News. *Glenn Beck* originally contained elements similar to *The Daily Show* such as comedy bits but settled into a half-hour program where Beck spoke directly to the audience at home about his opinions relating to political and social matters. He frequently used a chalkboard to illustrate his opinions and to show connections between seemingly unrelated concepts, often working through his thoughts on the program itself. Beck told the *New York Times* reporter Mark Leibovich, for example, "When you listen and watch me, it's where I am in my thinking in the moment. I'm trying to figure it out as I go." Leibovich added, "[Beck] will sometimes stop midsentence and recognize that something he is about to say could be misunderstood and could cause him trouble. Then, more often than not, he will say it anyway."[78] As a result, Beck became known for making controversial comments that were often the object of criticism in the Stewart/Colbert universe.

The Daily Show has always been particularly harsh on Glenn Beck. Twice Stewart dedicated the majority of *The Daily Show* to a parody of the *Glenn Beck* show. The first instance occurred on March 18, 2010, where Stewart mimicked Beck's mannerism on a set that parodied the *Glenn Beck* show. On this episode, Stewart transformed into a parody of Beck but always maintained that he was Stewart mimicking Beck, not Beck himself. In the episode, Stewart responded to comments Beck made on his show, acting shocked and regretful that he was part of the "progressive cancer that was killing America" that Beck feared. Throughout the segments, *The Daily Show* used direct appropriation of clips from the *Glenn Beck* show as a jumping off point to critique Beck's viewpoints on leftist politics through parody.[79]

Although the March 18, 2010 episode if *The Daily Show* was quite scathing in its parody of Beck, the program had a different tone on its April 7, 2011 parody of *Glenn Beck*.[80] In the original parody, Stewart remained Stewart just in the guise of Beck. In this episode, however, Stewart in more ways became Beck, indicated through Stewart's opening comments:

> In the past two years, I have always promised you that if anything were going to happen that would threaten your very existence on this planet I would let you know in a melodramatic way, signified by changes in seating and lighting. And I would use some unusual camera angles.

In the episode, Stewart sat on a simple stool, looking and pointing directly at the camera, as Stewart tells the audience that it would know he was telling the truth, "Not because I have told the truth in the past—I haven't—not because I know what the truth is—I don't—but because I would tell it to you while wearing glasses." After putting on the glasses, Stewart tells the audience what he is going to do on the episode by using complicated terms to explain the simple processes of human speech and listening.[81]

In the next segment, Stewart plays the announcement that Beck was going to be leaving television shortly. A clip is then played of Beck acknowledging his departure, where Beck intertextually references Paul Revere to suggest he is stopping the process of delivering the message and is now ready to fight in a revolution. Stewart emerges from below the camera as if he is rising from the grave, praising Beck as a "sweet, sweet, humble man," and that it was a fair comparison for Beck to make because the only difference between Beck and Paul Revere was that when "Paul Revere told you the British were coming they were, in fact, coming." Stewart beings to speculate the real issue is not Beck's departure but why he was leaving. Stewart mockingly swims through the air to his chalkboard, already filled with random images of the

Russian hammer and sickle, a croissant, the Burger King logo, George Soros, and Charles

Manson. Stewart jests at the idea that Beck was fired because of "plummeting ratings," and

mocks Beck's detractors who argue "30% of his viewers have abandoned him, his viewers'

median age is dead from natural causes." Stewart asks his audience if programming should really

be selected by a secret set of Neilson families, reminding that Charles Manson also had a family

anyone else could join, and he didn't "want to live in an America where Charles Manson can tell

our children what they can watch on television."

Stewart reminds the audience that Beck still had the third highest rated show on Fox

News. He proceeds to mock one potential reason for his cancellation:

> Well Jon, maybe Fox thought it would be useful to pick some random radio talk host
>
> rehashing the same tired old John Birch Society conspiracy theories to cede
>
> ultraconservative viewpoints into the news cycle while making the rest of the network
>
> centrist by comparison but he then began believe his own messianic delusions and
>
> became a giant pain in the ass.

These comments receive an outpouring of applause by Stewart's audience, but Stewart continues

his sarcastic performance of Beck, ridiculing the possibility of this as a plausible reason for

Beck's cancellation. He postulates:

> So what's really going on here? What I'm about to say to you is going to sound stupid,
>
> illogical, moronic, asinine, disembrained. What I'm about to say is the kind of thing that
>
> will make you wonder how I even dress myself in the morning. Glenn Beck is leaving
>
> Fox because Glen Beck tells the truth.

A series of clips showing Beck using the Bible to support his apocalyptic viewpoints is shown.

Stewart again, however, addresses a contradiction in Beck's logic, asking his audience how

Beck, who frequently cites the Bible, can know when the end of the world is coming when the Bible states in Matthew 24:36 that no one will know. Stewart answers by moving to a different chalkboard with another Bible quote, Isaiah 49:22, which reads, "The Sovereign Lord says: See, I will beckon to the nations, I will lift up my banner to the peoples." He proceeds to erase "See, I will" and "-on to the nations. I" to present to the audience God's true message: "Beck will lift up my banner to the peoples." Thus, according to Stewart, Beck was sent by Jesus to deliver the message and for the audience members to "not take [his] word for it, look it up yourself."[82]

Stewart's parody of Beck uses intertextuality to constitute the audience in two key ways. First, it creates a fourth persona by making intertextual references that establish a sense of inclusion for those who "get" the reference. However, as these examples show, these references run the gamut of cultural relevancy. There is the most important intertextual reference in the episode, that being the extended parody of Beck and his program. Most of the Stewart/Colbert universe's audience would likely recognize this intertextual reference because of the frequent use of direct appropriation of the Glenn Beck program on both *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report*. However, those audience members who are more invested in Glenn Beck and have watched his program on its own are more likely to recognize elements of Stewart's parody, such as the frequent play with the glasses, the strange camera angles, the nonsense on the chalkboard, and the strange mannerisms. This does not necessarily change the reading of Stewart's parody, but does create a greater sense of satisfaction for the audience members who have devoted a large amount of time exposing themselves to the alternative media.

Of greater significance to the splintering of the audience are the unexplained intertextual references made throughout the parody. In the episode, Stewart makes intertextual references to people and things such as George Soros, Paul Revere, Neilson families, Charles Manson, the

John Birch Society, the Bible, and the Birther movement. Stewart explains in greater detail the common intertextual references such as the Bible, Charles Manson and Paul Revere, while leaving the other, more esoteric references unexplained. The choice to do so reflects the rhetorical choices of Glenn Beck and critiques the way Beck explains simple ideas in order to make his audience feel informed, while referencing other lesser knowing cultural artifacts to make himself sound reputable and clever. This was a common tactic on Beck's program, highlighted by Stewart's parodic insistence that the audience not take his word for it and to go look it up, something Stewart, like Beck, assumes the audience would not do. However, this criticism of Beck's rhetorical strategy is also reflected in the parody on *The Daily Show*. Stewart's parody highlights the way that Beck uses these intertextual references to create an audience who "gets" it in order for the audience to mentally and politically separate itself from the drones who buy into the mainstream media. However, intertextuality functions similarity in this parody. By making these lesser-known intertextual references, *The Daily Show* runs the risk of splintering its own audience based on the levels of cultural capital possessed by individual members.[83] Those that immediately get the references are positioned to most fully understand the humor of Stewart's argument and, at times, given a better opportunity to comprehend the argument being made. Having limited cultural capital or not having the time or desire to go back and research all of Stewart's references impacts how the audience understands the intertextuality and, thus, the criticism. Unlike Beck's audience, however, which according to Stewart's commentary is not supposed to get the references, Stewart's audience is expected to follow the intertextuality in order to maximize the Stewart/Colbert universe's potential to provide equipment for living. Thus, while the recognizable presence of intertextuality constitutes the audience into a fourth persona, that persona is not a single entity, but one that contains members

with a spectrum of understanding that may impact how meaningful and useful the criticism is in their own lives.

While this is problematic in itself, a second concern about rhetorical constitution through intertextuality arises when the tone of its usage is considered. Unlike most of the examples I have provided thus far, Stewart's parody of Beck lacks the humility that would suggest Beck is akin to the audience and only mistaken in his reasoning. Instead, the parody paints Beck, as Stewart puts it, as "stupid, illogical, moronic, asinine, disembrained."[84] Throughout the episode, Beck is presented as a dishonest and manipulative person, although perhaps too ignorant to recognize his own manipulation. This is emphasized by the lack of clarity as to whether Stewart is performing as Beck himself or Stewart feigning identification with Beck's perspective. In the beginning, for example, we are told by Stewart to see him as Beck himself through intertextual references to "the past two years" (the amount of time Beck was on Fox News), the erratic production of the program, and the remarks that he has not told the truth in the past, none of which apply to Stewart and *The Daily Show* but all of which resemble Glenn Beck and his program. Yet moments later Stewart begins to talk of his reaction to Beck's announcement, separating himself from Beck in a rhetorical move that positions the audience to read Stewart's illogical performance of himself as a stand in for Beck. This sleight of hand is easy for the audience to comprehend, but reinforces the notion that even a parody of Beck is altogether different from Stewart himself, a stark contrast from how Colbert's parody does its best to make as many connections between the parody and the object of criticism.

Once Beck is established as fully separate from Stewart, he becomes solely an object of ridicule, the very thing Burke feared about satire.[85] While it may be argued that Stewart's performance is to criticize Beck, this episode is better read as a victory lap around the fallen

Beck, who no longer poses the threat he once did for all the reasons Stewart ironically mocks during the episode. Instead, this episode uses an extended intertextual parody to point out to the audience of the Stewart/Colbert universe why the producers and, by extension, the audience were right and Beck and his followers were wrong. The references become ways to laugh at Beck, and the notion that Beck's audience members believe in his logic positions the Stewart/Colbert universe audience to laugh at its counterparts for being dupes. This further separates the audience from the object of criticism, leading ultimately to a dismissal of Beck as no longer culturally relevant. While this may prove to be true, such a gloating performance opposes the fundamental and overarching goals of ironic appropriation, namely to reduce incommensurability and bring seemingly opposing sides into conversation with one another. By constituting the audience in such a way that suggests the Stewart/Colbert audience is superior to the object of criticism, it paints the other side as wrong as opposed to mistaken.

Furthermore, it must be remembered that a rhetorical act in the process of constitution is a request to the audience to act. In the case of the Stewart/Colbert universe, it is clear this request is to the fourth persona who "gets" the intertextual references, but it is also invites the attention of the object of criticism. Wander argues that such a request "may be an invitation turned down; it may even be an offensive invitation, but it is an invitation which can be heard and responded to here and now. It becomes morally important, when one realizes that it is, beyond being, an invitation to act."[86] In my discussion of intertextuality and incommensurability below, I argue the Stewart/Colbert universe can and has emphasized this rhetorical invitation in order to directly address the object of criticism. However, the *Glenn Beck* parody points to the problem of ignoring a foundational concept of rhetorical constitution, that identification in one audience can create division in others.[87] Through the logic of ironic appropriation, such division opposes the

purpose of leftist politics, and must be accounted for and corrected whenever possible. In the case of this parody, the division is emphasized, making it more difficult for the object of criticism to see Stewart's parody as criticism. Instead, those criticized are positioned to read this episode and, possibly, the Stewart/Colbert universe as merely espousing a viewpoint incommensurable to their own.

Making Judgment: Outward Intertextual Engagement

The possibility of an ideologically opposite reading by a third persona is important because it would impact not only how the Stewart/Colbert universe uses intertextuality to constitute audiences, it would also impact the way rhetorical texts can position the audience toward judgment. Throughout the section above, I argued that intertextuality is a constitutive force that creates a fourth persona that is positioned to "get" the references and use that knowledge to build an understanding of the ideological perspective of the Stewart/Colbert universe. I also warned that the paradox of intertextuality means that, as this fourth persona forms, audiences become splintered because the degree to which the audience "gets" the message is based on individual experiences. This problem is further complicated when the rhetoric is constructed without humility and the intertextual references are used to diminish and insult the intertextual reference or when the ideology of the intertexts negates the existence of alternative viewpoints. The result is a set of personae that are positioned to use the intertextuality as equipment for living in potentially different ways. The audience for the Stewart/Colbert universe is situated to use the equipment for living to challenge the normalization of incommensurability in the judgments and find ways to see solutions that connect perspectives. But the splintering of the audience may impact how successful the Stewart/Colbert universe is in spreading this perspective on judgment. Thus, subscribers to the logic of ironic appropriation must be mindful

of this potential and find ways to redirect the message and reinforce the dismissal of incommensurability.

Considering the third persona as well as the potentially splintered fourth persona, the best solution for subscribers to the logic of ironic appropriation is to utilize the principle of intertextuality in ways that minimizes the formation of these audience factions. But it must be remembered while the rhetorical power of ironic appropriation hails a fourth persona into being, it also sends a call out to the object of criticism. As Wander puts it, this call is one "which can be heard and responded to here and now."[88] While in many instances rhetors may wish for oppositional invitations to be ignored, the logic of ironic appropriation desires to be heard and responded to by the object of criticism. In Chapter III, I argue this characteristic of ironic appropriation will often put the audience into action through the principle of interactivity. However, the Stewart/Colbert universe does not leave it to the audience alone to confront the object of criticism and get the response. Instead, the Stewart/Colbert universe uses the principle of intertextuality to rhetorically engage with the object of criticism directly.

Earlier I pointed to how the Stewart/Colbert universe addresses the acknowledgement of their rhetoric in other cultural texts. But the Stewart/Colbert universe takes a much more aggressive approach. Not only does the universe use intertextuality to bring outside texts into the discussion and create criticism, the universe will often interject itself into outside sources through appearances in other arenas. Just as I argued this dissertation forces itself into the set of paratexts related to the Stewart/Colbert universe, Stewart and Colbert will shove themselves into other texts, creating a paratextual relationship between the Stewart/Colbert universe and the objects of criticism that encourages those not in the audience to take notice. In this section, I focus on two such instances of this outward intertextuality: Stewart's appearance on the CNN

show *Crossfire* and Colbert's appearance before Congress to discuss American labor policy.

In Chapter I, I briefly discussed Stewart's appearance on *Crossfire* and his attempt to insert himself and, thus, the mission of the Stewart/Colbert universe's rhetoric into the conversation about media responsibility beyond the limits of the universe's own boundaries. In the appearance, Stewart wasted no time in getting to the heart of it, asking hosts Paul Begala and Tucker Carlson, "Why do we have to fight?" Stewart then encouraged both hosts to say something nice about the opposing party's presidential candidate. Moments later, though, Carlson attempted to reinforce the mythic notions of right/wrong by asking Stewart, "Is [presidential candidate John Kerry] the best Democrats can do?" Stewart again tried to reinforce the notion of discussion and compromise, reminding Carlson that Kerry was chosen democratically by the people in the primaries to represent the party. Carlson pressed the issue, to which Stewart replied he was impressed by candidate Al Sharpton because, "the person that knows they can't win is allowed to speak the most freely, because, otherwise, shows with titles such as *Crossfire*…will jump on it." Stewart used this moment of intertextuality to connect where Carlson wanted to take the interview to where he wanted to take it: a direct criticism of the *Crossfire* show itself. Stewart proceeded to acknowledge he had personally and publically bashed *Crossfire* and expressed a degree of remorse for doing so. It was not that Stewart felt he was wrong for his feelings. Instead, Stewart told Carlson and Begala, "I felt that it wasn't fair [to do it on his show], and I should come here and tell you that…it's not so much that [*Crossfire* is] bad, as it's hurting America. But I wanted to come here today and say…stop, stop, stop, stop hurting America." Stewart had used intertextual reference to *Crossfire* on *The Daily Show* to address the ways the show encouraged incommensurability in democracy and forced viewers to see political perspectives solely in polar opposes.[89] Sitting on the *Crossfire* program, however,

Stewart makes those *Daily Show* comments an intertextual reference forced upon the *Crossfire* audience and pulls from it the ideological perspective that is in direct opposition to the goals of the *Crossfire* program.

As Stewart's appearance continued, Carlson attempted to redirect the attack back onto Stewart, implying that people like John Kerry avoided appearing on *Crossfire* because the *Crossfire* hosts asked tough questions, while Stewart and *The Daily Show* pandered to left-leaning guests. Stewart retorted, arguing the reason Kerry preferred *The Daily Show* was because, "We have civilized discourse." It was in these moments that Stewart began his argument that *The Daily Show* was not a news source and that he was quite concerned "that news organizations look to Comedy Central for their cues on integrity." Later he continued, "But my point is this. If your idea of confronting me is that I don't ask hard-hitting enough news questions, we're in bad shape, fellows." Carlson responded, "We're here to love you, not confront you. We're here to be nice." Stewart, however, continued his approach saying, "But what I'm saying is this. I'm not [here to be nice]. I'm here to confront you, because we need help from the media and they're hurting us." At this point, Begala enters the conversation, asking Stewart, "Let me get this straight. If the indictment is…that *Crossfire* reduces everything…to left, right, black, white…Well, it's because, see, we're a debate show," to which Stewart quickly replies, "No, that would be great. To do a debate would be great. But that's like saying pro wrestling is a show about athletic competition."

In this segment of the interview, Stewart used his time to directly challenge the assumption of dichotomy in discourse that prevails throughout *Crossfire*. First, Stewart reminded Carlson the world is not a matter of love and hate, and that confrontation can occur without establishing polar perspectives. Instead of talking about the program when the hosts cannot speak

back, Stewart created an intertext and forces confrontation when the object of criticism would otherwise reject the invitation to respond. Stewart correctly pointed out the incivility in a democracy of opposing sides sitting in their corners bad-mouthing the other and instead insists that a conversation happens, a point he reinforced when Begala attempted to argue *Crossfire* is about debate. Stewart, however, dismissed this claim, insinuating that the program does not produce debate across political perspectives but instead is a theater used to create the illusion of real debate in order to ensure no real social or political process is accomplished.

In the next moments of the *Crossfire* episode, Stewart attempted to refocus the conversation on the responsibility of *Crossfire* to the public, saying, "You have a responsibility to the public discourse, and you fail miserably," and later, "We need what you do. This is such a great opportunity you have here to actually get politicians off of their marketing and strategy." Each time, however, the hosts redirected the conversation away from a critique of the show itself. This rare moment of complete agreement between the two hosts reinforced Stewart's central critique about the show being theater that simply perpetuated the status quo. During this exchange, however, Stewart worked to reinforce the idea *Crossfire* was part of a larger problem. Later, Begala tried to force Stewart to state who he wanted to win the presidency because Stewart had "a stake in it that way, as not just a citizen, but as a professional comic." Stewart sarcastically replied, "Right, which I hold to be much more important than as a citizen," reinforcing the notion that the media has a responsibility to improve democracy and social discourse and not exist solely for personal gain.

As the discussion reached a conclusion, Stewart argued *Crossfire* plays into the larger theater of absurdity that is American politics, which dishonestly spins any statement to benefit a candidate. Begala disagreed, arguing those working for and speaking for candidates honestly

believed in their candidates. Stewart agreed with Begala in the sense he believed those that

supported a candidate honestly believed their candidate would do the best job. However, he also

believed, "They're not making honest arguments. So what they're doing is, in their mind, the

ends justify the means." Here, Stewart makes the final point he is permitted by the hosts to make.

Stewart's assertion that politics has reached a point where dishonesty is acceptable if it helps one

side get its way reinforces the problems associated with incommensurability being normalized in

discourse. Ethics and integrity quickly become pushed aside when making judgments, and

instead the desire to win at all costs must be pushed forth because, when it is all over, the winner

is, in their mind, right and justified.[90]

Stewart's *Crossfire* appearance shows one way rhetorical engagement creates an

intertextual link between the object of criticism and the critic. In a way, the producers of

Crossfire should have been applauded for allowing such an intertextual link to be created.

Stewart's appearance shows how intertextuality can create a connection that pulls forth the entire

ideology of the Stewart/Colbert universe and inserts it into the text. The effect of such outward

intertextual insertion is not likely to always mirror the impact of Stewart's appearance on

Crossfire, which, as I mentioned in Chapter I, is often attributed to the cancellation of the

program shortly thereafter. Audiences who watch the object of the Stewart/Colbert universe's

criticism are often as deeply invested in their program as the Stewart/Colbert universe's audience

is in it. However, this is not to suggest real social change is not a possibility when those who use

the logic of ironic appropriation make themselves intertexts. While Stewart's *Crossfire*

appearance shows one way outward rhetorical engagement influences the *media*, Colbert's

congressional testimony on immigration and labor provides one example of how *government*

policy can be shaped.

On the July 8, 2010 episode of *The Colbert Report*, Colbert interviewed Arturo

Rodriguez, president of the United Farm Workers of America. Rodriguez urged Colbert and the

rest of America to reconsider the official policy on immigrant labor and to be more concerned

with the rights of farm laborers. During the interview, Rodriguez told Colbert his organization

ran a program called the Take Our Jobs, Please campaign, where Americans were invited to

replace immigrant farm workers for a day to see what the experience was truly like. When

Rodriguez told Colbert, so far, only three people had taken the group up on the offer, Colbert

volunteered to become the fourth.[91] Two and a half months later, Colbert aired his experience in

the Take Our Jobs, Please program. During his day of labor, Colbert built boxes, packed corn,

and picked beans, all of which he did unsuccessfully.[92]

The Colbert Report segment aired the day before Colbert was asked to testify before

Congress about his experiences with the program. On September 24, 2010, Colbert spoke before

the Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, Refugees, Border Security, and International

Law. Zoe Lofgren, Chairwoman of the Subcommittee who also accompanied Colbert during his

Take Our Jobs, Please experience, opened the meeting by explaining they were meeting to

discuss the plight of the migrant farm worker in America. Lofgren thanked Colbert for appearing

before Congress and "joining that group of celebrities who will use their media position to

benefit others…[Colbert's] actions are a good example of how using both levity and fame, a

media figure can bring attention to a critically important issue for the good of the Nation."[93]

Moments later, Rep. Steve King of Iowa uses an intertextual reference himself, arguing "Make

(sic) we should be spending less time watching Comedy Central and more time considering all

the real jobs that are out there, ones that require real hard labor and don't involve sifting (sic)

behind a desk."[94] In these early minutes of the meeting, King exemplifies the power of

intertextuality and taking the text outward. Through his reference to Comedy Central, King argues that Americans need to do more than merely talk about the problems and instead do something about the issues. While this may be read by some as a shot at *The Colbert Report*, King is supporting the larger purpose of Colbert appearing before Congress. As Nola Heidlebaugh argues, overcoming incommensurability requires active, artistic engagement and the use of ironic appropriation throughout the Stewart/Colbert universe encourages such a practice.[95] King's use of intertextuality pulls the Stewart/Colbert universe into the conversation to encourage Americans and Congress to be more active before making judgment about immigration policy.

Later in the meeting, Republican Rep. Lamar Smith of Texas also used intertextuality to make an argument against focusing on the labor policies of illegal immigrants:

Let me point out that one witness, Stephen Colbert, has shed some light on the issue of jobs Americans supposedly won't do. A few years ago when debating himself on his show, he asked, "Don't we want to have cheap labor for all the jobs we don't want to do?" He responded, "Yeah, unless you are an American landscaper or an American construction worker." Then he added, "But I am an American TV host. My job is safe." Millions of Americans wish they didn't have to compete with cheap foreign labor and had such a safe job. Unfortunately, 17 million American workers are out of a job…It is no laughing matter to pretend that Americans don't want jobs. Pay them more if needed, but don't insult American workers by telling them the government cares more about illegal workers than U.S. citizens.[96]

Rep. Smith's comments again attempt to use *The Colbert Report* to attack the message Colbert will eventually support. However, Smith's use of intertextuality forces the Stewart/Colbert

universe into the conversation. By quoting in detail from an episode of *The Colbert Report*, Smith introduces into congressional record a paratextual relationship that may eventually lead those who would not otherwise be aware of Colbert's rhetoric into the Stewart/Colbert universe.

During the proceedings, Rep. John Conyers indirectly expressed concern that Colbert would speak. After expressing his admiration for Colbert, Conyers said, "Now, here is what I suggest so that our Republican colleagues can—we get to the bottom of this." Conyers goes on to suggest Colbert's forthcoming Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear is a significant contribution to democracy, but that Colbert should simply submit his testimony in writing and excuse himself. Conyers, a Democrat, admitted to actively watching *The Colbert Report*, suggesting he was aware of what Colbert's true intentions would be. Conyers' suggestion that Colbert leave "so that our Republican colleagues can—we get to the bottom of this" implies Conyers was using his experience as an audience member of the Stewart/Colbert universe to make an active judgment about whether this was a rhetorically wise move to allow Colbert to remain at the meeting.[97]

Conyers never made it clear as to why he suggested Colbert leave the meeting, although he did imply that Colbert's presence created an overabundance of media. However, this remains an important moment in the proceedings for a few reasons. First, Conyers again demonstrated the power of the Stewart/Colbert universe actively engaging with other texts and extending the intertextuality beyond the universe. Conyers comments placed the Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear not only into public record as something important for democracy, but, given his concern for the excess of media, suggested knowledge of the rally can be spread beyond the texts of the Stewart/Colbert universe at a very optimal time. Second, Conyers' confession of enjoying Colbert for many years signaled that the Stewart/Colbert universe has been in the ear of government, and its message has not gone unnoticed. Finally, while Conyers never explicitly

says what he fears about Colbert remaining at the meeting, his expression of concern, particularly his implication that it may hinder his Republican colleagues from moving forward on the debate, indicated the real need for media that use ironic appropriation to move beyond bringing intertextuality in and doing as Colbert does here—exposing the objects of criticism to the message directly. If the Stewart/Colbert universe constructs their messages in ways that unavoidably turn away the object of criticism, the mission of eliminating incommensurability is a failure. Conyers' concern appears to be that Colbert will ridicule the views of the Republicans, a legitimate and, as it turns out, accurate concern. However, as Colbert will show in his testimony, it is how that ridicule is expressed that impacts whether outward intertextual insertion amplifies or diminishes incommensurability in judgment.

Up until the point his testimony began, Colbert remained quite respectful of the proceedings. He spoke only when asked to and even agreed to leave per Conyers request if Lofgren agreed he should, which she did not. When his testimony began, the humble and respectful Colbert remained. Colbert expressed gratitude for speaking before Congress, saying, "I am happy to use my celebrity to draw attention to this important, complicated issue." Immediately thereafter, however, the parodist Colbert character emerged, adding, "I certainly hope that my star power can bump this hearing all the way up to C-SPAN 1." Colbert continued, "The obvious answer [to concerns over farm worker rights] is for all of us to stop eating fruits and vegetables. And if you look at the recent obesity statistics, you will see that many Americans have already started." Colbert went on to argue importing foreign labor has been a longstanding policy for great nations, citing how the Egyptians imported the Israelites to build the pyramids, but that he does not feel doing so is American. Colbert stated, "I don't want a tomato picked by a Mexican. I want it picked by an American—then sliced by a Guatemalan and served by a

Venezuelan in a spa where a Chilean gives me a Brazilian."[98] In statements like these, Colbert

mixes irony with intertextual references to common experiences in American industries where

other foreign labor is used. Despite Colbert's expression of strong feelings that work like this

should be done by Americans, he proceeded to say that, based on his experience with the Take

Our Jobs, Please campaign, the work is incredibly hard. Colbert spent the remainder of his

testimony reinforcing that it is a real problem that needs a solution. For example, Colbert stated:

> Normally, I would leave this to the invisible hand of the market. But the invisible hand of
>
> the market has already moved over 84,000 acres of production and over 22,000 farm jobs
>
> to Mexico and shut down over a million acres of U.S. farmland due to lack of available
>
> labor, because, apparently, even the invisible hand doesn't want to pick beans.[99]

Colbert proceeds to stress he did not like the government getting involved, but this is a problem

big enough for him to ask why the government has not addressed the issue. Again, Colbert used

his parodic performance to humorously hint as to why the problem persists, suggesting, "Maybe

this AgJOBS bill would help. I don't know. Like most Members of Congress, I haven't read it.

