

Abstract

This thesis focuses on the origins of *The Office*, characterises the comedy series that preceded its creation, and examines the show's influence on later mockumentaries. The main link between the chapters is the phenomenon of humour and its treatment by the sub-genre of mockumentary. The aim of the thesis is to define the differences between *The Office* and other selected comedy series and to identify how *The Office*, as a watershed in comedy, influenced later mockumentary work. The thesis examines three separate influences; the influence on the genre of comedy, the influence on narrative style and the influence on the treatment of social issues. The main methods used to achieve the stated aim are observation, comparison and content analysis. Among the most important results of the thesis is the finding that *The Office* series had a revolutionary effect on the concept of the comedy genre, as it broke away from the established formula of 1990s television comedy series, which mainly relied on humour in the form of traditional jokes. *The Office* works primarily with awkward situational humor. The popularisation of the mockumentary sub-genre, which was the driving force behind *The Office*, brought a more pronounced use of its distinctive elements into later work, which influenced the way the creators presented the story to the viewer. Furthermore, it has been shown here, through specific examples, that the mockumentary form allows for the unconventional filming and humorous presentation of stories from often seemingly unattractive backgrounds, controversial topics or topics on the fringes of social interest to society. In this respect, the contribution of *The Office* series is unquestionable.