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The elements of parody in *'Allo 'Allo!*

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Z á s a d y p r o v y p r a c o v á n í :

Student se ve své bakalářské práci zaměří na prvky parodie v britském komediálním seriálu Haló, Haló. Student bude nejprve charakterizovat parodii jako žánr, jeho vývoj, definici a především postmoderní chápání parodie. Dále provede kulturně-historickou analýzu období 2. světové války, jejího vlivu na britskou veřejnost i částí společnosti, které figurují jako typologické postavy ve zmíněném komediálním seriálu. Konfrontace kulturně-historických faktů s jejich parodickým filmovým zpracováním bude tvořit těžiště literární analýzy. Student vytvoří analytický akademický text založený na dostatečném množství kvalitních primárních a sekundárních zdrojů.

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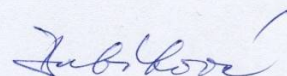
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Souhlasím s prezenčním zpřístupněním své práce v Univerzitní knihovně.

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ANNOTATION

This thesis aims to identify the elements of parody in the popular British sitcom *'Allo 'Allo!*. It introduces the genre of parody and its development from ancient times to postmodernism and the development of British sitcom. Consequently, it focuses on the period of the Second World War, mainly from French and British points of view, as it is the main setting of the sitcom.

KEYWORDS

'Allo 'Allo!, parody, sitcom, Second World War, French resistance

ANOTACE

Tato bakalářská práce se snaží identifikovat prvky parodie ve známém britském komediálním seriálu *Haló, Haló!*. Představuje parodii jako žánr, její vývoj od starověku po modernismus a také vývoj britské situační komedie. Dále se zaměřuje na období Druhé světové války, hlavně z pohledu Francie a Británie, jelikož se jedná o prostředí, v němž se seriál odehrává.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Haló, Haló!, parodie, situační komedie, Druhá světová válka, francouzský odboj

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Introduction

The genre of parody has become rather popular nowadays, especially when it is displayed in sitcoms. This thesis aims to discover the parodic elements in the popular British situational comedy *'Allo 'Allo!*, which was broadcast between the years 1982 and 1992. The setting of the sitcom is set in the period of the Second World War in the small town of Nouvion, France, and the elements of parody are analysed primarily in contrast with the real events and characters of the War, although some non-war themes are discussed as well. In order to properly address parody, it is introduced as a postmodern genre, even though the origins of parody are not omitted. In addition, to successfully analyse the elements of parody in *'Allo 'Allo!*, it was crucial to approach the sitcom carefully, utilizing the knowledge gained from the theoretical background.

Initially, the theoretical part addresses parody as an ancient genre, its evolution throughout the ages, from ancient times to Modernism, and its influence in history. The second part of the first chapter deals specifically with the issue of parody as a genre, which is hard to specify. It summarises the definitions of various authors and tries to clarify the confusion concerning parody as much as possible. In addition, the contrast with satire, which is often mistaken for parody, is discussed in the chapter. At the end of the first chapter, a possible short definition of parody is provided, although it is only a speculation and it may not be entirely correct.

The second chapter continues to discuss parody from the postmodern point of view. This chapter introduces various approaches to postmodernism and the genre of parody, as well as its comparison to modernist parody. Similar to the confusion of parody and satire in the first chapter is a resemblance between postmodernist parody and pastiche, which is also discussed in this part. Furthermore, the famous postmodern authors, that use parodic elements, are introduced in order to demonstrate that parody is present in every art. The rest of this chapter is meant to show the usage of parody in sitcoms. This is accomplished by presenting the techniques, which are used to evoke parody, and by demonstrating the parodic themes on different examples.

The following part of the thesis serves as an introduction to British sitcoms. It describes its origins and its development, as well as its definition and description of a prototypical sitcom. The subsequent paragraphs introduces *'Allo 'Allo!*, its plot and main characters. Additionally, it discusses the differences between the show and a typical British sitcom.

Finally, the last chapter starts with the introduction of the historical and cultural analysis of the Second World War, specifically from the British and French points of view. This serves as a background for the sitcom, as it is set in France during the War. The last paragraphs aim to highlight the elements of parody in the sitcom. The elements are presented on specific examples, such as scenes, characters and themes from the sitcom. These examples should provide a contrast of the historical events and characters, and its television adaptation.

1. Parody

Parody has become a very popular genre in a modern culture. It is part of people's everyday lives. While it began as a theatrical genre, it has gradually appeared in literature and nowadays parody is a popular art used in film, television series, music, architecture and even dance. In order to properly analyse parody, its development throughout the ages should be traced.

Although it is generally known that parody originated in ancient Greece, only little remains of the original plays. As Dentith mentions, the only complete plays containing parody are those of Aristophanes, as the others are either lost or fragmented. However, as Dentith further explains, it is significantly difficult to define what form the ancient parody had, mainly because of the chaotic translations of the ancient texts as well as the insufficient knowledge of the other works, which were fragmented or lost. (Dentith, 2000, pp. 39-40) *Parody: Dimensions and Perspectives* further claims that the word *parodia* (explained further in the text) was first used by Aristotle (350 BC), who used it to describe the works of Hegemon of Thasos, who is therefore considered as the first parodist. The book then speculates that parody might be even older, however, no earlier works have survived. Aristotle saw parody as an adaptation of an epic verse, for example *Odyssey* by Homer. (*Parody: Dimensions and Perspectives*, 1997, p. 3) Dentith also adds that poetic competitions featuring parody were held. The only poem, which has survived is the *Batrachomyomachia*, or *Battle of the Frogs and Mice*. (Dentith 2000, 10) Even though majority of the works have been lost in time, it is also known that many tragic plays, often considered as trilogies, were in fact written as tetralogies, where the last part was a satirical play with parodic elements as is stated by Dentith. (Dentith, 2000, p. 40)

Parody can also be traced throughout the period of the Roman Empire. Dentith mentions that parody played a central role in both Greek and Roman culture. (Dentith, 2000, p. 40) A famous Roman author and philosopher Seneca is given as an example of an early

parodist. Dentith presents Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis*, which was written shortly after Emperor Claudius had deceased. Seneca makes fun of the late Emperor through the means of parody. (Dentith, 2000, p. 48)

By the time of middle ages, parody had also settled in a Christian culture. Medieval parody chose an interesting topic, which is best described by Dentith: "What perhaps seems most surprising about medieval parodic forms is that they are focused on the most sacred texts of the culture, namely the Bible and the liturgy." (Dentith, 2000, p. 50) What can be even more astonishing is the fact that these parodic texts were written by clergy and for clergy and were not meant for common populace. Bayless provides the evidence when pointing out that the authors of the texts were familiar with Scripture, theology, and the Church. (Bayless, 1996, p. 177)

While searching history for the traces of parody, one must certainly stop at Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote*. The work itself is often considered as the first European novel, however, it has more to offer. According to Dentith, *Don Quixote* is full of parody: "It begins with series of parodies in the 'Preliminary Verses' prefixed to the novel itself, and it proceeds by means of parodies of the language, conventions and incidents of the chivalric romances it is attacking, while also taking in parody of pastoral and, indeed, of 'high' style more generally." (Dentith, 2000, p. 57)

In the 19th century, parody managed to enormously attract people's attention. Encyclopædia Britannica Online states that in 1812 the first collection of parodies, *Rejected Addresses* by Horace and James Smith, scored a wide success in England. (Encyclopædia Britannica Online, 2013) Parody is also tightly connected with English nonsensical authors such as Lewis Carroll and Edward Lear. Dentith additionally claims that parody may have even given birth to the traditional English nonsense literature. (Dentith, 2000, p. 38) In some cases, parody even emerged to save other works. As Encyclopædia Britannica Online states, the parodies of Carroll and Lear helped in preserving some of the parodied verses, which would not have survived otherwise. (Encyclopædia Britannica Online, 2013)

The popularity of parody that started in the 19th century had not subsided in the 20th century. The genre was still evolving and authors tried to invent various form of parody. For example, Korkut mentions Max Beerbohm's work *A Christmas Garland*, which is a book of various Christmas themes, each written in a style of a different contemporary author. Beerbohm thus managed to parody up to eighteen authors, including Rudyard Kipling, H.G. Wells and Joseph Conrad. (Korkut, 2009, p. 58) Another innovative technique was used by Sir John Squire between the World Wars. According to Encyclopædia Britannica Online, the

style was called double parody and it consisted of expressing the thoughts of one author in the style of another author: "... e.g., Squire's version of Thomas Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* written in the style of Edgar Lee Masters' *Spoon River Anthology* resulted in *If Gray Had Had to Write His Elegy in the Cemetery of Spoon River Instead of in That of Stoke Poges*." (Encyclopædia Britannica Online, 2013)

While there is still the matter of postmodern parody to be discussed, the rest of this chapter will deal with the characterisation of parody as such. The analysis of postmodern parody will be provided in the next chapter, as it is directly connected with parody in sitcoms, which is also the subject matter of the following chapter.