But maybe we could offer more visas to the immigrants, who, let's face it, will probably be

doing these jobs anyway." Throughout the Stewart/Colbert universe, texts are rhetorically

constructed to be active and artistic in making judgment, and Colbert's testimony is no different.

While the previous statement suggests an outward endorsement of the AgJOBS bill and support

for illegal immigrants, his next statement twists this interpretation, putting it into the perspective

of his conservative persona:

> And this improved legal status might allow immigrants recourse if they are abused. And
>
> it just stands to reason to me that, if your coworker can't be exploited, then you are less
>
> likely to be exploited yourself. And that, itself, might improve pay and working

conditions on these farms, and eventually Americans may consider taking these jobs again.[100]

Colbert's official testimony ended shortly thereafter, but it was through statements like these that Colbert stressed the leftist perspective on immigration and farm labor, but was able to do it in a way that put it in terms of the rhetoric of the right, reinforcing the need to link between both sides on the issue.

Republican Rep. Smith later thanked Colbert for making some important contributions. Although he positioned it as a Democrat issue, Smith argued congressional leadership should listen to Colbert and read bills. In fact, Smith stated he would take Colbert's words "as an endorsement of the Republican pledge to Americans, because we have a provision in there that requires the leadership to give 72 hours of notice of any bill that we have before we vote on it on the House floor." Smith then proceeded to give Colbert "a second opportunity to be a little bit more serious, because I know you do take this subject seriously."[101] This second opportunity, however, consisted of Smith grilling Colbert about his experiences, including asking Colbert to speak on matters he could not do with confidence such as the number of workers present on the day of Colbert's participation in the Take Our Jobs, Please campaign, how many were illegal immigrants, and how much they were paid. With each question, Colbert admitted his ignorance of the matter while keeping the Colbert character parody going, stating he did not know how many were illegals because he "didn't ask them for their papers, though [he] had a strong urge to" and he did not know how much they were paid because he "didn't do a good enough job to get paid, so [he] can't compare [his] salary to anyone." Smith continued to question Colbert's relevance as a witness, but Colbert remained in character, emphasizing the difficulty of the work. Colbert informed Smith, "I do endorse your policies. I do endorse Republicans. You asked me if

I endorse Republican policies, and I do endorse all Republican policies without question."[102] Here, Colbert maintained the parodic performance, spreading the leftist message through his outward intertextual appearance, but doing so in a way that placed his perspective in direct conversation with Republican values, making it difficult for anyone to dismiss his experiences and opinions, including Republicans like Smith who informed Colbert that he was making good points, and he was glad Colbert was there.

Colbert's careful construction of his character during this appearance shows the power of extending intertextuality outward and using the principle to force the object of criticism to seriously take into consideration the message of the producers. Throughout the meeting, Colbert maintained his conservative pundit persona, finding ways to use parody to spread the message that farm labor faces a problem that must be considered because it impacts all workers, illegal or legal. In the final moments of the meeting, Colbert took full advantage of the principle of intertextuality. Recognizing the indeterminacy of his performance, Colbert's testimony became a *poiesis* moment, as he cunningly transformed himself. At the end of the meeting, Rep. Judy Chu asked Colbert, "And considering the conditions, why would any American worker want to work on jobs like this?" Colbert's immediate response was aligned with the overall message the Republican congresspersons have pushed throughout the meeting, "I don't know if Americans would or would not want to work on jobs like this. I believe that Americans are tough. I agree with the congressman, that Americans are tough and they do tough jobs." Chu followed up by asking Colbert, "Why are you interested in this issue?" It is in his response that Colbert transformed his message:

I like talking about people who don't have any power. And it seems like one of the least powerful people in the United States are migrant workers who come and do our work but

don't have any rights as a result. And, yet, we still invite them to come here and, at the same time, ask them to leave. And that is an interesting contradiction to me. And, you know, whatsoever you do for the least of my brothers. And these seem like the least of our brothers right now. A lot of people are least brothers right now because the economy is so hard, and I don't want to take anyone's hardship away from them or diminish it or anything like that. But migrant workers suffer and have no rights.[103]

To the audience of the Stewart/Colbert universe, this statement is probably quite shocking. As Colbert said these words, there was a slight shift in the tone of his face, and he seemed to relax for the first time during the whole meeting. The audience will recognize this as a rare moment where Colbert breaks character, explicitly expressing his true feelings about why he does what he does, not only in the case of migrant workers but for each instance he uses his parodic performance to talk "about people who don't have any power." But this moment was not for the Stewart/Colbert universe's audience. Colbert never mentioned these words on *The Colbert Report*. This message was for the audience he was directly speaking to that day. It was meant for the object of criticism, the invited audience that may otherwise chose to ignore the message. But it was not done in a mocking tone as Rep. Conyers seemed to fear. Colbert waited for the right moment to transform from Colbert the character to Stephen Colbert the person. Colbert spent the meeting establishing the character's perspective in terms of conservative values and talking points. Even this final statement includes a paraphrase of the Bible, a common conservative go-to source for credibility. These were Colbert's last words during the hearing and no one, not even Rep. Chu who asked the question, had a response. Instead, Colbert left everyone with something important to consider. Colbert's careful construction of his message and delivery makes it unclear for anyone whether it was Stephen Colbert the person speaking or Colbert the character.

With these words, the parody intentionally is blurred, encouraging everyone present, Democrat and Republican alike, to consider how Colbert's sentiment reflects the values of both parties.

Stewart's *Crossfire* appearance and Colbert's testimony before Congress are two examples of how intertextuality can be used to not only bring outside texts into the Stewart/Colbert universe but can also involve the universe inserting itself into other texts. These appearances directly confront the frequent objects of criticism in the Stewart/Colbert universe: the media and government. Both show how direct engagement with the object of criticism makes the criticism difficult to ignore, and can have significant impacts on culture, society, and policy. Most importantly, though, it provides examples of how everyone can attempt active, artistic judgment without the assumption that incommensurability must exist and viewpoints must always bifurcate.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, I have explored the principle of intertextuality in the logic of ironic appropriation. Intertextuality is an important principle, because the very nature of the rhetorical device bridges texts and pulls viewpoints together. Used effectively, I have argued intertextuality can be used to build upon other texts and pull into a text the ideological perspective and rhetorical force of another. Intertextuality puts the audience to work, encouraging the audience to determine what the intertextual references are, why they were used, and the ideology behind them. It acts as equipment for living, helping the audience of the Stewart/Colbert universe apply this knowledge beyond the texts of the universe alone. It serves as a constitutive force as well, creating a sense of unity and pride for those who "get" the references and are able to use them in a way that signals to the audience members that they are part of the Stewart/Colbert universe. When the rhetors strategically used intertextuality to extend

themselves outward into other texts, the principle also provides a special opportunity to directly engage the objects of criticism on their terms.

However, there are limits to the rhetorical power of intertextuality if it is not used effectively. The indeterminacy of intertextuality can be an asset to rhetors; however, it also may limit the effectiveness of intertextuality when the audience does not share the same degree of cultural capital. This may not only splinter the constituted audience, but may also shut out certain ideological viewpoints, creating a third persona that is silenced. This is a major concern for those who subscribe to the logic of ironic appropriation, which serves to include as many voices as possible and build connections between them. This problem is compounded by the potential for audiences to use the indeterminacy of the intertextuality and create their own reading which may be in direct opposition to the rhetors', a problem further complicated when the double-codedness of the principle of irony is included.

Like the principle of irony, the principle of intertextuality must be used strategically. Humility in the rhetors and careful consideration of audiences shapes the rhetorical effectiveness of intertextuality. This can be difficult, and missteps occur even in the Stewart/Colbert universe. However, as a body of texts, the Stewart/Colbert universe can use the large umbrella of paratexts to redirect and adjust the overall rhetorical message. Both irony and intertextuality are primarily mental in nature. They are constitutive, but in a way that builds an audience as part of the "mass illusion" that McGee spoke of, with the audience being "more of a process than a phenomenon."[104] The Stewart/Colbert universe must continue to use these principles, just as any user of ironic appropriation would, to build the audience, provide it with equipment for living, and encourage a particular perspective on judgment. However, as the subtitle to *America (The Book)* indicates, the Stewart/Colbert universe sees everyone, including the audience, as part of an

inactive democracy. Just as myth wants to guide its audience to perform real action that reinforces a preexisting endpoint, ironic appropriation wants the audience to act in a way that returns democracy back to the people. In Chapter III, I address this desire by examining the principle of interactivity, and argue, when combined with the equipment for living provided by the principles of irony and intertextuality, ironic appropriation can lead the audience toward active, artistic judgment in democracy.

Notes

[1] The Colbert Report, "The Word – New Country for Old Men," *The Colbert Report* video, 4:38, March 1, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/375911/march-01-2011/the-word---new-country-for-old-men.

[2] The Colbert Report, "The Word – New Country for Old Men."

[3] Roland Barthes, "From Work to Text," in *The Cultural Studies Reader*, 3rd ed., ed. Simon During, 81-87. (London: Routledge, 2008), 85.

[4] Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *The Signifying Monkey and the Language of Signifyin(g)* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1988), 60.

[5] Gates, *The Signifying Monkey*, 61.

[6] Kelvin Knight, *Aristotelian Philosophy: Ethics and Politics from Aristotle to MacIntyre* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2007), 4-41.

[7] Gates, *The Signifying Monkey*, 61.

[8] Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: The Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

[9] Jonathan Gray, *Show Sold Separately: Promos, Spoilers, and Other Media Paratexts* (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 26.

[10] Based on Gray's argument about the nature of paratextuality, it would mean that if someone comes into contact with this dissertation, their understanding of the Stewart/Colbert universe is fundamentally altered because of these new paratextual relationships. However, the interaction with this text is limited to a small population, thus, the understanding of the Stewart/Colbert universe will be constructed entirely different for most others.

[11] The complexity of this process deserves the entirety of Gray's book on paratextuality. However, to see a relatively common example of how the process of paratextuality impacts how we understand a text, see this exploration of the possible entry points into the *Star Wars* universe: http://static.nomachetejuggling.com/machete_order.html. For a further explanation, see Gray, *Show Sold Separately*, 37.

[12] Gray's discussion of paratextuality considers the producer-centered focus of intertextuality, but his theoretical basis draws heavily from the audience-centered perspective. Thus, for the purposes of clarity, when I refer to paratextuality I will be assuming a focus on the ability of paratexts to open readings for audiences. I will reserve the use of the term intertextuality from here on to refer to the producer-drive process of textual construction through intertexts.

[13] The authors refer to several layers of homoeroticism in the film, ranging from the way the main characters linger on Gucci ads to the prolonged physical contact between male bodies during the fighting sequences. There are, they note, other key instances that trigger a homoerotic reading, such as when one main character shoves his gun down the throat of the other. According to Brookey and Westerfelhaus, several reviewers picked up on these undertones, but the director David Fincher denied it, a rhetorical move the authors argue was "economically judicious considering that *Fight Club* was marketed to a young male audience, the type of audience to which overt male homosexual representation seldom appeals." The extra-texts within the DVD, the authors argue, serve to curb the homoerotic reading and reinforce the heteronormative reading of the film. Robert A. Brookey and Robert Westerfelhaus, "Hiding Homoeroticism in Plain View: The *Fight Club* DVD as Digital Closet,"*Critical Studies in Media Communication* 19 (March 2002): 27.

[14] Brookey and Westerfelhaus, "Hiding Homoeroticism," 22-23.

[15] Brian L. Ott, *The Small Screen: How Television Equips Us to Live in the Information Age* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 65.

[16] Ott's definition of parodic allusion is, in fact, not altogether different than the construction of parody itself used throughout this dissertation so far. There is a strong connection between irony and intertextuality. Both are brought to life through by a double-coded text. Because of this, there is often an overlap between the two, where the double-coded textuality of intertextuality is what produces the double-coded meaning of irony. Ott's modes of intertextuality are encompassing enough to make it difficult to imagine a means to achieve irony without intertextuality. Even direct commentary on another text by an author can be subsumed into the explicit reference mode of intertextuality. Intertextuality, however, can exist without irony. Think of a news program that shows a clip from another show. Such direct appropriation is a mode of intertextuality, but can certainly exist without encouraging the audience to consider an alternative to the original meaning. Thus, it becomes possible for a text to combine itself with the intertext to strengthen a single argument. This is where the paradox of parody that arose in the introduction and Chapter I returns in a discussion of intertextuality. The difference being, however, that by its nature parody wants to challenge that which it imitates, whereas intertextuality may be used intentionally to support the argument of an original text or use the intertext to bolster its own argument.

I emphasize this point for two reasons. First, it should now be clear that although there is a relationship between irony and intertextuality, they are two different principles. The rhetorical implications of intertextuality on audience constitution and how it positions that audience toward action and judgment differs in many ways from the principle of irony. Second, by distinguishing irony from intertextuality, the real significance of intertextuality as a principle of ironic

appropriation can be seen. By seeing intertextuality as appropriation of a text *by the authors*, intertextuality can be understood as a means to combine texts for the purposes of challenging or reinforcing particular points of view.

[17] Gates, *The Signifying Monkey*, 36.

[18] Gates reminds us that the term text is perhaps best thought of as emerging from an oral tradition and that, in *Orality and Literacy*, Walter J. Ong argues the text was a mode of "weaving or stitching—rhapsoidein, to 'rhapsodize,' basically means in Greek 'to stitch together.'" Gates, *The Signifying Monkey*, 25-26; and Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Methuen, 1982), 13.

[19] Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," in *Education: Culture, Economy and Society*, eds. A. H. Halsey, Hugh Lauder, Phillip Brown, & Amy Stuart Wells, 46-58. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

[20] Joseph D. Straubhaar, *World Television: From Global to Local* (Los Angeles, CA: Sage, 2007), 204, 203.

[21] The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Steele Crazy After All These Years," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 6:51, July 5, 2010, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/mon-july-5-2010/steele-crazy-after-all-these-years.

[22] See, for example, The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "The Great Gaffesby," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 5:27, December 15, 2010, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/wed-december-15-2010/the-great-gaffesby; The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Run RNC," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 5:49, January 17, 2011, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/mon-january-17-2011/run-rnc; The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Michael Steele pt. 1," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 2:35, February 1, 2011,

http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/tue-february-1-2011/michael-steele-pt--1; and The Daily

Show with Jon Stewart, "Lockup Everyone," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 6:44,

January 3, 2012, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/tue-january-3-2012/lockup-everyone.

[23] Determining authorial intention is a tricky problem in scholarship. Yet, as I argue throughout

this chapter, intertextuality is designed to help audiences find links between the texts for the

purposes of meaning-making. This makes the discussion of intention unavoidable. In this work, I

am less concerned with the actual intention of the authors in the Stewart/Colbert universe than I

am with how they use intertextuality to encourage the audience to determine intention.

[24] The logic of these patterns is called PO by the authors. Ott also discusses the logic of PO and

these three patterns of intertextuality in his book *The Small Screen*. There he places

intertextuality in the larger concept of hyperconscious television, of which intertextuality plays a

major role. Brian L. Ott and Beth Bonnstetter, "'We're at Now, Now': *Spaceballs* as Parodic

Tourism," *Southern Communication Journal* 72 (October-December 2007): 320-324.

[25] The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Indecision 2012 – Bain Man," *The Daily Show with Jon

Stewart* video, 5:02, January 31, 2012, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/tue-january-31-

2012/indecision-2012---bain-man.

[26] The Colbert Report, "Crisis in the Middle Everywhere – Japan & Libya," *The Colbert Report*

video, 5:33, March 21, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-

videos/378276/march-21-2011/crisis-in-the-middle-everywhere---japan---libya; The Colbert

Report, "Californians Respond to Japanese Disaster," *The Colbert Report* video, 2:42, March 22,

2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/378439/march-22-

2011/californians-respond-to-japanese-disaster; The Colbert Report, "The Word—Over-

Reactor," *The Colbert Report* video, 5:26, March 23, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-

colbert-report-videos/378624/march-23-2011/the-word---over-reactor; and The Colbert Report, "Bears & Balls – Misery Edition," *The Colbert Report* video, 5:38, March 24, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/378802/march-24-2011/bears---balls---misery-edition.

[27] The Colbert Report, "The Word – New Country for Old Men."

[28] Ott, *The Small Screen*, 47-56.

[29] The Colbert Report, "The Word – Due or Die," *The Colbert Report* video, 4:21, March 6, 2012, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/410085/march-06-2012/the-word---due-or-die; The Colbert Report, "The Word – Shock the Vote," *The Colbert Report* video, 4:07, June 15, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/389738/june-15-2011/the-word---shock-the-vote ; and The Colbert Report, "The Word – Buy and Cellulite," *The Colbert Report* video, 6:05, April 13, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/381642/april-13-2011/the-word---buy-and-cellulite.

[30] Interestingly, the split screen provides what might be better called intratextuality, although the same characteristics persist only with more immediacy.

[31] There are numerous intertextual references in this segment, in fact too many to expand upon here. For example, even the title of the segment is an intertextual reference. The title "New Country for Old Men" is a pun-based parodic allusion to the film *No Country for Old Men*. I highlight in this section those intertextual references that best illustrate the way the segment provides equipment for living.

[32] There is a conflation of democracy as a system of government and capitalism as an economic system in the discussion surrounding the wealth gap both in social discourse as well as in this segment of *The Colbert Report*. While Colbert's general parodic performance may hint at the

problematic nature of this conflation, it is an important point not directly addressed in Colbert's commentary.

[33] From here on, I will place the commentary of the unseen contributor in parentheses and italics at the moments when such comments were made on the program.

[34] Recall from Chapter I the discussion about the impact of Twitter in the Egyptian revolution in *The Daily Show* segment The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "The Rule of the Nile," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 7:09, January 27, 2011, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/thu-january-27-2011/the-rule-of-the-nile.

[35] Chrystia Freeland, "The Rise of the New Global Elite," *The Atlantic*, January/February 2011, http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2011/01/the-rise-of-the-new-global-elite/8343/1/.

[36] "The Word – New Country for Old Men," *The Colbert Report.*

[37] *Undercover Boss* (2010-present) is a CBS television reality program that is a celebration of capitalism in America. The program deserves its own volume of criticism, but for the purposes here it should be understood that on the program CEOs and other high ranking employers of major companies pretend to be everyday workers in order to understand what the real experiences of the workers are as well as determine ways to improve the company.

[38] Edwin Black, "The Second Persona," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 56 (April 1970): 113.

[39] The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Toemageddon 2011 – This Little Piggy Went to Hell," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 6:11, April 13, 2011, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/wed-april-13-2011/toemageddon-2011---this-little-piggy-went-to-hell.

[40] See The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Worst Responders," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 5:18, December 16, 2010, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/thu-december-16-2010/worst-responders; The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "9/11 First Responders React to the

Senate Filibuster," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 8:55, December 16, 2010,

http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/thu-december-16-2010/9-11-first-responders-react-to-the-

senate-filibuster; and The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Mike Huckabee," *The Daily Show with

Jon Stewart* video, 5:29, December 16, 2010, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/thu-

december-16-2010/mike-huckabee.

[41] The Colbert Report, "George W. Bush Helps Break a World Record," *The Colbert Report*

video, 2:15, June 22, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-

videos/390364/june-22-2011/george-w--bush-helps-break-world-record.

[42] Ott, *The Small Screen*, 66.

[43] "*The Colbert Report*: Leather iPad 2 Smart Case," *Shop.ComedyCentral*,

http://shop.comedycentral.com/The-Colbert-Report-Leather-iPad-2/M/B0069ASUBQ.htm.

[44] "*The Colbert Report*: Logo Light Up Pen," *Shop.ComedyCentral*,

http://shop.comedycentral.com/The-Colbert-Report-Logo-Light-Up/M/B005Y2CYAI.htm.

[45] It is important to remember that this is a paradox of intertextuality in ironic appropriation, not

intertextuality in general. Intertextuality, unlike irony, is not so consistently guided by rules of

criticism and making connections for change. Often, intertextual references can be used to forge

gaps as much as it brings people together, as I will argue for in the comparison of Glenn Beck

and Jon Stewart's performance of Glenn Beck.

[46] It is certainly possible to analyze the auditor of a different medium, but historically

rhetoricians were concerned with traditional public speeches and their speakers.

[47] Michael C. McGee, "In Search of 'The People': A Rhetorical Alternative," *Quarterly Journal

of Speech* 61 (October 1975); and Maurice Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the

Peuple Québécois," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73 (May 1987).

[48] Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (Berkeley, CA: The University of California Press, 1969), 22.

[49] Philip Wander, "The Third Persona: An Ideological Turn in Rhetorical Theory," *Central States Speech Journal* 35 (1984): 197-216, 209.

[50] The transition from what is now referred to as neo-Aristotelian criticism to today's rhetorical criticism has a long and complicated history. This chapter covers a brief summary of the important debates that took place to bring out the ideological turn. Interested readers should check out the entire Hill-Campbell debate: Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "An Exercise in the Rhetoric of Mythical America," in *Critiques of Contemporary Rhetoric*, 50-58. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1972); Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "'Conventional Wisdom—Traditional Form': A Rejoinder," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 58 (December 1972); Forbes Hill, "Conventional Wisdom—Traditional Form—The President's Message of November 3, 1969," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 58 (December 1972); Forbes Hill, "Reply to Professor Campbell," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 58 (December 1972); Robert P. Newman, "Under the Veneer: Nixon's Vietnam Speech of November 3, 1969," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 56 (April 1970); and Hermann G. Stelzner, "The Quest Story and Nixon's November 3, 1969 Address," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 57 (April 1971). Also relevant are the texts that helped produced and/or emerged from the debate. See Burke, *Attitudes;* Frank Lentricchia, *Criticism and Social Change* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983); Philip Wander, "The Ideological Turn in Modern Criticism," *Central States Speech Journal* 34 (1983); and Philip Wander and Steven Jenkins, "Rhetoric, Society, and the Critical Response," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 58 (1972).

[51] Campbell, "Conventional Wisdom," 452.

[52] Wander and Jenkins, "Rhetoric, Society, and the Critical Response," 450.

[53] Michael C. McGee, "The People."

[54] Michael Calvin McGee, "The 'Ideograph': A Link between Rhetoric and Ideology," in *Readings in Rhetorical Criticism*, 4th ed., ed. Carl R. Burgchardt, 498-513. (State College, PA: Strata, 2010), 500.

[55] Wander, "The Ideological Turn," 9, 18.

[56] See Wander, "The Third Persona," 209.

[57] Wander, "The Third Persona," 216.

[58] The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "The Rule of the Nile"; The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Tiger Mothering," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 4:37, April 26, 2011, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/tue-april-26-2011/tiger-mothering; The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "West Wing Story – Latino Vote," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 3:28, June 15, 2011, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/wed-june-15-2011/west-wing-story---latino-vote; The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Indecision 2012 – Herman Cain & the Black Vote," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 4:50, September 27, 2011, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/tue-september-27-2011/indecision-2012---herman-cain---the-black-vote; and The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Uncensored – HPV Mandate & Pro-Vagina Controversy," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 5:46, September 15, 2011, http://www.thedailyshow.com /watch/thu-september-15-2011/uncensored---hpv-mandate---pro-vagina-controversy.

[59] The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Jon Stewart's Eye on the Ladies," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 3:12, February 20, 2012, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/mon-february-20-2012/jon-stewart-s-eye-on-the-ladies.

[60] Michael Ross and Lorraine York, "'First, They're Foreigners': 'The Daily Show' with Jon Stewart and the Limits of Dissent Laughter," *Canadian Review of American Studies* 37 (2007); and Irin Carmon, "The *Daily Show*'s Woman Problem," *Jezebel*, June 23, 2010, http://jezebel.com/5570545/comedy-of-errors-behind-the-scenes-of-the--daily-shows-lady-problem, ¶ 1.

[61] McGee, "The People," 246-247.

[62] Wander, "The Third Persona," 209.

[63] Scott R. Olsen, *Hollywood Planet: Global Media and the Competitive Advantage of Narrative Transparency* (Mahwaj, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1999), 5.

[64] Straubhaar, *World Television*, 88.

[65] "The Mad Real World, Episode 1-6," *The Chappelle Show*, Comedy Central (February 26, 2003).

[66] "The Wayne Brady Show, Episode 2-12," *The Chappelle Show*, Comedy Central (April 7, 2004). There are many arguments as to why Wayne Brady is seen as safe to white culture, but for a succinct argument put into context of this *Chappelle Show* episode, see Devon Basco, "Wayne Brady: Black Skin, White Mask," *People of Color Organize*!, February 2, 2012, http://www.peopleofcolororganize.com/activism/general/wayne-brady-souls-black-folk/.

[67] Jim Carnes, "Dave Chappelle Lets Rude Crowd Have it, Sticks Up For Cosby's Comment," *Sacramento Bee*, June 19, 2004, http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1156342/posts.

[68] "Chappelle's Story," *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, February 3, 2006, http://www.oprah.com/oprahshow/Chappelles-Story.

[69] Heather L. LaMarre, Kristen D. Landreville, and Michael A. Beam, "The Irony of Satire: Political Ideology and the Motivation to See What You Want to See in *The Colbert Report*," *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 14 (April 2009).

[70] Charles E. Morris III, "Pink Herring & the Fourth Persona: J. Edgar Hoover's Sex Crime Panic," in *Readings in Rhetorical Criticism*, 4th ed., ed. Carl R. Burgchardt, 595-613. (State College, PA: Strata, 2010), 597.

[71] Morris, "Fourth Persona," 603.

[72] Morris, "Fourth Persona," 597.

[73] Rhetorically, it is beneficial to imagine the fourth persona as something beyond the act of reading through a passing performance. Furthermore, Morris' construction of the fourth persona in his original essay describes this audience as "collusive," seeking to let the rhetor know that they know the performance is a pass and that, at any time, the audience could out the rhetor. Unlike the passing scenario, though, a fourth persona in the Stewart/Colbert universe is meant to recognize the textual wink, making the fourth persona a primary target of the rhetoric. Instead of being collusive in any harmful sense, the audience is actively playing the game of intertextuality with the producers. In the original conceptualization of the fourth persona, the textual wink is something the rhetor desperately strives to avoid. However, in the Stewart/Colbert universe the use of intertextuality indicates a desire for the audience to recognize the wink, inviting the audience to analyze and decipher the rhetorical message being constructed through the combination of texts.

Some may argue, then, that the Stewart/Colbert audience is the second persona in this case, the audience who is intended to read the message. While this is a reasonable point, it then begs the question, what becomes of the rest of the viewers? They are not a third persona, for they are

clearly and addressed public. But they would be missing the characteristics of becoming a fourth persona as there is no textual wink. The landscape of rhetorical scholarship has seen enough additions to the number of personas. I believe there is no reason to add an additional persona that features only a minuscule change in theoretical construction and would be applicable in very limited cases. Instead, using that same logic, I argue it is more beneficial to rework the theory of the fourth persona as I do here. Personal correspondence with Charles Morris has revealed to me that he agrees with this assessment and, as I will show in this chapter, Morris himself has expanded the fourth persona beyond the original construction, minimizing the collusive nature of the persona. See Morris, "Fourth Persona," 597.

