

Choose a form of  
television comedy  
that is not a sit com  
assignment

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Television studies Comedy is and was all throughout the history of the human culture undoubtedly among the most popular genres In the entertainment Industry overall and especially on the television since it has become one of the favorite recreation alternatives for the modern people. In television, the comedy has taken a solid place from the very beginning of the broadcasting. Probably, it is for this reason that with time, the forms, or types of the comedy have been multiplied and varied to the point, where they become the most numerous among the other entertaining genres.

Also, a lot of genres that are not precisely comedy, often bear some comedy features. Like this, the most popular and wide-spread comedy genres include sitcom, aka situation comedy, sketch comedy, comedy-drama, improvisational comedy, somehow comedy, stand- up comedy, and even animated cartoons. For the reason of the wide popularity of the comedy genre. It is important to research its influence on the audience and understand the factors that make it so loved by the public.

It is significant from the point of view of defining the determinants that later have the power of formation of he cultural, political and social viewpoints of the people who watch comedies. In this paper, one of the most wide-spread forms of the comedy, sketch comedy will be researched in order to understand the influences of it on the deferent aspects of life of people of the American society.

Moreover, investigating the differences between sketch comedies and the sitcom, which Is the other widely popular form of the comedy, will provide an understanding of the different Influences they have on the audience and the

aspects they mostly focus on from the political, social and cultures perspectives. First of all, it is necessary to explain, which place do sketch comedies take in the comedy genre and describe this form on the whole.

This will be necessary in understanding the nature of this form and its conventions, as well as its analysis from the point of view of the other perspectives including political, gender and racial points of view and making fun of the society. As it was mentioned earlier, sketch shows are the popular form of the comedy all over the world. This form of the comedy genre has appeared in the 19th to early 20th centuries and today is very popular in America as a part of the television comedy.

The history of the sketch comedies begins with the vaudeville, where the short humorous scenes were presented to the public for the first time and thus the emergence of a new genre has started. These scenes could be both invented in advance and improvised (Kerr 61). As such, the sketch comedies take their origin from the stage shows, which later passed to the radio and television. This gave the opportunity to raise their popularity through the focusing on the matters that interested the population the most including the major contemporary political and social issues.

Today, the examples of odder sketch comedies include such popular shows as Saturday Night Live also known as SON. The main conventions of the sketch comedies are rather simple. The sketch shows, also known as sketch comedies consist of the number of short separate these terms, they often have common goals while skits, although more traumatized than the sketches, also mock the customs, traditions and the standards of the society.

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Overall, the sketches are the comedy scenes that usually take up from one to ten minutes and are being based on two or three characters.

Sketches can also be individual, when there is only one character in it. There is an interesting fact that differentiates the sketch shows from the other types of the comedy genre. The sketches can be both related to each other and unrelated at all. It was first that the sketches could talk about any topic, and these were commonly different. Later, however, the comic groups started to create the characters that moved from one sketch to the other, which united the sketch show into a single holistic performance.

Today, such a tendency to binding the show to several characters is a mainstream. Moreover, some sketch shows tend to center their plots in the single locality, which also serves as the factor that combines the different sketches into a single story. Moreover, this provides with another opportunity of fully disclosing the facts that serve as the basis for the mockery, which is common for the sketches. Through this, there is a possibility of translating the message of the comic group to the audience that often centers around making fun of the society.

It is obvious that the primary goal of the sketch comedies is to present the public with the comical development of the situation or a character in an original and inventive way (Kerr 9). However, the sketch comedies present the wide opportunities of addressing the most different issues, as well as giving the points of view on the single topic from the different perspectives. As such, it is possible to say that it is this form of the comedy that suits best for making fun of the society overall.

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Moreover, for a deeper analysis of the problem, it is beneficial to turn to the history of the sketch shows once again in order to understand how these possibilities provided by them turned the small hours of the type of the comedy into a must-see event for several generations of the viewers.

Primarily, the sketches were no more than the source of filling the gaps between the more holistic performances, both of the comedy and any other nature. With time, however, the popularity of the specific characters transformed these sketches into the series of comedy scenes that already shaped as the separate performances.

The development of the television and radio in the 20th century has opened a new way for this form of comedy. Of course, at first the sketches did not form as separate shows from the very beginning. They were often part of the variety shows, where they were followed by musical or dancing numbers. Still, the changes that took place within the broadcasting industry all over the world were enormous since they were influenced with the rise of significance of the younger audience (Marx, Consistencies and Becker 26).