The Online Etymology Dictionary states that the term parody was first used by Ben Jonson in 1590s. The term emerged from Greek *parodia*, which means burlesque song or poem. (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2012) According to Hutcheon, most parody theorists follow this etymological statement and do not continue to pursue the deeper meaning of the word. (Hutcheon, 2000, p. 32) That feels completely incorrect, especially when Hutcheon offers a detailed analysis of the word. She separates the word into two parts: *odos*, meaning song and *para*, for which she states two possible meanings. The first one is "counter" or "against" and thus it symbolizes an opposition or contrast between texts. The other meaning is "beside", which suggests an accord of intimacy instead of a contrast. Hutcheon further claims that this second meaning is usually neglected and forgotten and thus decreases an insight into parody. (Hutcheon, 2000, p. 32) However, Hutcheon is not the only author, who perceives parody as something more than just a simple definition. Rose mentions that the ancient heritage of the word is often omitted, and presents an entry in *Oxford English Dictionary*, which states that parody is a burlesque poem or song. In Rose's opinion, this claim is outdated and comes from the 18th century definition of parody. She further says that the very term 'burlesque' is inappropriate to define parody, as it is a more modern word and it has emerged from different terms. (Rose, 1993, p. 5)

Nevertheless, the historical context is not the only problem Rose describes as faulty when trying to describe parody. According to her, the analysis of parody is often restricted by a number of its aspects. While the etymology is greatly discussed, other terms, such as comic aspects, the attitude of the parodist to the work parodied and the reader's reception of it, can be used to analyse parody. Rose also highlights that examining only one aspect is incorrect and that all of them should be investigated. (Rose, 1993, p. 5)

As could be seen in aforementioned paragraphs, defining parody is certainly not an easy task. Even more confusion arise as many dictionaries and authors tend to characterise

parody as a completely different genre. Such examples, as mentioned by Hutcheon, are pastiche, burlesque, travesty, plagiarism, quotation, allusion and mainly satire. (Hutcheon, 2000, p. 25) It is specifically satire that should be distinguished from parody, as most people seems to mix the two terms and parody is sometimes even described as a subordinate term of satire. Rose presents a possible explanation why the confusion emerged. She says parody was widely used by satirists since the ancient times. (Rose, 1993, p. 83) Therefore, someone must have misinterpreted parody as a part of satire and the claim have been maintained throughout the history. Many authors oppose this claim. For example, Ziva Ben-Porat (1979) in Hutcheon provides a detailed differentiation of the two terms:

Parody is alleged representation, usually comic, of a literary text or other artistic object – i.e. a representation of a “modelled reality,” which is itself already a particular representation of an original “reality.” The parodic representations expose the model’s conventions and lay bare its devices through the coexistence of the two codes in the same message.

While on the other hand, the satire is described as:

A critical representation, always comic and often caricatural, of “non-modelled reality,” i.e. of the real objects (their reality may be mythical or hypothetical) which the receiver reconstructs as the referents of the message. The satirised original “reality” may include mores, attitudes, types, social structures, prejudices, and the like. (Hutcheon, 2000, p. 49)

In epitome, parody only tries to reproduce another piece of work, while satire adds a critique of some real events. Rose tries to distinguish between parody and satire as well. She writes that parody is directly dependent on the parodied work, while satire is not restricted by such boundaries. (Rose, 1993, p. 81)

Although parody has existed for centuries, its definition has not stayed the same. As Hutcheon says, there are no transhistorical definitions of parody because its meaning constantly changes. Parody changes throughout ages and culture, with its forms and its relations to the audience and parody in contemporary North America is not the same one which existed in eighteen-century England. (Hutcheon, 2000, pp. xi; 32) Her claim is supported by Dentith, who says that parody had a long and complicated history and it acquired various meanings as it changed. (Dentith, 2000, p. 11) Parody also serves as a kind of a bridge between history and the present, as is suggested by Hutcheon, it links the modern to the postmodern, it is an inscription of the past in the present. (Hutcheon, 2000, p. xii)

In order to further prove how difficult it is to characterise parody, the definition from a *Dictionary of Literary Theory* is presented:

A literary genre imitating and caricaturing a specific literary work or type of literary works by accentuating its typical features and usually even its confrontation with elements that are not poetically accepted in the parodied work. Parody is, therefore, in genre system situated on a different level than all other genres. Parody is not characterised as a genre with specific attributes, such as lyricism, epic character, drama, extent, topic, composition and other things, it, contrarily, adopts these qualities from the work it imitates. Therefore, it cannot be described and characterised on its own, but only in a relation to imitated works. That is why history of parody is, instead of a continuous developing line of the genre, abbreviated and simplified history of the whole literature.¹ (Vlašín, 1977)

This definition supports the statement of Hutcheon that parody is a kind of a literary link. Dentith tries to provide a simplified definition of parody as well: "Parody should be thought of, not as a single and tightly definable genre or practice, but as a range of culture practices which are all more or less parodic." (Dentith, 2000, p. 19) This coincides with the definition from the *Dictionary of Literary Theory* that it cannot be characterised on its own. Dentith then continues his definition: "The range of available parodic forms (and the names that they go under) varies dramatically from period to period, in a way that challenges any schema of definitions." (Dentith, 2000, p. 19)

Eventually, there must come a question such as "what then, is parody?" The answer is simple, but may be unsatisfactory for some. Parody lacks any clear explanation or definition. As is mentioned in foregoing paragraphs, parody is directly affected by the work it parodies, therefore it retains features of every possible genre that has appeared so far, as nothing seemed to escape the parodist's minds. Of course, some dictionary definitions may be used, such as those from Online Etymology Dictionary and, as is mentioned by Rose (Rose, 1993, p. 5), Oxford English Dictionary, however, these definitions scarcely suffice if one actually wants to provide a resourceful explanation of the term. One possible solution may be to identify parody by disposing of everything parody is not. Some examples, provided by Hutcheon (Hutcheon, 2000, p. 25) in the text, are satire, pastiche, burlesque, travesty, plagiarism, quotation and allusion. People often tend to confuse the terms, even though they are only related. Still, if one truly wanted to use the most appropriate definition, it would probably be the following one: "Parody is a style (literary, theatrical, musical, cinematic, etc.) which recreates the original parodied work in its own humorous way."²

To summarise this chapter, it initially dealt with the brief periodization of parody, from ancient times to modernism, where it discussed the presumed birth of the genre in ancient Greece and how it evolved and influenced the literature later in the 19th century, when

¹ translated from Czech by the author

² based on author's research - only a speculation

it managed to preserve the parodied work. Thereafter, the chapter continued by analysing parody as such. Going through different examples, it provided an insight into the difficulties of parody interpretation, as many dictionaries and authors tend to use the wrong definitions. As an example, the confusion of parody with satire, pastiche, burlesque, travesty, plagiarism, quotation and allusion is presented. Finally, the possible definition of parody is discussed at the end of the chapter. Although the term itself cannot be properly characterised, the appropriate suggestion is presented.

To complement the periodization of the term, the next chapter will be dealing with the postmodern parody. It is separated from the periodization in this part of the paper, as the following chapter will also include the parody in sitcoms, which is directly connected with postmodernism.

2. Postmodern parody, parody in sitcoms

It is highly appropriate to deal with postmodern parody separately, as it has become something different compared with the earlier parody. Postmodernism brought about the rise of popular culture, and contemporary parody benefits from it greatly. Docker in Dentith said the following: "Parody does indeed characterise postmodern culture, but its source is in popular culture." (Dentith, 2000, p. 158) Therefore, all of the three terms seems to be directly connected with the each other.

While parody had predominantly remained a literary and theatrical genre since the ancient times, nowadays it has penetrated every possible corner of culture. Parody is used in song lyrics, books, movies, TV shows and its traces can even be found in videogames. Because of the fact that parody has essentially become a part of popular culture, it is ever-present and well-known to every individual. This is also the reason why postmodern parody should be treated individually, as it switched its focus from high culture to popular culture and thus, it has become such a popular genre. This statement is supported by the claim of Docker in Dentith, which clearly states that postmodernism enables people to appreciate the role of parody in popular culture, while the high-cultural modernism did not manage this. (Dentith, 2000, p. 157)

The change that occurred in parody is addressed by some in an interesting manner. For example, Hassan in Rose describes postmodern parody as 'insane' and further characterises it as a form, which opposes modernist experimentalism. (Rose, 1993, p. 208) As can be seen from the claims of both Docker and Hassan, postmodern parody is often compared with its

modernist counterpart. In addition, according to Sontag in Rose, parody has changed its function. She states that parody demonstrates its form rather than the content of the work, as opposed to some modernist descriptions of parody. (Rose, 1993, p. 209) Parody has therefore become a postmodern form, as is proved by Jencks in Rose: "One of the virtues of parody, beside its wit, is its mastery of cliché and convention, aspects of communication which are essential to postmodernism." (Rose, 1993, p. 243)

One possible characteristic of postmodern parody, and its distinction from parody modern, is discussed by Rose. She claims that while pre-modern parody contained both comic and meta-fictional aspects, modern parody discarded those two terms. However, postmodern parody can again be distinguished as either comic or meta-fictional or a combination of both. Yet, as Rose further argues, the definition of postmodern parody as comic and meta-fictional cannot suffice, for it is seen as restricting. Therefore, it is essential to approach postmodern theory considering the problematic definitions in the past. (Rose, 1993, pp. 277-278) This claim is supported by the problems encountered in the previous chapter, where the inability to clearly characterise parody was discussed. The issue of contemporary parody is further addressed by Dentith:

It is necessary to distinguish between, say, Malcolm Bradbury and Antonia Byatt, or between Salman Rushdie and Peter Carey, so too distinctions need to be preserved among the parodic practices of popular culture. Some of this parody is sharply directed at deflating self-importance, and is politically and socially pointed and telling. Other parody, meanwhile, is done simply for the fun of it. There is no general politics of parody; you cannot decide in advance whether it seeks to contain the new or to deflate the old. Equally, at the level of popular culture, no general decisions can be made in advance about the cultural value of parody. (Dentith, 2000, p. 185)

This definition shows that there is no such term as a 'general parody', even in postmodernism. Parody simply follows the parodied content, as was suggested in the previous chapter, and therefore its final shape depends on the original work.