[74] Charles E. Morris III, "Richard Halliburton's Bearded Tales," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 95 (May 2009).

[75] Morris, "Halliburton," 132.

[76] Morris, "Halliburton," 142.

[77] Ott, *The Small Screen*, 66-70.

[78] Mark Leibovich, "Being Glenn Beck," The *New York Times*, September 29, 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/03/magazine/03beck-t.html?_r=4&hp=&pagewanted=all, ¶ 9.

[79] The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Intro – Progressivism Is a Cancer," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 1:38, March 18, 2010, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/thu-march-18-2010/intro---progressivism-is-cancer; and The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Conservative Libertarian," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 13:05, March 18, 2010, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/thu-march-18-2010/conservative-libertarian.

[80] Like the "The Word" segment analyzed above, this episode of *The Daily Show* contains numerous intertextual references. Here I focus on those that are relevant to the argument I am presenting.

[81] The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Intro – Jon Tells the Truth While Wearing Glasses," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 2:10, April 7, 2011, http://www.thedailyshow.com/ watch/thu-april-7-2011/intro---jon-tells-the-truth-while-wearing-glasses.

[82] The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Glenn Beck Was Sent by Jesus," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 4:29, April 7, 2011, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/thu-april-7-2011/glenn-beck-was-sent-by-jesus.

[83] To highlight this point, I reference my own experiences transcribing the episode. Unlike other quotations from the Stewart/Colbert universe, this episode required frequent use of Google searches to determine what words Stewart was saying and what those intertextual references were.

[84] The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Glenn Beck Was Sent by Jesus."

[85] Kenneth Burke, *Attitudes Toward History*, 3rd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 49.

[86] Wander, "The Third Persona," 209.

[87] Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives*, 22.

[88] Wander, "The Third Persona," 209.

[89] Notable examples include the "Great Moments in Punditry" segments, where *The Daily Show* had children read transcripts of *Crossfire* episodes, as well as other segments where Stewart was outwardly critical of the program and at others simply dismissive of it. See The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Great Moments in Punditry – Carlson and Carville," *The Daily Show with Jon*

Stewart video, 0:58, March 22, 2004, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/mon-march-22-2004/great-moments-in-punditry---carlson-and-carville; The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Governor Resignations," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 2:04, August 12, 2004, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/thu-august-12-2004/governor-resignations; The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Douchebag of Liberty: Robert Novak," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 1:12, September 13, 2004, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/mon-september-13-2004/douchebag-of-liberty--robert-novak; and The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Great Moments in Punditry – The Pet Goat," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 1:28, January 5, 2005, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/thu-january-6-2005/great-moments-in-punditry---the-pet-goat.

[90] For a complete transcript of the *Crossfire* appearance, visit http://politicalhumor.about.com/library/bljonstewartcrossfire.htm.

[91] The Colbert Report, "Arturo Rodriguez," *The Colbert Report* video, 4:45, July 8, 2010, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/340925/july-08-2010/arturo-rodriguez.

[92] The Colbert Report, "Fallback Position – Migrant Worker Pt. 2," *The Colbert Report* video, 8:12, September 23, 2010, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/360017/september-23-2010/fallback-position---migrant-worker-pt--2.

[93] *Protecting America's Harvest: Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, Refugees, Border Security, and International Law*, 111th Cong. 2 (September 24, 2010), http://judiciary.house.gov/hearings/printers/111th/111-150_58410.PDF, 3.

[94] The errors reported here are from the official Congressional testimony records. *Protecting America's Harvest*, 4.

[95] Nola J. Heidlebaugh, *Judgment, Rhetoric, and the Problem of Incommensurability* (Columbia, SC: The University of South Carolina Press, 2001).

[96] *Protecting America's Harvest*, 8.

[97] *Protecting America's Harvest*, 8-9.

[98] *Protecting America's Harvest*, 32.

[99] *Protecting America's Harvest*, 33.

[100] *Protecting America's Harvest*, 33.

[101] *Protecting America's Harvest*, 39.

[102] *Protecting America's Harvest*, 41.

[103] *Protecting America's Harvest*, 56.

[104] McGee, "The People," 242.

CHAPTER III.

INTERACTIVITY & RHETORICAL ENGAGEMENT

"'I'm mad as hell, and I'm not going to take it anymore!' Who among us has not wanted to open their window and shout that at the top of their lungs? Seriously, who? Because we're looking for those people. We're looking for the people who think shouting is annoying, counterproductive, and terrible for your throat; who feel that the loudest voices shouldn't be the only ones that get heard; and who believe that the only time it's appropriate to draw a Hitler mustache on someone is when that person is actually Hitler. Or Charlie Chaplin in certain roles."

– Rally to Restore Sanity website[1]

On the anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream Speech," Glenn Beck held a Tea Party-driven "Restoring Honor" rally on the same steps of the Lincoln Memorial where King delivered his famous address. Although Beck's rally was said not to be politically related, the presence of Beck and his guest Sarah Palin inevitably marked the event as political and a criticism of the state of the current government.[2] Although *The Washington Post* described the mood of Beck's rally as "peaceful and calm," Stewart proposed the rally was part of a larger rhetorical move that encouraged the "us versus them" mentality of politics, an approach that ultimately leads towards the normalization of incommensurability.[3] The Rally to Restore Sanity, designed to encourage open and respectful discourse on politics and society, was proposed by Jon Stewart on *The Daily Show* as a response to Beck's rally.

Almost immediately after announcing the planned rally on *The Daily Show*, Colbert used *The Colbert Report* to suggest an alternative rally be planned. Urged by users of the online sites Reddit and Facebook as well a group calling themselves Restoring Truthiness, Colbert sensed the Colbert Nation wanted him to respond with his own rally.[4] Naming his rally the March to Keep Fear Alive, Colbert proposed an event that would keep social discourse focused on extremism and fear. In the next months, both Stewart and Colbert planned their respective rallies, announcing any updates on their programs. Shortly before the rallies, however, Colbert

announced he had been unable to secure a location for his rally. Stewart stepped in and offered to share his space on the Washington Mall. The result was a merger of the two rallies into the Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear, a rhetorical move on the part of the Stewart/Colbert universe that encouraged the audience to become active in politics by prompting rational discussion for a healthy American democracy.

The quotation that opens this chapter can be found on the official webpage for the Rally to Restore Sanity. This statement makes use of intertextual references to the film *Network*, Charlie Chaplin's tramp character, and the frequency in which the Hitler moustache is appropriated in protest rhetoric to produce an ironic commentary about political activity and discontent in contemporary American society. But the use of these two principles of the logic of ironic appropriation serves to lead the audience toward the third key principle: interactivity.

The quotation demonstrates interactivity on two levels. First, it is interactive in the simplest sense of the term, namely that someone must actively go to the text and read it. Typically, this sort of interactivity would not truly be regarded as interactive by media scholars. Those like Sheizaf Rafaeli, for example, argue true interactivity is part of a three-step process of message transaction.[5] On the surface, there appears to only be two steps. The user sends an information request to the World Wide Web for the Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear's website and the returned information is supplied to the user. As I mentioned in the Introduction, scholars who focus on interactivity would suggest a third step is necessary, typically in the form of some sort of interaction with the website itself such as watching video, contributing to message boards, or participating in online polls. As I show throughout this chapter, many of the interactive texts in the Stewart/Colbert universe contain such elements. However, I would argue that this piece of text, which is merely words on a page, encourages a third level of interactivity.

This third step comes in the form of the call to action in the quotation. In the quotation, the Stewart/Colbert universe tells the reader they are looking for a particular type of person. As it continues, the website asks, "Are you one of those people? Excellent. Then we'd like you to join us in Washington, DC on October 30—a date of no significance whatsoever—at the Daily Show's 'Rally to Restore Sanity.'" In the Introduction, I mentioned the various forms of interactivity described by Sally McMillan as typically occurring in new media such as user-to-system, user-to-user, and user-to-text. The Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear, however, suggests another form of interactivity, one in which the text encourages the audience to go out and interact with the world and the people within it.[6]

Media scholarship has tended to focus on the way interactivity places the audience into action through options the media provide. Considering this use of interactivity with the media is important to the role interactivity plays in the constitutive process. However, this example from the Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear website shows that, in the development of rhetorical constitution, interactivity in the media can be used to encourage interactivity outside of the media, an important use of interactivity for rhetorical purposes Barbara Warnick calls the development of offline peer-to-peer networks.[7]

In this chapter, I explore the principle of interactivity in the logic of ironic appropriation as it is used in the Stewart/Colbert universe. As a part of the logic of ironic appropriation, interactivity provides the opportunity for the constituted audience to go beyond simply consuming rhetorical messages and, instead, encourages the audience members to become active participants in the process of constitution. Unlike the subtlety of interpellation found in the principle of irony, the principle of interactivity even more so than intertextuality will often hail the audience directly. Consider the quotation above from the Rally to Restore Sanity website

again. The message itself may contain some of the double-coded elements of irony and intertextuality, but the interactive component is clear: "[W]e're looking for those people." Below I argue this call to action was part of a large body of rhetorical texts that helped to constitute not only the Stewart/Colbert universe's audience but also brought it together in a physical space to participate in democracy and question the normalization of extremist rhetoric in discourse. Along with the Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear, I use examples of interactivity in the Stewart/Colbert universe such as mobile applications, merchandising, fan sites, online forums, and moments on the television shows themselves to show the ways interactivity serves as a constitutive tool that gets the audience members actively engaging with the media and, by extension, each other to produce engaged democratic participation.

Rhetorical Constitution: Hailing and Being Hailed Through Interactivity

Louis Althusser maintains that people become part of the construction of ideology through the process of interpellation. Althusser argues:

> I shall then suggest that ideology "acts" or "functions" in such a way that it "recruits" subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all), or "transforms" the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all) by the very precise operation which I have called interpellation or hailing, and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace every day police (or other) hailing: "Hey you there!"[8]

Throughout this dissertation, I have argued the logic of ironic appropriation, through the principles of irony and intertextuality, hails the audience through identification with the Stewart/Colbert universe, in particular Jon Stewart, and inscribes upon it a particular ideological viewpoint. Charland argues, "[T]his rhetoric of identification is ongoing, not restricted to one hailing, but usually part of a rhetoric of socialization."[9] The analysis of the previous principles of

ironic appropriation has shown how the combined rhetoric of the Stewart/Colbert universe produces such socialization.

However, this socialization through hailing has been shown primarily as a mental endeavor, one in which the audience is presented with a collection of rhetorical texts to guide it toward action and judgment. Interactivity provides an opportunity for members of the audience to engage actively with the Stewart/Colbert universe in a way that communicates back to the producers. Thus, the audience is not only hailed by the rhetoric through interactivity, but, because of the generative process of interaction, the audience members can also call back to the producers as well as each other. Take, for example, the websites for *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report*. Both sites contain the video footage from every episode of their respective programs, as well as additional content that is available only online. The result is a complete database that helps people watch and research the programs. Each video contains a detailed description of the clip as well as numerous tags that aid in searching for content on the sites, making it easy for audience members to go back and watch anything that has ever been on the show. This open access to the library of content is essential to the process of finding connections between texts and the honesty of the media, two concepts I have argued previously as being essential to the Stewart/Colbert universe's use of ironic appropriation. However, the opportunities for interactivity do not end there. These videos also provide the option for audience members to provide comments. A video clip from the September 13, 2010 episode of *The Colbert Report* provides one example of this interactive usage by the audience. In the clip, Colbert makes his final hint that he will hold a rally to counter Stewart's rally before he would ultimately officially announce the March to Keep Fear Alive. Poster Saphira commented on the video, saying, "Aw, Jon's the nicest evil guy in the world. He makes a great nemesis…I wouldn't

want to be 'against' him, but I would if I truly had to pick a side. I sure hope that any possible rallies wouldn't force us to choose sides!" Saphira's comment acknowledges the playful banter between Stewart and Colbert and also reinforces the collectiveness of the Stewart/Colbert universe. This sentiment is reinforced by user aKarenBlitz'en, who directly responded to Saphira: "I don't think they would ever make us choose- If there's going to be a rally and they both are going to have a rally - then they'll be doing it together…Jon and Stephen stand united ;) and as they say themselves: they see the 2 shows as 2 parts of a block."[10] Written weeks before the two hosts officially merged their rallies, user aKarenBlitz'en was aware of the way the Stewart/Colbert universe uses its rhetorical power to constitute an audience and accurately predicted the two would eventually come together in the process. This post illustrations how members of the audience can be actively aware of the rhetorical maneuvering of the Stewart/Colbert universe, and it also shows how users can participate in that rhetorical construction by contributing information that may often go unsaid by the producers themselves.

Of course, it is important to note the interactivity in the Stewart/Colbert universe is not reserved for just those who I have argued are part of the audience. Just as a viewer could recognize the irony in the Stewart/Colbert universe and disagree with the criticism or recognize the intertextuality without feeling a sense of connection to the texts, interactivity in the universe remains open to more than those who are constituted into the audience. Some forms of interactivity are more likely to be associated with those that are not rhetorically constituted by the Stewart/Colbert universe's use of ironic appropriation than others, however. For example, while possible, it seems unlikely people would purchase Stewart/Colbert merchandise such as T-shirts or bumper stickers and use them if they did not consider themselves connected to the audience.[11] Other moments of interactivity, such as commentary on discussion forums, are more

likely to be used by those outside of the universe's audience who want to participate due to the lack of cost and accessibility, although I argue below the Stewart/Colbert universe has put measures in place to limit that accessibility at times. In an electronic and information age, this openness of everyone to participate through interactivity is essential to the logic of ironic appropriation, particularly the emphasis of overcoming the naturalization of incommensurability. Keeping the audience isolated from dissenting or questioning voices may aid in the constitution of an audience with a coherent viewpoint, but this is the goal of the logic of myth. The logic of ironic appropriation encourages such questioning and the principle of interactivity permits those questions to be thrust into the discourse surrounding the Stewart/Colbert universe.

While more than the audience is open to the interactive elements, many of those elements are still controlled by the producers and other editors to limit how strong an opposing viewpoint may enter into the rhetorical message and disrupt the constitution of the audience. Both shows, for example, offer free tickets to the taping of the live programs. However, restrictions exist that limit the possibility for amassed dissenting voices to overtake the tapings. *The Daily Show* site, for example, makes it explicit that groups of audience members are limited in size: "Groups larger than four will be turned away at the door, even if they are separate reservations."[12] Making this rule clear sends a direct message to those wanting tickets there is a limit to their participation. While this rule may serve to add fairness to the ticketing process, it also permits the producers of the show to control the voice of the audience as the taping commences. Objectionable voices can also be suppressed through the process of editing. Having final control over the edited product, producers have the opportunity to present the rhetorical message in a way that constrains the influence of interactive audience members.

Such editing is not restricted to the producers of the television programs. In his study of the alternative media source *Indymedia*, Victor Pickard argues that certain limitations exist that he calls "tyrannies," which can constrain voices. For example, in the "tyranny of structurelessness," Pickard argues that even radical organizations tend to become bureaucratic over time and develop policies that tend to privilege certain individuals over others. This, he argues, opens up the possibility for reputational hierarchies to develop "by which the most socially outgoing and confident people, not to mention those with the luxury of time on their hands, take on a majority of tasks and begin to wield a certain amount of power."[13] Unclear editorial policies and mysterious editors also provide a tyranny that may limit not only what is said but how what is said is presented back out to the rest of the group. Pickard's study reveals the way that even media sources that challenge dominant discourse run the risk of limiting dissent even within the group.

The discussion forums for *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report* websites provide the clearest example of these editorial tyrannies at work in the Stewart/Colbert universe. Like most discussion forums on the internet, these two forums are free for users. Like some forums, users are required to create an account and sign in to contribute to the forums. Unlike most forums, however, these require users to create an account and sign in to see the forum content at all. The reasoning, according to the forum webpage, is to prohibit spammers and bots from infiltrating the boards. However, users must go through a rather technologically complicated process to access and create content on the forums. The directions require users to 1) create an account for Comedy Central's webpage, 2) have a Facebook account, 3) sign into Facebook and send a friend request to the Forum's Facebook page, 4) send the Forum's Facebook page a private message through Facebook with the username chosen for the Comedy Central webpage as well

as the email address the user originally used to sign up for the account, then 5) wait 1-3 business days to receive access to the Forum's content. The instructions also inform users, "While you're waiting, why not familiarize yourself with the Forum guidelines?"[14] Most of the Forum guidelines encourage the sort of reasoned, civil behavior emphasized through the Stewart/Colbert universe. However, certain speech, such as trolling, cursing, prejudice comments, exposure of personal information, pornography, and "comments that make a fellow member uncomfortable" can result in expulsion from the Forums.[15] It is not made clear who the editors of these Forums are or just how bad behavior must be for these editors to elect to remove someone from the group. It likely does not matter for the audience of the Stewart/Colbert universe, though. The complexity of joining the Forum serves as a deterrent for those technologically unable to meet the requirements and also dissuades those who may wish to join to stir up trouble. The secret editors also limit such behavior by suppressing voices that may be deemed as offense through the policies on trolling and uncomfortable speech. For example, any user that desires to use offensive language or stir up arguments is required to use the Flaming thread on the discussion board or, per the rules of the Forum, face expulsion from the group. Members of the audience would have no problem with these rules because they understand the desired behavior through the rhetorical act of socialization, but those that oppose the viewpoints of the Stewart/Colbert universe are less likely to understand why such editorial control is put into place. It is through the limits of this interactivity that the Stewart/Colbert universe constrains rhetorical messages to reinforce the constituted audience and the respective ideological perspective.

Of course, users with viewpoints that challenge the Stewart/Colbert universe may still enter into the Forums. For example, on January 31, 2012 user "skin and Bone's Chad" wrote a post on the Colbert Nation Forum titled "Where friendliness goes to die!" "skin and Bone's

Chad"'s post does not appear on the main Forum's section. Instead, it was relegated to a

subsection of the Forum labeled "Flames," a space where the anger and frustration of users like

"skin and Bone's Chad" are meant to be contained.[16] His post attacks both Colbert as well as

those who are part of the universe:

> If you've come here to make friends with people that share the idea of Stephens
>
> greatness..... You are a FuckTard and should be shot! GTFU! Enjoy the rest of your life
>
> as a Walmart greeter. If you want to laugh.... Even at this turd!.......... Some here share
>
> your beliefs, and through sarcasm, witt, hidden objectives, and character assasination will
>
> welcome you. don't ever mention your I.Q. test scores..... You will be beaten to no end.
>
> You will be called an idiot, an anti-intellectual, and a thin skinned and small boned pussy,
>
> all while be reminded of your lack of intelligence, in abundance. You wont claim to be
>
> the smartest person here, but some will take it that way (bow to them, for they are the
>
> masters).If you persist, you will have to smack them with their own game....... Otherwise
>
> GTFU! Do not suggest that things have slowed and why...... Because FUCK YOU!.....
>
> NoobTard. In all.... It's a great environment to hang out in if you like abuse.[17]

"skin and Bone's Chad"'s post received nine pages of responses on the Forum. Many users

attempted to address the original post through the sort of reasoned discussion and critical

thinking pushed in the Stewart/Colbert universe. User Lost™, for example, extended the

constitutive process of the rhetorical message:

> Here are some pointers: 1) Stephen Colbert is the greatest troll of all time, don't be
>
> surprised if his fans are the same. 2) The other day whilst driving my car another motorist
>
> was saying something along the lines of '...you fucking cunt.' This shit happens all the
>
> time IRL, do you expect the internet to be any different?[18]

 By suggesting to the original poster that harsh and inflammatory language is common in various places throughout society and people should not expect any space, electronic or otherwise, to be free from such attacks, Lost™ reminds the readers of the response that handling attacks with reason is an important part of communication in society. Furthermore, the claim that Colbert is "the greatest troll of all time, don't be surprised if his fans are the same" is both an indication of how the Stewart/Colbert universe encourages the audience to be put into action and a comment on the problems that arise when people try to emulate the style of Colbert instead of the more socially acceptable Stewart. Like Lost™, user SoCal responded with a detailed message on how "skin and Bone's Chad" could better handle presenting his opinions and avoid engaging in hateful discussion in the Forum. There were many responses that deviated from "skin and Bone's Chad"'s point and others that harshly responded back to the original poster, but, throughout this board, many users maintained the sense of responsibility toward reasoned discourse.

　　While the Flames subsection is intended to keep off topic discussions out of the general conversation, the Forums are primarily spaces to permit the users to share information that may eventually be seen by the producers and have a direct impact on the texts within the Stewart/Colbert universe. *The Daily Show* Forum, for example, contains subsections such as Guest Suggestions, Show Suggestions, and Story Ideas. These subsections are by far the most used, at times having up to ten times as many posts as other subsections. It is through these subsections that users can interact with each other and, it appears, with the producers themselves.[19] While the Forum users represent a small portion of the Stewart/Colbert universe's audience, the Forums provide one opportunity for the audience to engage directly with the universe's texts, in the process extending the rhetorical messages and at time aiding in the process of rhetorical constitution by reinforcing the ideological perspective.

Interactivity opportunities such as the comments sections on videos and the Forums represent ways the Stewart/Colbert universe uses interactivity to hail the audience into participating in the construction of the rhetorical texts. In these examples, the rhetoric of socialization that is associated with constitutive rhetoric has appeared, not from the primary textual producers, but instead from the audience itself. Despite this, however, the principle of interactivity is enacted through space mediated by the Stewart/Colbert universe. Yet interactivity as a principle of ironic appropriation must not necessarily be under the direct control of the producers. Just as those who invoke the logic of myth to constitute an audience expect that myth to circulate outside of their own textual construction, those that invoke the logic of ironic appropriation must expect the audience to circulate the ideology associated with the logic beyond the producers' texts. This is why interactivity as a principle falls into the "appropriation" component of ironic appropriation. The logic of ironic appropriation expects the audience members to take the ideology and spread it through their own creations based on what was presented by the original producers.

The principle of interactivity permits the audience to expand the number of paratexts to expand the constitute rhetoric beyond the producers' texts. In his initial contemplation of whether to hold a rally or not, for example, Colbert mentions that some of these audience members contributed to the site Reddit.com, a website designed to allow users to interact with the site through the sharing of news stories and ideas into and from the site, to drum up support for a rally. Colbert also mentions other ways the audience used interactive media outside of the universe itself to spread support for a rally, including establishing a Facebook group and creating the website ColbertRally.com.[20] A week after mentioning the ways the audience had taken to the internet to promote the idea of a rally, Colbert shared that, during that week, an internet meme

had spread urging him further. At the same time, dozens had sent Colbert toy geese, and one group even released live birds as an intertextual reference to Beck's "Restoring Honor" rally, where geese had flown over Beck in what he interpreted as a symbol from God.[21] Examples such as these show how the audience can activate to speak to the producers of the show. Importantly, these examples show the audience can become motivated through its own volition to participate in the process of constructing rhetorical texts that hail the producers' attention.

The audience can also use interactivity to interpellation people beyond the producers of the Stewart/Colbert universe. The examples above may have come to the attention of the producers, but they were intended originally for others. The ColbertRally.com website, for example, was in existence for well over a week before they posted the call to send bird-themed gifts to *The Colbert Report* studio.[22] Other fan sites exist as well that encourage interactivity on a variety of levels. FakeNewsJunkies.com, for example, is a site that serves as a database for numerous other fan sites that are dedicated to the Stewart/Colbert universe.[23] Sites like the No Fact Zone, a Colbert fan page, are dedicated to spreading information about the hosts.[24] Other sites go to extremes to spread the rhetoric of the universe beyond what is presented by the producers. Wikiality, for example, is an audience run wiki much like Wikipedia, only instead of real encyclopedia entries the site features descriptions based on Colbert's concept of truthiness, "the quality of preferring concepts or facts one wishes to be true, rather than concepts or facts known to be true."[25] These websites show how the principle of interactivity permits the audience to construct paratexts that spread and shape the constitutive rhetoric of the universe, often in ways that get members of the audience to use the principles of irony and intertextuality.

The principle of interactivity also fulfills an important role for constitutive rhetoric by spreading the ideology of the messages through discourse between members of the constituted

public as well as those outside of it. Charland argues, "[T]he tautological logic of constitutive rhetoric must necessitate action in the material world; constitutive rhetoric must require that its embodied subjects act freely in the social world to affirm their subject position."[26] Audience members frequently use social media networks such Twitter and Facebook to share clips and stories about the Stewart/Colbert universe and often take advantage of the space provided by these networks to add additional commentary to the messages. This use of interactivity provides the audience with a sense of participating and constructing the rhetorical message, because, as Christine Harold argues, "[Social media] members have the capacity to talk back…reorganize, and influence the tastes of their peers at a rate impossible to achieve through the media of television and radio."[27] This sharing through social media serves this tautological need of constitutive rhetoric to spread the message through discourse to those who are already seen as subjects of the Stewart/Colbert universe and hail the attention of those within their circles who may not already be part of the audience.

Interactivity serves an important role in the process of hailing the audience, primarily because interactive elements in the media are understood by media users as calls for their attention. But, as the examples above have shown, this principle of interactivity can also be used by the audience to call the attention of the Stewart/Colbert universe producers. Furthermore, as a principle of the logic of ironic appropriation, audience members can use interactivity to spread the ideology of the universe to others in the audience and beyond, contributing to the rhetoric of socialization by allowing audience members to, as Charland put it, "act freely in the social world to affirm their subject position" in the Stewart/Colbert universe.[28]

This last point draws attention to one of the key roles played by the ideological effect of constitutive rhetoric. Charland argues that freedom of agency of the audience is an illusion with

constitutive rhetoric. His reasoning stems from the assumption that constitutive rhetoric is using the logic of myth, which encourages the audience to follow an already written narrative that matches the ideology of the shared myth. While I have argued the logic of ironic appropriation eschews such a preconceived narrative in favor of constant questioning, I have also argued that ideology still plays a pivotal role in the constructive of constitutive rhetoric. Thus, even for constitutive rhetoric that uses the logic of ironic appropriation, total freedom of action remains an illusion for two important reasons.

First, the ideology tied to the logic confines the audience to an expected mentality and set of behaviors. The examples from the Forum above show how editorial limits exist to encourage certain people to participate and also regulate how that participation will happen. Because of the shared ideological perspective, those limits seem both fair and normal since the limits match the ideology of the Stewart/Colbert universe. However, those limits also exist to prohibit opposing perspectives from gaining a strong voice in the discourse.

Second, the principle of interactivity has shown that, to be constitutive, the interactivity of the audience must also always be networked back into the universe's set of texts and, thus, lead back to identification with, as I have argued throughout this dissertation, Stewart. Warnick argues, "[O]nline interactivity play[s] a key role in promoting identification."[29] She cites for Kenneth Burke to support this point. Burke argues, "we are clearly in the region of rhetoric when considering the identifications whereby a specialized activity makes one a participant in some social or economic class. 'Belonging' in this sense is rhetorical."[30] Warnick adds to this quotation the possibility that, beyond social or economic class, belonging applies to political parties as well. I argue this extension applies to the media and the Stewart/Colbert universe. Audience members are given the freedom to create and expand texts through interactivity, but

this need to belong that stems from the identification with the universe limits the ability for the audience to operate without running into the confines set up by the Stewart/Colbert universe's ideological position. The umbrella of paratexts is constantly expanding, and even texts that may not seem at first to be related to the Stewart/Colbert universe are quickly appropriated back into the universe by the actions of the audience through sharing on social media, message board posts, and entries on fan sites. Ultimately, if the audience creates a text so far removed from the producers' texts that it is not pulled back into the paratextual umbrella, it fails to be part of the Stewart/Colbert universe altogether. Thus, despite being driven by the logic of ironic appropriation, the ideology prohibits true freedom among the audience even when opportunities for interactivity are abundant.

