

Postmodernism: The American T.V. Show, 'Family Guy, As a Politically Incorrect Document

Tyron Tyson Smith¹; Ajit Duara^{2*}

¹Symbiosis Institute of Media and Communication, Symbiosis International (Deemed University), Pune, Maharashtra, India.

^{2*}Symbiosis Institute of Media and Communication, Symbiosis International (Deemed University), Pune, Maharashtra, India.

^{2*}ajit.duara@simc.edu

Abstract

Postmodernism is a movement that grew out of modernism. Movements in art, literature, and cinema focused on a particular stance. The visual artists who created entertainment focused on expressing the creator herself/himself beginning from German expressionism to modernism, surrealism, cubism, etc. These art movements played an important part in what an artist (literature, art, and visual) portrayed to his or her audience.

As perspectives played an important part, an understanding of what the artist needed to portray was critical. Modernism dealt with this portrayal, which came about due to the changes taking place in society. In terms of the industry, where the overall product dealt with features like individualism, experimentation and absurdity, modernism dealt with a need to overthrow past notions of what painting, literature, and the visual arts needed to be. "After World War II, the focus moved from Europe to the United States, and abstract expressionism (led by Jackson Pollock) continued the movement's momentum, followed by movements such as geometric abstractions, minimalism, process art, pop art, and pop music."

Postmodernism helped do away with these shortcomings. An understanding of postmodernism is explored in this paper. The main point which sets it apart is concepts like pastiche, intersexuality, and spectacle. Concerning pop culture, an understanding of referencing is a constant trait used by postmodern art.

Postmodern television and the central part of this study applied to the popular animated American TV show, 'family guy' is a postmodern show in its truest form, while attempting to use certain aspects of postmodernism tropes to help emphasize that visual art can be considered a historical document while doing an in-depth analysis of the visual text of 'family guy' by itself, several other research papers were used to help further put in stone that 'family guy' is a true representation of postmodern television. It is divided into two phases of data collection: context analysis, which involves a qualitative study. The second being in-depth interviews (also qualitative) which in itself helps give a subjective view of participants between the ages of 20 and 28. These comprise students who are familiar with the show and the concepts of the show. All of them, both frequent viewers of the show and those also politically

informed of world politics, helped further emphasize the concept of the paper, which was the idea of how a television show in all its absurd narrative and pastiche functions as a historical document.

The purpose of this study, along with the results for this research, is to help bring about the comprehension of how postmodern shows are influenced by other past events, figures of history, etc.; this understanding can explain how a television show like 'family guy could be considered a historical document – by its narrative, by the cultural references connected to these said events, and also with the help of paintings, which the makers of the show use to design the episode of the show, and which reflect and refer to the actual historical figures. Historiography is being proven to be biased in more ways than one, which leads us to an understanding of a different narrative depending on one's own opinions of history and historical documents as we know it.

Key-words: Postmodernism, Art, Television, Pastiche, Pop-culture, Political Incorrectness, History, Historical Document, Historiography.

1. Introduction

“The first prerequisite of the serious historical researcher must be the ability to jettison dearly held interpretations in the face of the recalcitrance of the evidence.” Understanding history and historiography are key in determining an opinion. Evans explains this in his book as a way to drop a bombshell of sorts in the face of interpretation of history, meaning that we understand history in terms of an opinion. This opinion is a bias, which historians study and interpret and the layman interprets in the perspective of the person who wrote about the said historical event, figure, etc.; understanding postmodernism has been the key in this regard, as it deals with referencing older documents of culture, article, etc [1]. Postmodern theorist believe that postmodernism is of key importance to more than just one particular sphere of life, as we know it. “Simplifying to the extreme, I define postmodernism as incredulity toward met narratives” [2] A similar way where many religions deliver different stories and account for other people's lives and relate them to how we should live our lives. An opinion or perspective is given while certain art in the form of literature or visuals is made. Modernism, before postmodernism, dealt with a definite stride toward doing away with preconceived notions and understandings of how art was supposed to be made [3]. As time went on, these understandings of doing away with notions as a criterion for good art started to fade out with a need for proper reasoning. an understanding of substituting the real for mere signs of the real. The emphasis laid down for a postmodern world; sometimes, something fake or unreal defines the world more than the real itself [4]. These are done through signs previously kept to represent the real. Hence, the postmodern world portrays the real world through a simulation. "The media represents a world that is more real than the reality that we can experience. People lost the ability to distinguish between reality and fantasy [5]. They also engage with the fantasy without realizing what it is. They seek happiness and fulfillment

through the simulacra of reality." The copy without the original was key to understanding how Baudrillard shaped postmodernism in his book [6]. He emphasized that the copy was most of the time taken to be the original. An understanding was laid down in cinema with films like 'The Matrix' (Silver, 1999) and 'Pulp fiction' (Bender, 1994). The latter dealt with popular culture and took a different way in terms of narrative, to the traditional format, with the anti-hero [7], which brought about an audience of a wider range due to the intrigue, which the film brought about. The former of the two dealt directly with the understanding of postmodernism and simulation, which played an important part in shaping television at the time [8].