By some, postmodern parody is seen as a kind of a bridge between literature levels as well. For instance, Rose states that some authors see parody as a device, which closes the gap between the high and the low, in other words the elite and the popular, by bringing the high low. (Rose, 1993, p. 214) This statement proves parody to be a successful device of postmodernism, as Dentith further adds that the very function of postmodernism was to erase any boundaries between high and popular culture. However, he adds that contemporary parody is not only parody of the high by the low, because one comedian parodies another, just like pop musicians and disc jockeys remix each other. (Dentith, 2000, pp. 160;184) Therefore, it is also parody of the low by the low.

In the previous chapter, pastiche was mentioned as one of the styles, which are often confused with parody. According to some authors, postmodern parody is very close to postmodern pastiche, even though there are slight, but important, differences. Jameson in Rose describes the contrasting terms clearly:

Pastiche is like parody, the imitation of a peculiar or unique style, the wearing of a stylistic mask, speech in a dead language: but it is a neutral practice of such mimicry, without parody's ulterior motive, without the satirical impulse, without laughter, without that still latent feeling that there exists something *normal* compared to which what is being imitated is rather comic. Pastiche is blank parody, parody that has lost its sense of humour. (Rose, 1993, p. 222)

Dentith also tries to separate the two terms, although on the other hand, he distinguishes pastiche from parody by the absence of anything critical of the original text. (Dentith, 2000, p. 155) Therefore, according to both definitions, pastiche can be described as a parody without its essential parts, only a hollow shell.

While speaking about postmodern parody, its authors should not be omitted. One of the great contemporary parodists and literary theorists, as introduced by Rose, is Malcolm Bradbury. He uses a kind of a 'double parody', bringing together C. P. Snow's Lewis Eliot and Kingsley Amis' Jim Dixon in a single story, *An Extravagant Fondness for the Love of Women*, in an unexpected and comic manner. His other interesting parody, *Why come to Slaka?*, does not parody a piece of high literature, but simply certain travel guides' naïve use of legends. (Rose, 1993, pp. 259-260) Some other artists that use parody elements in their works are mentioned by Dentith, for example Alasdair Gray (especially his work *Lanark*), John Barth, Salman Rushdie and Jonathan Coe as novelists, Portoghesi and Philip Johnson in architecture, Tony Harrison in poetry and Andy Warhol or Gilbert and George in art. (Dentith, 2000, p. 160)

Although parody is used to entertain, some boundaries should be preserved. Dentith states that even though it is all right to parody religion or the Royal Family nowadays, some limits concerning sacred topics are to be maintained. As an example, he mentions Salman Rushdie and his *Satanic Verses*. Muslim extremists marked the book as blasphemous to their religion and Rushdie must have gone into hiding. (Dentith, 2000, p. 163) Something similar happened to the creators of the American cartoon *South Park*, Matt Stone and Trey Parker. For their 200th special episode, they chose the topic of Muhammad's untouchability by media. Even though the prophet himself remained hidden in the episode (he was shown in a bear costume), his name was heard several times. Again, Muslims started to threaten the creators, although they said it was a prediction rather than threat. Comedy Central, a broadcasting

company which airs South Park, had to make special precautions, thus in the next episode, everything concerning Muhammad was censored, including the final minute-long scene. (Itzkoff, *The New York Times*, 22.3. 2010)

This last paragraph about parody contains some predictions of its future. It seems that parody will not fade and it will continue to evolve. Rose comments on the contributions parody has brought to literature and art so far and predicts that it will keep on contributing because of its creative power. (Rose, 1993, p. 284) Dentith also sees the future of parody in contribution, as he describes parody as a force which will continue the conversation, even though in a loud and offensive way, accompanied by laughter. (Dentith, 2000, p. 189)

As the theoretical analysis of parody is complete, the rest of the chapter, as well as the following chapter, will be dealing with sitcoms, even though parody will still be present as it is an essential part of situational comedies.

Definitely, the most common way people discover parody nowadays is through media. Some famous representatives in literature and art were already mentioned earlier in the chapter, however, contemporary media are full of other famous parodists. Weird Al Yankovic can serve as the best example of a musical parodist. He, for example, recreated Michael Jackson's single *Bad* into his own *Fat*, by both imitating the song and its corresponding video.

Not even film industry was spared the parodic disgrace. According to Johnson, first movie parodies were based on the classic horror movies of 1930s, like *Frankenstein* or *Dracula*. It seems that so many horror films were made that audiences could not take them seriously any longer. That is why film-makers started with their parodies. (Johnson, 2011) Even though the genre started as parodies of another specific genre, more recent parodies, such as *Scary Movie* series and *Hot Shots*, use multiple other sources, which are then recreated into a parody.

Although the theme of parody is quite common in movies, another, also visual, entertainment uses parody perhaps the most of all. Situation comedy³ is full of real life, as well as fictional, references that are rarely depicted seriously.

Perhaps in every art there are some techniques used to highlight each of those arts function. The same goes with parody in sitcoms. There are, according to Sturtevant, six techniques how parody is portrayed in television. The first one is reiteration which is a process by which the parody establishes its connection to the source, using, for example, horses to evoke the western, handheld cameras to evoke the documentary, and so on. The

³ sitcoms are further discussed in the next chapter

second one, inversion, is a way of using an element of the source text in an ironic way, so that it means the opposite of its intended meaning. The third technique is called misdirection. It is a process by which the conventions of the source text are used to create a set of expectations in the spectator, which are then reversed or transformed by the parody. The fourth method, referred to as literalization, takes a naïve approach to the source text, as though it were readable only literally and not through the lens of convention. This process can be applied to narrative elements, as in *Robin Hood: Men in Tights* (1993) when Robin cries out to the crowd "Lend me your ears," at which point the crowd starts throwing actual ears at him. Extraneous inclusion, which is the fifth method, uses elements that do not belong in a conventional generic image in order to render it strange. For instance, a scene in *Hot Shots* shows an Indian settlement with a buffalo and teepee. That image is then made strange through the extraneous inclusion of a doorbell on the teepee and pink bunny slippers on the protagonist. The last one is exaggeration. It takes an aspect of the source and renders it absurd through excessive emphasis. This technique can apply to simple objects, like the enormous helmet worn by the character Dark Helmet (Rick Moranis) in *Spaceballs* (1987). (Sturtevant, 2013) It is clear then that visual parody can and wants to be seen, however, to fully acknowledge the form, one must have certain knowledge of the original.

In order to further specify how parody is used in sitcoms, the subsequent paragraphs will depict the most common parodied themes. For this purpose, specifically chosen sitcoms will be used as examples in order to demonstrate the parodied themes.

As the politics and politicians are the part of everyday life, they are often subjects of parody. Especially US presidents are often present in English and American parodies. In an American cartoon show *Futurama*, Richard Nixon appears in many episodes throughout the whole sitcom. What is parodied most about him is his way of speech. Together with his comical articulation, he also makes a weird 'arooo' sound in nearly every sentence.

Famous people, or celebrities, cannot escape journalists, nor can they avoid to be parodied. Even though many of them appear in a sitcom willingly, others are not so lucky. For example, even Michael Jackson's death was not sacred to the *South Park*'s creators. Jackson was depicted as a little girl stuck in an adult body, who is unable to leave this world until he wins a 'little miss' competition. (*South Park*, S13E08)

One of the most common themes of parody is parody of another media, including books, films, television shows and video games. As parody of literature has become traditional throughout the ages, it is not surprising that it has also settled in sitcoms. Together with parodies of aforementioned pastimes, book parodies remain quite popular. The whole

story of William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* was reproduced in a humorous way in a popular American sitcom – *The Simpsons*. (*The Simpsons*, S13E14)

Many sitcoms take place in a specific setting and the most common ones are family and workplace. The life in these settings is constantly being parodied as well. The typical example of a sitcom containing parody of family is *The Simpsons*, while workplace is a main setting in the British sitcom from a bookshop – *Black Books*.

Stereotypes are an infinite source of inspiration for parodies. Stereotypes are most visible in *The Simpsons*, where police officers are obese and eat doughnuts, Middle Eastern men are store cashiers, celebrities drink and take drugs, mafia members are Italians, etc.

Minorities and nationalities is a category that could be characterised as being very similar to stereotypes, as the stereotypes concerning minorities and nationalities are often parody subjects. In an episode of *The Simpsons*, Japan is depicted as a nation of technology and intelligence, however, Japanese are parodied as crazy people. (*The Simpsons*, S10E23)

Religion is a favourite topic of parodies as well, although, as mentioned before, some boundaries should be maintained. Two sitcoms can be mentioned to contain the most references to religion, *The Simpsons* and *South Park*. Both shows are predominantly focused on Christianity, although other religions are included as well.

Sitcoms often tend to recreate various historical events and periods, such as World War II or even earlier ones. *The Simpsons*, for example, retold a story of Mayflower and her voyage to America in its own comic way. (*The Simpsons*, S17E18) These themes can probably best characterise parody in sitcoms. It is obvious that the transition of the genre from literature to television has brought many changes and new possibilities. Furthermore, sitcom creators do not spare anyone or anything that can be parodied.

This chapter continued to characterise the term parody, complementing it by analysing postmodern parody. Most of the characterisation was provided by different authors' approach to the postmodern term. In addition, the difference between modern and postmodern parody was discussed, as some authors see it important to differentiate the terms. Then, the contrast of parody and pastiche had to be analysed, as pastiche is often compared to parody, in a similar way as satire, and it is important to separate the terms. Furthermore, the importance of parody was discussed, as it is seen as a device that closed the gap between the high and the low. Additionally, some well-known parody authors were introduced in order to complement the characterisation of the genre. However, parody was also presented as a dangerous tool, as it can touch a topic too sensitive for some people. Salman Rushdie can be mentioned as an example, as he is constantly being persecuted by Muslims, who blame him for desecrating

their religion. Eventually, both Rose and Dentith trust that parody will remain a powerful tool in the future.

