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The Simpsons: A Postmodern Reading for the Position of an American Family

Prof. Dr. Ansam Riyadh Abdullah Almaaroof

Amina Nidham Al-Din Jabir

Tikrit University-College of Education for Women-

* *Corresponding author: E-mail* : amnanidham0@gmail.com

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A B S T R A C T

With analysing *The Simpsons*, the following paper aims at clarifying the ideology of postmodernity and how this literary work exposes and confronts them. The paper analyses the text according to the postmodern techniques and strategie; intertextuality, hyper-reality, and fragmentation. *The Simpsons*, a popular cartoon comedy in the USA and worldwide, is intended to show the values of damaged American families. The Simpsons' postmodern techniques have established it as one of the most significant shows. Throughout *The Simpsons*, readers get to see a variety of characters. This work shows essentially every element of North American society. Finally, almost anybody who has viewed *The Simpson* the least once in his\her life will find that it presents predictions which have received the corresponding traction. *The Simpsons* has become a routine dependency on subconsciously predicting actual events.

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عائلة سمبسون: قراءة ما بعد حداثية لوضع الأسرة الأمريكية

ا.د.انسام رياض عبدالله المعروف/ جامعة تكريت– كلية التربية للبنات – قسم اللغة الإنكليزية

آمنه نظام الدين جابر/ جامعة تكريت– كلية التربية للبنات – قسم اللغة الإنكليزية

الخلاصة:

من خلال تحليل نص الادبي الذي يحمل عنوان "عائلة سمبسون"، تهدف هذه الورقة إلى توضيح أفكار ما بعد الحداثة وكيفية مواجهتها ومدى تأثيرها علة وضع الاسرة الامريكية. تقوم الورقة بتحليل تقنيات واستراتيجيات ما بعد الحداثة من التشبيك، الواقع التشعبي، والتجزئة. عائلة سيمبسون، وهو كوميديا شعبية انتشرت في "الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية" وفي جميع أنحاء العالم، وتهدف إلى إظهار قيم الأسر الأمريكية المتضررة. وقد أثبتت نظرية ما بعد الحداثة أنها واحدة من أهم الاعمال التي تطرح الجوانب المختلفة

لعصر ما بعد الحداثة. من خلال عائلة سيمبسون، يستطيع القراء رؤية مجموعة متنوعة من الشخصيات. يعرض هذا العمل كل عناصر مجتمع أمريكا الشمالية. أخيراً، تقريباً أي شخص قد شاهد "عائلة سيمبسون" في اي وقت من حياته. ومع التطور الذي حدث على مدى السنوات القليلة الماضية، يجد ان توقعات "عائلة سيمبسون" دائما ما تجد زخمًا واقعيا. أصبح آل سمبسون تبعية روتينية لتوقع الأحداث الأساسية دون وعي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: – عائلة سمبسون ، الدراما الأمريكية ، ما بعد الحداثة ، الرأي الاجتماعي ، السياسة

1- Introduction

1-1- Postmodernism theory

Postmodernism is a term that covers various approaches to aesthetic production and cultural criticism that emerged in the 1980s. This is a uniquely important exercise in this range. It is directly related to art, philosophy, politics and sociology. The definition of postmodernism in the Encyclopaedia of Modern Literary Theory expresses its broad scope. "Today, postmodernism refers to the visual arts, music, dance, film, theatre, philosophy, criticism, history, theology, and everything that explains it." general. Some of the most influential thinkers in science have come up with an innovative way to explain the shift in the new cultural state of postmodernism (A.4).

Postmodernism seeks to deconstruct or rewrite modernity into open closed systems. Both movements use technique that fundamentally challenge tradition, the mood and motives for using these techniques are fundamentally different. Fragmentation is example of a characteristic that characterizes modernism and postmodernism. However, literary critics argue that modernists use fragmentation as the tone of sadness and nostalgia for a more intact earlier period, while postmodernists use a tone of enthusiasm and liberation.

Postmodernists also distinguish among modernism and postmodernism in their perception of the relationship among "higher" and "lower" art. Modernists generally avoid mixing high and low art, but it is not uncommon in postmodern circles to mix these elements in one expression. Postmodernism contrasts sharply with the aesthetic elitism that postmodernists see as an integral part of modernist aesthetics. Postmodernists consider popular art as important to our culture as classical art. Although often seen as provocative, it has led to a much harsher critique of postmodernism (ibid).

1-2. The Main Characteristics of Postmodernism:

Intertextuality is one of the main features of postmodernism. Intertextuality is the formation of text meaning from other texts. It may involve borrowing and changing previous text or directing the reader to one text while reading another.

