

Humorist Study

Analysis:

For my two humorists I chose to study the styles of Sasha Baron Cohen, particularly in his mockumentary “Borat” and the stand up comedian, John Mulaney in his “Baby J” stand up special. Both of these comedians are influential to their generations in different ways. Sasha Baron Cohen is known as a comedian that has no boundaries and will put himself in dangerous, funny, confusing, and scary situations to get his point across. In his Mockumentary film “Borat,” Cohen utilizes satire as his primary genre of comedy, and makes fun of real life situations to shed light on the reality of how people truly behave and complex social situations. He uses black humor to push the boundaries and use shock value as a way to keep the audience engaged. Cohen also utilizes Slapstick humor by showcasing various scenes of absurd physical comedy. Sasha Baron Cohen uses many subgenres of comedy but the one I admire the most is his commitment to the character he plays using character immersion. In “Borat” he never breaks character so much so that the people in this film (who are unaware they are in a film) believe he is who he says he is. For my project I want to draw from his style of comedy by making my main characters so unbelievably clueless and characterized that the audience forgets they are characters and not real. I also want to emulate some of the satirical wit he uses in his jokes that usually make fun of one political party.

Contrastingly, John Mulaney focuses on real-life story telling, anecdotes, and wit. I admire John Mulaney a lot, because his style of stand-up comedy is so unique. His stand-up style utilizes a lot of storytelling and anecdotes, setting up his story for the climax or punchline. Many of his stories include blue, black and absurd humor. In his comedy special “Baby J” he tells various personal stories that are so absurd while making fun of himself that it makes the stories feel relatable and real. He touches on dark subjects like his drug addiction, rehab, and divorce, all while utilizing wordplay and puns to keep the vibe light. For my comedy project I want to utilize fiction storytelling in a similar way that he does by providing context and anecdotes. Using this style of comedy makes the audience feel engaged, seen, and makes the story feel more relatable.

In conclusion, these two comedians inspire me greatly in their different ways and I believe them both to be one of the most influential comedians of all time. Cohen has pushed the boundaries of comedy and revolutionized satire mockumentaries. Mulaney is one of the most successful stand up comedians of our time by using anecdotes and storytelling, he makes the audience feel like they are present in his stories.

Reflection:

Ever since I was little I've always loved comedy. I grew up watching The Simpsons every Sunday with my dad. I've sat on our big red sofa and indulged in stand-up comedians from all around the world. I've watched Friends, followed it up with South Park, and washed it down with the Life of Brian. Watching a broad range of comedy from a young age has heavily affected my development. I find myself to be a person that brings comedy into parts of my daily life that don't see a lot of comedy. When I am sad, I cope with humor, when I aim to impress someone I rely on my wit, when I want to diffuse a situation I make a self-deprecating joke. Through comedy, I have learned to further engage in social situations and make new friends.

Similarly, from humor I have found a comfort that I could rely on. Comedy is a genre that never fails to put a smile on my face, teach me something I didn't know before, and ultimately make me feel seen. Comedy has the power to be one of the most influential teachers of our time. When combining comedy with current social context, you create an easy to digest and understand work that also reflects on important issues.

When I reflect back on the pieces of media that have changed me, taught me something, and made me cry, they all contain one common denominator: comedy. Although comedy is often devalued as a genre I believe it is one of the most powerful tools for communication. When I reflect on the media I've consumed that combines social issues with comedy I think of Borat, Jojo Rabbit, and Eighth Grade. These films shed light on complex subjects such as sexual assault, war, racism, and homophobia all while using humor.

Along with humor that reflects societal issues, I also heavily value situational humor and blue humor. From these genres of comedy I've learned about all different walks of life with a smile on my face. From SNL to Gilmore Girls to Sex and the city, these different situations have made me laugh and learn about things deemed 'taboo'. Blue humor touches on subjects that many are afraid to discuss. Blue humor destigmatizes subjects that are often deemed offensive when in reality are apart of everyday life such as sex, bodily fluids, etc. I value this genre and was glad I watched blue humor growing up because it made me view these subjects as talking points instead of untouchable topics. I was raised with humor and I wouldn't have it any other way

Proposal:

- homemade vlog mockumentary about an old southern married “white trash” couple trying to find bigfoot
- We will have cut interviews in between
- We will have bloopers at the end
- Luiza Rufeisen and Tegan Parket-Morris
- We plan to film at Westwind Park at night and Tegan's Room
- We plan to get absurd southern style outfits at party city
- The genres of humor we want to use: Farce, Absurd, Slapstick, Caricature, Unspoken truth, Blue humor