The rest of the chapter tried to highlight how parody is portrayed in sitcoms. Initially, some parody techniques are presented, followed by the most common topics that exist in sitcoms. These topics are then depicted in actual examples from some chosen sitcoms.

The next chapter will also follow situation comedies, however, it will concentrate on the British production. Furthermore, a complete introduction to 'Allo 'Allo! will be provided as well.

3. British Sitcom and 'Allo 'Allo!

Red Dwarf, *The IT Crowd*, *Black Books*, *Mighty Boosh* and eventually *'Allo 'Allo!* - all of these popular television shows have something in common. They are British situation comedies or sitcoms, as the term is commonly shortened. These sitcoms are known to the Czech general public, as they were available on Czech television programmes, however, the popularity of sitcoms goes further back into past.

According to The British Comedy Guide, television comedy in Britain started in 1936 with the launch of the BBC's Television Service. Before that, it was available only as radio broadcasting. Comedy had been gradually evolving, except for the period of the Second World War, when the BBC services were shut down, until the first sitcom appeared. (The British Comedy Guide, 2006; 2013) Here, the two points of view collide. BBC News UK claims that the first sitcom was broadcast on 29 November 1946 under the name *Pinwright's Progress*. It reflected changes in Britain's society and its workplaces. (BBC News UK, 2011) On the other hand, The British Comedy Guide claims that the first actual sitcom was *Hancock's Half Hour* in the 1950s because it managed to attract the majority of British population. It was still available in both television and on the radio at that time and the comedians played their extensions rather than some fictional characters, which was very different from contemporary sitcoms. (The British Comedy Guide, 2006)

As the decades passed and changed, they had significant impact on how sitcoms were made. For example, BBC News UK presents a sitcom from the sixties called *The Rag Trade*, which was revolutionary as it introduced women characters, *Steptoe and Son* should also be mentioned as it highlights the changes in post-war Britain. (BBC News UK, 2011) The British Comedy Guide additionally mentions a sitcom by David Croft, who is a co-writer of *'Allo 'Allo!*, called *Dad's Army*. (The British Comedy Guide, 2006)

The seventies did not stop the boom of sitcoms. On the contrary, the decade introduced some of the best sitcoms, not only till that time but also for the years to come. Many sitcoms still addressed some social issues, The British Comedy Guide for example mentions shows such as *Fawlty Towers*, which, according to BBC News UK, showed the importance of class in the seventies, and *Are You Being Served?*, which BBC News UK characterise as a parody of the British class system in a workplace. The seventies were a successful decade for sitcoms, considered by many 'the golden age of British sitcom'. (The British Comedy Guide, 2006; BBC News UK, 2011)

The next decade, the 1980s, brought some changes to the genre of situation comedies. According to The British Comedy Guide, the reasons for the changes were political and social revolution and the government led by the Tory party. Old and traditional shows began to vanish and new, more anarchist comedies, such as *Red Dwarf*, took their place. These new kinds of sitcoms started a trend, which continued until the start of the new millennium, when traditional sitcoms watched by millions of viewers had to make way for the so called cult sitcoms, for example *Black Books*. Even though fewer people watched them, they were greatly loved by their fans. (The British Comedy Guide, 2006) Nowadays, the traditional sitcoms are long gone, although the best of the original ones are still being aired repeatedly.

It should be additionally mentioned that British sitcom producers experimented with sitcom movies. Coniam states that in the fifties, when Hollywood started a revolution in film industry, Britain did not want to stay behind. However, the producers lacked the resources that their American colleagues had, and thus came with the idea to produce sitcom movies. Although some of those movies were acclaimed by audience, most of them lacked the atmosphere of the classic 30-minute-long sitcoms and the experiment died out in the 80s. (Coniam, 2009) However, even today some authors try to experiment with sitcom movies. For example, the producers of the highly praised sitcom *Red Dwarf* tried to recreate it into a movie.

The definition of the genre is not as difficult as the one concerning parody. Even though there have been some changes throughout the decades, the form of sitcom is the same in most cases. A typical definition of the genre is provided by Mintz in Mills:

A half-hour series focused on episodes involving recurrent characters within the same premises. That is, each week we encounter the same people in essentially the same setting. The episodes are finite; what happens in a given episode is generally closed off, explained, reconciled, solved at the end of the half hour . . . Sitcoms are generally performed before live audiences, whether broadcast live (in the old days) or filmed or taped, and they usually have an element that might almost be metadrama in the sense that since the laughter is recorded (sometimes even augmented), the audience is aware

of watching a play, a performance, a comedy incorporating comic activity.

The most important feature of sitcom structure is the cyclical nature of the normalcy of the premise undergoing stress or threat of change and becoming restored . . . This faculty for the 'happy ending' is, of course, one of the staples of comedy, according to most comic theory. (Mills, 2009, p. 28)

A simpler definition is given by The British Comedy Guide: "A humorous radio or television series featuring the reactions of a regular cast of characters to unusual situations, such as misunderstandings or embarrassing coincidences." It further defines it as a comedy performance with the same characters in humorous storylines and it usually takes place in a usual environment, such as work place or family house. (The British Comedy Guide, 2006)

Sitcom still retains some theatrical features, which emphasize its origin. As Mills mentions, the fact that sitcoms are being shot in front of live audience place the actors in the shows in a position that does not differ from actors on a theatre stage. (Mills, 2009, p. 14) Together with the recorded audience laughter, these aspects make sitcoms quite different from other television products.

Sitcom in general has very distinctive features. Every episode is typically half an hour long and is broadcast once every week. However, not all of those 30 minutes are reserved for the whole episode, as the time includes an opening and ending and there is usually a commercial brake in the middle of each episode. Eventually, there are approximately 22 minutes left for each episode. Occasionally, some episodes, such as pilots and Christmas specials are one hour long. *'Allo 'Allo!*, in particular, does not follow this rule, as throughout all of the series, the show changed length of its episodes several times.

Another feature covers the number of episodes a show has in one series. Here, the British sitcoms differ from the American ones. While it is common to have six episodes in a series in Britain, American shows goes up to 30 episodes per series. An explanation is given by The British Comedy Guide. It says, that in America, a show is usually written by a team of writers, while in Britain there are just one or two writers for a sitcom. British television stations also prefer a lower number of episodes, as they can change their schedule more easily. (The British Comedy Guide, 2006)

Sitcom can be additionally divided into three types. Taflinger characterises those types as actcom (action comedy), domcom (domestic comedy) and dramedy (dramatic comedy), where actcom is the most common sitcom based on themes such as family, places and occupations and the emphasis is on action. The second type, domcom, focuses on a larger cast of characters that gradually develop throughout the show. It is based in a family environment

and tends to be more serious. The last kind of sitcom, dramedy, is the rarest. It does not try to invoke laughter but tries to present serious problems like war, death, crime, racism, etc. (Taflinger, 1996) With the overall characterisation of the sitcom completed, the next part of the chapter contains a detailed introduction of the British sitcom *'Allo 'Allo!*

'Allo 'Allo! was created by Jeremy Lloyd and David Croft and aired in Britain from 1982 to 1992. The Czech television first broadcast the show in 1996 and repeated the sitcom several times, which indicated its popularity even in the Czech Republic. It spanned 85 episodes in nine series and it was greatly revered by its fans not only in Britain. Even though it is a sitcom made by the British, it does not necessarily follow all the aforementioned features of sitcom. For example, it retains a typical British sitcom attitude of six to eight episodes per series, but in series five, the total number of 26 episodes reflects the American style. Even the length of the episodes changes in the series. While most of the episodes last 30 or 25 minutes, some episodes have the duration of 35 and 45 minutes.

The story of *'Allo 'Allo!* is set in the small town of Nouvion in Nazi occupied France. The main character is a café owner René Artois, who constantly tries to be in favour with many distinct groups so he can survive the war. Initially, René only has to appease German Colonel Von Strohm, however, soon many others start using him, namely the French Resistance, the Gestapo officer Herr Flick and the Communist Movement, which hates the Resistance. René cooperates with all these groups, often because he has no other choice, while he tries to hide the fact from the others and do stay sane. This inevitably leads to numerous humorous situations, which never end in the expected way.

René's troubles start when Colonel Von Strohm wants him to hide a painting of Fallen Madonna with the Big Boobies by Van Klomp, which Colonel wants to sell after the war. However, Hitler also wants the painting and therefore sends Herr Flick to investigate and find it. However, the problems do not end with the Germans, as Michelle of the French Resistance urges René to hide two shotdown British pilots, who do not understand French⁴ at all. To further complicate it all, René has a secret relationship with his waitresses, which he is constantly trying to hide from his wife.

Very interesting is the usage of catchphrases in the show. A majority of the characters uses a phrase or phrases in most episodes, for instance Michelle's "Listen very carefully, I shall say this only once." has become quite popular. Another example can be a phrase of

⁴ Although the sitcom is completely in English, the authors experimented with languages in the form of accents. Therefore, British pilots, speaking in upper-class manner of English, do not understand the French accent of other characters.

policeman Crabtree "Good moaning"⁵. He is, in fact, a British agent sent to facilitate communication with the British pilots, even though his French is very poor.