This resulted in the increasing of the prominence of the types of the shows that were comparatively little known before, among which the sketch shows took one of the most notable places. This can be referred to the growing popularity of the comedy on the whole, as well as the satirical comedy forms, which made fun of the major problems of the contemporary society. These tendencies were most obvious in the societies of the developed countries, especially of the European and North American.

As such, America represents a good example for explaining the influence of the sketch comedies on the audience and the features that were the has explored its socio-political nature” (Crabber and Outlook 62). As such, in this country, where the freedom of speech and thought has become one of the main values of the society, such a form of comedy that took into account the most common and major problems, could have not been substituted by any other form. The scholars who research this form of the comedy note that the sketch shows in the most cases are satirical, which indicates their sharp political and social nature.

Moreover, “ television sketch comedy deals with issues (such as politics, race, and gender) in ways more direct than other modes of television comedy’ (p. 7). It is for this reason that the sketches tend to simultaneously challenge and reinforce the points of view they critically represent through the recurring characters and different situations. The types of the sketch comedies, however, differ, as well, and there are costly two crucial types that are necessary to outline for a better understanding of the effectiveness of the sketch comedies in criticizing the societal problems.

As such, there is a traditional sketch show that focuses on the comedy without the sharp intention on mockery, which emphasizes a more biting critique and attack of culture” (Mochas 7-8). The last type is actually what characterizes the most popular sketch shows from the end of the 20th and up till 21st century. This popularity can be regarded through the prism of the criticism of the different aspects of life. Among them, there are political

aspects that created the vast opportunities for the comedy groups and social issues, such as exclusively racial and gender problems.

Up until today, the named three areas constitute the biggest part of the sharp mocking within the format of the sketch shows. As such, the comedic tone used for bringing up the complicated political problems that interest the audience creates the predisposition for the popularity of such shows, as well as their high influence on the mentality of the audience. For this reason, there is also yet another point to be added to the discussion, which takes into account the negative feature of the political perspective of the sketch shows.

In addition to the representation of the points of view on the political situation, these shows also formed the specific perception of this situation among the audience (Mochas 34-35). Through the jokes and mockery, the political issues of the sketches can be viewed as propaganda of two different levels. At the first level, it is negating certain political ideology, while, on the second level, it is providing the viewers with the inflicted stereotypes and forming the attitude toward the political power.

While the first level seems to be harmless enough since it is rather close to the main goal of criticism, the second level dwells upon the violation of the free choice, which is not entirely appropriate for the objective television. As such, the political issues that are at the forefront of the attention of the sketch groups have an ambiguous yet commonly strong impact on the audience. The similar situation can be also viewed when analyzing the social issues discussed in these shows, both gender and racial.

According to the researches, the political problems are the “ official center” of the sketch shows while social and cultural issues became the “ unofficial aspects” (Mochas 51). As such, although racial issues were less powerful than political issues, they still have a significant place in the development of the genre as the mockery of the society. The domination of the several racial groups within the society, which is characteristic for the U. S. , can be demonstrated through problems.

The stereotypical ethnic humor has always been part of the comedy sketches, which can be traced back to the traditional entertainment, where they were part of the show. As such, it is obvious that African Americans have to become the minority that was the most often mocked since their emergence as an independent and equal part of the American population has coincided with the development of the sketch comedy genre. This way, the target audience of these shows is narrowed to the white population through the misrepresentation of the African Americans.

The Saturday Night Live is probably among the brightest examples of the sketch comedies that were focused on appealing the tastes of the white population. However, on the other hand, the sketch shows were also used with the different goal, which was actually representing the ethnic minority. The impact of the sketch shows translates the success of these efforts, although it is not possible to say they were not limited by the resistance of the audience to the ruination of the traditional bias.

In addition to the racial humor, there is also another important area necessary to be outlined as the major focus of the sketch shows. The gender

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and sexuality representation in this type of comedy shows are not specifically defined; however, the sketches often refer to numerous gender stereotypes of the society along with the axial bias. Since, for the sketch comedies, it is not rare to utilize the exaggeration in order to achieve the necessary tone of the background for the Joke, the issues of gender inequality and the misrepresentation of the genders are often the topics of mockery.