Fragmentation. Postmodern literature takes modernist fragmentation and expands on it, moving literary works more into collage-like forms, distortions of time, and significant leaps in character and place (master class.com) It is clear that postmodern writers are not the first to use irony and humour in their works, but this is characteristic of their style for many postmodern writers. World War II has deeply disillusioned the Postmodern writers, and the Cold War and conspiracy theories had the same effect. There is irony, playfulness and black humour when one tries to combine them (literary-articles.com).

Techno-culture and hyper-reality, Postmodernism, called "the cultural logic of late capitalism". Society moved behind capitalism in the information age that constantly bombards people with advertisements, videos, and product positioning. Many postmodern writers mirror this in their work, either by creating products that mirror actual advertising or by placing their characters in situations where they cannot escape technology.

Postmodernists seriously reject theological belief in divine religions though all suggest that they depend on it. Postmodernists do not speak implicitly about materialism but discuss morality and religiosity. However, their goal is religion and natural theology, which is the product of the human community and their desires. They believe in nothing outside the everyday world, and there is no trace of spiritual and material dualism (Forghani et al. 105).

2- The Simpsons

The Simpsons has become a true pop culture icon, reflecting and shaping 1990s American culture through witty scripts and hilarious animations. The series belongs to the most famous TV families globally and features many celebrity voices. It will air for 14 seasons with over 300 episodes and is still airing at the time of writing. The series is also famous and broadcast in over 60 countries. It is also a valuable franchise worth nearly $1 billion when clothing-related marketing and licensing are valid.

The Simpsons began as a collection of short films for The Tracey Ullman Show in 1987 and evolved into its series in 1989 through producer James Brooks and producer Matt Groening. Groening created the fictional city of Springfield, USA, for an animated film set. Once an underground comic, Groening takes over the comic medium and transforms Springfield into a fantasy world that reflects the natural world through a distorted entertainment mirror, Groening said he used the series as a vehicle to "silence some of the countercultural messages". As a defence against network intrusion or censorship, Brooks' influence is as an established producer and the show's "great popularity". The New York Times film critic A.O. Scott believes he is tackling an important issue facing America (Ho 277).

3- Postmodernism in Simpsons' Family

The Simpsons is an American animated television sitcom with many postmodern features, such as Leotard's metanarrative theory, intertextuality, and hyper-reality. The show uses various elements and themes to "appropriately" portray postmodernism. *The Simpsons* has been a family favourite for decades and are the longest-serving sitcom. The show regularly mimics societies in other countries, making it one of the first sitcoms to include another section of society that was previously untouched. The show's postmodern approach has become one of the most influential shows. *The Simpsons* allows the audiences to see different characters throughout the show. This animated series covers almost the entire spectrum of society in North America. Moreover, Simpson's notion of sets parodies the basic meaning of the postmodern paradigm (Donaldson6).

One of the main characteristics of postmodernism in aesthetic production is intertextuality, which *The Simpsons* frequently uses in his stories. Most of the show's comedy lies in its extensive use of explicit and implicit references to cultural images, past and present. It is a classic comedy technique far from exclusive to *The Simpsons*, but the inclusion of this reference, as is usual in *The Simpsons*, is new to all popular television series, especially in the animated genre. Observation every episode of *The Simpsons*, observers find it hard to ignore the barrage of references to cultural phenomena. Using "A Streetcar Named Marge" episode as an example, cultural references range from the Broadway drama Oh! Kolkata! By Russian philosopher Ayn Rand (A. 19).

Another feature of postmodernism is that *The Simpsons* deals primarily with contemporary culture, with a fair amount of parody and style in the past. Indication to historical events and figures were often incorporated into stories and parodied. The visual appearance of specific eras is often considered a reflection of a presented historical event. As Homer recalls his childhood, the audience is transported to the 1950s. Stereotypical imagery from the period occurs. At this moment, the vibrant colours of the present have vanished into the black and white, which symbolizes the period in which the story unfolds. Black and white present this period because it is an image we associate with it. The absence of colour evokes a sense of time, conveying the "1950s" into the present.

When *The Simpsons* incorporates multiple references to past and present realities into their content, viewers will recognize their object of reference as accurate, automatically separating the real from the fictional. However, once the viewer connects with reality that reality reference turns to *The Simpsons*, leaving viewers unsure how authentic the image is. It becomes difficult to distinguish that parts are taken straight from reality and entirely fictitious. That is one of how Springfield constantly mixes the imaginary and the natural, ultimately leading to a hyper-reality where the viewer has detached from real emotional attachment. The only thing that exists is artificial stimulation. It is a postmodern condition. This reflected when Lisa told Homer :

Lisa: I want a Daddy who lives in the real World!
Homer: To Daddy, the real World gets fainter and fainter every (www.scarymommy.com)

The Simpsons is full of postmodern irony. Some media experts see the irony of postmodernism as an uneasy challenge for teachers who are obliged to combining media literacy together with productive citizenship. Purdy for example, laments that "between Madonna and the fight between Jesus and Santa Claus that invented the animated series South Park, fewer and fewer conventions can be surprising to ignore". Irony concludes, "invites us to investigate ourselves, but within ourselves, we cannot believe, very interesting or significant." While it can support a minimal political program," they wrote, "it is widely viewed as irreparably parasitic and antisocial. " Irony can be "both political and apolitical. It is conservative and radical, both repressive and democratizing in the way other discursive strategies are not". The challenge of postmodern irony in relation to its challenge to establish itself consistently.