In order to highlight the elements of parody in the sitcom, it is important to briefly introduce the characters, as they are direct initiators of the parodic moments. This next part will therefore present the most important figures of the show, as they will be later mentioned in the analytic part. René Artois is the main protagonist and owner of Café René, where many of the scenes take place. Although he is considered a hero of resistance, he is in fact only a coward, who wants to flee every time it is not safe. On the other hand, his wife Edith is willing to die for France. She is a singer at the Café, although her singing is horrible and customers have to fill their ears with cheese every time she sings. Yvette Carte-Blanche, Maria Recamier and Mimi Labonq are all waitresses in Café René and all of them are in love with René. Maria is replaced by Mimi, who is also a secret resistance agent, after the third season of the show. Michelle Dubois is the leader of the Nouvion resistance group. She constantly puts René into trouble by hiding British pilots and explosives in his café. Monsieur LeClerc and Monsieur Alfonse are both old men working for the resistance. LeClerc is a messenger and master of disguise, while Alfonse owns a funeral home and provides the resistance, even though not always willingly, with money. Officer Crabtree, as mentioned before, serves as a local police officer, who was sent from Britain to help the resistance with the British pilots. Of course, the two British pilots, Fairfax and Casters, play large roles in the sitcom. René and the others are constantly trying to send them home, however, their efforts are always thwarted.

The Germans should not be omitted, as they are important as well. Colonel Kurt Von Strohm is a commanding officer in Nouvion. Although he tries to stay authoritative, he is kind and does not want to upset the villagers. However, his command is taken by General Erich Von Klinkerhoffen, who arrives later in the show. He is imperative and his subordinates fear him. Lieutenant Hubert Gruber is a gay character in love with René, who returned from the Russian front. According to *The Return of 'Allo 'Allo!*, it was the first openly gay character ever in a British sitcom. (*The Return of 'Allo 'Allo!*, 2007) Captain Hans Geering, later replaced by Italian Captain Alberto Bertorelli, is Colonel's friend and his right hand. Private Helga Geerhart is Colonel's secretary, who plays a kind of a double agent, working for the Colonel and Herr Flick of Gestapo. Even Gestapo sent two officers to the Nouvion area, Herr Otto Flick and Herr Engelbert Von Smallhausen. They were sent by Hitler to search for the

⁵ Bodré podoledne in the Czech translation - author's note

stolen valuables. Flick dates Helga in order to spy on the General and Colonel, however, he seems to be in love with her eventually. Although the Germans were meant to be ruthless and frightening, the sitcom depicts them as common people in uncommon, comical, situations, so the effect is completely opposite. (*'Allo 'Allo!* series)

With the relevant characters introduced, the themes the show parodies should be mentioned. The sitcom uses nearly every topic stated in the previous chapter, from the theme of workplace to the parody of historical events. The creators took advantage of parody to its full potential.

This chapter dealt with the topic of British situation comedy. Initially, it discussed its birth in the 1930s, its development throughout the 20th century, the experiments with sitcoms in films, and eventually the form of contemporary sitcoms. Additionally, a definition of the genre is provided in the chapter as well, followed by characteristics of a typical sitcom. It was mentioned that the genre could be divided into three categories, actcom, domcom and dramedy.

The second part of the chapter was meant as an introduction to *'Allo 'Allo!*, a popular British sitcom by Jeremy Lloyd and David Croft. The show's differences from a common sitcom are discussed, followed by the introduction of the story as well as the main characters.

The next, and also the last, chapter will focus on World War II, as the show itself takes place during this period. Furthermore, it will analyse real war events and stages of the war, as they are reflected in the sitcom. Finally, the chapter will highlight the elements of parody in the show, based on the research.

4. World War II background and the elements of parody in *'Allo 'Allo!*

While all the previous chapters dealt primarily with the theoretical analysis of all relevant terms associated with the paper's topic, this chapter will eventually try to analyse the parodic elements in the British sitcom *'Allo 'Allo!*. However, as the show takes place in occupied France during World War II, some theoretical background of the war and its events will be discussed at the beginning. Additionally, some theory will be provided further in the text as an introduction to certain elements of parody.

Although the Second World War had started in 1939, the people of Western Europe experienced the horrors of the war later, in 1940. As the German army was drawing near France, its citizens were more and more terrified. Gilbert mentions that their fear was even greater because of the false messages of great civilian losses. (Gilbert, 2006, p. 91) The fate of France was still uncertain at that time and French, together with British allies, fought with the German oppressors. As far as the civilians were concerned, Gilbert states that according to BBC, citizen morale was very low. (Gilbert, 2006, p. 96)

However, by the end of May 1940, the Germans were gaining advantage and the British decided to withdraw to the port of Dunkerque and flee back to Britain to form a defence. It is specifically Dunkerque that remains in people's memory as a place where the British left the French on their own. However, Ferro exposes this claim as a lie, as the French troops also boarded the ships heading to safety. (Ferro, 2006, p. 291)

The fate of France was sealed when Marshall Henri-Philippe Pétain gained control of the country. Although it meant immediate peace with Germany, Shaw also points out that Pétain was a collaborator. Nevertheless, Brigadier General Charles de Gaulle rose up in defiance, even though only in radio broadcasting in London. (Shaw, 2004, p. 26) De Gaulle appealed to every man able to fight or help in the broadcast. Even though, as Ferro states, only a handful of people could hear it, it was enough to let them know that at least one French general is willing to fight for freedom of France. (Ferro, 2006, p. 298)

The civilians of both France and Britain were meanwhile directly affected by the war. For example, Shaw mentions that thousands of people had to flee Paris only days before the Germans captured her. Furthermore, people of Jewish origin were persecuted in France as well, even though, as Ferro adds, French Jews were not sent to death camps, they were "only" excluded from society. The same fate awaited all Freemasons. On the other hand, after the

peace treaty between France and Germany, ordinary citizens could continue their everyday lives, although under supervision. (Ferro, 2004, p. 305) Even the British civilians could not escape the terrors of war. Many people lost their lives during the German operation known as the Blitz. Shaw states that even though German air strikes destroyed the very centre of London, they could not destroy the morale and determination of the people. (Shaw, 2004, p. 32)

At the beginning of the occupation, the French morale was quite low. Ferro claims that it was due to the fact that the population was decimated, the country was divided into regions and there was limited supply of goods and food. (Ferro, 2006, pp. 310-311) Although there were already few small groups thinking about a resistance, Ferro adds that most French are still devastated by the occupation and therefore unable to act. (Ferro, 2006, p. 310) However, the public opinion gradually changed and people started to cause harm to Germans as they could. Ferro states that the rebellion started with only minor acts of defiance, such as leaving a café when a German officer entered it. Through the time, people became more courageous and dared to save Jewish children, while eventually, members of the resistance demolished train bridges and sabotaged factories in order to stall the German production. (Ferro, 2006, pp. 314-315) Ferro additionally mentions that in fact two resistance movements existed at the time, the Gaullists and the communists. (Ferro, 2006, p. 307)

Britain also started to secretly work with the resistance soon, mainly thanks to a young British soldier named Jimmy Langley. Gilbert informs that Langley himself escaped France with the help of civilians, and after his return to Britain, he began organising operations to rescue many imprisoned soldiers and pilots kept in France. (Gilbert, 2006, pp. 166-167)

This historical and cultural background serves as an introduction to the period of the Second World War, mainly in France, during which the sitcom takes place. The following paragraphs will highlight the parodic elements used in *'Allo 'Allo!* in contrast with the parodied topics.

At first, it should be noted that *'Allo 'Allo!* was not meant to parody only the war as such. In the documentary, *The Return of 'Allo 'Allo!*, it is mentioned that the producers have always insisted on the show being the parody of the genre of war film and war television drama. The show probably took the most inspiration in the war drama *Secret Army*, where the main character was also owner of a café and the protagonists tried to send shotdown British airmen back to Britain. (*The Return of 'Allo 'Allo!*, 2007) However, the following paragraphs will primarily focus on the elements of parody concerning the Second World War, although some other references will be made.

Perhaps the most common theme which is the subject matter of parody in the show are disguises. Nearly in every episode, a comical moment concerning a character in disguise, which is usually a predictable one as well, appears. This seems to be based on the fact that during the war, many agents worked secretly undercover, including the members of the resistance. In this case, the character of Monsieur LeClerc can serve as an ideal example. Being a messenger and courier for the resistance, he most frequently appears in various disguises, carrying something for René. He is usually disguised as a seller, always coming to the Café with loud exclamation, offering some of his goods. Although René sees through LeClerc's obvious costume in advance every time, LeClerc always approaches René, lifts up his glasses and says his catchphrase "It is I, LeClerc!" The fact that no other person can recognise LeClerc makes the scenes even more comical.

In later episodes, the show starts to parody itself as well and LeClerc is no exception. In one episode, when Madame Edith is hiding from the communist resistance, she enters the Café dressed as the duck seller. Eventually, she slowly approaches René at the bar and behaves exactly like LeClerc, lifting her glasses and saying, "It is I, LeClerc!" However, the real LeClerc comes out behind the bar, angrily pointing out that he is the real one, repeating the catchphrase as well. (*'Allo 'Allo!*, S5E8) He was also parodied by multiple other characters, like Helga, who changed the catchphrase to more fitting, "It is I, Helga!"

Other characters disguising themselves get involved in various comical situations as well. For example, the two British pilots hiding at Café René changed plenty of costumes, ranging from onion sellers to nuns. Even though they were sent into a monastery, they came back to René, who had to hide them again from the Germans. (*'Allo 'Allo!*, S2E1) In this scene, the parodic element involves the moustaches of the fliers. When asked about why the nuns have beard, one of the airmen replies that they should see the moustache of the monastery's Mother Superior.