As a constitutive force, interactivity can be used to hail the audience, the producers, and those outside of it. But as Charland argues, it is not just the hailing that provides constitutive rhetoric its power. "Constitutive rhetorics…have power because they are oriented towards action."[31] In the next section, I argue the principle of interactivity can be used to position the audience toward numerous different forms of action, and such calls to action can motivate the audience to make important contributions to society.

Active Rhetorical Engagement: Interactivity and the Activ(ist?) Audience

Whether or not the Stewart/Colbert universe should be considered true journalism may remain up for debate, but what is clear is the universe has an agenda that is intended to influence politics and society. In an interview with Chris Wallace on *Fox News Sunday*, Stewart denied he was an activist and instead was simply a comedian, but then went on to point out his comedic sensibility was "informed by an ideological background, there's no question about that."[32] Perhaps Stewart and company are not activists in their minds, but the Stewart/Colbert universe

produces rhetorical messages that have increasingly encouraged the audience to take action in politics and society. Throughout this dissertation, I have provided examples of how the rhetoric of the Stewart/Colbert universe has used the mainstream media to activate the audience, albeit often on a personal and intellectual level. Yet, through the principle of interactivity, that activation of the audience can take material forms, and the embodied nature of the audience permits messages to spread in ways the producers of the Stewart/Colbert universe alone could not achieve. In this section, I address the ways the Stewart/Colbert universe employs the principle of interactivity to put the audience into action. Often, this is done through comedy in a way that permits the audience members to deny they are true activists just as Stewart did in his interview with Chris Wallace. Even through comedy, though, the inspired actions of the audience members are unmistakably about making a difference and raising awareness, making it less likely they would not be considered activists, let alone desire as an audience to separate itself from that label.

Robert Asen argues what is considered as citizenship should be reconsidered in the current age. Specifically, Asen is concerned with engaged citizenship, the type of active rhetorical engagement I argue the principle of interactivity can provide for the audience of the Stewart/Colbert universe. Asen believes "we may wish to consider how citizenship engagement proceeds generatively, exhibits risk, affirms commitment, expresses creativity, and fosters sociability."[33] Asen's view of engaged citizenship bears many similarities to Heidlebaugh's active artistic judgment.[34] By encouraging citizenship through creative thinking and social activity, Asen's argues citizenship can be engaged in a number of different modes that allow democratic participation in ways that otherwise would not be seen as active citizenship. Many of

the uses of the principle of interactivity discussed in this chapter demonstrate such engaged citizenship and make use of this creativity to inspire greater civic engagement.

I focus on some of the nobler ways the Stewart/Colbert universe puts its audience into action, but it must be remembered the universe remains an entertainment property that is permitted to exist because it generates a profit for a larger media conglomerate. As such, one common way money is generated is through providing merchandise for audiences to buy. Comedy Central offers merchandise for both television programs through their website. *The Daily Show*'s supply of merchandise is limited, consisting of things such as a mug, copies of *America (The Book)*, and a few Rally to Restore Sanity bumper stickers and shirts.[35] *The Colbert Report* store is larger, likely as a parodic response to Bill O'Reilly's entire online storefront that would rival some department stores.[36] Colbert's store not only includes the pen and iPad cover mentioned in Chapter II, but also a few shirts, two DVDs, copies of *I Am America*, March to Keep Fear Alive merchandise, hats, and bracelets.

Comparing these shows to O'Reilly's store, however, suggests much of the merchandise exists less as a money making endeavor and more to spread the rhetoric of the Stewart/Colbert universe in ways the television programs could not do alone. O'Reilly's store features numerous articles of clothing, for example, that are updated constantly. In fact, a member of O'Reilly's audience has the opportunity to become a walking billboard for the show due to the availability of hats, jackets, shirts, travel mugs, and exercise clothes, not to mention other items like doormats, key chains, and playing cards. The merchandise available for the Stewart/Colbert universe is significantly limited in comparison, and the products that would be seen as a public display of identification with the universe are limited and almost entirely focused on the Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear. This is an important point, as it suggests the merchandise like shirts

for the Rally were intended to help establish the offline peer-to-peer networks through interactivity discussed by Warnick.[37] The clothing becomes part of a performance of identification with the universe and a means to put the audience into action for the purposes of allowing the audience members to hail each other as clearly part of the universe. Moreover, Asen argues that, in neoliberal America, such consumerism may be one mode in which citizens are able to perform civic engagement in a creative and sociable manner.[38]

The Stewart/Colbert universe has discovered ways to turn much of the commercial merchandise into a multilayered interactive experience for the audience. Take, for example, the WristStrong bracelet available from *The Colbert Report* store. After injuring his wrist in July of 2007, Colbert went on a crusade to tackle what he called the media's endorsement of wrist violence in America. As a response, on the August 8, 2007 episode of *The Colbert Report* he introduced the WristStrong bracelet. The WristStrong bracelet is a silicone bracelet much like Lance Armstrong's LiveStrong bracelet, which was intended to raise money and awareness for cancer.[39] Years later, the WristStrong bracelets remain a piece of merchandise available for purchase from the Comedy Central site.

This item is associated with the principle of interactivity in three different ways that put the audience into action. First, like the other wearable merchandise, the WristStrong bracelet provides an opportunity for the audience members to take their identification with the universe to the world outside of the media. Just as the shirts and bumper stickers mentioned above provide an opportunity for identification in peer-to-peer networks, the red bracelets send a signal to those in the lived world they share identification with the program and, thus, each other.

Second, interactivity between the producers and the audience is permitted through the opportunity for user to produce reviews on the Comedy Central website. Like the Forums and

video comments sections, these product reviews allow audience members to change the nature of the Stewart/Colbert universe's online presence by contributing their own rhetorical messages. Unlike those two, however, which were most often taken by the audience members as opportunities to communicate with each other or offer suggestions to the producers for how the producers could shape future rhetorical messages, many of those that provided product reviews did so in the tone of *The Colbert Report* itself. Some of the reviewers provide the sort of obvious, meaningless support for the product often given by Colbert. For example, reviewer Marcus Matteo writes, "Its great for everything from sitting still on my wrist to hanging loosely on my arm." Colbert often proposes implausible consequences for actions, and reviewers such as "scott f" mimicked this trend: "This wrist band changed my life, since receiving it my pay has doubled, I have won two lotteries and oil was discovered on my land." Others like "I didn't know I had a profile on here" provide ironic testimony to support the product: "I have been wearing this bracelet since I received it, and my wrist has remained unbroken the entire time."[40] These customer reviews represent another way the audience can use the interactivity principle to contribute to and shape the rhetorical message.

Finally, when Colbert announced on the August 20, 2007 episode that the bracelets would be available to purchase, he added that money from every sale of the bracelets would be given to the Yellow Ribbon Fund, an organization that helps injured service members when they return home from war.[41] Tying the bracelet to a charity with indirect links to a government endeavor, the Stewart/Colbert universe creates an opportunity for the audience to take action. This link between the bracelet and the charity is noticeably important for some of the audience. For example, the product reviewer "A. Fox 'FuCH'" noted three years after the bracelet became available, "i bought two just so 10 dollars would go to the yellow ribbon fund."[42] Importantly,

the money does not go to the war effort directly, but itself serves as a rhetorical maneuver by supporting the people who have been sent to war and are victims of it. Again, the ideology of the Stewart/Colbert universe controls the rhetoric of the bracelet by inscribing upon it a specific statement that the audience members that choose to purchase the bracelet are Americans that support soldiers without necessarily supporting the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, wars frequently criticized throughout the Stewart/Colbert universe. In this case, money becomes speech for the audience, speech that is permitted by the interactive opportunities created by the producers.

The WristStrong bracelet is one of many examples in which Colbert used the principle of interactivity to active the audience to make donations to charities that support the ideological cause of the universe. Recall, in Chapter II, I addressed the way Colbert used intertextuality to create an interactive moment for the audience, encouraging the audience for an entire week to support the Japanese relief effort following the 2011 tsunami by donating to the Red Cross.[43] In 2007, Colbert introduced his Ben & Jerry's ice cream flavor, Americone Dream, and encouraged his audience to consume as much as possible because the proceeds went to charities such as the Yellow Ribbon Fund.[44] Colbert has also used the power of the audience to support the 2010 U.S. Olympic speed skating team financially, leading almost 10,000 audience members into donating over $300,000 to the team.[45]

Fully aware of the importance of all three principles of ironic appropriation, one of the most significant events to activate the audience by Colbert came through an intertextual exchange with Jimmy Fallon in 2011. Fallon, host of the NBC show *Late Night with Jimmy Fallon*, had previously been feuding with Colbert over their rival ice cream flavors in an attempt to raise the most money for charity. Having made up on *The Colbert Report* in early March of 2011, Colbert and Fallon became quick on-air friends. In late March, Colbert auctioned off a

self-portrait for $26,000 and donated the proceeds to DonorsChoose.org to help art programs in schools. Colbert also praised Fallon for agreeing to match the donation personally.[46] The next Monday, however, Fallon announced on his program that he never made such a promise and was immediately confronted by Colbert, who argued he has every right to give away Fallon's money since they are "best friends." Colbert stormed off in disgust, and Fallon told his audience members that they needed to fix the problem by raising the money. If they could do it by that Friday, Fallon promised that Colbert would return on Friday to sing Rebecca Black's *Friday* on his show.[47] The next day on *The Colbert Report*, Colbert expressed his anger with Fallon, and told his audience he put a donation button on the ColbertNation.com website so large they could easily avoid it.[48] Three hours after *The Colbert Report* episode aired, the donations surpassed the $26,000 mark.[49] As the week continued, donations continued to pour in and Colbert and Fallon together sang the song at the end of the week. The result was an extended intertextual exchange that activated the audience to become a part of the solution for strained art programs throughout the country. By combining the audiences of both the Stewart/Colbert universe and Fallon's fans, as of April 2012, money from the stunt resulted in donors raising over $100,000 to help nearly 55,000 art students.[50]

These examples show the way the Stewart/Colbert universe can activate the audience through the principle of interactivity to send a message about the ideological values of the universe. This gives the audience the ability to speak through money and declare support for and inclusion in the universe. However, like other ways the principle of interactivity serves to constitute the audience and put it into action, charitable donations have become a form of commodity activism audience members can use to speak back to the Stewart/Colbert universe and shape the message on their own. This form of participation serves as one way the audience

can perform the sort of engaged citizenship through consumerism of which Asen speaks.[51] For example, audience members used the Reddit website and created the ColbertRally.com website to encourage Colbert to hold a rally, but this was not their only form of interactive speech to gain the attention of the universe. The Reddit posts and ColbertRally.com also encouraged supporters to donate money to one of Colbert's favorite charities, DonorsChoose.org. The audience spoke loudly, donating over $100,000 in just a few days, and breaking the servers for DonorsChoose.org in the process.[52] While it is quite likely that the wheels were already in motion for what would eventually become the Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear, the actions of these members of the audience demonstrate the power of the principle of interactivity in allowing the audience to signal to the producers what it desires. If there had been doubts about the appeal of a rally, such a quick and large donation uses interactivity and money to send a rhetorical message, one that, done through the charity, acknowledges the corresponding ideological perspective of the Stewart/Colbert universe.

It is important to note the act of donating to charities is not necessarily a substantial form of civic engagement for the audience. Although it does represent one form of the creative and generative form of engaged citizenship of which Asen speaks, determining how the impact of that engagement may be impossible. Asen uses the example of someone choosing a local coffee shop over Starbucks. While some may make the choice out of protest to fair trade laws, others may make the choice because one is closer than the other. As such, it becomes difficult to suggest purchasing from a local coffee is necessarily an act of civic engagement. Similarly, making other forms of consumer purchases such as charitable donations do not necessarily equate to active civic engagement. Asen argues such determinations would need to be based on contextualizing the rhetorical act. The Stewart/Colbert universe's rhetoric contextualizes such a

determination. However, as Asen argues, the choice to perform engaged citizenship is often individualized, making it difficult to suggest the option for charitable donations or any form of citizenship mentioned here was a purposefully performed act of citizenship on the part of the audience members.[53] What is important, then, is that the principle of interactivity as used as part of the logic of ironic appropriation provides opportunities for modes of engaged citizenship and expression of judgment.

In the Conclusion, I argue, through the Colbert Super PAC, the Stewart/Colbert universe has expanded upon the use of money through interactivity to produce rhetorical speech in what has been called by many as an elaborate but successful prank on contemporary American democracy.[54] Pranking as a rhetorical strategy provides an opportunity for audiences to interject themselves into the normal flow of mediated discourse. A rhetorical prank, according to Harold, is not a stunt to provide opposition to a viewpoint, but instead a "stylistic exaggeration" that can "render a qualitative change by turning and doubling a material or text."[55] Pranks work through appropriating mediated texts and adding a turn of the text, then re-presenting that text back to the audience in a way that disrupts the ability for the media to appear as a seamless and infallible machine. In one example of pranking, Harold talks about the Barbie Liberation Organization, who switched the voice boxes of talking Barbie and G.I. Joe dolls and returned the dolls to stores with a note hidden in the package urging angry families to call their TV news stations to complain.[56] Harold, discussing cultural jamming of which she considers pranking to be a part of, argues that:

> "[J]amming" as a metaphor does not have to be interpreted only as a damming or
> stopping of corporate media. More interestingly, it can be a strategy that artfully

proliferates other media and messages that challenge the ability of corporate messages to make meaning in predictable ways—to jam with rather than against.[57]

Harold argues that pranks are typically associated with arguments about the meaning of the prank, "but such arguments are translations of pranks. They do not account for the power of the prank itself. One might even argue that such translations dilute the rhetorical power of pranks to confuse and provoke."[58]

Amber Day, however, disagrees with Harold, noting, "While I agree that the cleverness of a prank can obviate the need for direct didacticism, I would argue that if it is to have any political or rhetorical effect, a prank must imply some moderately clear critique…or risk being nothing more than an exercise in art-student narcissism."[59] Noted rhetorician and prankster Kembrew McLeod appears to agree with Day, arguing, "A good prank uses deception to speak truth to power, or at least crack jokes that expose fissures in power's façade, often using the news to do the work."[60] For example, one of McLeod's most notable pranks involved him copyrighting the phrase "Freedom of Expression," then sending out cease and desist letters to users of the phrase in order to get the media talking about the way copyright laws have been manipulated to expand corporate power over creativity.[61] McLeod proposes the formula of "Pranks = Satire + Performance Art x Media," a formula that highlights the combination of the three principles of ironic appropriation I have argued for here.[62] The combination of irony, intertextuality, and interactivity permits such pranks to have the rhetorical force spoke of by Day and McLeod and makes pranks a likely rhetorical strategy for those who subscribe to the logic of ironic appropriation.

The Stewart/Colbert universe has used the rhetorical strategy of pranking to help encourage an active audience in a way that allows the audience to at least participate in a

criticism that inserts itself into other parts of media and culture. In Chapter I, I briefly discussed

one way the Stewart/Colbert universe provided the opportunity for the audience to pull off a

prank. Since the character of Colbert is so self-assured, it would seem inevitable to him that the

book *I Am America (And So Can You!)* would win numerous awards. With no sense in delaying

the inevitable, Colbert awarded his book the first recipient of The Stephen T. Colbert Award for

the Literary Excellence. At the end of the book, Colbert tells the audience, "You need to take the

lessons of this book and apply them to the community."[63] Colbert's examples stress verbal

communication with others, but included between this page and the next is a sheet of stickers

with the following instructions:

> Heroes, by buying and reading this book, you've proven that you get it—and are
>
> therefore now members of the nominating committee for The Stephen T. Colbert Award
>
> for The Literary Excellence. Use the medallions below to nominate any book that you
>
> feels embodies the values of the Colbert Nation.

The book includes twelve stickers for the reader to affix on to other books that would

presumably match Colbert's values. *I Am America*, thus, sets up the potential for the audience to

engage in an elaborate prank by placing upon other books the fake award sticker. Just as the

Stewart/Colbert universe inserted itself into congressional testimony and other media programs,

these stickers provide an opportunity for the audience to engage in the construction of such

outward intertextual references.

There is little evidence as to how common it was for the audience to act upon this

potential prank. A brief discussion among readers on the website GoodReads.com brainstorms

possible recipients of Colbert's award, in particular the works of Ann Coulter.[64] Many of the

customer reviews of the book make mention of the Award stickers, but none discuss putting the

stickers into use.[65] There was also one brief exchange about using the award stickers on the Colbert Nation Forum page.[66] Although Colbert has used the book to perform minor pranks such as placing the book in the stack of books supposedly referenced by America's Founding Fathers at the National Constitution Center, he never makes reference on *The Colbert Report* to the audience using the stickers as described by the book.[67] Therefore, despite the potential for a prank with rhetorical influence, it becomes difficult to determine whether this lack of discussion about the award means the prank occurred at all or whether it was ineffective or not.

Like The Stephen T. Colbert Award for the Literary Excellence, Colbert's creation of the "Farewell to Postage" postage represents another opportunity for the audience to participate in the process of pranking. As I discussed in the Introduction, these legitimate U.S. postage stamps are available for audience members to purchase and use when mailing items. As part of the received letter, the stamps are literally a way to stick a commentary on the general message that disrupts the normal flow of communication. As of this writing, the stamps are too new to determine what impact they may have, although, unlike The Stephen T. Colbert Award stickers, there is greater reason to believe that stamps are being used since there are only two reasons to purchase the stamps: for usage or collection.

Both The Stephen T. Colbert Award and the "Farewell to Postage" postage represent opportunities presented by the Stewart/Colbert universe for the audience to use the principle of interactivity and participate in the rhetorical act of pranking. There are, however, examples where pranks have been conducted involving the audience to influence the process of meaning-making. As I mentioned earlier, social media like Twitter is one space in which people can share and extend a rhetorical message to indicate inclusion in the audience. Aware of this, Jon Stewart used his audience through *The Daily Show*'s Twitter account to influence then presidential

candidate Jon Huntsman's open town hall meeting. On November 29, 2011, Huntsman's camp sent the tweet, "I'm taking your questions on Twitter at 4:45 ET TODAY. Use hashtag #Q4Jon. Excited to do it!" *The Daily Show* producers, recognizing the potential for a successful prank, tweeted to their audience, "@MadMen_AMC fans: tweet Jon Hamm your questions by 4:15 Eastern! Hashtag #Q4Jon." In the world of Twitter, hashtags are a means to organize like-minded topics and create a trend that draws the attention of those looking for tweets related to the same topics. Just as the switching of Barbie and G.I. Joe voice boxes described by Harold represents one prank that forced consumers to consider the rhetorical significance of not only the prank but the original messages as well, Stewart and company's switching of the hashtag from a political gathering to fans of the television show *Mad Men* shows how interactivity can be used with social media to impact the meaning-making process.

There are some important limitations to the prank, however. Perhaps unfortunately for Stewart, Huntsman's camp was able to catch on and the quick-thinking Huntsman played along with the prank, answering tweets such as "Jon, in ten years do you see yourself following George Clooney's or Tom Selleck's career path?" with "I definitely want Clooney's career path. But I think that Q was for Jon Hamm. Funny prank @TheDailyShow! #Q4Jon."[68] The Huntsman camp's technological and cultural savvy perhaps diffused the prank before Huntsman could accidentally reveal information that may have impacted his political narrative, making it less of a disruption of meaning-making and more of a humorous linkage between the campaign and the Stewart/Colbert universe.

This first issue draws attention to need for those who use the principle of interactivity to be one step ahead of the object of the prank. This prank, however, also reinforces an important part of the process of constitution, namely the illusion of agency for the audience. In this prank,

the audience is not as much in on the prank as it is a medium to institute the prank. *The Daily Show* producers take advantage of their audience's collective ear through Twitter to encourage them to become the active mechanism in the prank. In this situation, though, the audience members are unaware they are part of the prank, and instead truly believe they are talking to Jon Hamm and asking him questions about *Mad Men*. While this shows an important way the producers may use the principle of interactivity to produce rhetorical activity, this form of activity reduces the role of the audience. The principle of interactivity does not guarantee an increased role of the audience members as individual contributors to the rhetorical process, but, given the overall desire to turn inactive people into active and critically-minded citizens, it is counter-productive to trick them into participation without them being aware of their role in the attempted construction of a rhetorical message.

Although there are problems and limitations to these pranks, there have been successful pranks performed in by the Stewart/Colbert universe and the audience. One of the most successful pranks in the history of the Stewart/Colbert universe came in early 2009. NASA announced that they were campaigning to let citizens vote for the name of what was then known as Node 3 of the International Space Station. Although NASA suggested a few names to vote on, they permitted write in votes. On March 3, 2009, Colbert, in his words, "mobilized" the audience and told it to go to the NASA site and enter in "Colbert" as the name for the station.[69] By the next night, the choice for "Colbert" topped the list of options.[70] On March 10, NASA representative William Gerstenmaier hinted that NASA may not honor the results of the vote if "Colbert" won.[71] When the final votes were counted, "Colbert" had won handily. The vote was created by NASA to represent the spirit of cooperation, but Gerstenmaier's prediction had

apparently come true with NASA implying they were going to go ahead with the second place choice, Serenity.[72]

The prank, initialized by Colbert and put into action by the audience, may have started out as what seemed like a joke but turned into a rhetorical opportunity to expose the deception of the vote. Colbert was quick to point to the hypocrisy of ignoring the results of a vote that was inspired by the notion of cooperation when the outcome was brought on by his audience coming together.[73] Democratic Congressman Chaka Fattah took it a step further, releasing a press statement that said, "NASA decided to hold an election to name its new room at the international space station and the clear winner is Stephen Colbert. The people have spoken, and Stephen Colbert won it fair and square –even if his campaign was a bit over the top…We insist on democracy in orbit."[74] NASA eventually settled on an another write-in name, Tranquility, and opted to name a treadmill sent into space the Combined Operational Load Bearing External Resistance Treadmill or C.O.L.B.E.R.T.[75] Colbert and his audience may not have achieved the goal of naming the node after Colbert, but the prank heightened awareness of the ways government agencies, even for seemingly inconsequential decisions, can strip the democratic process of its meaning. The result was a discussion with greater rhetorical significance than if the node had simply been named "Colbert." The prank became a moment for the Stewart/Colbert universe to use the principle of interactivity not only to interject the universe into another situation but to also use that opportunity to change the discussion from a celebration of space achievement to one of the hidden limits of democracy in America.

This prank highlights the linkage of the three principles of ironic appropriation in the process of putting the constituted audience into action that helps shape the meaning-making process through commentary. This inclusion of commentary as part of the rhetorical prank stands

against Harold's construction of pranking as free from critique. Part of the reason for the disagreement between Harold and others is that Harold separates parodic activism from pranking whereas both Day and McLeod emphasize the ironic as part of the prank itself. As I have argued in Chapter I, this is no small distinction because it is through the ironic principle that a commentary becomes inscribed upon actions including pranks. This may confine the ability of an audience freely to interpret a prank, but it becomes a necessary limitation when the audience members are expected to become a part of the prank themselves. Consider The Stephen T. Colbert Award for the Literary Excellence prank. Assuming they conducted the prank, without commentary, the Stewart/Colbert universe's audience would be nothing more than blindly throwing stickers on books which would at best deter other people from buying *that particular copy* of a book with Colbert's sticker on it. Even if they were to buy that copy, without a commentary, there would be no signified meaning to the sticker that would eventually lead the unsuspecting recipient of the prank toward further understanding of the ideology of the Stewart/Colbert universe. It would exist as a curiosity that could likely never be explained and devoid of its rhetorical power. Pranks, at least as used through the logic of ironic appropriation, are rhetorically successful uses of the interactivity principle because of the tie to the ironic.

The case of Colbert's NASA prank, however, demonstrates how there can be some rhetorical advantages to keeping that ironic commentary fluid as the prank unfolds. Some above examples show how the principles of interactivity may be used to construct pranks that put the audience into action in an effort to shape the process of message construction. The Stephen T. Colbert Award for the Literary Excellent and the "Farewell to Postage" postage show how the producers can construct the mechanism for a prank, but rely on the audience to accomplish the task. In these examples, the prank's critique is written into the instructions for the audience

which, in turn, confine the ways the objects of the prank may interpret the commentary.

Colbert's NASA prank, however, was less clear in its critique. Although it served early on as a

means to highlight the absurdity of the naming process, the fluidity of the prank allowed for the

conversation to turn more toward a discussion of democracy after NASA's decision. Given the

desire in ironic appropriation to remain open to constant critique and change, Colbert's NASA

prank suggests there is benefit in letting commentary emerge from the prank as opposed to being

inscribed upon it from the beginning.

These examples may not make the Stewart/Colbert universe or its audience activists in a

strict sense. However, these uses of the principle of interactivity point to ways the entire

Stewart/Colbert universe can be put into action to produce material changes and shape discourse

beyond the confines of the universe itself. In the Conclusion, I return to this idea of audience

activism and use Colbert's Super PAC to argue that, through the combined use of the principles

of ironic appropriation, the audience can be mobilized unmistakably into activists. For now,

though, it is clear the principle of interactivity is a valuable rhetorical tool for bringing the

audience into process of producing and shaping meaning-making.

Similarly, interactivity can be used to influence the process of making judgments and

spread the argument against the normalization of incommensurability. Just as seen in Chapter II,

where the use of outward intertextuality forced consideration from the objects of criticism, the

above examples show the ways interactivity permits the audience to engage in such rhetorical

insertion. I have argued throughout that one of the primary characteristics in the logic of ironic

appropriation is a tendency toward questioning and away from incommensurability, in the

process helping those who subscribe to the logic to find connections between ideas and

minimizing overheated debate. While often implied in the Stewart/Colbert universe, these values

became the major focus of the universe in late 2010 in what was perhaps its most explicit

entrance into the democratic process: The Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear.