When all serious projects become satire, play, or bullshit, "any attempt at authenticity or genuine intent becomes invalid, only poses punctuated by polished confidence" (Bybee and Overbeck 5).

3.1. Fragmentation in *The Simpsons*

The proliferation of characters representing different cultures and subcultures in *The Simpsons* mirrors the fragmentation of subject matter linked with postmodern art forms. The subjectivity in *The Simpson* dissolves with the sheer number of characters that manifest in each show. The appearance of characters embodying so many different individual identities creates contradictions in programming messages, leading to an atmosphere of objectivity rather than subjectivity. Postmodern fragmentation "should be understood as celebrating absolute and irreparable collapse with a single subject." *The Simpsons* demonstrates the decentralization of this unifying theme, focusing on groups of people previously driven against traditional sitcom backgrounds, i.e. if they are there at all. Although the episodes mainly focus on one member of *The Simpsons*, their development during the story inevitably leads to the preface of dozens of different characters along the way. Often the focus of the subject shifts with each episode, distancing the viewer from the diverse voice cast as traditional TV shows do, and providing snippets of characters from different sections of society, creating diverse images of life (A. 12).

The postmodern fragmentation in *The Simpsons* is not restricted to the subject but expands to its narrative form. The unstable structure of Simpson's storyline is the result of a fractured and fragmented narrative, demonstrating the role fragmentation played in the creation of this series. Another feature of postmodernism is that episodes are intentionally "ubiquitous" and non-linear, i.e. The first 5-10 minutes usually have little to do with the main story. This show makes extensive use of groove techniques. It inserts a story with so many twists and deviations from unrelated subjects that it can sometimes be challenging to determine what an episode is the intended one. *The Simpsons* breaks its short 22-minute run into several shorter stories in its many episodes. In the House of Horrors of the Tree Halloween special, the screenwriter has the opportunity to present several individual stories in greater detail, rather than one continuous (ibid).

3-2. *The Simpsons* can teach people the economics of health care.

Matt Groening and the others of *The Simpsons'* founders have not forgotten the complexities of healthcare which have developed over the years. Scenes from many episodes focus on such informational issues, fuelling much of the debate about dining tables and the health politics of water coolers across America. *The Simpsons* could teach us a lot about health economics as Homer tells Marge:

Homer: "Don't worry, Marge. America's health care system is second only to Japan, Canada, Sweden, Great Britain, well, all of Europe, but you can thank your lucky stars we don't live in "!*Paraguay (m.facebook.com).*

The Simpsons educates viewers about the impact of lifestyle on health in almost each episode. Any time Homer eats a donut, he sacrifices subsequent weight loss and improved cardiovascular health to enjoy today's spray . An economist will say that Homer prefers donut time. Homer valued the here and now more than the potential benefits he expected. Homer isn't the only player in Spring to judge the future this way. For example, when Krusty the Clown sees Homer in the hospital before his heart bypass surgery, he tries to calm his terror by telling Homer that he is also in Homer's triple bypass. Thereafter, finding signs of heart surgery, Christie unbuttoned her shirt and immediately started smoking. Krusty valued the nicotine in a cigarette more than avoiding the pain of future surgeries (Hall 128).

Viewers can observe many things in the world of health by watching the everyday life of The Simpsons. What can viewers learn from his adventures? With their help, we can better expound the rise in health care costs in the US. They showed people that the healthcare market is full of information asymmetries, and this asymmetry leads to higher costs for patients, doctors, and insurance companies. The public is aware that there are subsidies for health warranty in the tax process. This developments your health care coverage and the care you need. Other regulations governing physician education and licensing end the supply of physicians in the market and further increase costs. But perhaps the important lesson they could teach us is that the American healthcare process is far more complex than it first appears, and we must carefully weigh all competing and unwanted incentives (Hall 138).

4- *The Simpsons'* Satire

Satire is a sublime form of comedy, often influencing social change. Satire achieves social correction by raising a mirror for our society, ourselves, and demanding that we improve both. Writers employ satire to rebel with an overly codified society and escape from a "polluted" world. Satire attacks the "absurdity" hidden in social habits, exposes misconceptions and destroys the duplicity of our society(Ho 287).