For the American tradition of the sketch comedy, it is not rare to concentrate on heterosexual masculinity as the marginal perspective prevalent in the society. As such, this tradition is being regarded as laughable through the methods of parody and imitation. This helps to show off the absurd side of the relationship that regard to their normative side. The characters of the sketch shows, as such, take different stances that demonstrate the comic aspect of the “ appropriate” relationship and behaviors of the society.

This, however, also demonstrates the focus of the sketch shows on the audience, as well as it is intended to alleviate the cultural social stress caused by the gender stereotypes of the society. Overall, in comparison to the other forms of the comedy, especially to the other most popular type, a situation comedy aka sitcom, the sketch shows demonstrate different attitude toward the issues raised. Moreover, while sketch comedies are highly dependent on “ the timing of the Jokes,” situation comedies concentrate on the development of the characters, their relationship and the situations (Simonizing 1).

In this regard, the different focus of sketch comedies and sitcoms creates the predisposition for the utilization of the different methods in construction of the humor. For example, the sketch shows demonstrate a much more exaggerated point of views, as well as they often base on the stereotypes and bias, which is not characteristic for the situation comedies. Moreover, the topics of these two types of the comedy usually differ, as well. In this regard, the political background of the sketch comedies, on the contrary to the other types, is a much more common topic.

At the same time, the situation comedies utilize the political issues much less frequently. This is due to the structure of the sketch shows that are being “ composed of several independent segments with less reliance on a cohesive narrative structure than the sitcom, which allows for more chances of the sketch shows in comparison to the situation comedies, which mostly achieve the goal of presenting the humorous situation within the interpersonal relationship. As for the social issues, there are also a lot of differences between the approaches used in sitcoms and the sketch comedy shows from this perspective.

First of all, when comparing the issues of race and ethnicity as they are presented in the sketch shows and in sitcoms, it is impossible to ignore the fact that “ television sketch comedy is guilty of using racial stereotypes with an explicitness and blatancy not found in situation comedy’ (Mochas 52).

While the other comedy forms including sitcoms utilize only the part of the racial issues necessary for the development of the plot (or he “ situation” for the sitcoms), the sketch comedy shows tend to use the stereotypes in their

most extreme manifestations and exaggerate them to the point of ridiculing these social problems.

Similarly, gender stereotypes and inequality are also shown from the magnified perspective, which is inappropriate for the sitcoms, where the focus is made on only slightly overrepresented realism of the situations. However, racial and gender issues are more common in sitcoms than political problems, which makes thus an emphasis on the lives of people without taking into account more global issues that surround them. In this regard, sitcoms seem to be further from reflecting the real-life experience of people while sketch comedies, often basing on exaggerated prejudice, tend to show it with more comprehensive details.

This explains the increased popularity of the sketch comedy shows beginning from the middle and at the end of the 20th century, when the population of the U. S. Has become highly indulged in the social and political life of the country. Also, not surprisingly, such wide spread of the sketch shows resulted in their high social influence, which caused the shift of the points of view of the audience. In conclusion, it is beneficial to note that the comedy genre has always been among the most popular for the audience.

This popularity can be regarded from the point of view of the issues that are being raised in the different forms, beginning from the sketch shows and up to the situational comedies. As such, the political and social issues, which are the characteristic features of the sketch comedy shows, attract the attention of the audience due to their acute nature. Moreover, it is possible to note

that the attention to the politics and different social issues including gender and axial stereotypes is affected by the conventions of the comedy form.

The conventions include few characters, usually two or three, the short time of the sketches that take up to ten minutes maximum and the possibility of unattached nature of the sketches to one another. Taking this into account, while, for situational comedies, it is structurally and topically adherent to focus on the development of the characters, their relationship and situations, the sketch comedy shows concentrate on the issues that are the most significant for the society through parody and imitation.

Moreover, the sketch comedies depend highly on the methods of exaggeration and overstatement of the reality, which are intended to specify the thought of the actor and thus often serve as the primary characteristic of the sketches. According to these features, sketch shows tend to have several functions otherwise than simply entertaining the public. They are often informative and opinion shaping to the point of propaganda, as well as they commonly serve for alleviation of the social tension. Popularity among the contemporary viewers. Works Cited Crabber, Glen and Outlook, John.