Making Judgment: Interactivity and the Stand Against Incommensurability

For two weeks, Stewart had teased that he was going to make an important

announcement about a big event, while Colbert announced he was planning an even bigger

counter-announcement to trump Stewart's announcement. On September 16, 2010, Stewart made

his announcement to the Stewart/Colbert universe. Stewart's opening comments immediately got

to the heart of his ideological concern:

> But first, if I may, how did we get here? We live in troubled times with real people
>
> facing very real problems. Problems that have real, if imperfect, solutions that I believe
>
> 70-80% of our population could agree to try, and could ultimately live
>
> with. Unfortunately, the conversation and process is controlled by the other 15-
>
> 20%. You may know them as the people who believe that Obama is a secret Muslim
>
> planning a socialist takeover of America so he can force his radical black liberation
>
> Christianity down our throats. Or that George Bush let 9/11 happen to help pad Dick
>
> Cheney's Halliburton stock portfolio. We have seen these folks, the loud folks, over the
>
> years dominate our national conversation on our most important issues. Yes. As you can
>
> see, it is easy to get caught up in it. But why don't we hear from the 70-80
>
> percenters? Well, most likely, because you have shit to do. And quite frankly, even if
>
> you didn't have shit to do, you may lack the theatrical flair necessary for today's 24 hour a
>
> day, seven day a week news media. You may have an assault rifle, but don't think it's
>
> appropriate to bring to a rally filled with your unarmed citizen brethren. You may be
>
> interested in a topic, but not "dress all in pink, cover your hands in fake blood, and act

like you snuck into a meeting that's public in the first fucking place" interested. But that

ends tonight. For tonight I announce, the Rally to Restore Sanity![76]

Mixed with these words were intertextual references to videos of those 20% of the population

raising the rhetoric to heightened levels of unreasonableness, including a clip of Stewart himself

from the April 20, 2010 episode where he blasted Fox News for being "truly a terrible, cynical,

disingenuous news organization," then he broke into a gospel song of "Go Fuck Yourself."[77]

Stewart proceeded to tell the audience members that they may wonder if the Rally, which

Stewart calls "a clarion call for rationality," is right for them. He responded, "The fact that you

would even stop yourself to ask that question, as opposed to just, let's say, jumping up, grabbing

the nearest stack of burnable holy books, strapping on a diaper, and just pointing your car

towards D.C., that means I think ya might just be right for it." As the announcement proceeds,

Stewart continues to push the reasoned level of thinking that was to be the ideological force that

drove the rally. He noted, for example, this would be an interactive rally for the audience

members to do things like bring signs, but, if they could not take the time to create their own,

signs such as "I disagree with you, but I'm pretty sure you're not Hitler," "9/11 was an outside

job," and "I'm not afraid of Muslims/Tea Partiers/Socialists/Immigrants/Gun Owners/Gays but I

am scared of spiders" would be provided. The announcement ended by emphasizing the way the

ideological message could be spread through interactivity, with Stewart telling the audience that

the Rally was an opportunity for "some nice people to get together for fun, maybe some special

guests, and some great conversation. It'll be like being in a chat room, but real. I don't know,

seems like a pretty reasonable request. See you October 30th on the National Mall, spreading the

timeless message: Take it down a notch, for America."[78]

Immediately following that episode of *The Daily Show*, Colbert announced on *The Colbert Report* his March to Keep Fear Alive. Responding to Stewart's call toward reasonable discourse, Colbert told the audience:

> Need I point out that reason is just one letter away from treason? America cannot afford a rally to restore sanity in the middle of a recession. Did you even consider how many panic-related jobs that might cost those of us in the Fear Industrial Complex? Because now is not the time to take it down a notch. Now is the time for all good men to freak out for freedom![79]

In the weeks that followed, the two hosts shared the developing plans for the rallies on their programs. On September 20, 2010, Stewart announced the launch of the website RallytoRestoreSanity.com and the activation of a Twitter account where information about the Rally would be shared.[80] That night, Colbert warned that going to Stewart's website would produce a virus—herpes—and, instead, the audience should go to KeepFearAlive.com and join the March's Facebook page.[81] On October 12, Stewart, recognizing that some people were, as he predicted, too busy to attend the Rally in person, announced it will be broadcast on Comedy Central and streamed online.[82] The same day, Colbert mentioned that he had forgotten to acquire a permit to hold the March.[83] Two days later, in the interest of Stewart's ideological message of promoting reasoned discourse, Colbert convinced Stewart to add his March to Stewart's Rally permit, making it officially the Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear.[84]

While the general planning of the event unfolded, politicians and celebrities began to throw support behind the Rally. Despite Stewart's objection, former President Jimmy Carter suggested to Stewart that the Rally was an entrance into politics and encouraged Stewart to use the Rally to emphasize that this discourse escalation has likely always existed on the fringe, but

an increase in media exposure has expanded it to the mainstream.[85] On September 28, *The Daily Show* guest Arianna Huffington announced that her company would supply buses out of New York City for anyone that wanted to go to the rally.[86] The next night on *The Colbert Report*, Colbert responded to Huffington, implying there would be some hypocrisy of her supporting the Rally and yet refusing to bus his March supporters as well.[87] Oprah Winfrey, who first supported the Rally through Twitter, appeared on *The Daily Show* to give the studio audience a trip to the Rally.[88] Even President Obama, speaking to a group of high school students, recognized the Rally as a healthy alternative to the heightened rhetoric that permeated prevailing media and discourse.[89]

As awareness and support for the Rally grew, Stewart and Colbert used their programs to reinforce the simple message of their events. In late September, Stewart pointed to the use of dishonest editing in political campaigns, citing examples of an advertisement where a congressional candidate was made to appear as if he is oppressive toward women and the hyperbolic rhetoric produced because of Sarah Palin being booed on the reality show *Dancing with the Stars*, to point to how both sides of the political spectrum rely upon extremist rhetoric and incommensurability.[90] This move served to reinforce the need for the Rally in contemporary American democracy.[91] In another example, which shows the Stewart/Colbert universe's awareness of the power of intertextuality, Stewart announced the Rally would happen on the East end of Washington Mall, where nothing significant has ever happened before and no ideological baggage could be brought in from an intertextual reference to a past event.[92] As the event plans unfolded, it became increasingly clear that the point of the Rally was as simple as it was originally implied: reduce the extremist rhetoric and engage in civil discourse, or, as it would later be put by Stewart, "Don't be a douche."[93]

Unlike Stewart, who was frequently reinforcing the intended message of the Rally to Restore Sanity, Colbert never took the time to clarify the purpose of his March to Keep Fear Alive. From the beginning, Colbert's event was reactionary to Stewart's, making it never about something itself but instead a representation of what Stewart was not. The unreasonableness of a huge event being held simply to oppose reasonableness played nicely into Colbert's parody, but left little reason for the audience or the media to assume the March was anything other than part of the overall plan for the Stewart/Colbert universe. Forced to remain in character and support the desire for fear in discourse, Colbert obviously could not directly encourage the ideological message of what was to become the combined Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear. Instead, Colbert encouraged the audience members to participate in the process of spreading fear by doing things such as wearing costumes of the things they feared most or going to a website called SpookyorDooky.com, where the audience could vote on what image was scarier.[94] Here, again, identification fell with Stewart. While Colbert presented a fun alternative, it permitted the audience to identify with Colbert only through an ironic sense.

As a result, much of the media attention fell on Stewart, something Colbert openly lamented. *The Colbert Report* became a means for Stephen Colbert to use the parody to draw attention to the ways other media outlets were spreading the Rally's message without directly supporting it himself.[95] For example, Colbert celebrated only one news source covering the announcements of the Rally and the March, a news story from West Virginia University's *The Daily Athenaeum* by student writer Zak Kinnaird. In his opinion piece, Kinnaird argued that the Rally and March were opportunities for the public to help change the course of discourse in America. Calling the event a potential "defining moment of [a] generation," Kinnaird urged, "In that light, I encourage you to attend, not as a tourist going only so you can say 'I was there,' but

as an active participant nestled deep in the bowels of an era."[96] Kinnaird's piece highlights the lack of specificity in the exact purpose of the Rally and March, saying, "With so many people involved in an event without specific purpose, who celebrate only a vague desire for reason and understanding, art and history cannot help but be made."[97] The fact that art and history seem like an inevitable byproduct of the Rally draws an important parallel to some of the major points I have emphasized throughout this dissertation. If the Stewart/Colbert universe had the answer to the problem of incommensurability, it would likely have put aside any plans for an elaborate event and instead simply produced the solution for the audience. However, like most of the problems addressed in the universe, the producers recognized a problem without an obvious solution. The value of the logic of ironic appropriation, in particular the principle of interactivity, is that it permits the audience to become a part of the production of a solution. Just as the pranks mentioned above put the audience into the process of disrupting the meaning-making, the Rally is a means for the audience to enter into the construction of meaning. As I argued above, the case of Colbert and the NASA node provided a specific example of how a prank attached with a hint of social commentary provides an important opportunity for the audience to work with the producers to use its rhetorical power so social critique can emerge from the discussion. Although the Rally was not a prank, Kinnaird's argument points to how the simple ideological message opened up the Rally so that, from it, everyone would be able to participate in the construction of active artistic judgment without an extreme ideology forcing the discourse to the margins and toward incommensurability.

Kinnaird's insights as to the potential for the Rally were made quite early in the development of the eventual Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear, but in the weeks that followed the Stewart/Colbert universe took advantage of the rhetorical benefits of interactivity to create

opportunities for the audience to help shape the message of the Rally and come prepared to

participate. Like many of the examples above, one way the universe encouraged the audience to

become involved was to make charitable donations. Colbert reminded the audience members that

it was charity that ignited the flame for the events in the first place and to keep supporting

DonorsChoose.org, where they had already raised over \$318,000.[98] Stewart encouraged

donations, this time to the Trust for the National Mall, a charitable fund designed to help protect

the space where the Rally would be held. [99]

These charitable donations, done through internet credit card submissions, represent a

form of user-to-system interactivity where users take advantage of the technological capabilities

of the electronic system. The value of user-to-system interactivity is typically downplayed as a

rhetorical tool. Warnick, for example, chooses to place little focus on this form of interactivity in

her book *Rhetoric Online* because she "emphasizes forms of interactivity insofar as they function

as communication rather than as technologically enabled."[100] In many circumstances, I would

agree with Warnick's view of user-to-system interactivity. However, these charitable donations

show one way user-to-system interactivity can function as communication when that system

interaction has implications beyond the system itself. Unlike what is often regarded as user-to-

system interactivity, for example, interactions such as making the font size bigger or clicking

hyperlinks, this form of user-to-system interactivity sends a message to the system to make a

change that has implications beyond the confines of the system. Some may argue this makes this

a form of user-to-document interactivity, where users "contribute texts and information that

change[s] the content of the site text."[101] Some of the donation sites such as DonorsChoose.org

do keep a visual record of contributions, which lends some credence to the argument for the

donations to be labeled user-to-document interactivity. However, the representation of these

contributions is not necessarily tied to the act of charitable giving. While it is always an interaction with the system, it is does not always mark a change in the text.

Thus, user-to-system interactivity can function as communication depending on how the form of interactivity is used. Through their charitable donations, the audience members are able to interact with a system in a way that communicates to others their support for the Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear as well as the charitable organizations. This form of interactivity helps facilitate how money becomes rhetorical speech and was used throughout the process of developing the Rally by the audience to not only show the producers the audience's support for the idea but also help draw the attention of other media outlets to help promote the event. By supporting organizations such as the Trust for the National Mall, the donations also serve as an expression of judgment. The tie between the Rally and the organization may have been established by the producers, but the audience's choice to contribute to the Trust serves as recognition of the responsibility of American citizens to participate not only in the democratic process but also in the act of facilitating that participation. The Trust preserves the Washington Mall, enabling rallies such as these to occur. Here, the principle of interactivity allows for the audience to spread the message, "We feel it's important to preserve this historic site for future rallies and for future Americans to rally on!"[102]

These charitable donation links were found on the Rally to Restore Sanity and March to Keep Fear Alive web pages. However, the charity links were just one of many on the site that allowed for interactivity to occur that helped shape the message and delivery of the Rally. Both sites, which are nearly identical in layout, have links to the official accounts on social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter. Through these sites, the audience members were able to gather and share information about preparations for the Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear. Warnick

argues this type of information sharing between users through online interactivity can produce a beneficial rhetorical effect. Not only does this sharing of information promote the event within the audience, content posted on these sites "accompanied by encouragement to share it with others extends site-specific news and information to other online audiences."[103] Features such as the "Share" button on Facebook and the use of hashtags on Twitter enabled the audience to use these sites to promote the Rally and its message quickly and easily to those beyond the Stewart/Colbert universe's audience.

The webpages also provided important information on how to plan to attend the Rally. Although Arianna Huffington offered to bus people for free to the Rally, this was an option only benefitting those in the New York City area. Others from around the country were left without direct help to plan their trip, and the web pages provided a space called "Getting There" to help them find their way.[104] This section was an opportunity for the audience members to share information about flights, bus schedules, car pools, hotels, and other travel related issues with each other. As a rhetorical text, the Rally required a substantial audience to magnify support for the message, thus, encouraging as many people to come as possible was essential. Warnick argues that allowing the sort of user-to-user interactivity through the official site has a meaningful rhetorical effect on the audience by "deepening the users' sense of affiliation with and commitment to" the cause.[105] The audience members used this interactive feature to help each other find ways to the event safely, and, through the feature, develop the potential for offline peer-to-peer groups to emerge at the Rally where the reasonable discourse would likely occur.

Both sites also had interactive features where the audience could choose between images to contribute to the site's text.[106] The March site notes, "Nation, the forces of sanity are growing

stronger by the day. If we don't strike fear into their calm, civilly discoursing hearts before it's too late, America might finally become the land of reason and tolerance promised by our founding ideals. And no one wants that." To combat this trend, Colbert recommends that users go to SpookyorDooky.com, a website where users can "upload the scariest image you can think of…Our fear as a Nation depends on it."[107] Colbert announced on *The Colbert Report* that many users were submitting the costumes they planned to wear to the March and encouraged users to go to SpookyorDooky.com to choose if the costumes were scary enough to keep fear alive.[108] This site gave the audience members an opportunity to share their opinions through user-to-document interactivity by clicking on images to show support.

While SpookyorDooky.com provided a space for the audience to express judgment on the costumes and other scary images, the site itself was presented as an ancillary game for the audience members to have some fun while sharing their own contributions to the March. This does not eliminate any rhetorical value, as it had the benefit of contributing to the audience's sense of participation and commitment to the March. However, because it was becoming increasingly aware through the messages of the Stewart/Colbert universe that the combined Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear would emphasize the ideological purposes emphasized by Stewart, SpookyorDooky.com failed to significantly bolster this audience's participation in this message.

A similar site connected to the Rally to Restore Sanity website, however, was designed to place the audience in a direct position to judge other contributions to the overall message of the Rally. The Rally to Restore Sanity site notes, "Your rally sign is finished, which means you're finally ready for the best part of the creative process — subjecting your deepest convictions and most personal thoughts to a round of polite, constructive criticism!" SaneorNot.com was a website established by the Rally organizers to allow users to submit their signs and get feedback

from other audience members to "decide whether or not it's rally-worthy. If it's not, you may

have to take it down a notch. If it is, bring it to the rally and hold it high! Just, uh, not so high

that we can't see."[109]

Susana Polo, writing for the website Geek O System, supported the site, which used a

familiar online ranking system to weed out the sane from the problematic signs. Polo notes, "Of

course one large concern for the success (and the getting-taken-seriously-ness) of the rally is to

make sure that everybody doesn't look like nutjobs, and that a minimum of people are carrying

signs that don't follow the spirit of the event. Which can be tricky when you're organizing a

protest about staying *calm*."[110] Polo's comments highlight an important concern about the

problem of making judgments when extremist language and incommensurability is off the table.

Pushed to the extremes, it is rather easy to recognize language as demonizing an opposing

viewpoint. However, when discourse is brought down it is trickier to determine if the rhetoric is,

in fact, following the spirit of commensurability and rationality. As I have stressed throughout

this dissertation, such judgments about one's own rhetoric are helped through the type of

reflexivity often displayed in the Stewart/Colbert universe. SaneorNot.com allows for the

audience members to support that reflexivity with honest feedback from the audience that, given

the spirit of the event, would be calm and fair.

SaneorNot.com gave audience members an opportunity to practice and prepare for the

Rally by encouraging them not only to make reasoned judgments but also to give them the

opportunity to put themselves out there to be judged. It highlights another important purpose of

the Rally, to encourage the audience to become active in the process of democracy. Recall

America (The Book) was about democracy inaction on the part of the *audience* just as much as it

was about the *government* itself. Through interactive opportunities found on and linked from the

Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear websites, the audience was given the chance to prepare itself to take the bold step of becoming part of democracy in action.

The big show of this expression of support for reasoned judgment and discourse was the Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear itself. To help the audience members stay in touch with the producers as well as each other during the event, the Stewart/Colbert universe created an application (app) for iPhone and Android users. The app featured some information found on the Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear websites, such as news updates and FAQs, but also had features that allowed the audience to explore and participate in the rhetorical construction of the Rally. The app, for example, featured a link to Google Maps that allowed users to direct themselves toward the Rally itself. The app also allowed the audience members to "check-in" with the social media site FourSquare to let others know not only that they were at the Rally but where they were geographically, helping others physically there to find them.

The Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear app was one of many ways the Stewart/Colbert universe took advantage of interactivity through social media to bring the audience together quickly and have it help in the process of constructing the shared message. Zachary Sniderman of Mashable.com praised the Stewart/Colbert universe for this use of social media, noting their use of many different available interactive communication options like Facebook, Twitter, FourSquare, and texting to keep the audience constantly in the loop.[111] Writing about political campaigns, Warnick argues that websites that provided spaces for the audience to contribute through interactive means aided in the rhetorical constructed of the audience because audiences felt a greater sense of connection to the campaign.[112] The use of social media in the preparation and execution of the Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear took this a step further by not only allowing the audience members to interact with the producers but also by responding to and

using those audience contributions to shape the overall message. Sniderman argues, "As a way of engaging with their audience, earning new followers and maximizing the reach of social media, the Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear might just be setting the model."[113]

The model set up by the Stewart/Colbert universe not only allowed the audience to contribute to the Rally, but also expand the model as well as the Rally further. Stewart acknowledged from the beginning that the audience may not be able to go to the Rally because of their lives, and the producers' even worked with Comedy Central to broadcast the Rally on television. The audience took it upon itself to use the model of the Rally producers to engage with social media and recreate the Rally experience on local level. The site Meetup.com, for example, shows that, around the globe, 1,142 alternative Rally sites were established for over 6,000 participants.[114] While it may not be a model of all successful political action, the producers' use of social media to make the Rally a truly democratic event suggests it is a rhetorically powerful option for subscribers of the logic of ironic appropriation.

A final interactive tool on the app was a camera option that allowed users to take pictures at the Rally and post it to the Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear's server. Other users were then able to view the pictures, and, at times throughout the Rally, Stewart showed some of these pictures on large screens. This feature turned the app into a kind of social media itself, allowing the audience's perspective and contributions to be included in the construction of the message.

Many of the pictures taken were of the costumes people wore, often intertextual references to political and popular culture figures, and of the signs people brought to the Rally. The signs had been from the initial announcement of the Rally to Restore Sanity the marker of audience participation in the construction and spreading of the Rally's message. While SaneorNot.com gave many audience members the opportunity to share ideas and vet others to

determine if they were appropriate, the Rally was the home of thousands of signs spreading the ideological message of the Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear.[115] This, of course, does not mean that problematic signs did not exist that ran counter to the overall message of commensurability and reasoned discourse. Many signs, for example, directly attacked the Tea Party, a growing political movement driven by the oftentimes conflicting values of social conservatism and fiscal government responsibility. Most of these signs were against Tea Party representatives like Glenn Beck, Sarah Palin, and Christine O'Donnell. One sign featured an image of O'Donnell with the word "TEATARD" written underneath it, a sign that not only problematically used the term retard as a pejorative but also did so to ridicule O'Donnell in a way that made her someone to dismiss instead of someone with which to converse. Similar attacks were made on Beck, including a number of signs featuring Beck crying, one that read "Don't Let Glenn Beck Teabag our Children!," and another that read "Palin/Beck 2012: How did the Mayans know??" This final sign's intertextual reference to the popular belief that the Mayans predicted the world would end in the year 2012 highlights the sort of rhetoric the Rally was intended to counter.[116]

While these signs were problematic because they intended to heighten levels of fear, many audience members used the ironic spirit of Colbert's character to suggest fear while still promoting the message of reasoned discourse. One sign featuring the image of General Zod from *Superman* and the word KNEEL beneath his image is a play on the famous Barack Obama HOPE image. Although the Zod sign mimics the Obama image, it is also a nod to all of the re-appropriations of the image which are often used to suggest other messages like Obama is Hitler. Through comparing the equation of Obama to Hitler with a message that similarly strikes fear, the image of the Superman villain, the audience member uses the tone of fear to produce a parodic commentary that points out the problems of such comparisons. Not all fear-based

messages were so intertextual. One, for example, used the Hitler image by placing a moustache

on a cat. Others were hardly intertextual at all, such as the one that read "My Problems Can't

Possibly Be My Fault." The fear signs, however intertextual, used their ironic tone to allow these

audience members to interact with everyone else in a way that would be understood as

supportive of the Rally's overall message.

Although there were plenty of fear-based signs at the Rally, the majority of the signs that

were posted to the Rally to Restore Sanity website directly endorsed Stewart's call for reasonable

discourse. Many signs were simply non-combative in nature, such as ones that read "Hi," "So No

to Hate, Say Yes to Pancakes," or another that read "Be Excellent to Each Other," an intertextual

reference to the movie *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure*. Other's served to reinforce the call

toward discourse, such as one that read "You got a problem with me? You got a PROBLEM with

me? Okay, lets grab some coffee and talk about it…" or two friends that held signs near each

other that read "My Friend is a Democrat" and "My Friend is a Republican," respectively. Many

used the signs as an opportunity to share examples of reasoned discourse. For example, there

were ones that focused on how people should talk to each other to produce reasoned discourse.

Some signs focused on how people communicate, such as the one that read "Caps Lock is Not

Persuasive," while others focused on way people use information for rhetorical purposes such as

the sign that read "Facts are not determined by how many people believe them. Truth is not

determined by how loudly it is shouted." Others used the signs to provide reasoned critiques of

the current political discourse, such as signs that read "America is diverse. Find middle ground,"

"Two Things Americans Hate: 1 – Paying Taxes 2 – Giving up things our taxes pay for," and "Bi

(Partisan) Curious." Several signs appropriated the Hitler image to critique its own appropriation,

such as one sign that featured pictures of Obama, Beck, and Hitler that read "Not Hitler" next to

the former two and "Hitler" next to the latter or another sign that showed support for the group "Americans for the Responsible use of Hitler Comparisons." While these show a number of different strategies for using the sign as a rhetorical tool, as an interactive component of the Rally they provided a means for the active artistic judgment encouraged by the logic of ironic appropriation and called for by the producers of the Stewart/Colbert universe.

During the Rally itself, Stewart served as the keynote speaker and followed Carter's advice, pointing his attention toward the way the media contributes to the problem of elevated discourse. Following the Rally, many in the media criticized the Stewart/Colbert universe for what had been done or not done. David Carr of the *New York Times*, for example, argued Stewart and company was simply shifting the blame to an easy target instead of focusing on real issues.[117] A more substantial criticism came from *Real Time* host Bill Maher, who criticized the event for not being about anything in particular, resulting in the Rally insinuating that both the extreme right and the extreme left sides of politics were equally responsible for the imbalance of sanity in discourse. Maher argued after the Rally, "It seems to me that if you truly wanted to come down on the side of restoring sanity and reason, you'd side with the sane and the reasonable, and not try to pretend the insanity is equally distributed in both parties." Maher continued, suggesting that, by not taking a stand, the Rally participated in the belief that everything must be balanced and contributed to a world where people believe "unions are just as strong as corporations and reverse racism is just as bad as racism."[118] Maher was not alone in his criticism. Others like Medea Benjamin, co-founder of the women's activist group CODEPINK, wrote for the *Huffington Post*, "[I]t's too bad that Jon Stewart, the liberal comedian, is putting anti-war activists, tea partiers and black bloc anarchists in the same bag. And it's sad that he's telling his audience—many of whom are young progressive thinkers—that activism is crazy."[119]

MSNBC commentator Keith Olbermann agreed with the principle of the Rally, going as far as to temporarily suspend his "Worst Person in the Word" segment out of respect for what the Stewart/Colbert universe wanted to accomplish, but argued that he and his network were not the moral equivalent of Fox News and that "sticking up for the powerless is not the moral equivalent of sticking up for the powerful." On Olbermann's program, political analyst Jonathan Alter continued the critique, arguing this equivalency "confuses reason and fact with emotion and opinion."[120]

These criticisms have merit. By building this equivalency into the message of the Rally in an attempt to maintain the appearance of the Rally being apolitical and non-partisan, the Rally reinforced the notion that both the left and right side of politic discourse is equally extreme. I have argued throughout this dissertation the Stewart/Colbert universe, through the ideological ties between a reduction of incommensurability and ironic appropriation, pushes for more moderate political discourse in the hopes of a more functional democracy. As journalist Jeff Jarvis and Rally supporter put it, the Rally was an opportunity to make something "[n]ot Democratic or Democrat—democratic."[121] In doing so, however, the Rally was likely *too* humble in its rhetoric. The desire of Burke is for critics to see the object of that criticism as mistaken not villainous.[122] But the means to achieve this should not come by suggesting the critic is equally villainous as what is being critiqued. These criticisms of the Rally urge a reflection of how rhetorical humility should be accomplished and the problems that arise when something that is fundamentally political has its political role stripped out of the discourse. As Jarvis put it, the Rally did use the principle of interactivity well to create a moment of democratic participation and stir real conversation between opposing political perspectives, but when those perspectives

are positioned as equally balanced when, in reality, they are not, it seems doubtful movement in political action will result.[123]

The principle of interactivity played an essential role in the Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear from the inception of the idea to the Rally itself. The use of various interactive options supplied by the Stewart/Colbert universe allowed the audience to not only feel a greater sense of belonging to the universe but also provided it the opportunity to follow through with the call for democratic action that has been an essential component of the Stewart/Colbert universe's rhetoric. Moreover, the audience was able to take it upon itself to use the principle of interactivity to help get support for the Rally to started and create alternative options for supporters who could not attend the Washington, D.C. rally. By utilizing the principle of interactivity, the Stewart/Colbert universe was able produce in under two months a rhetorical message about discourse and judgment that not only spoke to a global audience, but made them part of the rhetoric as well.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I explored the third principle of ironic appropriation: interactivity. As a principle, interactivity encourages producers and audience members to work together in order to share and create messages. It serves rhetorically to constitute the audience by allowing the producers of rhetorical messages to hail the audience and allows those audience members to hail the attention of the producers as well. It also provides opportunities that call for action on the part of the audience. It cannot be interactive without some degree of action, and, as I have argued, that action can run the gamut from creating a sense of belonging to leading toward political activism. In the process, this action can position the audience to become part of the democratic process and allow the audience to spread for itself the expectation of

commensurability in discourse through active artistic judgment. The Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear showed that utilizing a variety of the interactive tools available in the twenty-first century can produce a rhetorically powerful message about politics and society in a short of amount of time.

The Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear marks a moment that rhetorically signified the link between Stewart and Colbert, helping create the Stewart/Colbert universe. It also provides one example of all three principles of the logic of ironic appropriation coming together to show how rhetoric produced through this logic can be used to constitute an audience and put it into action. While I have focused on the interactive nature of the Rally signs, for example, it is worth noting here that the spirits of irony and intertextuality were also in full swing. Many of the signs mentioned here drew attention to common political symbols and re-appropriated them to influence the meaning-making process. One sign, for example, read "1-31-07 Never Forget," a reference to common September 11, 2001 rhetoric, but this time featured the character Ignignokt from the television show *Aqua Teen Hunger Force*. That same image had been used in a viral marketing campaign in early 2007, but, instead of selling the show, it inspired fears of a bomb threat in the Boston area.[124] The double-coded irony produced through the intertextual references to *Aqua Teen Hunger Force*, September 11th and the rhetoric that accompanies it, and the bomb scare itself speaks volumes in a single image that is exemplary of the logic of ironic appropriation. This image presented as a sign at the Rally combines the three principles of the logic of ironic appropriation to produce a constitutive rhetorical message that contributes to the message of judgment against heightened levels of discourse and the push toward fear that comes from it. Through interactivity at the Rally, the creator of this sign was able to make a significant social critique in a simple message. Employing the combined principles of the logic of ironic

appropriation, this participant in the audience highlighted not only the way in which 9/11

rhetoric is employed to strike fear when fear is unnecessary but also direct attention to the way in

which such rhetorical actions can have serious consequences, in this case causing panic in the

city of Boston over a cartoon advertisement.