The Simpsons are pop culture images effected by the American reactionary movement of the 1960s. Although the series satirizes the law and corporations, it exposes many of the American legal system's problems. The commentary on the series is undoubtedly funny, but it is more than a comedy to "figure out" the faults in our social system. This series falls into the realm of corrective social satire. It reflects a wrong legal system and is also an attempt to change it. The Simpsons use ancient forms of satire to deliver timely and relevant information about the failure of American society, especially the legal system .

Ultimately, *The Simpsons* is promoting a realistic legal agenda. Springfield's rule of law is meaningless, trivial, and easily circumvented. In the tradition of legal realism, the creators and writers of the series imagine a fictional world where there is no absolute based on religion or natural law, and justice is achieved only through abuse or circumvention of the legal system. For the people of Springfield, this is the only way to find truth and justice. The Simpsons are effective because they reflect the legal system's widely held beliefs. He sent a message to the lawyers that they needed improvement and that the cause of the criticism should be investigated (Ho 288).

5- *The Simpsons* and Religion

Most of *The Simpsons'* main characters share the same beliefs and respect other religions. Bart and Lisa attempt to talk to Krusty to return to the clown and accept his Jewish heritage. Apu and his Hindu people live with Christians in the city of Springfield. Recurring characters are Muslims, Buddhists, or atheists .

Conversations with people of different religions (and with those who profess no faith at all) will cause viewers to have mixed reactions to the "religious" world of The Simpsons. Atheists on *The Simpsons'* website criticized the show, calling it "more like a Sunday school program. The show's main message is that only good people have religion." While "kindness" is

familiar to various characters on the show, the argument that a religious message is pervasive on *The Simpsons* seems to have some merit.

Choose from The Simpsons episodes, which represent 13 years of broadcasting. In general, the following lesson is understandable: "God is omnipotent and omnipresent in the life of people living in Springfield. Homer, Marge, Bart, and Lisa turn to God for support when problems arise and also Marge 's question:

Marge: Why aren't we ascending into Heaven…(raebear.net)

The Simpsons' writer takes a stand against the hoaxes, snobbery, and hypocrisy of many characters in an embarrassing comedic sense, but the point is clear. *The Simpsons* makes people laugh. The Holocaust was rescheduled for another Sunday as many embraced what Burke calls a "comedy cult". Comedy, satire and jokes are essential principles to remember in Simpson's world (Lewis 164).

The writer realizes the importance of laughing or making fun of something. "The Simpsons seems to make fun of religion, but like so many TV shows, it acknowledges religion's real role in American life".

6- *The Simpson* predictions for 2022

Almost everyone has seen *The Simpson* at least once in their life. Over the past few years, *The Simpsons'* "predictions" have gained the corresponding traction as progress was there made. The Simpsons have become a recurring habit of subconsciously predicting important events.

1- One of the predictions is When Lisa hides her concerns about going to Mars and asks to go to Mars one way, but Marge gets very offended, resulting in the whole family signing up for the trip, scheduled for 2026. SpaceX's Elon Musk and his A-Team plan to develop a cargo ship for Mars by 2022.
2- Another prediction is when The Simpsons stumble upon an amusement park where robots control all the rides. They lose control of themselves and kill most of themselves and those around them. Known as the "father of artificial intelligence," Jurgen Schmidhuber believes that robots could rule the world as we know it for decades to come.

3- Also, in a 2001 episode, Bart and his friends are involved in a naval project that seeks to control their thoughts through music by relaying subliminal messages to children. Since many still believe that hip hop is to manipulate listeners' minds, this particular moment could be on the list of predictions that have come true.
4- In a season 11 episode aired in 2000, Bart appears to travel to a future where Lisa is president and talks about "family problems" leftover from his predecessor, who was none other than Donald Trump. That prediction came true in 2016 when Trump won the race against Hillary Clinton.
5- ٢٠٢٠ has been an unsettling year for the world, but the United States may have a little more complicated as it deals with the mother hornet and the coronavirus. At the same time, "killer bees" invaded the city) times).

6- Conclusion

Postmodernism is now used to denote the visual arts, dance, music, film, criticism, philosophy, theatre, theology, and anything that describes it. This movement inspires works that make people feel more connected to society. Postmodernism is redefining the arts and arts of mass culture of value. The Simpsons has been bringing people together, sparking conversations, and connecting us through visual media for nearly 20 years, and will likely continue to be a masterpiece of postmodern literature.

The Simpsons has been a true pop culture image, reflecting and shaping 1990s American culture through witty scripts and hilarious animations. The Simpsons is an American animated television sitcom has many postmodern features. Fragmentation, irony, humour, Techno-culture, hyper-reality, and intertextuality cover the structural side of the series.

The Simpsons is always fun. However, when these events become a reality, viewers are always one step ahead of all other sitcoms, as they have to wait for the next virtual show that can become part of the reality.

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