Another character connected with undercover operations is Officer Crabtree. The comical situations around him are always connected with his bad 'French'. In an episode where René is about to get married, Crabtree disguises himself as a priest in order to sabotage the wedding. Again, no one really recognizes that he is not the real clergyman, of course except for René. Crabtree starts with the formalities in his bad 'French': "Dearly beloved. We are gathered together in the presence of God, to join this woman and this man in holy wedlock". Colonel Von Strohm then tells Lieutenant Gruber that he does not understand a word the priest is saying. Gruber answers him that these Roman Catholic services are often served in Latin, thus making the parodic moment complete. (*'Allo 'Allo!*, S5E6)

As might be expected, the show does not parody only topics connected with war, in many occasions, the parodied themes originated elsewhere. For instance, the show contains parody of famous people, both real and fictional. Marilyn Monroe can serve as one example. René, dressed in women's clothes, is being held captive in a cellar. When he is standing on top of a drain, suddenly a wind blows and lifts René's skirt, who then tries to put it down. (*'Allo 'Allo!*, S2E6) The original scene was performed by Marilyn Monroe herself, even though it was deliberate.

The second example of a famous person (and most importantly one scene with him), this time a fictional one, that is parodied in *'Allo 'Allo!* is James Bond. The famous scene where Bond is tied to a table and a circular saw is approaching his crotch was brilliantly recreated in the show. René and LeClerc are caught by the communist movement that thinks they are German officers. They are tied to a circular saw table, each on one side of it. Then, LeClerc gets an idea to cut the binding ropes with the help of the saw. However, nothing goes according to their plans, as usual. LeClerc starts the saw, but he cannot reach it, so he tries to turn it off again. However, the saw starts moving towards René's crotch, who shouts at LeClerc to stop the machine. He only makes it worse, as the saw starts to move the other way, this time towards him. He pushes the buttons once more, but this time the saw goes towards René again. Eventually, they are both saved by the members of the communist movement, who think that they wanted to commit suicide rather than being interrogated. (*'Allo 'Allo!*, S5E4) These two examples were meant to illustrate that the show did not focus only on the war themes. Nevertheless, more known characters, connected with the Second World War, will be discussed further in the text.

Naturally, the stereotypes could not have been omitted by the creators of the show. Each of the nationality represented in *'Allo 'Allo!*, Germans, French, British and Italians, is often depicted stereotypically. One of the French stereotypes is represented by René himself. French are frequently being referred to as cowards who flee from battle on the first occasion. Even though everyone reveres René as a great war hero who is ready to die for France, the truth is completely opposite. René is an absolute coward, always half-ready to flee if anything, even minor, happens. Still, because of unexpected twists, he is eventually seen as a hero rather than a coward. Another reference to the French cowardice can also be found at the end of an episode, where René, Michelle and others rob Gestapo's safe. When they think they were discovered, LeClerc asks what they should do, to which Michelle answers: "What every Frenchman does in emergency - leg it for the hills." (*'Allo 'Allo!*, S7E6)

The British, on the other hand, are best represented by the shutdown pilots kept at the prisoners of war camp. All of them have typical English moustaches and like to smoke tobacco pipes. This theme is parodied in a later episode, where Bertorelli's soldiers have to disguise themselves as British pilots. Each of them receives a hat and a pipe with a fake moustache on it. The parody is intensified when the soldiers start to imitate English, which in result sounds as 'faafaafaa fafafafa'. (*Allo 'Allo!*, S6E2) Even the British cuisine, which is said to be terrible, is referred to in the show. When Colonel Von Strohm and Lieutenant Gruber discusses the possible invasion to Britain, Gruber mentions that British are barbarians, as they want even a breakfast warm. (*Allo 'Allo!*, S5E19) In another scene, René and Edith briefly visit London. When tasting the local cuisine, René states that even Edith's cooking skills are better than this.⁶ (*Allo 'Allo!*, S7E4)

Another stereotypical character is Captain Bertorelli who can serve as model Italian. They are often seen as philanderers and Bertorelli is depicted as a man interested in every woman he sees. Italians are also referred to as ice cream makers. In an episode where General Von Klinkerhoffen discusses plans to invade Britain with other officers, Bertorelli steps up and volunteers to be in the front of the invading army. General, not amused at all, then asks: "What do you wish to do, set up an ice cream cart?" (*Allo 'Allo!*, S5E9) The German stereotypes that are depicted in the show will be addressed later in the chapter when the parody of the Germans is discussed.

While some examples of references to famous people were already discussed, they were only examples of people not connected with the War. Yet, the show also makes fun of two opposing leaders, General de Gaulle and Adolf Hitler. De Gaulle is never really present in the show, nevertheless, whenever he is referred to, he is 'the one with the big hooter'. In fact, every time a French general is mentioned, he seems to be bound to a rather large nose. In one episode, René, disguised as a French general, is hiding from the Germans. What makes the scene so comical is the fact that René has a big nose modelled from plastic explosive. At first, he is not recognized by Gruber and Von Strohm, who are also looking for a French general, but Gruber eventually identifies René. He promises not to expose him and offers him a cigarette and fire. René, however, sneezes and a fuse comes out of his fake nose. The fuse catches on fire and René has to throw the nose out of the Café, where it explodes and hits Herr Flick. (*Allo 'Allo!*, S5E10)

⁶ René thinks that Edith's cooking is horrible in fact

Even though it may have been quite controversial at the time of release, the makers of 'Allo 'Allo decided to ridicule even infamous Adolf Hitler. Initially, there was only one reference to Hitler, however, as the topic ceased to be too delicate, the show mentioned him more and more. The first scene Hitler, specifically his speeches, is parodied is in an episode, where Herr Flick wants to go out with Helga. At first, he suggests going to a cinema, but then implies that they can stay in his office and have some fun. While Helga wonders what is on Flick's mind, he states that he owns an excellent gramophone and many records with Hitler's speeches, which are very amusing. Helga is quite surprised by the statement, however, Herr Flick explains it quickly: "Played at double speed, he sounds like Donald Duck." (*'Allo 'Allo!*, S2E3) In the show, even the German officers often make fun of the Fuehrer, although they are acting very seriously. When the resistance steals prototypes of new land mines, General Von Klinkerhoffen informs Von Strohm and Gruber that Hitler had one of his familiar rages. Gruber asks very seriously if he has eaten the carpet again, to which the general answers that he has damaged a reproduction of Bayeux tapestry. Von Strohm additionally asks: "Do you think he has a screw loose?", which is followed by general's answer: "In my opinion, a whole meccano set has fallen apart in there." (*'Allo 'Allo!*, S5E19) By the end of the show, Hitler also made his own appearance. In fact, it was Lieutenant Gruber in disguise, accompanied by Colonel Von Strohm as Hermann Goering. Actor Guy Siner, who plays Gruber, did a great job imitating Hitler's behaviour, gesticulation and style of speech. The members of the communist resistance thought that they are real Hitler and Goering and pursued the duo. Eventually, both escapees found shelter at the Café and René hid colonel into a wardrobe, while lieutenant found cover in Edith's bed. The comical moment arrives when Edith's mother, who hates Germans, enters the room and finds Hitler/Gruber in the bed. She thinks Edith is sleeping with him and starts to shout, when Goering/Von Strohm peeks out of the closet and tells her to be silent. Monsieur LeClerc, who is also present, then finishes the funny moment by stating that Goering is watching them from the wardrobe. (*'Allo 'Allo!*, S8E5) The creators went even a little bit further in the following episodes. In an episode by the end of the eighth season, Germans forced René and Edith to dress as Hitler and Goering in order to lure the communist resistance. However, René and Edith are captured by a general governing the neighbouring area. He thinks Edith is real Hitler, blames her for the bad outcome of the war and wants to execute her. René, dressed up as Goering, tries to persuade the general that they are ordinary villagers and points out that Edith/Hitler is his wife. The not-so-surprised general mumbles: "Hitler is married to Goering, we are not shooting them a moment too soon." (*'Allo*

'Allo!, S8E6) This may be reference to the fact that Hitler was losing sanity towards the end of the war and the wedding with Goering was used as a parodic recreation of his condition.

In the paragraphs about stereotypes, the Germans were intentionally omitted. Some stereotypes will be discussed in the subsequent paragraphs, where the parodic elements concerning the Germans will be addressed as well. Perhaps the most common stereotype that is connected with German soldiers is the infamous Heil Hitler. This salutation was specifically ridiculed by Sam Kelly, who played Captain Hans Geering. The character only says something similar to 'clap' or 'clap' while saluting, instead of pronouncing the whole salutation. In *The Return of 'Allo 'Allo!*, the actor himself states that Hans could not be bothered with saying whole Heil Hitler, but instead he said only half of the word Hitler, which resulted in -TLER. (*The Return of 'Allo 'Allo!* 2007) This way of saluting has also become Hans' catchphrase. The salutation is also used as a comical element in a scene, where Herr Flick is disguised as a priest. A young woman confuses him with a real Father and wants to confess her sins to him. In response, Flick tells her to go home and say one hundred Heil Hitlers, instead of the usual prayers. (*'Allo 'Allo!*, S3E6)

In *'Allo 'Allo!*, the German officers seem to be the most incompetent Germans in the history. Apart from not being evil and cruel at all, in comparison with their actual counterparts, they were unable to perform the dreaded German interrogation as well. In one episode, Monsieur Alfonse was summoned to Colonel Von Strohm's office and was about to be interrogated. Lieutenant Gruber was to perform the act. He starts to walk towards frightened Alfonse, however, when he reaches him, he immediately asks Good Morning in a very polite way. General Von Klinkerhoffen, who is also present, admonishes Gruber and tells him to walk slowly around poor Alfonse while watching him closely, which should frighten the interrogated. Gruber imitates Klinkerhoffen, nonetheless, he asks Alfonse what is his name, again quite politely. The General advises Gruber to use the interrogation guidelines, which he immediately picks up. This time, he manages to progress with the interrogation and asks Alfonse about suspicious mounds of dirt in his graveyard. When Alfonse asks what mounds of dirt, Gruber actually shouts that they (the Germans) ask the questions, thus he finally resembles the actual German interrogator. However, the comical moment comes right afterwards, when he immediately starts laughing and pointing at the manual, satisfied that he managed to follow the guidelines at last. (*'Allo 'Allo!*, S6E1)