In the Conclusion of this dissertation, I look at another part of the Stewart/Colbert

universe that combines the three principles of the logic of ironic appropriation: Colbert Super

PAC. While Stewart may have denied to President Carter he was entering into the world of

politics with the Rally to Restore Sanity, Colbert Super PAC is undeniably a political venture,

one that shows just how influential the use of the logic of ironic appropriation can be in

critiquing and creating political and social action and getting people to participate in the

construction of that action.

The principle of interactivity, more so than either irony or intertextuality, brings the

audience into the Stewart/Colbert universe. Interactivity provides the opportunity for the

audience to construct the rhetoric of socialization that is a significant characteristic of

constitutive rhetoric. Moreover, interactivity provides modes of participation that allows for both

the type of active engaged citizenship Asen proposes and the active artistic judgment

Heidlebaugh sees as necessary to overcoming the normalization of incommensurability in

democracy.[125] In the Conclusion, I address the concern that the Stewart/Colbert universe

produces a cynical audience that would rather complain about democracy than participate in it.

However, as I argue, this is not the case because the Stewart/Colbert universe constitutes an

audience that desires to be active in varying modes of democratic participation. While both irony

and intertextuality provide opportunities for this engagement and prepare audience members for

it, what makes interactivity a necessary principle of the logic of ironic appropriation is the way

the principle can be manipulated to facilitate that engagement with publics and policy.

Notes

[1] The website remains titled as the Rally to Restore Sanity. However, as the rally progressed in planning and merged with Colbert's March to Keep Fear Alive, the content merged to become the Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear. "Rally to Restore Sanity," *Rally to Restore Sanity*, http://www.rallytorestoresanity.com/.

[2] Amy Gardner, Krissah Thompson, and Philip Rucker, "Beck, Palin tell thousands to 'restore America,'" The *Washington Post*, August 29, 2010, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/08/28/AR2010082801106.html.

[3] Gardner, Thompson, and Rucker, "Beck, Palin," ¶ 10; and The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "I Have a Scheme," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 10:19, August 26, 2010, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/thu-august-26-2010/i-have-a-scheme.

[4] The Colbert Report, "Geese Witherspoon," *The Colbert Report* video, 7:32, September 7, 2010, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/352238/september-07-2010/geese-witherspoon; and "What is Restoring Truthiness?" *ColbertRally*, http://colbertrally.com/what-is-restoring-truthiness.

[5] Sheizaf Rafaeli, "Interactivity: From New Media to Communication," in *Advancing Communication Science: Merging Mass and Interpersonal Processes*, eds. R. P. Hawkins, J. M. Wiemann, and S. Pingree, 110-134. (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1988).

[6] Sally J. McMillan, "Exploring Models of Interactivity from Multiple Research Traditions: Users, Documents and Systems," in *The Handbook of New Media*, eds. Leah A. Lievrouw & Sonia Livingston, 163-182 (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002).

[7] Barbara Warnick, *Rhetoric Online: Persuasion and Politics on the World Wide Web* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), 88.

[8] Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," in *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, 2nd ed., eds. Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan,693-702. (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), 699.

[9] Maurice Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the Peuple Québécois," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73 (May 1987): 138.

[10] The Colbert Report, "Stop Sending Live Animals," *The Colbert Report* video, 5:15, September 13, 2010, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/358980/september-13-2010/stop-sending-live-animals.

[11] This is, of course, possible to occur, but the likelihood of it occurring is slim and if it was done would likely be done with the same sort of intertextual ironic commentary directed back at the Stewart/Colbert universe that the universe projects onto that which it appropriates.

[12] "Ticket Reservations," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*, http://www.thedailyshow.com/tickets, ¶ 3.

[13] Victor W. Pickard, "Assessing the Radical Democracy of Indymedia: Discursive, Technical, and Institutional Constructions," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 23 (March 2006): 32, 33.

[14] Despite the 1-3 business day promise on both *The Colbert Report* and *The Daily Show* Forum pages, it took 5-12 business days to get access to all of the content. "Important Forum Instructions," *Colbert Nation*, http://forums.colbertnation.com/.

[15] Trolling is defined on the page as posting "controversial, inflammatory, irrelevant or off-topic messages in an online community, such as an online discussion forum or chat room, with the intention of provoking other users into an emotional response or to generally disrupt normal on-

topic discussion." "The Colbert Nation Forum Guidelines," *Colbert Nation*,

http://www.colbertnation.com/forum-guidelines/.

[16] Both *The Daily Show* and the *Colbert Nation* Forums contain Flame subsections. These

sections are often filled with intentional nonsense and anger, and even include user-driven

contests as to who can flame the best.

[17] Throughout this chapter I will quote from several user posts. All grammatical errors are found

in the original posts. "skin and bones Chad," "Where friendliness goes to die!" *Colbert Nation*

Forum, January 31, 2012, http://forums.colbertnation.com/?page=ThreadView&thread

_id=29692.

[18] Lost™, "Where friendliness goes to die!" *Colbert Nation Forum*, January 31, 2012,

http://forums.colbertnation.com/?page=ThreadView&thread_id=29692, post 6.

[19] The Forums are clearly associated with the respective programs. However, it is not made clear

on the Forums how much or how little the actual producers look at the Forums for ideas. "The

Daily Show Forum," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*, http://forums.thedailyshow.com/.

[20] The Colbert Report, "Geese Witherspoon."

[21] The Colbert Report, "Stop Sending Live Animals."

[22] "Latest News," *ColbertRally*, http://colbertrally.com/latest-news.

[23] "Awesome Fan Sites We Adore," *Fake News Junkies*, http://fakenewsjunkies.com/awesome-

fan-sites-adore/.

[24] "No Fact Zone: News Site for Fans of Stephen Colbert," *No Fact Zone*,

http://www.nofactzone.net/.

[25] Truthiness, a term coined by Colbert in 2005, was selected by Merriam-Webster dictionary as

the Word of the Year in 2006. See "Word of the Year 2006," *Merriam-Webster*,

http://www.merriam-webster.com/info/06words.htm. See also "Welcome to Wikiality!"

Wikiality, http://wikiality.wikia.com/Main_Page.

[26] Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric," 141.

[27] Christine Harold, *OurSpace: Resisting the Corporate Control of Culture* (Minneapolis, MN:

The University of Minnesota Press, 2007), xviii.

[28] Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric," 141.

[29] Warnick, *Rhetoric Online*, 70.

[30] Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (Berkeley, CA: The University of California Press,

1969), 28.

[31] Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric," 143.

[32] *Fox News Sunday with Chris Wallace*, Fox News (June 20, 2011).

[33] Robert Asen, "A Discourse Theory of Citizenship," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 90 (May

2004): 198.

[34] Nola J. Heidlebaugh, *Judgment, Rhetoric, and the Problem of Incommensurability* (Columbia,

SC: The University of South Carolina Press, 2001).

[35] "*The Daily Show* merchandise," *Shop.ComedyCentral*, http://shop.comedycentral.com/

category/41229863681/1/The-Daily-Show.htm.

[36] To see just how much O'Reilly merchandise exists, see http://www.billoreilly.com/store.

[37] Warnick, *Rhetoric Online*, 88.

[38] Asen, "A Discourse Theory of Citizenship," 206-207.

[39] The Colbert Report, "Wrist Watch – Fighting Back," *The Colbert Report* video, 4:48, August

8, 2007, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/91153/august-08-2007/wrist-

watch---fighting-back/.

[40] "Customer Reviews. The Colbert Report WRISTSTRONG Bracelet," *Amazon*, http://www.amazon.com/The-Colbert-Report-WRISTSTRONG-Bracelet/product-reviews/B0038QUYJ0/ref=cm_cr_pr_btm_link_1?ie=UTF8&showViewpoints=0.

[41] The Colbert Report, "WristStrong Bracelets," *The Colbert Report* video, 0:44, August 20, 2007, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/91799/august-20-2007/wriststrong-bracelets.

[42] "Customer Reviews. The Colbert Report WRISTSTRONG Bracelet." Amazon.

[43] The Colbert Report, "Crisis in the Middle Everywhere – Japan & Libya," *The Colbert Report* video, 5:33, March 21, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/378276/march-21-2011/crisis-in-the-middle-everywhere---japan---libya; The Colbert Report, "Californians Respond to Japanese Disaster," *The Colbert Report* video, 2:42, March 22, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/378439/march-22-2011/californians-respond-to-japanese-disaster; The Colbert Report, "The Word—Over-Reactor," *The Colbert Report* video, 5:26, March 23, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/378624/march-23-2011/the-word---over-reactor; and The Colbert Report, "Bears & Balls – Misery Edition," *The Colbert Report* video, 5:38, March 24, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/378802/march-24-2011/bears---balls---misery-edition.

[44] Colbert has kept Americone Dream in the minds of his audience through several segments in order to raise the charitable donations. The flavor remains a strong seller for Ben & Jerry's. See The Colbert Report, "Ben and Jerry – Introducing Americone Dream," *The Colbert Report* video, 6:00, March 5, 2007, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/83216/march-05-2007/ben-and-jerry---introducing-americone-dream; and "Stephen

Colbert Charity Ice Cream at Ben & Jerry's Shops NOW thru Feb. 2012," *Yellow Ribbon Fund*, August 11, 2011, http://www.yellowribbonfund.org/?p=2514.

[45] Howard Berkes, "U.S. Speedskating Finds Savior in Stephen Colbert," *National Public Radio*, January 19,2010, http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=122731145.

[46] The Colbert Report, "Raging Art-On – Art 3," *The Colbert Report* video, 7:38, March 23, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/378623/march-23-2011/raging-art-on---art-3.

[47] Rebecca Black's *Friday* was a then popular internet video that featured a 13 year-old Black singing a song about her Fridays. *Late Night with Jimmy Fallon*, NBC, March 28, 2011.

[48] The Colbert Report, "Jimmy Fallon Promises a Performance by Stephen," *The Colbert Report* video, 3:44, March 29, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/379251/march-29-2011/jimmy-fallon-promises-a-performance-by-stephen.

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[50] "The Jimmy Fallon/Stephen Colbert Project," *DonorsChoose*, http://www.donorschoose.org/donors/viewChallenge.html?id=157284.

[51] Asen, "A Discourse Theory of Citizenship," 206-207.

[52] Megan Friedman, "Reddit Campaign for Colbert Rally Breaks Donation Record," *Time*, September 14, 2010, http://newsfeed.time.com/2010/09/14/reddit-campaign-for-colbert-rally-breaks-charity-records/#comment-14227.

[53] Asen, "A Discourse Theory of Citizenship," 206-207.

[54] See Jo Piazza, "Herman Cain Says He's in on Stephen Colbert's S.C. Primary Prank, Tells Detractors to 'Lighten Up,'" *Fox News*, January 18, 2012, http://www.foxnews.com/entertainment/2012/01/18/herman-cain-says-hes-in-on-stephen-colberts-sc-primary-prank-tells-detractors/; "Stephen Colbert's PAC's First Campaign Ad: Mitt Romney is a Serial Killer," *The Art of the Prank*, http://artoftheprank.com/2012/01/15/stephen-colberts-pacs-first-campaign-ad-mitt-romney-is-a-serial-killer/; and Jason Stanford, "Could Colbert's Prank Reform Politics?" *Politico*, http://jasonstanford.org/2012/01/politico-could-colberts-prank-reform-politics/.

[55] Harold, *OurSpace*, 78.

[56] Harold, *OurSpace*, 79-81.

[57] Harold, *OurSpace*, xxvi.

[58] Harold, *OurSpace*, 106.

[59] Amber Day, *Satire and Dissent: Interventions in Contemporary Political Debate* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2011), 174.

[60] Kembrew McLeod, "Everything is Connected," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 96 (November 2010): 424.

[61] Kembrew McLoed, "My Freedom of Expression® Trademark," Kembrew.com, http://kembrew.com/prank/my-trademark-of-freedom-of-expression/.

[62] Kembrew McLeod, "Everything is Connected," 424.

[63] Stephen Colbert, et al., eds., *I Am America (And So Can You!)* (New York: Grand Central Publishing, 2007), 215.

[64] "The Stephen T. Colbert Award Sticker," GoodReads.com, http://www.goodreads.com/topic/show/64611-the-stephen-t-colbert-award-sticker.

[65] "Customer Reviews: I Am America (And So Can You!)," *Amazon*,

http://www.amazon.com/Am-America-And-Can-You/product-reviews/0446582182/

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ding.

[66] "How do I submit my book to get the Stephen T. Colbert award for literary excellence,"

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2008, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/166020/april-16-2008/national-

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[68] Aly Semigran, "Jon Stewart and 'The Daily Show' Twitter prank Jon Huntsman, who, for the

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2011/11/30/jon-stewart-and-the-daily-show-mad-men-twitter-prank-jon-huntsman/.

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[70] "The Colbert Report, Space Module: Colbert – Scientiology's New Galactic Overlord," *The

Colbert Report* video, 3:53, March 3, 2009, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-

videos/220648/march-04-2009/space-module--colbert---scientology-s-new-galactic-overlord.

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video, 6:46, March 10, 2009, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-

videos/221174/march-10-2009/space-module--colbert---william-gerstenmaier.

[72] The Colbert Report, "Space Module: Colbert – Democracy in Orbit," *The Colbert Report* video, 3:18, March 30, 2009, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/223137/march-30-2009/space-module--colbert---democracy-in-orbit.

[73] The Colbert Report, "Space Module: Colbert – Democracy in Orbit."

[74] "NASA Appropriator Says: Stephen Colbert is Out of this World," *Congressman Chaka Fattah Congressional Site*, March 26, 2009, http://fattah.house.gov/index.cfm?sectionid =34&parentid=247&sectiontree=&itemid=394.

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[76] The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Rally to Restore Sanity Announcement," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 11:11, September 16, 2010, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/thu-september-16-2010/rally-to-restore-sanity.

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[88] The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear Announcement."

[89] The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "BBQ & A," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 5:11, September 30, 2010, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/thu-september-30-2010/bbq---a.

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[92] The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Rally to Restore Sanity Location," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 2:41, October 6, 2010, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/wed-october-6-2010/rally-to-restore-sanity-location.

[93] The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Rally Dos and Don'ts."

[94] Like many of the webpages associated with the Rally, SpookyorDooky.com is now a dead link. On the page, users would be presented with two images such as Lady Gaga and George W. Bush and vote on which one was scarier. The Colbert Report, "Terror a New One," *The Colbert Report* video, 5:35, September, 28, 2010, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/360291/september-28-2010/terror-a-new-one.

[95] See The Colbert Report, "March to Keep Fear Alive Media Coverage."

[96] Zak Kinnaird, "Stewart and Colbert Gathering May Be Defining Moment of Generation," *The Daily Athenaeum*, September 19, 2010, http://www.thedaonline.com/opinion/stewart-and-colbert-gathering-may-be-defining-moment-of-generation-1.1606066#.T4SYE9UnPYg, ¶ 13.

[97] Kinnaird, "Stewart and Colbert," ¶ 10.

[98] The Colbert Report, "Langur Monkey Security," *The Colbert Report* video, 2:45, October 5, 2010, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/361086/october-05-2010/langur-monkey-security.

[99] The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Rally to Restore Sanity Location."

[100] Warnick, *Rhetoric Online*, 75.

[101] Warnick, *Rhetoric Online*, 76.

[102] Here again I wish to stress that charitable donations are but one way of creative engagement and consumerism is not necessarily a significant mode of engagement in all or even most instances. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, it is impossible to separate consumer citizenship from common consumerism. Rhetorically, it remains vital to contextualize the performance of citizenship through consumerism. While I argue such consumer citizenship can and does exist, I am also wary of letting that argument follow the slippery slope to suggest all consumerism is citizenship. "Rally to Restore Sanity – FAQ," *Rally to Restore Sanity*, http://www.rallytorestoresanity.com/faq/, ¶ 1.

[103] Warnick, *Rhetoric Online*, 88.

[104] As of this writing, the "Getting There" sections for both sites link back to the FAQ site.

[105] Warnick's original quote was in specific reference to political campaigns use of online user-to-user and user-to-document interactivity. Warnick, *Rhetoric Online*, 89.

[106] The two sites discussed below, SpookyorDooky.com and SaneorNot.com, have both been taken down as of this writing.

[107] "Show Us What You're Afraid Of," *Keep Fear Alive*, October 19, 2010, www.keepfearalive.com/news/.

[108] The Colbert Report, "Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear Chinatown Bus Tickets," *The Colbert Report* video, 3:56, October 14, 2010, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/362221/october-14-2010/rally-to-restore-sanity-and-or-fear-chinatown-bus-tickets.

[109] "Upload Your Rally Signs and Vote for Your Favorites," *Rally to Restore Sanity*, October 19, 2010, http://www.rallytorestoresanity.com/news/.

[110] Susana Polo, "Sane or Not: The Site for Sanity Rally Signs," *Geek O System*, October 15, 2010, http://www.geekosystem.com/restore-sanity-rally-signs/.

[111] Zachary Sniderman, "How the 'Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear' Nailed Social Media," *Mashable*, October 27, 2010, http://mashable.com/2010/10/27/stewart-colbert-rally-social-media.

[112] Warnick, *Rhetoric Online*, 89.

[113] Sniderman, "Nailed Social Media," ¶ 14.

[114] "About Rally4Sanity and March4Fear Meetups Everywhere," *Meetup*, http://www.meetup.com/rally4sanityandmarch4fear/.

[115] All images for signs can be found on the Rally to Restore Sanity website at http://www.rallytorestoresanity.com/photos/ or through the link on the Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear app.

[116] Despite these signs appearing to be in the minority, their presence was enough to impact the way the object of criticism could spin the Rally's message. Conservative blogger Kathleen McKinley took those signs as an opportunity to argue that the left was deceptive about their intentions, and that it was the conservatives that truly wanted to restore sanity. See Kathleen McKinley, "The Rally to Restore Sanity Didn't Restore Civility," *Houston Chronicle*, October

31, 2010, http://blog.chron.com/texassparkle/2010/10/the-rally-to-restore-sanity-didnt-restore-civility/.

[117] David Carr, "Rally to Shift the Blame," The *New York Times*, October 31, 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/01/business/media/01carr.html?_r=1.

[118] *Real Time with Bill Maher*, HBO (November 5, 2010).

[119] Medea Benjamin, "Dear Jon, Sane People Protest Crazy Wars," *The Huffington Post*, October 27, 2010, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/medea-benjamin/dear-jon-sane-people-prot_b_774638.html.

[120] *Countdown with Keith Olbermann*, MSNBC (November 1, 2010).

[121] Jeff Jarvis, "To Rally Perchance to Dream," *BuzzMachine*, http://www.buzzmachine.com/2010/10/30/to-rally-perchance-to-dream/.

[122] Kenneth Burke, *Attitudes Toward History*, 3rd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

[123] As I will argue, such unnecessary equivalency all but disappears in the Colbert Super PAC but in that case no effort was made to suggest the Super PAC was anything but political.

[124] "Many young Bostonians think city overacted," *MSNBC*, February 2, 2007, http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/16931200/#.T4cFVtUnPYg.

[125] Asen, "A Discourse Theory of Citizenship;" Heidlebaugh, *Judgment*.

CONCLUSION.

IRONIC APPROPRATION & THE CONSTITUTED AUDIENCE

"I heard that there were laws to prevent you from doing things with campaign finance money until I went to do it. And then I found out there kind of aren't."

– Stephen Colbert on the *Today* Show[1]

In 2011, the Stewart/Colbert universe embarked on its most political venture yet: Americans for a Better Tomorrow, Tomorrow, better known as Colbert Super PAC (Political Action Committee). Colbert Super PAC is a legally recognized political organization created by Colbert and developed throughout 2011 and 2012. Although driven heavily by Colbert and his production team, all members of the Stewart/Colbert universe, including the audience, participated in this evolving project that, as the quotation above suggests, revealed flaws in the American campaign financing rules that have the potential to negatively influence the democratic process in America. The Super PAC has been labeled by some as an elaborate prank on American democracy, with critics not always seeing the humor in the actions of the Stewart/Colbert universe.[2] Like some of the pranks discussed in Chapter III, Colbert Super PAC has had moments of weakness that failed to lead to social criticism and at times even reinforced the problematic nature of campaign finance rules. However, the majority of the time the rhetorical message of Colbert Super PAC has been produced through the logic of ironic appropriation, allowing the Super PAC prank to exist more like the International Space Station prank, one that begins with ideological convictions but remains open enough in interpretation to allow it to evolve as necessary. The result is a prank that inspires the questioning of campaign finance rules through irony and intertextuality and brings the audience into formation of the rhetorical message to make judgments about what is best for American democracy.

Black calls rhetoric "a vector of influence," and I have argued throughout this dissertation that, as a vector, the influence of constitutive rhetoric must point the audience in a direction toward such judgments as the ones encouraged by Colbert Super PAC.[3] Right-leaning constitutive rhetoric uses the logic of myth to position the audience toward judgment that supports the predetermined endpoint of the myth.[4] According to Barthes, myth is by its very nature right-leaning because it presents itself as depoliticized speech that reinforces a currently accepted worldview. Barthes argues, "The oppressor conserves [the world as it is], his (sic) language is plenary, intransitive, gestural, theatrical; it is Myth."[5] Thus, when a popular myth such as American exceptionalism circulates, anything that challenges it is positioned as political and an assault on what is viewed by many as the normal way of seeing the world. Right-leaning constitutive rhetoric can present the appearance of not being political by presenting itself as part of a normal myth about the way citizens should view society.

Barthes argues left-leaning discourse struggles to use myth as a means to identify with an audience because left-leaning discourse often sides with the oppressed, eliminating the ability to tap into the shared narratives of the dominate powers through which myth often circulates.[6] Michael McGee argues it is through the circulation of these mythic stories that the audience gets called into being.[7] Audiences identify with these narratives, and it is this identification, Charland argues, that encourages audiences to be hailed by a rhetorical message. As these rhetorical messages spread, they combine to constitute a large audience filled with members who share an understanding of who they are and what they should do to reinforce the message.[8] McGee reminds us that often the only thing that connects these audiences is the shared belief in the myth, so when that is gone, as Barthes argues it is for left-leaning audiences, there is little to constitute an audience, let alone keep it together.[9]

Despite this limitation of myth for left-leaning rhetoric, Barthes argues that something must exist that can build and guide an audience besides myth. He argues, "There is therefore one language which is not mythical, it is the language of man (*sic*) as a producer; wherever man (*sic*) speaks in order to transform reality and no longer to preserve it as an image."[10] Until now, scholars of constitutive rhetoric have focused on myth as the primary force that builds audiences and places them into action. Barthes' words, however, suggests that something besides myth must exist that better serves left-leaning rhetorical messages. This dissertation has attempted to explore one possible alternative to the logic of myth. Using the Stewart/Colbert universe, which has a proven track record of a devoted audience and a left-leaning message, I have argued for ironic appropriation as an alternative constitutive logic that better suits the purposes of transforming reality.[11]

Analyzing the Stewart/Colbert universe revealed three common principles of the rhetorical message: irony, intertextuality, and interactivity. Here, irony has been defined as a rhetorical trope used to suggest an alternative to a literal interpretation for the purposes of judgment through dialectical thinking. This irony, seen primarily through the satire of Stewart and the extended parody of Colbert, provides for the audience double-coded texts that, when combined, creates an audience that relies upon the Stewart/Colbert universe to provide that audience with the equipment for living necessary to make judgments about America politics and society. The second principle, intertextuality, relies on the use of repetition and revision of previously existing texts to combine rhetorical messages and ideologies in order to shape the meaning-making process. Finally, the principle of interactivity permits the sharing and construction of meaning-making through exchanges between producers, texts and the audience. Combined through the logic of ironic appropriation, these three principles allow for the

construction of constitutive rhetorical messages that support the values of constant questioning and commensurability in political discussion.

Throughout this dissertation, I have attempted to keep the principles of the logic of ironic appropriation separate in my criticism to highlight how each principle contributes in its own way to the process of rhetorical constitution. In reality, however, the principles work together more often than not. Recall the "Farewell to Postage" postage stamp that opened this dissertation, which combined all three principles to position the audience to make a judgment about the value of the postal service to American society or the way the Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear used various combinations of the principles to help the audience take a stand against heightened rhetoric in discourse and the normalization of incommensurability. In serving as equipment for living, the Stewart/Colbert universe uses irony and intertextuality to consistently encourage interactivity between the audience, the producers, and the world around them all. The examples provided through the dissertation reinforce the idea that these principles combine as a logic of rhetorical constitution that work together to call an audience into being and position it toward judgment.

I concluded the last chapter on interactivity with a critical analysis of the Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear, arguing the Rally provided an opportunity for the audience to directly participate in democracy in a way that intentionally tried to influence the process of discussion in America. In the end, I pointed to a particular Rally sign, the Ignignokt "Never Forget" poster, to emphasize that the Rally not only encouraged interactivity, but also provided an opportunity for the audience to participate in the construction of a rhetorical message that used the principles of irony and intertextuality to provide a relevant criticism of discourse in contemporary politics. Although Stewart denied the Rally was an entrance into politics, there is little doubt it walked the

edge of political action as its purpose was to change how people discussed political issues in society. While the Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear may not have been explicitly political, the Stewart/Colbert universe took a clear step into politics with the formation of Colbert Super PAC. In this concluding chapter, I use Colbert Super PAC as an exemplar of rhetoric produced through the logic of ironic appropriation. Highlighting the way the Super PAC uses the three principles of ironic appropriation in various combinations, I argue the Super PAC provides an opportunity for the producers and audience to work together to produce a rhetorical message that not only adds to the process of rhetorical constitution and socialization, but also contributes to discourse and meaning-making in a way that may have significant implications on American democracy.

Ironic Appropriation and Critique Through Democratic Participation

Political Action Committees have long been a part of the American political system. PACs are organizations that raise and spend funds that are used to influence political elections, including individual contests and ballot measures. As the quotation at the beginning of this chapter suggests, it is often assumed that campaign financing has laws set in place to protect American democracy from becoming a plutocracy. However, as the development of Colbert Super PAC reveals, such regulations are more often illusions of safeguards than real protection of democracy.

In late March of 2011, Colbert, inspired by a slick campaign ad for then-Presidential candidate Tim Pawlenty, created his own ad urging viewers to go to ColbertPAC.com. Colbert reported that over 25,000 people visited the site without knowing what it was about, something Colbert knew was true because he had no idea what a PAC was himself.[12] Colbert invited his lawyer and former Chairman of the Federal Elections Commission (FEC), Trevor Potter, to tell Colbert what he could do with a PAC. Potter, already prepared with the necessary legal

documents to make Colbert PAC a reality, explained to Colbert that a PAC would allow him to

raise money for personal use and allow him to create ads for whatever purposes he wanted.

Colbert turned to his audience asking, "Do you want your voices heard in the form of my voice?

