

### Section III Module 1 Response

This essay describes the relationship between parody and political detachment in the former Soviet Union in the late 1970s and 80s and current US mainstream views. More specifically, the article argues that the political and social trends in Eastern Europe at the end of the twentieth century are similar to political and social trends currently in the US.

Stiob is a type of parody where there was a strong link of identification between the subject and the author. It emerged because of the loosening of state control of news after Stalin. It was also successful because it was not openly oppositional. A stiob like media has now become a part of the US. There are several reasons for this including monopolization, political discourse organized by the government, and the normalization of political performance as seen in Jon Stewart or Stephen Colbert.

The first example of stiob during perestroika is of an article that attacks rock bands for advocating for 'bourgeois morality' and the destruction of culture. This is an example of stiob because the author was a member of a rock band. The response to the article was confusion since people were not sure if the author's statements should be supported or if he was making fun of the government. An important aspect of journalism was revealed: someone could easily emulate an ideological statement by following the write format and using several phrases. A similar example happened with NSK artists who created a poster that turned out to be part of Hitler's propaganda. The artist's claimed that they had only seen the poster once but did not know it was part of Hitler's propaganda. This incident continued the dual view that was associated with the rock band article. In another incident, the author of the rock band article went on national television and gave a lecture about how the founders of the Communist Revolution were on drugs and that he had irrefutable evidence. The whole lecture was a joke but it is another example where the comedian made fun of the government without directly attacking it.

The article then goes into some examples of American stiob. He starts with Jon Stewart's the *Daily Show* which is defined as hypernormalization but not stiob. The show is immensely popular among 35 -year- olds and while it makes jokes about the news also provides a commentary of it. One way he does it is by compiling real news clips in a funny way. He did this during the 2008 election and implied that media is obsessed with demographics. But he did not actually say that.

The authors claim, the *Colbert Report*, is stiob. An example of this is that Colbert dramatically 'overidentifies' with news commentary by imitating the style of commentators like Bill O'Reilly. They give an example of an interview Colbert did with O'Reilly where he is trying to imitate his rhetoric and does so in a humorous way. Colbert, who is not a populist, has people believe he is. Another group with similar overidentification is the Yes Men. The group does an impressive job of spreading fake news or impersonating company representatives. The Yes Men used techniques like the ones used in the late Soviet Union.

In the last part of the essay, the authors give their arguments for why stiob is expanding in the US. One reason is the consolidation of production in American media mean there is less capacity to have unique material and everyone uses the same sources. Digitalization has led to a new form of journalism where text is constantly recycled like in the Soviet Union. News organizations also rely on each other and their last argument is that a culture has emerged for liberal politics to be entertainment. The last and final argument is that the collapse of the Soviet Union created an ideological tension in the US. While it existed, it was easy for right wing

ideology to say that life is better here. But with the collapse, liberalism in the US was able to become a 'normal' point-of-view.

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