Especially German generals are often parodied in the show. One such allusion is mentioned by Herr Flick, who thinks that General Von Klinkerhoffen wants to assassinate Hitler: "This is a very common fault with our generals." (*'Allo 'Allo!*, S5E2) This probably

refers to unsuccessful attempts on Fuhrers life. In another episode, a British air strike hits Novion. The scene depicts General Von Klinkerhoffen hiding under his bed. He dials a number on a phone and calls Colonel Von Strohm, who, as the scene switches to him, is also hiding in his office, under his desk. Nevertheless, the General asks Strohm where he is. The Colonel answers that he is on the balcony, coordinating anti-air offensive against the attackers. The General, when asked the same questions, answers that he is on the roof firing the machine gun. (*'Allo 'Allo!*, S5E3) Both of them are clearly only boasting, while in fact, they are both frightened and cowering in fear. In later episodes, General Von Klinkerhoffen is sent to mental hospital after being labelled mentally ill. Colonel Von Strohm wants to visit the General, but Captain Bertorelli insists that Klinkerhoffen is insane. Afterwards, Gruber explains: "For a German general that is not unusual." (*'Allo 'Allo!*, S7E2) Yet, German generals were ridiculed even more. At the conference, where a plan to invade Britain is discussed, some other German generals are being introduced by Helga. These general's names are all wordplays meant to ridicule German names. For example, General Von Flokenstiffen, Von Walkenstiffen, Von Winkelmeister, Von Sinkenquicken and Von Bratwurst. (*'Allo 'Allo!*, S5E9) It should be mentioned, that all of the names contain 'Von', which is, at least according to *'Allo 'Allo!*, completely essential part of every German name.

Apart from the German army, another Reich institution is parodied in detail. Gestapo, originally a very feared organization, is ridiculed nearly in every episode of the show. Gestapo's main character Herr Otto Flick, although completely unemotional himself, makes his every appearance quite comical. Flick himself is a prototypical Gestapo officer, who is walking with a limp, using a cane, and is always dressed in a long black coat and a hat.

The most referenced topic concerning Gestapo is their infamous cruelty. For example, in one scene, Von Smallhausen comes late to Herr Flick's headquarters with an apology that his servant forgot to wake him up. Flick asks if the servant is dead, to which Smallhausen replies that he told him to be more careful in the future. Herr Flick turns to Smallhausen and says that he wonders how Von Smallhausen got into the Gestapo. Smallhausen answers: "I think it was the limp, and the sinister gaze." (*'Allo 'Allo!*, S4E2) In another episode, Herr Flick tells Helga, who is visiting him, about how he nearly failed the Gestapo exams. The scene starts with Helga standing in a corner, because she burned Flick's toasts. When he invites her back to the table, where they were having breakfast, he informs her that he kept her egg warm. Helga states that Flick has a kind streak in his nature, to which Flick answers that he nearly failed his Gestapo exams because of it. (*'Allo 'Allo!*, S2E3) Another reference to the Gestapo exams appeared later in the show, when Von Smallhausen wanted to be promoted. The exams

take place at Herr Flick's headquarters. Smallhausen sits in front of Flick's desk and Flick points two lamps at him, which is probably another reference to the interrogations. The parody starts afterwards, when Herr Flick states that Smallhausen has chosen the topic Hitler. After answering all questions correctly, for example the name of a barber who created Hitler's silly haircut, Smallhausen must perform a physical test, which he fails immediately. (*'Allo 'Allo!*, S5E23) All these references are meant to ridicule the way the Gestapo is usually seen and depicted.

In *'Allo 'Allo!*, everything the Gestapo has seems to be special and is referred to as being Gestapo's. As an example, Herr Flick drives a Gestapo car, has Gestapo pens and pencils. In some episodes, the creators made quite unreal things, such as Gestapo Monopoly, with cards like 'you have been hit with a rubber truncheon and miss three moves' or 'go directly to Hitler's bunker, do not pass Go and not collect 200 Marks'. (*'Allo 'Allo!*, S2E5) In another scene, Herr Flick shows Helga pictures from Gestapo holiday camp, pointing out that everyone wore black leather bathing shorts while doing leapfrogs. When Helga asks why is someone wearing skirts, Flick answers that they are girls. Surprised Helga says that she did not know there were any women in Gestapo. Herr Flick replies: "Who do you think types the threatening letters?" (*'Allo 'Allo!*, S3E3) In one scene, Herr Flick even demonstrates a typical Gestapo dance accompanied by interesting lyrics: "You put your left boot in, you take your left boot out. You do a lot of shouting and you shake your fists about. You light a little smokey and you burn down ze town. Zat's what it's all about, HEIL, Ah Himmler, Himmler, Himmler..." (*'Allo 'Allo!*, S3E2)

Gestapo, being a secret German police, was perceived as ever-present. In the show, this is parodied in a scene, where two German pilots have to drop some bombs over England. They are casually talking about why they should go all the way to Britain, when they can drop the bombs into a sea and why they should risk their lives for the mad carpet-eating house painter⁷. Then they discuss that they could not talk like that if they were at the base, because the Gestapo are everywhere and start to make jokes about Goering, Himmler and Hitler. However, Flick and Smallhausen, who were hidden in one of the bombs, appear outside the cockpit and start knocking on the glass. The scene ends with the frightened pilots saying that they are not safe anywhere, making the parody complete. (*'Allo 'Allo!*, S5E20)

Eventually, the show started to parody even its own themes, as was mentioned in the paragraphs discussing disguises. In fact, every character started to recreate another character's

⁷ parodic reference to Hitler

behaviour or a scene. In many cases, the subject of parody was a catchphrase of another character, for example Michelle's 'Listen very carefully, I shall say this only once'. Usually, Michelle comes to the Café through the back room and after everyone gathers, she starts with her catchphrase. However, once, she is summoned by Edith, who switches their roles and starts with Michelle's catchphrase instead. Michelle pauses for a moment, but the dialogue continues shortly. (*Allo 'Allo!*, S5E6) A very similar conversation starts, when René decides to quit the resistance. He approaches Michelle and says the very catchphrase that she usually uses. (*Allo 'Allo!*, S6E4) Nonetheless, most likely the best parody of Michelle's catchphrase was performed by officer Crabtree. The scene begins when he enters the Café, telling René that he has a 'massage' from Michelle. Then, after everybody gathers at the bar, he says: "Listen very carefully, I shall sue this only wince." (*Allo 'Allo!*, S8E3)

When mentioning officer Crabtree, he was parodied as well. In one episode, René is presumed to be dead and has to disguise himself as Crabtree to preserve his anonymity. Naturally, he also has to speak as the officer, which means in poor 'French', so that the disguise can be perfect. (*Allo 'Allo!*, S9E3)

Occasionally, whole scenes were recreated in later episodes. For instance, when Helga first meets Herr Flick in her office, he wants to be introduced to Colonel Von Strohm. However, when Helga wants to let the Colonel know, Flick stops her and tells her to adjust her clothing so he can see her legs. This scene was redone later, but instead of Helga, Herr Flick, dressed as a woman private, was sitting behind the desk and instead of Flick, General Von Klinkerhoffen entered the room. Not knowing that it is only a disguise, the General instructs Flick to adjust his clothes in order to see his legs. The General then states that Flick has good legs but it is pity about the limp. (*Allo 'Allo!*, S9E3)

Surprisingly, the show ends with a parodic recreation of its own previous scenes as well. René, who is secretly in relationship with his waitresses, always gets caught by Edith when hugging one of the maids. Even though Edith suspects him from cheating, René always outsmarts her with some excuse, usually starting with 'you stupid woman'. At the end of the show, the scene starts when Von Strohm, Gruber and Helga returns to Novion many years after the War. They meet all inhabitants of Café René and reminisce. When they admire René's statue in the square, Gruber accidentally breaks its arm and they find the lost painting of Fallen Madonna with Big Boobies by Von Clomp. Even though René assures everyone that they will share the money from selling the painting, he, together with Yvette, hijacks Gruber's car and plans to escape with the painting. When Edith asks him what the meaning of it is,

René answers: "You stupid woman, can you not see? I am eloping." First time since the beginning of the show, René actually tells Edith the truth. (*'Allo 'Allo!*, S9E6)

In this last chapter, the historical and cultural background of the Second World War was introduced, as the story of *'Allo 'Allo!* takes place during the War. The history was discussed mostly from the French and British points of view, and covers both military and civilian perspective. It introduced events which influenced the common people in both France and Britain and the events which lead to the establishment of the French resistance and its cooperation with Britain.

The rest of the chapter highlighted the elements of parody in the British sitcom *'Allo 'Allo!*. At first, it was noted that the sitcom, according to the creators, was meant to be a parody of war films and TV war drama. The following paragraphs contained the actual parodic elements. It started with describing the theme of disguises, which serves as a base for many comical moments. Next, the chapter informed about the parodic topics which were not based on World War II. The subsequent paragraphs concerned the stereotypes, including French, Italian, British and German. Then, parody of Adolf Hitler was presented, together with parody of General DeGaulle, as well as French generals in general. Subsequently, German officers were mentioned as a strong theme of parody in the sitcom, followed by parody of Gestapo, the infamous German police, which is ridiculed greatly in *'Allo 'Allo!*. The last paragraphs discussed the fact that the show also parodied its own scenes and themes, for example catchphrases, which were also used as an ending of the sitcom.

5. Conclusion

The main topic of the thesis was to analyse the elements of parody in the popular British sitcom *'Allo 'Allo!*, which is set in the period of the Second World War. In order to address it correctly, it was important to start with a focus on the individual terms connected with the analysis - parody, sitcom, the War and the actual show.