Do you want to be players in the 2012 campaign? Do you want to receive spam emails asking for

$5, $10, $15?" The thunderous applause accompanied Colbert signing the PAC papers, and

marked the beginning of the Stewart/Colbert universe's direct involvement in politics.[13]

In the next two weeks, over 68,000 people signed up to be a part of Colbert PAC.[14]

Unfortunately for Colbert, however, Viacom, the parent company of Comedy Central, informed

Colbert he could not create the PAC out of fear the use of his show would be counted as an in-

kind donation and require the company to disclose personal information to the FEC.[15] Trevor

Potter returned to the show to tell Colbert Viacom could stop the formation of the Colbert PAC,

but recent changes in laws concerning political expenditures presented a loophole Colbert could

exploit that would make his political activity potentially even more powerful than with just a

PAC.

Potter explained that, in 2010, the Supreme Court decided on the case *Citizens United v.*

Federal Election Commission, which resulted in a ruling that stated corporations are, in

circumstances like political donations, people. Thus, placing limitations on corporations' use of

money, including fundraising and spending, was unconstitutional. The result was the birth of

independent-expenditure only committees, or Super PACs. A Super PAC is a PAC that can raise

unlimited money from corporations, unions, and individuals, provided the Super PAC does not

directly coordinate with any candidate. These new PACs change the nature of political

fundraising, allowing the wealthiest citizens and corporations to transform wealth into political

speech at levels heretofore prohibited by law. Potter provided Colbert with the necessary

paperwork (a cover letter) to transform the PAC into a Super PAC, and Colbert sent in the official documents requesting permission to form the Super PAC.[16]

A month later, Viacom once again tried to block Colbert from forming the Super PAC.[17] Frustrated, Colbert turned to Potter to find out why Carl Rove was allowed to promote his Super PAC on Fox News, but Colbert could not promote Colbert Super PAC on Comedy Central. The reason, according to Potter, was that Rove was on Fox News analyzing his own PAC, not promoting it through what is known as a media exemption.[18] On May 13, Colbert appeared in Washington, D.C. to file for his media exemption, and 500 people showed up to greet him and make the first donations to Colbert Super PAC.[19] A month and a half later, Colbert invited the Colbert Nation to wait for him on the steps of the FEC building as he met with the Commission to finalize the approval of his Super PAC, something Trevor Potter told Colbert people were already doing in anticipation of the decision.[20] The next day, after answering two short questions, Colbert Super PAC was approved with a media exemption for Colbert and he could begin to legally raise unlimited funds from donors.[21]

These few months in which the Super PAC developed marked the first phase of a prank that would become the most direct political activity of the Stewart/Colbert universe. Relying on the principle of irony, Colbert used his parodic performance to explore with the audience how an influential component of American politics works. The parody of Colbert's character emphasized the senselessness of his desire for a PAC in the first place. In fact, Colbert never expressed any reason to want all this political power other than the fact that he could have that power in unlimited amounts. With the formation of Colbert Super PAC, that unlimited power in the form of money transformed Colbert from a citizen to someone that could use other people's money however he wanted. Interestingly, the only objection to Colbert having this power came from his

own company, which tried to stop Colbert for the sole reason that his actions may limit how Viacom used its money to influence politics.

In Chapter III, I addressed the ways the Stewart/Colbert universe, including the audience, used the principle of interactivity to turn money into a rhetorical message through charitable donations. Using money as speech permitted the audience to gain the attention of the universe and helped to spawn the Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear, and the universe encouraged the audience to make donations to charities that reflected the ideological position of the universe. Such donations were often made to charities that had ties to political issues or government, such as the Yellow Ribbon Fund or the Trust for the National Mall, but were not direct contributions to politics. This is what allowed Stewart to deny President Carter's claim that the Rally was an entrance into politics. The formation of Colbert Super PAC provided Colbert with a legal organization to raise money for political action, but it was made clear from the beginning that this was going to be funded by the audience. Although moments of interactivity presented themselves, such as when people met on the steps of the FEC to support Colbert, until the Super PAC was approved the prank was being driven solely by the Stewart/Colbert universe. The approval opened the doors for the audience to begin influencing the direction of the Stewart/Colbert universe's political activities.

After the formation of Colbert Super PAC, the prank entered into a month-long phase of fundraising. After two weeks, Colbert began scrolling the names of donors at the bottom of the screen during *The Colbert Report*. This "Hero Scroll" continued for months and gave the audience an incentive to donate to the Super PAC by allowing them to become a part of the Stewart/Colbert universe. While users of Reddit suggested Colbert was being pranked in his own right by donors who submitted names such as Lord Sauron from *Lord of the Rings*, Colbert

retorted, "You got me! By giving me your money."[22] These name pranks were in the minority, however, as each night dozens of realistic names scrolled across the screen, adding to the sense of community and producing a message that added to the rhetorically constitutive power the principle of interactivity in the Stewart/Colbert universe.

It was clear that donors were pouring in for the Super PAC. However, a major problem remained. On the July 28 edition of *The Colbert Report*, Colbert shared with the audience a letter he received from two children, Charlie age 10 and Grace age 8, who had raised $13 for the Super PAC. The audience responded with a moan of admiration as to how adorable the donation was, but the action served as more than just a cute moment. Instead, Charlie and Grace's fundraising shows one way the rhetorical messages of the Stewart/Colbert universe can be shared among the audience, in this case parents with children, to further constitute an audience and put it toward action. Quite fittingly, it was from these constituted children that the important problem was presented. The children ended their letter noting they wanted to do more for the Super PAC but, "Mom says we can't do a lemonade stand for [Colbert Super PAC] until you decide what the Super PAC stands for so let us know."[23]

McGee argues that as new narratives and perspectives arise, myth must confront and adapt to these changes to bring new information back into the ideological focus of the myth. For months, the focus of the Super PAC had gone unchallenged as the constituted audience had ignored what was the purpose of their political participation. In pranks like the NASA International Space Station module, this lack of focus in the prank allowed for commentary to emerge. In the formative stages of the Super PAC, this openness had permitted the Stewart/Colbert universe to highlight the significance of PACs in politics and critique the ease with which wealthy people and corporations can influence politics. Other important critiques

continue to emerge from the Super PAC prank in later phases, but, in the post-formation phase, the Super PAC was failing to produce meaningful commentary. Just as a normalized myth encourages audiences to ride on faith that the myth will guide them toward the prescribed outcome, the audience was going along with Colbert under the assumption its contributions were leading toward a desired result. I have argued the logic of ironic appropriation pushes the constituted audience to remain in a state of constant critique. Colbert's parodic prank, however, was temporarily failing to encourage that critique, leading the audience to blindly support his purposes in much the same way Colbert was criticizing the shadowy influence of other Super PACs.

Unlike the logic of myth, however, which incorporates disruptive narratives back into the prescriptive myth, Charlie and Grace's simple question shook Colbert and the audience back up. Through the logic of ironic appropriation, the critique of the Super PAC itself forced the entire universe to reflexively consider its purpose and drove the Super PAC toward its second major phase.[24] In this next evolution of the Super PAC, Colbert turned the focus toward defining a purpose. The first phase was driven by the double-coded performance of Colbert as parodist, including frequent intertextual references to other Super PACs and Karl Rove (through a stand-in, a canned ham named Ham Rove), to place a critical eye on this part of politics in America. In the phase of defining the purpose, the producers began inviting the contributions of the audience.

Immediately after sharing Charlie and Grace's letter, Colbert turned to ABC political analyst Matthew Dowd to discover what other Super PACs do. Dowd told Colbert that most Super PACs are set up to support the desires of the very rich because they are the ones who almost solely fund them. Recall that the Stewart/Colbert universe and its audience, by using the left-leaning logic of ironic appropriation, fights for the oppressed, making the universe and its

audience unlikely to identify with the right, something that Colbert is well aware of in his response to Dowd: "Here's the thing. I don't have millionaires or billionaires. I only have these people (pointing to his audience)."[25] Colbert's comments ignited the studio audience and sent a clear message to the audience that it will play a role in determining the purpose of the Super PAC.

This second phase marked a bigger focus on the principle of interactivity. The audience members were asked to go to the Super PAC website to contribute messages of what they stand for in the hopes of shaping the direction of the Super PAC. Using the website as well as social media sites like Twitter, the audience was able to share hundreds of different thoughts on the desired purpose of the PAC. Using the Twitter hashtag #istandfor, audience members created a list of important topics that match the desire to help the oppressed and bring alternative and neglected viewpoints into the political conversation. Some continued to have fun with the prank, using the hashtag to vent some frustrations with society. One example read on *The Colbert Report* came from Twitter user @heathermack who wrote, "istandfor smacking slow walking pedestrians in the back of the head. Some of us have things to do." Most of the #istandfor comments, however, took a more serious tone and spoke to the heart of many social issues the Super PAC could directly influence. Another comment read on *The Colbert Report* by user @BarbaraCTaylor stated, "#istandfor making the rich pay their fair share of taxes protect interests of the rest of us who bear the tax burden."[26] Statements like these support my argument from Chapter I that the audience, despite being fans of Colbert, identifies with Stewart's direct approach instead of Colbert's parodic performance and these users saw this as an opportunity to confront real issues even though these suggestions fly in the face of Colbert's parody. After reading @BarbaraCTaylor's suggestion on *The Colbert Report*, Colbert electronically deleted the

comment from the list, implying her #istandfor Tweet did not match the ideological bent of Colbert's purpose. However, many other left-leaning #istandfor comments were presented through Twitter, such as user @JhotRockin's Tweet, "#istand for ensuring that the haves have no more influence than the have nots."[27]

In a few weeks, over 53,000 #istandfor messages were submitted, and the producers combined these messages into a word cloud to highlight the most frequently used terms in the messages. The word cloud revealed that words like government, education, people, and marijuana were used the most frequently, while other words like freedom, America, taxes, and money were also commonly used.[28] The word cloud supports the above argument that the audience used the opportunity for interactivity to push the focus toward reform of government in a way that best suits the people. Just as Colbert deleted @BarbaraCTaylor's message, though, Colbert used his parody to find a way to justify keeping the focus on his character's conservative ideology. Colbert argued because his Super PAC was made possible by the results of *Citizens United* and that case reinforced the belief that money is free speech, Colbert should listen only to those commenters who also donated money.

After eliminating all comments from users who did not donate money, Colbert created a new word cloud and took it to Frank Luntz, the man best known for spinning terms to manipulate audience reaction, such as turning "drilling for oil" into "energy exploration" and "global warming" into "climate change."[29] Despite the fact that, through his character, Stephen Colbert was openly mocking Luntz's manipulation of people in politics and business, Luntz agreed to work for the Super PAC. After revising the word cloud again, Colbert announced that the two biggest words were people and corporations, and, thus, the people must want the Super PAC to focus on the idea that people are corporations.[30] Luntz worked with Colbert to try to spin this

message, even holding a focus group where the participants helped Luntz create better phrasings for the idea that corporations are people.[31]

Luntz's contribution to the Super PAC played into the irony of the entire prank because his participation revealed how political rhetoric is analyzed and manipulated to suit the needs of those who can afford it. Through the Super PAC, Luntz showed how easy it was for the rich to buy not only media airtime but discourse itself. After this phase, the audience was left with a series of events, spawned from its own participation in the construction of the Super PAC, which encouraged a critical analysis of why the unlimited buying power of the Super PACs is a problem for democracy.

However, it remains uncertain just how influential the audience was in shaping the Super PAC. Recall the events that eventually led to Luntz's involvement were set in motion to determine the purpose of the Super PAC. While the audience was presented the opportunity through interactive measures to contribute to the rhetorical message, Colbert was explicit in stating that he was going to ignore a large chunk of the messages. Using the idea from *Citizens United* that money equals speech was a successful rhetorical maneuver that not only reinforced one of the original criticisms spawning from the prank but also repositioned the audience's interaction in a way that maintained his parodic performance. In doing so, however, many of the audience members were silenced. Because the interactivity was emerging from Colbert, who cannot break character to support the legitimate ideological perspective, the audience was only given the illusion of participation. This was a problem seen in Chapter III as well and further complicated by the sudden dwindling of the word cloud down to the terms "people" and "corporations." While "people" was emphasized in both word clouds, "corporations" was not visually depicted as significant to the users. Without providing further justification for why

"corporations" was suddenly a key term, it is difficult to find a way to conclude the audience had much say in the direction of the Super PAC after all. The audience was, thus, given the illusion of freedom Charland spoke of for constitutive rhetoric to shape the message, but primary control remained with the producers of the Stewart/Colbert universe.[32] Here, it is apparent that even though ironic appropriation strives to better incorporate the voices of the people than myth does, when those voices significantly derail the purpose of the constitutive rhetorical message they can be silenced or ignored.

While the Super PAC was working on constructing its purpose, it was also beginning to use its funds to directly influence the 2012 presidential election. Then candidate Buddy Roemer and Matthew Dowd told Colbert that, if he wanted to be a political player from the beginning, he needed to focus on the Ames Straw Poll held in Iowa in August.[33] Following their advice, Colbert turned to Iowa. Rick Perry, then Governor of Texas, had not entered the political campaign officially, but weeks before the Ames Straw Poll Colbert had expressed support for Perry. By the time of the Poll, however, strong support for Perry had begun to emerge and other Super PACs were fighting to be his primary supporter. Although he was not on the ballot for the Straw Poll, officials were allowing write-in candidates and a strong pro-Perry sentiment was growing. Colbert, claiming he called Perry first, for the first time legitimately entered into the political campaign by running two ads in Iowa.[34] The ads, however, did not directly support Perry. Instead, they were attack ads against the competing Super PACs, which Colbert Super PAC accused of manipulating and exploiting Iowans by exposing them to "cornography"—an intertextual reference to both the use of fields of corn in other ads to suggest identification between Perry and Iowa's crop as well as the way sexuality is often used to sell an idea. The ads

urged voters who shared Perry's true perspective to go to the polls and write in "Rick Parry with an A for America" to show they support Colbert Super PAC above the others.[35]

The Parry with An A ad campaign was a prank within the prank intended to disrupt the emphasis placed on the Ames Straw Poll, which, despite its small size, is given the honor in the media as the first real event in a presidential election. This trickery was likely inspired by a mail campaign by the Super PAC Americans for Prosperity, funded primarily by the conservative Koch brothers, where that Super PAC mailed out absentee ballots for a recall election in Wisconsin with "Mail By" dates two days after the election and a fake P.O. Box address.[36] Through his parody, Colbert had blasted the actions of Americans for Prosperity and used the "Parry with an A" ads to turn this political deception back on its head by making it more obvious, or so it would seem.

Despite the Super PAC's ads spelling out for the viewers it was encouraging the audience to write in the alternative spelling Rick Parry, the ABC WIO affiliate in Des Moines refused to air the ads because they deemed them "too confusing" for voters.[37] While this may at first seem absurd given how much effort the ads put into emphasizing the alternative spelling of Perry, WIO's claim is supported by the research of Heather LaMarre, Kristen Landreville, and Michael Beam.[38] Their research concluded that *The Colbert Report*, when viewed in an experimental study, could be read as conservative by conservative viewers. In Chapter I, I argued that this was not an issue for the audience of the Stewart/Colbert universe, because that audience would be aware of the ideological bent of the universe. However, these Super PAC ads were not speaking to the Stewart/Colbert universe's audience. Instead, they were speaking directly to conservative voters. Based on LaMarre, Landreville, and Beam's study, it is possible the viewers would find the ads confusing. In Chapter II, I discussed the rhetorical benefit of outward intertextuality as a

means to address the object of critique. I argued this use of intertextuality helped encouraged civil discourse and the reduction of incommensurability. These ads, though, present an alternative problem that can emerge when that outward intertextuality is extended through parody. Because of Colbert constantly maintaining character, the audience of such outward intertextuality does run the risk of reading a literal reading into the parody instead of the double-coded meaning produced through irony. This is particularly problematic when the intertextual references found within the parody are missed by the viewers, leaving them only the literal reading on which to fall back. When done skillfully, as Colbert did in his Congressional testimony, both the literal and double-coded readings can be manipulated to provide the same critique. However, these ads represent a potential problem when that parodic message is not carefully crafted.

Political advertisements continued to be part of the Super PAC's strategy, including serving as an important piece in the next phase of the Super PAC's development. In September, Colbert had Trevor Potter back as a guest to explain why corporations were not donating to Colbert Super PAC but other Super PACs, such as Karl Rove's American Crossroads, received large donations. Potter explained that even though the Super PAC could raise unlimited funds, the donations would have to be shared with the Internal Revenue Service. To get around this, corporations donate to 501(c)(4) organizations which serve as anonymous shell corporations that big corporations can make large donations to and those donations can be used for political purposes, including taking the money donated to the 501(c)(4) and donating it to a Super PAC. Thrilled by the idea of collecting unlimited secret funds, Colbert had Potter help him start his own 501(c)(4), Colbert Super PAC SHH!.[39]

After Colbert explained how Karl Rove's used his 501(c)(4) Crossroads GPS to potentially attract big money to his Super PAC American Crossroads, the media began reporting that Colbert, through his Super PAC, had exposed a legal money laundering scheme on the part of Rove.[40] Rove's lawyers wrote to Colbert making it clear he had never used Crossroads GPS to send money to American Crossroads, but the point was moot.[41] Colbert had exposed a serious, potential problem in the workings of the PAC system that would allow corporations to purchase significant influence in political elections without ever having to acknowledge those donations publically. Colbert's intertextual allusion to the similarities between his actions and Rove may have not been accurate, but the fear of such an accusation was strong enough for Rove to acknowledge Colbert Super PAC for the first time and ask for clarification to be made.

Now that Colbert knew he had Rove's attention, he continued to emulate Rove in his use of the Super PAC. In November, the Chairman of the Nebraska Democratic Party revealed a loophole in the state's elections laws that allowed the Party to make unlimited expenditures on advertisements when the advertisements were about issues instead of directly about campaigns.[42] Rove petitioned to be allowed such an exemption on a federal level, something Trevor Potter told Colbert was unlikely to occur. Again, however, Colbert was able to use the Super PAC to expose the workings of the political system by writing a letter to the Federal Elections Commission supporting Rove's request and even entered a sample issues advertisement with his letter. Although his actions appeared to support Rove's request, his submitted advertisement used the participation of then presidential candidate Buddy Roemer to show an example of how these advertisements would allow direct coordination between candidates and Super PACs under the guise of an issue instead of a campaign, essentially creating a loophole around the only real restriction placed on Super PACs.[43] Moreover, because Colbert's letter was a formal request to

the FEC, his letter and submitted advertisement would become a permanent part of the federal

record of Rove's request, forever establishing an intertextual connection between Rove's attempt

to manipulate the system and Colbert's criticism of that manipulation.

The next phase of the Super PAC began shortly thereafter with the impending South

Carolina primary. Colbert, who comes from South Carolina, returned to the previously stated

purpose of the Super PAC and used the funds to persuade the South Carolina GOP to put a

referendum on the primary ballot concerning corporate personhood reading:

In order to address the matter of Corporate Personhood, the enfranchised People of the

Sovereign State of South Carolina shall decree that:

Corporations are people

Only people are people[44]

Although Colbert acknowledged that the results of this referendum could have no legal

ramifications, the South Carolina Supreme Court ruled against it, saying that nonbinding

referendums could not appear on a presidential primary ballot. Although the vote would have no

legal implications, the inclusion of the referendum would have allowed, for the first time, the

people to voice their opinion through voting about the issue of corporate personhood.

Throughout the past nine months, Colbert's exploitation through the Super PAC of the decision

by the U.S. Supreme Court to rule in favor of corporate personhood could have come to a head

by using the results of that ruling to directly challenge it.[45] The referendum, stemming from a

history of intertextual references understood best by those that have followed Colbert's parodic

journey through the Super PAC, would have created an interactive moment that allowed people

within and outside of the Stewart/Colbert universe's audience to decide on what the

Stewart/Colbert universe felt was a dangerous challenge to the U.S. democracy.

When Colbert was unsuccessful in getting his referendum on the ballot, he chose instead to try and get himself on the ballot as a presidential candidate after polls showed Colbert as a viable presidential candidate.[46] Although the deadline to get on the ballot had passed, Herman Cain, who had ended his campaign, remained on the ballot. Colbert began a campaign that argued a vote for Cain was a vote for Colbert.[47] Colbert's efforts proved fruitless in the end, but this campaign violated the one major rule regarding Super PACs: no coordination between candidates and Super PACs. This resulted in a necessary shift in control of the Super PAC, but this presidential bid provided a chance to spread the rhetorical power of Colbert Super PAC to the rest of the Stewart/Colbert universe and presented an opportunity to expose how easily it was for candidates to utilize Super PAC money to directly influence elections.[48]

As a presidential candidate, Colbert could no longer run a Super PAC without breaking the rule against coordination between candidates and Super PACs. To overcome this problem, Colbert signed over Colbert Super PAC to Stewart, changing it to The Definitely Not Coordinating with Stephen Colbert Super PAC.[49] Shifting the control to Stewart created the opportunity to critique the ease with which the no coordination rule could be circumvented. Through the paratexts of the Stewart/Colbert universe, Stewart and Colbert were able to use a series of intertextual references that allowed Colbert to tell Stewart specifically how to spend the Super PAC money without them legally coordinating. One reason this phase of the Super PAC development was able to provide such biting criticism was because of the shift in focus. Under the restrictions of Colbert's parodic performance, the Super PAC was forced to keep the guise of a conservative cause. The parody had proven at times to limit the voice of the people, such as with the "I Stand For" Twitter comments. Had the Super PAC been run by Stewart, where identification falls because of the ideological alignment between Stewart and the audience, the

purpose of the Super PAC could have better taken into account the political desires of the audience. However, a satirical approach would have also undermined the rhetorical power of the Stewart/Colbert universe to mimic the manipulation of the system by other conservative Super PACs. In this phase, guided by Stewart's satire, the Super PAC was able to make ads that directly attacked the candidates in ways Colbert was unable to do in the Ames Straw Poll.

For example, leading up to the South Carolina primary, the Stewart-run Super PAC ran an advertisement that used the principle of irony to catch candidate Mitt Romney in his own hypocrisy. The ad showed a clip of Romney supporting the view that corporations are people then explained that Romney's job as a leader in the firm Bain Capital was to purchase corporations and carve them up for pieces. In other words, according to the advertisement, Romney was the serial killer Mitt the Ripper.[50] Unlike Colbert, who avoided attacking candidates directly, Stewart was able to use his satire to critique Romney and the flaws in his political stance. Although the advertisement is hyperbolic, it serves to get viewers beyond the Stewart/Colbert universe thinking about the problems in Romney's campaign.[51]

This switch in ironic tone provided an opportunity for new tactics on the part of the Stewart/Colbert universe, but the change in Super PAC leadership also presented the producers the chance to criticize the effectiveness of the rules put in place for Super PACs. Recall the reason for the transition of power to Stewart was the rule that Super PACs cannot directly coordinate with a candidate. Previously, Colbert had made the "issues ad" with Buddy Roemer to point out how useless the rule would be if is changed to meet Karl Rove's request. The switch in leadership, however, permitted the producers to show the ways the rule could still be exploited as-is.

On the January 17 episode of *The Daily Show*, Colbert appeared to point out that, through a loophole used by Newt Gingrich, as long as Colbert tells the Super PAC what to do through the media all Stewart has to do is watch the programs Colbert is on to know what he wants to do with the money. Moreover, the law permits Trevor Potter to be the lawyer for both the Super PAC and Colbert's campaign exploratory committee and advise them both on how to avoid breaking the law. During the episode, the two hosts sit literally cheek-to-cheek. With Potter overseeing the conversation, Stewart tells Colbert what he plans to do with the money and Colbert uses his nonverbal cues to hint his approval to Stewart. Together, the two planned exactly what to do with the money without ever legally breaking the no coordination rule between Super PACs and candidates. Potter told them that even if they did break the law they would probably only be fined, and they could use Super PAC money to pay the fine.[52]

The Stewart/Colbert universe continued to take the loopholes in the system as far as was permitted. On January 16, Colbert made the announcement he could not get on the South Carolina ballot and would use the votes for Herman Cain as a gauge of his potential success in the state. That same night, however, the Super PAC ran an ad in South Carolina supporting Cain, but featuring video of Colbert in his place. A reader of the political website Buzzfeed.com wrote to the site:

> Stephen Colbert and his Super PAC nearly simultaneously launched a "Vote Cain" effort tonight, but how did they do it without illegal coordination? Stephen Colbert begins taping at around 7:30 pm, and he detailed his "Vote Cain" strategy, complete with a scripted segment and clip package, on tonight's show. Meanwhile, the Colbert Super PAC released a slick 60-second "Vote Cain" ad before that *Colbert Report* episode even hit the

air. How did both production-intensive video segments get made within hours of each other without illegal coordination?[53]

That night on *The Colbert Report*, Colbert explains that the answer was simply that Stewart told him what he was planning on doing, and Colbert went along with it. Legally, coordination only occurs if Colbert gives the Super PAC suggestions directly, not the other way around.[54]

Although Trevor Potter remained constantly on watch that the Stewart/Colbert universe did not break the law, the combined but not coordinated efforts of Stewart and Colbert showed how easily candidates could circumvent the no coordination rule in order to talk to each other. Buzzfeed.com, in response to their reader's email question, asked a campaign finance lawyer about the situation, to which the lawyer replied, "Generally, a lot of Super PACs seem to have telepathic powers which are beyond the reach of the FEC."[55] This phase in the development of the Super PAC utilized both Stewart and Colbert to expose such telepathy as hokum, instead showing how the media and even direct conversations can be used to plan campaign finance spending without any real consequences.[56]

Throughout the first year of Colbert Super PAC, the Stewart/Colbert universe used the principle of irony heavily to critique the case of *Citizens United* and the unrestricted campaign finance spending that resulted from that decision. Colbert originally claimed the purpose of the Super PAC was to allow him to be a player in the 2012 presidential election, and through efforts in the Ames Straw Poll and the South Carolina primary, the Super PAC did try to influence the election. However, the greater impact may be how the Super PAC prank has influenced the perception of Super PACs and campaign financing. In August of 2011, the *New York Times* reported that Colbert Super PAC had the potential to change how Americans view and understand campaign financing noting, "Maybe the whole system has become such a joke that

only jokes will serve as a corrective."[57] Six months later, *The Hill*, the online Congressional newsletter, addressed the surge of Super PACs formed in the past year, crediting the exposure of Colbert Super PAC and even quoting a high school student named Damian Palmer who started his own Super PAC to see "if exploiting the FEC, like many of the current candidates for government positions do today, was as simple as [Colbert] made it out to be."[58] A month later, a University of Texas student emailed Colbert, telling Colbert he wanted to start a Colbert Super PAC at his school. Colbert Super PAC responded by creating Colbert Super PAC Super Fun Packs, which, for $99, the Super PAC provides for college students all the necessary legal documents to start a Super PAC.[59] Within a month, Colbert Super PAC had sold out of the Super Fun Packs.

As of this writing, this recent shift marks the current phase of Colbert Super PAC development. Although the Super PAC relied heavily on the principle of irony during the development, the principle of intertextuality played an important role in the construction of that irony, particularly in the political advertisements sponsored by the Super PAC. In this final phase, however, the principle of interactivity has come to the forefront. Importantly, this shift in the focus of the Super PAC was brought about by the actions of the audience. Just as the letter from Charlie and Grace encouraged Colbert to find a mission for the Super PAC, the actions of the audience encouraged a change in direction for the producers. In this case, these few audience members were inspired by the Super PAC to become participants in democracy in ways that would have seemed complex before the efforts of the Stewart/Colbert universe. After the Super PAC, this confusing process was simplified to the point that Super Fun Packs made it possible for college students across America to create their own Super PACs.

Throughout the development of the Super PAC, the producers used varying combinations of the three principles of ironic appropriation, irony, intertextuality, and interactivity, to create rhetorical messages that continued to call the audience into being and put it into action that will make judgments about the campaign finance rules in America. It is unclear what direction this Super PAC or the Super Fun Packs will take at this point, but what is clear is that, through the Super PAC, the Stewart/Colbert universe has finally entered politics directly. Moreover, the speed in which the audience has purchased the Super Fun Packs suggests that Colbert Super PAC has encouraged the audience to do more than feel victimized by the political system and, instead, made the audience ready to take action in American democracy.

Final Thoughts: Cynical Inaction or Democracy In-Action?

Colbert Super PAC has been more concerned with using its money and power to raise questions about and awareness of problems in the American political system than focusing on a specific political target. As the Super PAC went through the phases of development, it brought up many concerns, encouraging the audience to both participate in and shape the critique. Because the logic of ironic appropriation does not hang upon a strong, fixed narrative, the audience is not presented with a consistent focus in the rhetorical messages on which to rely. Instead, the audience is presented with a continued series of problems and few answers. The use of irony and intertextuality bridges gaps in logic that are often intentionally left open because exposing connections between them also exposes manipulations of the political system. The creation of the Super PAC and the 501(c)(4) show just two ways the supposed rules of the system can be easily manipulated into loopholes that allow for a hidden control of government. By having the audience members create their own Super PACs, the use of interactivity discourages the audience from becoming cynical to the system. More than just becoming aware

of the problem, this interactivity permits the audience to gain first-hand knowledge of the system and become active participants in government in ways that can help reshape the direction of campaign financing in America.

The assumption that the Stewart/Colbert universe is constitutive, by the nature of its theoretical tenets, is an argument that the universe encourages an audience that takes some sort of action. As Charland argues, constitutive rhetoric not only hails an audience into being, but places that audience into action.[60] I have argued that whether that logic is myth, ironic appropriation, or another logic entirely, this process of interpellation and the resultant active audience are both essential to constitutive rhetoric. Others, however, have argued this is not the case. The most biting argument against Jon Stewart and *The Daily Show* comes from Roderick Hart and E. Johanna Hartelius. Hart and Hartelius argue that Stewart is not a part of the democracy-in-action rhetorical universe I have argued for here and instead claim that Stewart reflects classical cynicism. The authors argue, "Just as the Cynics' agenda was to ridicule social and political norms by violating them in the most physically grotesque ways, Stewart foregrounds and mocks the generic conventions of his time."[61]

Throughout this dissertation, I have provided numerous examples that would at first seem to support Hart and Hartelius' claim. Stewart and the entirety of the Stewart/Colbert universe have a clear agenda that involves mocking generic conventions and ridiculing social and political norms. The problem with Hart and Hartelius' claim of cynicism, however, comes from what they admit is their "basic contention…that Stewart's antics let him evade critical interrogation, thereby making him a fundamentally anti-political creature."[62] While the authors first made their claims of cynicism in 2006, the Stewart/Colbert universe focused on here is from 2010 onward. Perhaps the Stewart of 2006 did encourage cynicism. But, like Colbert Super PAC itself, the

Stewart/Colbert universe has evolved and become both more reflexive and political through an increased use of the logic of ironic appropriation.

Robert Hariman rightfully argues against Hart and Hartelius that the mocking done by Stewart is not cynicism but satire.[63] In Chapter I, I addressed the concerns of Kenneth Burke, who argued that true irony is irony which is humble in its attack on the object of criticism and that satire runs the risk of encouraging its audience to see only the problems in others and not in themselves because satire is often lacking in such true irony.[64] This reasoning might suggest that Hariman's claim that *The Daily Show* is satire would perhaps be an argument for cynicism rather than against it. In Chapter I, however, I argued that, when viewed as the Stewart/Colbert universe, the universe produces rhetorical texts that utilize the various forms of irony such as satire and parody that often provide numerous and differing looks at the same critique. Combined with the level of reflexivity seen in the rhetoric of the Stewart/Colbert universe, this use of irony not only discourages the evasion of critical interrogation addressed by Hart and Hartelius but also provides for the audience members the necessary equipment for living to produce this criticism in their daily lives. In the comparison of satire in the Stewart/Colbert universe with the *½ Hour News Hour*, I argue that it is in how the satire is used, specifically for the purposes of making judgments that decrease incommensurability, which encourages an active audience and counters claims of cynicism.

One of the rhetorical tropes Hart and Hartelius claim Stewart uses to produce cynicism is the diatribe. A diatribe, according to Culter, "appeals to an imaginary adversary and as such is an exposition more than an argument, since there is only room for one main speaker."[65] One of the ways Hart and Hartelius argue Stewart sets up this diatribe is through the format of *The Daily Show* itself, where Stewart cuts clips from other programs in with his commentary, allowing

Stewart to argue at an absent object of criticism. These cuts are real, and one way the

Stewart/Colbert universe uses the principle of intertextuality to produce its rhetorical message.

Admittedly, Hart and Hartelius are right. The producers make intertextual references throughout

the entirety of the universe to help produce the ironic message and bring in the ideological

perspective of the original text to be a part of the critique. In Chapter II, I address how, if used

outside of the logic of ironic appropriation, this intertextuality can produce a sense of "smug

superiority," as Hart and Hartelius put it. Although I would disagree that Stewart is, as Hart and

Hartelius claim, a "one man band," Stewart does serve as the point of identification between the

audience and the Stewart/Colbert universe and, as I argued in Chapter II, opens up the rhetorical

message to negate those that fall outside of the immediately identification, creating a third

persona whose values, despite the overall ideological goals of ironic appropriation, may be

ignored.[66] Furthermore, the nature of intertextuality does encourage a sense of "getting it" that

can be used, as Stewart does in his mocking of Glenn Beck, to create the good versus evil

mentality that removes the humility in the ironic message.

While this problematic usage of intertextuality can and has existed, it is hardly the norm

that leads to consistent diatribe. Hart and Hartelius' claim again ignores the reflexivity of the

Stewart/Colbert universe in making the claim of a diatribe. While the intertextual references are

often used to build a rhetorical message against the object of criticism, I have argued that the

principle of intertextuality also permits the producers to directly address criticisms of the show,

at times even admitting to the problematic nature of their original message. Furthermore, the

interview segments allow direct conversation with both supporters of the criticism as well as the

objects of criticism themselves. In Chapter II, I also argue that, in recent years, the

Stewart/Colbert universe has made efforts to extend the intertextual links outward, entering in

other textual spaces to lay out their criticism. The *Crossfire* example, which took place before Hart and Hartelius' claim of diatribe, is one example of such outward intertextuality. Colbert's congressional testimony, the Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear, and Colbert Super PAC all represent other ways the Stewart/Colbert universe has extended itself into other texts to expand the number of related paratexts and find links between the position of critic and the position of the object of criticism.

The strongest argument against Stewart levied by Hart and Hartelius is the belief that *chreia* are a significant part of the program. A *chreia* is a "brief statement of an incident or situation followed by a pungent remark."[67] Hart and Hartelius use the *Crossfire* example as their exemplar of this problem, arguing that Stewart was only willing to attack the hosts for their role in democracy and was unwilling to accept his role as anything more than comedian. Throughout this dissertation, I have touched on this concern. I have argued that the Stewart/Colbert universe, creating constitutive rhetoric that places audience into action, is much more than a simple comedic endeavor. Stewart has remained consistently dismissive of being more than a comedian, and even goes so far as to claim to President Carter that the Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear was not political. Colbert Super PAC has made such claims ultimately impossible to make, because it has created legally recognized political ties with the Stewart/Colbert universe. Yet, even if Stewart maintains his political innocence, when taken as a whole, the Stewart/Colbert universe does not make use of *chreia* as often as Hart and Hartelius suggest.

The universe does contain "brief statement[s] of an incident or situation followed by a pungent remark," but unlike how Hart and Hartelius suggest, these statements are part of a larger universe of texts that build upon themselves to make meaning. In this dissertation, I have provided examples of this development of meaning-making, such as in the examples of the

International Space Station prank, Colbert's call for Red Cross donations following the 2011

tsunami in Japan, and the entire Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear. Taken individually, these

moments do appear as cynical comments levied against a target that is not permitted to fight

back. But the use of the principles of irony and intertextuality contain a double-codedness that

encourages the producers as well as the audience to continue to go beyond those moments of

ridicule to find meaning. These moments combine to produce the equipment for living necessary

to go beyond the rhetorically constructed text and help encourage the audience members to

become participants in the social criticism.

By invoking the principle of interactivity, the Stewart/Colbert universe provides for the

audience members the opportunity to make their own statements that counter claims of inactive

cynicism. In Chapter III, I address several examples of how using interactivity allowed the

audience members to not only respond to rhetoric of the Stewart/Colbert universe, but to take

action that influenced the rhetorical message. Interactivity provides an opportunity for the

audience members to hail the producers as well as each other, creating the ties that permit the

call for democratic action to extend beyond the guiding force of the Stewart/Colbert universe. In

the Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear, for example, the audience was able to use charitable

donations and social media to inspire the rally which would ultimately take a stand against

incommensurability in political judgment. The recent actions by audience members to create

their own Super PACs show another way the audience members can take it upon themselves to

contribute and shape the rhetoric and have a real influence on how people beyond the

Stewart/Colbert universe and the audience understand an important part of American democracy.

Hart and Hartelius conclude their trial against Stewart by arguing:

> [C]ynicism is not really an attitude by a style of language, a way of talking. Like any language, cynicism is taught, practiced, and perfected. It is also self-reinforcing: The more often it is spoken the hardier it becomes. If one speaks it, another is likely to follow suit. If Jon Stewart speaks it, everyone joins in.[68]

Their description of cynicism bears a resemblance to how I have addressed constitutive rhetoric throughout this dissertation. However, I maintain that this is not the logic of the Stewart/Colbert universe. As Hart and Hartelius claim, cynicism is "a way of talking." I would argue, based on their own argument of it being both attitude and discourse, that cynicism is more accurately seen as a logic. In fact, cynicism may very well be another example of the alternative logics to myth Barthes believes to exist. Like cynicism, the logic of ironic appropriation must be taught, practiced, and perfected. Throughout this dissertation, I have noted the ways the Stewart/Colbert universe has used the three principles of ironic appropriation to teach the audience, provide equipment for living, and encourage that audience to put that equipment into action for the purposes of making judgments. Hart and Hartelius argue that Stewart as a cynic is a combination of performances that "become ends in themselves rather than ways of changing social or political realities."[69] If this is truly what Stewart and the rest of the Stewart/Colbert universe did, I would agree with Hart and Hartelius that the entire universe was guilty of encouraging a seriously problematic cynicism in the audience. However, the rhetorical messages of the Stewart/Colbert universe are not "ends in themselves." In fact, as I have argued several times, part of the logic of ironic appropriation stemming from its three principles is rejection of actions that shut down conversation. Ironic appropriation is a logic, as exemplified in the Stewart/Colbert universe, that encourages questioning of the world, including self-reflexive questioning, and a rejection of incommensurability. It is through the criticism of social and political realities produced with the

logic of ironic appropriation that the Stewart/Colbert universe hopes to encourage its audience to become participants in democracy, not the inactive cynics as Hart and Hartelius fear.

Thus, it is important to note that at no point during the evolution of Colbert Super PAC does the Stewart/Colbert universe purport to solve the problem of campaign financing. Throughout this dissertation, I have argued that the Stewart/Colbert universe has failed to prescribe answers no matter the principle of ironic appropriation under consideration. Colbert Super PAC shows that, even when taken as a whole, this does not change. But this is not a failure of the logic itself. Instead, it is perhaps one of the logic's greatest strengths. Giving answers leaves the control of the rhetorical message with the producers themselves. If the Stewart/Colbert universe provided solutions to these problems, its logic would no longer be ironic appropriation, and, instead, one more akin to the mythic logic used by Fox News. Through ironic appropriation, the Stewart/Colbert universe reminds the audience that problems will continue to exist. Furthermore, the Stewart/Colbert universe uses the principles of ironic appropriation to provide the audience with the equipment for living necessary to critique the world around it and make judgments that challenge the normalization of incommensurability in society.

In Chapter I, I argued that the paradox of parody, where parody always reinforces the existence of the original, was not as problematic as it is often assumed to be because a true parodist makes the criticism in the hopes of helping to find solutions to the problem. By focusing on issues and not an issue, Colbert's extended parody is positioned to continue forever. Similarly, the satire of Stewart takes problems facing America through the media and government, allowing Stewart's criticism to develop as new events unfolded. This ever shifting, ever questioning nature of the Stewart/Colbert universe aligns well with the constant critique of ironic appropriation. Someday, Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert will fall out of the spotlight. But

the efforts of the Stewart/Colbert universe have used the logic of ironic appropriation in a way that has successfully constituted an audience with a specific ideological perspective that guides that audience toward judgment. Although *The Daily Show*, *The Colbert Report*, and all related paratexts will cease production at some point, the power of the logic of ironic appropriation has positioned the Stewart/Colbert universe to live on through an active, constituted audience, provided with the equipment for living necessary to support left-leaning political positions for years to come. The audience will create its own paratexts with their own irony, their own intertextual references, and their own interactive elements, because just as the logic of myth drives its constituted audience to create discourse that supported a fixed endpoint, the logic of ironic appropriation drives this audience to constantly question in the hopes of improving politics and society.

Notes

[1] Randee Dawn, "Stephen Colbert: Dog Cruelty to be Linchpin in Presidential Election," *Today*, *MSNBC*, May 4, 2012, http://todayentertainment.today.msnbc.msn.com/ _news/2012/05/04/11527753-stephen-colbert-dog-cruelty-to-be-linchpin-in-presidential-election.

[2] For one critique of the Super PAC, see Colbert I. King, "Stephen Colbert's Unfunny Run for President," The *Washington Post*, January 20, 2012, http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/ stephen-colberts-unfunny-run-for-president/2012/01/20/gIQAyCzWEQ_story.html. Responses to King's column can be found at "Letter to the Editor: Seeing Humor, or Not, in Stephen Colbert's Presidential Prank," The *Washington Post*, January 24, 2012, http://www.washingtonpost.com/ opinions/seeing-humor-or-not-in-stephen-colberts-presidential-prank/2012/01/21/ gIQAHwSLOQ_story.html. Support for the significance of the Super PAC as a prank can be found by Jason Stanford, "POLITICO: Could Colbert's Prank Reform Politics?" *JasonStanford*.org, January 19, 2012, http://jasonstanford.org/2012/01/politico-could-colberts-prank-reform-politics/.

[3] Edwin Black, "The Second Persona," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 56 (April 1970): 113.

[4] See Maurice Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric: The case of the Peuple Québécois," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73 (May 1987); Michael C. McGee, "In Search of 'The People': A Rhetorical Alternative," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 61 (October 1975).

[5] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (New York, NY: Hill & Lang, 1972), 149.

[6] Barthes, *Mythologies*, 146. For a complete discussion of myth and right/left politics see pages 142-156.

[7] McGee, "The People," 246.

[8] Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric," 143-144.

[9] Barthes, *Mythologies*, 142-156.

[10] Barthes, *Mythologies*, 146.

[11] Bill Carter, "Comedy Central Tries to Gauge Passion of Its Viewers," The *New York Times*, August 25, 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/26/business/media/26adco.html?_r=1.

[12] The Colbert Report, "Colbert PAC," *The Colbert Report* video, 3:30, March 30, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/379368/march-30-2011/colbert-pac.

[13] The Colbert Report, "Colbert PAC – Trevor Potter," *The Colbert Report* video, 4:38, March 30, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/379369/march-30-2011/colbert-pac---trevor-potter.

[14] This number is representative of people who have agreed to be part of an email list, not the number of people that made donations to Colbert PAC which had not started raising money yet.

[15] The Colbert Report, "Viacom Ruins Stephen's PAC Dream," *The Colbert Report* video, 3:22, April 14, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/382013/april-14-2011/viacom-ruins-stephen-s-pac-dream.

[16] The Colbert Report, "Colbert Super PAC – Trevor Potter," *The Colbert Report* video, 4:51, April 14, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/382014/april-14-2011/colbert-super-pac---trevor-potter.

[17] The Colbert Report, "Corp Constituency," *The Colbert Report* video, 4:19, May 11, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/386085/may-11-2011/corp-constituency.

[18] The Colbert Report, "Corp Constituency – Trevor Potter," *The Colbert Report* video, 4:40, May 11, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/386086/may-11-2011/corp-constituency---trevor-potter.

[19] The Colbert Report, "Stephen Files Super PAC Request," *The Colbert Report* video, 7:24, May 16, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/386467/may-16-2011/stephen-files-super-pac-request.

[20] The Colbert Report, "Colbert Super PAC – Irresponsible Advertising," *The Colbert Report* video, 3:30, June 29, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/391013/june-29-2011/colbert-super-pac---making-a-better-tomorrow--tomorrow; and The Colbert Report, "Colbert Super PAC – Trevor Potter Preps Stephen for His FEC Hearing," *The Colbert Report* video, 4:21, June 29, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/391014/june-29-2011/trevor-potter-prepares-stephen-for-his-fec-hearing.

[21] The Colbert Report, "Colbert Super PAC – I Can Haz Super PAC!" *The Colbert Report* video, 4:06, June 30, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/391146/june-30-2011/colbert-super-pac---i-can-haz-super-pac-; and The Colbert Report, "Colbert Super PAC – Stephen Addresses Colbert Super Nation," *The Colbert Report* video, 5:11, June 30, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/391147/june-30-2011/colbert-super-pac---stephen-files-his-super-pac-papers---addresses-colbert-nation.

[22] In a brilliant maneuver, Colbert turned these playful names into an extended joke that reflected his parodic performance. One donor, for example, used the false name Suq Madiq, which was funny in its own right, but Colbert took it further by not only praising Suq's ability to see past Colbert's past comments about Muslim Americans, but also for inspiring the support of his mother Munchma Quchi. Colbert would continue to use the fake names in jokes throughout the development of the Super PAC. The Colbert Report, "Colbert Super PAC – The Heroes Respond," *The Colbert Report* video, 4:21, August 4, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/393971/august-04-2011/colbert-super-pac---the-heroes-respond.

[23] The Colbert Report, "Colbert Super PAC – For the Children," *The Colbert Report* video, 3:30, July 28, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/393422/july-28-2011/colbert-super-pac---for-the-children.

[24] Just as the idea for the Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear was likely in place before the Reddit users made the charitable donations, the shift in focus toward finding a purpose was likely not actually inspired by Charlie and Grace's letter. However, the point remains that the audience is able to provide their own criticism and produce their own rhetorical messages through the principle of interactivity, and that criticism was at least aligned with the vision of the Stewart/Colbert universe.

[25] The Colbert Report, "Colbert Super PAC – Matthew Dowd & Ham Rove," *The Colbert Report* video, 5:16, July 28, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/393423/july-28-2011/colbert-super-pac---matthew-dowd---ham-rove.

[26] The Colbert Report, "Colbert Super PAC – The Heroes Respond."

[27] These Tweets were originally recorded at the time of Colbert's request. Since then, the frequency of the use of hashtag #istandfor has fallen and the topic is no longer trending on Twitter. Therefore, no direct link exists. However, a Google search of these and other #istandfor Tweets will reveal many other comments supporting the left-leaning position of the Stewart/Colbert universe.

[28] The word cloud can be viewed on the Colbert Super PAC webpage, http://www.colbertsuperpac.com/wordclouds/index.php.

[29] The Colbert Report, "Colbert Super PAC – Frank Luntz Commits to the PAC," *The Colbert Report* video, 7:09, August 16, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/394777/august-16-2011/colbert-super-pac---frank-luntz-commits-to-the-pac.

[30] The Colbert Report, "Colbert Super PAC – 'Corporations are People,'" *The Colbert Report* video, 2:25, October 24, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/400558/october-24-2011/colbert-super-pac----corporations-are-people-.

[31] The group came up with three suggestions. First, "corporations are humans." Second, "corporations are people, but will they be Chinese people or American people." And third, "People are corporations." See The Colbert Report, "Colbert Super PAC – 'Corporations are People' – Frank Luntz's Focus Group," *The Colbert Report* video, 5:10, October 24, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/400560/october-24-2011/colbert-super-pac----corporations-are-people----frank-luntz-s-focus-group.

[32] Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric," 138.

[33] The Colbert Report, "Buddy Roemer – Pt. 1," *The Colbert Report* video, 4:08, July 28, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/ the-colbert-report-videos/393424/july-28-2011/buddy-roemer-pt--1.

[34] The Colbert Report, "Colbert Super PAC – Rick Perry for President," *The Colbert Report* video, 6:01, August 8, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/394149/august-08-2011/colbert-super-pac---rick-perry.

[35] The Colbert Report, "Colbert Super PAC – Rick Parry with an 'A' for America," *The Colbert Report* video, 5:14, August 11, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/394520/august-11-2011/colbert-super-pac---rick-parry-with-an--a--for-america.

[36] The Colbert Report, "Wisconsin's Recall Election & Americans for Prosperity's Absentee Ballot Typos," *The Colbert Report* video, 2:52, August 4, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/393972/august-04-2011/wisconsin-s-senator-recall-election.

[37] The Colbert Report, "Colbert Super PAC – Confused by Rick Parry with an 'A' for America," *The Colbert Report* video, 5:39, August 11, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/394521/august-11-2011/colbert-super-pac---confused-by-rick-parry-with-an--a--for-america.

[38] Heather L. LaMarre, Kristen D. Landreville, and Michael A. Beam, "The Irony of Satire: Political Ideology and the Motivation to See What You Want to See in *The Colbert Report*," *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 14 (April 2009).

[39] The Colbert Report, "Colbert Super PAC – Trevor Potter & Stephen's Shell Corporation," *The Colbert Report* video, 4:43, September 29, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/398531/september-29-2011/colbert-super-pac---trevor-potter---stephen-s-shell-corporation.

[40] See, for example, David Edwards, "Colbert Explains Rove's 'Money Laundering' Scheme," *The Raw Story*, September 30, 2011, http://www.rawstory.com/rs/2011/09/30/colbert-explains-roves-money-laundering-scheme/; and Peter Grier, "Stephen Colbert vs. Karl Rove: Who's Better at 'Money Laundering'?" *The Christian Science Monitor*, September 30, 2011, http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Elections/Vox-News/2011/0930/Stephen-Colbert-vs.-Karl-Rove-Who-s-better-at-money-laundering.

[41] The Colbert Report, "Colbert Super PAC SHH! – Apology to Ham Rove," *The Colbert Report* video, 6:11, October 6, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/399181/october-06-2011/colbert-super-pac-shh----apology-to-ham-rove.

[42] The Colbert Report, "Colbert Super PAC – Issue Ads," *The Colbert Report* video, 5:22, November 7, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/401673/november-07-2011/colbert-super-pac---issue-ads.

[43] The Colbert Report, "Colbert Super PAC – Issue Ads – Trevor Potter," *The Colbert Report* video, 5:01, November 7, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/401674/november-07-2011/colbert-super-pac---issue-ads---trevor-potter.

[44] The Colbert Report, "Colbert Super PAC – Stephen's South Carolina Referendum," *The Colbert Report* video, 3:19, December 7, 2011, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/403807/december-07-2011/colbert-super-pac---stephen-s-south-carolina-referendum.

[45] The Colbert Report, "Colbert Super PAC – Stephen's South Carolina Referendum."

[46] The Colbert Report, "Colbert Super PAC – Coordination Problem," *The Colbert Report* video, 3:44, January 12, 2012, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/405888/january-12-2012/indecision-2012---colbert-super-pac---coordination-problem.

[47] The Colbert Report, "Colbert Super PAC – GOP Attack Ads & Herman Cain Ad," *The Colbert Report* video, 8:17, January 17, 2012, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/406122/january-17-2012/indecision-2012---gop-attack-ads---colbert-super-pac-s-herman-cain-ad.

[48] The Colbert Report, "Herman Cain's Bittersweet South Carolina Victory," *The Colbert Report* video, 4:17, January 23, 2012, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/406663/january-23-2012/indecision-2012---herman-cain-s-bitter-sweet-south-carolina-victory.

[49] Despite this change, because of the intentionally ridiculousness of this long title I will continue to refer to it as Colbert Super PAC. The Colbert Report, "Colbert Super PAC – Coordinating Resolution with Jon Stewart," *The Colbert Report* video, 7:36, January 12, 2012, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/405889/january-12-2012/indecision-2012---colbert-super-pac---coordination-resolution-with-jon-stewart.

[50] The Colbert Report, "Colbert Super PAC – Mitt Romney Attack Ad," *The Colbert Report* video, 5:02, January 16, 2012, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/405970/january-16-2012/colbert-super-pac---mitt-romney-attack-ad.

[51] It is worth noting that the advertisement is narrated by Jonathan Lithgow, who played a serial killer on *Dexter*. Although this is a subtle intertextual reference, it does mark another way in which the principle of intertextuality is combined to add to the rhetorical message.

[52] The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, "Colbert Super PAC – Not Coordinating with Stephen Colbert," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* video, 8:39, January 17, 2012, http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/tue-january-17-2012/colbert-super-pac---not-coordinating-with-stephen-colbert.

[53] "Is Stephen Colbert Breaking the Law?" *Buzzfeed*, January 17, 2012, http://www.buzzfeed.com/buzzfeedpolitics/is-stephen-colbert-breaking-the-law, ¶ 4-5.

[54] The Colbert Report, "Colbert Super PAC – GOP Attack Ads & Herman Cain Ad."

[55] "Is Stephen Colbert Breaking the Law?"*Buzzfeed*, ¶ 6.

[56] Shortly after the South Carolina primary ended, Stewart returned control of the Super PAC to Colbert.

[57] David Carr, "Comic's PAC is More than a Gag," The *New York Times*, August 21, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/22/business/media/stephen-colberts-pac-is-more-than-a-gag.html?pagewanted=1&_r=3, ¶ 22.

[58] Rachel Leven, "Super-PAC Craze Sweeps the Nation," *The Hill*, February 16, 2012, http://thehill.com/blogs/ballot-box/fundraising/211035-super-pac-craze-sweeps-the-nation, ¶ 10.

[59] The Colbert Report, "Colbert Super PAC – Texan Supporters & Super Fun Pack," *The Colbert Report* video, 7:04, March 29, 2012, http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/411352/march-29-2012/march-29--2012---pt--2.

[60] Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric," 143.

[61] Roderick P. Hart and E. Johanna Hartelius, "The Political Sins of Jon Stewart," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 24 (August 2007): 263-272, 264.

[62] Hart and Hartelius, "The Political Sins of Jon Stewart," 264.

[63] Robert Hariman, "In Defense of Jon Stewart," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 24 (August 2007): 274.

[64] Kenneth Burke, *A Grammar of Motives*, (Berkeley, CA: The University of California Press, 1969), 514; Kenneth Burke, *Attitudes Toward History*, 3rd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 49.

[65] Ian Cutler, *Cynicism from Diogenes to Dilbert* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2005), 36.

[66] Hart and Hartelius, "The Political Sins of Jon Stewart," 265.

[67] Cutler, *Cynicism*, 37.

[68] Hart and Hartelius, "The Political Sins of Jon Stewart," 268.

[69] Hart and Hartelius, "The Political Sins of Jon Stewart," 266.

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