The first chapter started with the introduction of parody. It is generally known that the genre itself comes from ancient Greece and was originally used in plays, however, the fact that the majority of the original works were lost makes ancient parody a mystery. As parody developed, it had gradually become a literary genre, above all. It was used by such great writers like Miguel de Cervantes, Lewis Carroll and Edward Lear.

The second chapter continued to analyse parody, mainly its change as a postmodern genre. It depicted its rise and expansion into genres other than literary, namely television,

cinema, music, architecture and even video games. It was discussed that parody was seen as a genre which greatly influenced the contemporary culture, mainly by uniting the high and the low, in other words the elite and the popular. Some authors were said to compare postmodern parody with its modern counterpart, claiming that modernist parody directly opposes parody modern. Additionally, more authors that use parody were presented, for example Salman Rushdie, Alasdair Gray, Tony Harrison, Andy Warhol and Weird Al Yankovic. While parody serves mainly to entertain, it was shown that it could be a dangerous tool as well. Two examples were given, when the Muslim extremists threatened Salman Rushdie and the creators of the American sitcom South Park, because they openly made fun of Muslim religion.

In both of these chapters, the issue of parody's characterisation was addressed. While many definitions exist, authors who specialise in the genre claim that these definitions are either completely wrong or insufficient. Additionally, as parody can be confused with other terms, such as satire or pastiche, it was important to differentiate the terms. Satire was analysed as a critique of some real events, while parody must be dependant on the original theme. On the other hand, pastiche is very similar to parody, however, it was described as a hollow shell compared to parody, as it lacks some specific features. Even though parody was described as a genre which is hard to completely specify, a possible and simple definition was presented.

The rest of the second chapter addressed parody in media, specifically in sitcoms. Film creators started using parody after horror movies stopped being scary and the audiences could not take them seriously anymore. Eventually, parody has moved into television and settled in situational comedies. In the following paragraphs, the six techniques of how parody is portrayed in television were presented. These techniques were referred to as reiteration, inversion, misdirection, literalization, extraneous inclusion and exaggeration. The theme of parody in sitcoms was completed by introducing the most common parodied themes. Each of the themes mentioned, politics and politicians, famous people, books, films, television shows, family or workplace setting, stereotypes, minorities and nationalities, religion and history, was demonstrated on a specific example from chosen sitcoms.

Subsequent chapter introduced sitcom as such, with emphasis on the British production. It covers the rise of British sitcom that started with either *Pinwright's Progress* or *Hancock's Half Hour*, it is not clear which of these two was first. The chapter continued to track the development of British sitcom through the 20th century, as it addressed many issues, such as women characters (*The Rag Trade*), or class (*Are You Being Served?*). The chapter

also mentioned that due to the political changes in the country, sitcoms have changed as well. They lost their traditionalism and became more anarchic (*Red Dwarf*). The number of viewers has also changed, compared with the earlier production. While sitcoms in the seventies had millions of fans, more contemporary ones have fewer of them. Then, the chapter addressed the form of a typical sitcom and some differences between American and British sitcom, which are mainly in length of each season and the number of episodes in each season. It also mentioned that the genre could be divided into three categories, actcom (action comedy), domcom (domestic comedy) and dramedy (dramatic comedy). At the end of the chapter, the story and main characters of *'Allo 'Allo!*, as well as the show itself, were discussed.

The last chapter initially analysed the period of the Second World War, both historically and culturally. The War was approached from British and French points of view, including both military and civilian perspective, so it could serve as a historical background for the final analysis. Finally, the elements of parody in *'Allo 'Allo!* were addressed in the remaining paragraphs. The analysis was conducted by highlighting the original war themes and characters and comparing them with their parodic recreations. Furthermore, every parodic element was demonstrated on its corresponding scene from the sitcom.

In conclusion, parody is a powerful tool used to ridicule and *'Allo 'Allo!* uses parody in order to ridicule and elevate the Second World War successfully, although it may sometimes be controversial.

6. Resumé

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá analýzou prvků parodie v oblíbeném Britském komediálním seriálu Haló, Haló!, jehož děj se odehrává za Druhé světové války. Práce je rozdělena do čtyř hlavních kapitoly, které popisují parodii, situační komedii, období Druhé světové války a závěrečnou analýzu prvků parodie v daném seriálu.

První kapitola se zabývá žánrem parodie od jejích počátku ve starém Řecku a sleduje její vývoj až po modernismus. Parodie je popisována jako původně divadelní žánr, o kterém ale není příliš známo, jelikož většina původních děl se nedochovala. Jak se parodie vyvíjela, postupně se z ní stal žánr převážně knižní. Za první evropské parodické dílo se dá považovat *Don Quijote* od Miguela de Cervantese. Parodie se stala velmi oblíbeným žánrem v devatenáctém století, kdy začala přitahovat pozornost čtenářů. Dva známí parodici, Lewis Carroll a Edward Lear dokonce pomocí svých parodických textů pomohli zachovat původní parodovaná díla, která by se jinak nedochovala. Kapitola se dále snaží charakterizovat parodii jako žánr, nicméně jak podotýkají někteří autoři, není to vůbec lehké. Ačkoliv existuje spousta definic, dle již zmíněných autorů je většina z nich zcela nesprávná nebo přinejmenším nedostačující. Jednou nepřesností je také případná záměna se satirou, což je úplně odlišný žánr. Problém s definicí je způsoben dlouholetým vývojem parodie, při němž se pojem často obměňoval a také nesprávným přístupem k problematice, jak podotýkají někteří autoři. Ve výsledku tak parodii nelze jednotně identifikovat, ačkoliv je v textu uvedena domněnka, jak by ona definice mohla znít.

Druhá kapitola pokračuje v definování parodie jako postmoderního žánru. Ukazuje, jak se parodie stala populární a kromě divadla a knih se dostala i do dalších částí kultury, jako například písní, filmů, televize či dokonce počítačových her. Kapitola popisuje jak se parodie změnila od moderny a jakým způsobem přispěla k rozvoji kultury tím, že spojila vysokou literaturu a populární literaturu. Dále kapitola navazuje na problematiku z kapitoly předchozí, kde bylo uvedeno zaměňování za satiru. V této kapitole se jedná o podobnost s pastišem, který se sice může zdát stejný jako parodie, nicméně postrádá některé její specifické prvky a někteří autoři tak tento žánr přirovnávají pouze k prázdné slupce. Dále jsou v kapitole uvedeni představitelé spojení s postmoderní parodií, například spisovatelé Salman Rushdie a Alasdair Gray, architekti Porthogesi a Philip Johnson, básník Tony Harrison, umělec Andy Warhol či zpěvák Weird Al Yankovic. Parodie je ovšem zmíněna i jako nebezpečná, přičemž jako příklad je uveden právě Salman Rushdie, který je pronásledován muslimy za znesvěcení jejich náboženství. Dále kapitola rozebírá počátky parodie na obrazovkách a styl, jakým se

parodie objevuje v situačních komediích. Popisuje, jaké techniky jsou využívány k evokování parodických scén, například opakování zažitých prvků, inverzi a další. Kapitola dále pokračuje poukázáním na nejčastější parodovaná témata, která jsou doplněna ukázkou z vybraných situačních komedií.

Třetí kapitola se zaměřuje na samotnou situační komedii, zejména britské výroby. Popisuje její začátky, zejména seriály *Pinwright's Progress* a *Hancock's Half Hour*, dále pokračuje popisem vývoje situační komedie a různými převratnými novinkami, které zavedla, například ženské postavy či problémy mezi společenskými třídami. V osmdesátých letech se však parodie kvůli politickým změnám v zemi přetvořila a vznikali spíše více anarchistické seriály typu *Červený trpaslík*, než ony staré klasické. Také se změnil průměrný počet diváků na seriál, který nyní tvoří jen zlomek z původního počtu. Kapitola dále pokračuje popisem situační komedie a popisem jejích hlavních rysů. Těmi jsou běžný vysílací čas 30 minut na epizodu, z čehož je ovšem nějaký čas vyhrazen na reklamy a dále počet epizod v sérii, který je odlišný v Británii (šest epizod) a Americe (až třicet epizod). Kapitola dále uvádí rozdělení situačních komedií na tři druhy, akční actcom, domcom z domácího prostředí a dramatickou dramedy. Následující odstavce popisují samotné *Haló, Haló!*, seriál, který se v Anglii vysílal mezi léty 1982 až 1992 a stal se velice úspěšným. Zmíněny jsou také odchylky od běžného britského seriálu, jelikož některé epizody mají nestandardních 35 až 45 minut a pátá série obsahuje celkový počet 26 dílů. Dále kapitola zmiňuje příběh seriálu a představuje jeho hlavní postavy. Seriál se odehrává za Druhé světové války v okupované Francii, v malém městečku Nouvion. Majitel kavárny René Artois se snaží poklidně vést svůj podnik, to mu ale komplikují místní německý plukovník Von Strohm, který si u Reného v kavárně schovává ukradené cennosti, jež hodlá po válce prodat, a velitelka místního francouzského odboje Michelle, která pro změnu v kavárně ukrývá dva sestřelené britské letce.

Čtvrtá kapitola začíná úvodem do období Druhé světové války, zejména z britského a francouzského pohledu a představuje válečnou dobu jak z vojenského, tak i civilního hlediska. Poukazuje na dopad války na civilní obyvatelstvo a na počátky odboje na francouzské půdě. Zbytek kapitoly se zabývá analýzou prvků parodie v daném seriálu, kde jsou reálné historické motivy a postavy srovnány s jejich parodickým zpracováním a doplněny korespondujícími scénkami ze seriálu.

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