Television series took a similar part and usually changed with a change in time and political situations present. Given 1950's American television, 'How to look at Television' (Adorno, 1991) Adorno, spoke on an understanding of how a need to study audiences was key to understanding the overlaying effect on them in terms of reception [9], which was used in some ways to help understand what an audience would and would not like, depending on several different factors. "The effect of television cannot be adequately expressed in terms of success or failure, likes or dislikes approval or disapproval [10]. Rather, an attempt should be made, with the aid of psychological-depth categories and previous knowledge of mass media, to crystallize several theoretical concepts by which the potential effect of television – its impact upon various layers of the spectator's personality could be studied." (Adorno, 1991: 136) [11]. He emphasized understanding of the audience and reception to certain shows, has based most of his study on 1950's television shows. He laid a foundation or a thought that eventually helped artists create television content to be wary of and cater to their target audience. It was a to and fro process of learning. Most theorists understood audience behavior and the cultural identity of people who created television content starting from the 1950s [12]. The emphasis on audience reception was key and played a huge part in understanding situations better. As time went by, different shows like reality television and soap operas started to take center stage during the 1970s 80's and '90s [13]. "Daytime melodramas became popular during a time when women spent less time in the paid labor force than they did in the early and later years of the 20th century" [14]. She lays down a part of the time during the 1980s and 90s, where soap operas dominated television viewing and captured audiences. Their target group being women, which became a hit eventually [15]. The idea of melodrama was key, which eventually led to more shows and sitcoms during the 90s and 2000s, which picked up on the theory of postmodernism. Several shows follow postmodernism, where referencing older cultures, texts, and proper use of pastiche was seen to take center stage [16]. Some of these shows were animated, and some real life. Shows like 'Simpson's (Brooks 1999), 'Community' (Foster, 2009), and 'The Office' (Silverman, 2005) dealt directly with postmodernism and the tropes of postmodernism

[17] using several tropes, which postmodernism possess. The main being is referencing. These shows, in certain ways, paid homage at times to older cultures, genres, historical events, and history. By showing certain cultures through their episodes, these shows became a piece of history, a way to understand the past somehow [18].

The research paper flows in the following ways. For example, the literature review helps draw an understanding of the term postmodernism and the tropes of the theory. An understanding of family guy and other shows with features they exhibit in their narratives, which eventually leads to an understanding of how these shows tend to portray history in their narratives in some way, shape, or form in terms of culture [19], which is further understood by referring to Baudrillard and his book, *Simulacra*, and *Simulacrum* along with several other research papers, websites, blogs, etc., the next part is the methodology, which emphasizes the direction the researcher has taken in terms of data collection and why he has taken it [20]. When paired with literature review, this data collection and analysis results, when paired with literature review, helps further to give a better understanding of the topic and the direction in terms of questions to be answered. Future scope and limitations tend to pave the way for further research along the same field using a similar or different study [21].

2. Literature Review

Understanding the visual arts' past is key to understanding how visual arts have reached the stage of postmodernism.

Dating back to 1885 with the Lumiere brothers, their film on the 'Arrival of a train at Vincennes Station' (Melies, 1896) to D. W. Griffith and 'The birth of a nation' (Griffith, 1915) was extremely influenced by art movements [22]. Having an understanding of this is key in terms of understanding where visual arts as a medium first established itself.

Starting from French Impressionism is one of the first film movements to other movements like German expressionist films like 'The cabinet of Dr. Caligary' observed Wiene, etc [23]. Film movements relied more on situational parts of the society, and filmmakers and artists alike had similar thought processes of the same. Television took a similar route. Being heavily influenced by the film movements, it concentrated initially on shows, which were set on a home basis, meant for a family-based audience [24].

"The June Cleaver or Donna Stone homemaker role was not available to more than 40% of black women with small children." (Coontz, 1992) was the problem that arose, which led to more of a variety.

Right from the start, a definite trait of stereotypes stuck on to American television. It followed into later years in the '60s, '70s, and '80s [25]. With more controversial shows like 'Maude' (Parker, 1972) taking center stage, shows like 'Brady Bunch' (Shwartz, 1995) shaping how society saw shows and structures of television sitcoms, the narrative of which was different from what had been seen before. Shows like 'Saturday night live' (Michaels, 1975) came around a little before in terms of the period with the idea of sketch comedy being the key. Shows around that time, too, saw a contrast in terms of reality [26]. Shows like 'Cops' (Thomas, 1989) took a new spin on the reality television viewing experience. This contrast continued with more variety and with a more varied audience, which caused a want for more than just one dominant type of television viewing experience; with modernism drawing to a close, a need for the next, more appealing thing to come up postmodernism [27].

Postmodernism did away with these restrictions and went a step ahead. It used more extravagant plots and storylines. The creation of a relationship between the audience and the film was key. The research was done to understand better newer series content creators, who still functioned in today's time [28]. They focused on using genre and intersexuality as a reference to create bonds for more out of this world television series, like 'Black Mirror' (Jones, 2011), the use of an over-the-top backdrop along with more relatable characters were ideal features of most postmodern films, having kept the spectacle in mind, television series relied heavily on the over the top [29].

"We were leaving the water-cooler era when most of us listened, watched, and read from the same relatively small pool of mostly hit content, and we are entering the micro-culture era when we all are into different things" [30].

2.1. Key Features in the Early Stages

"The emergence of the postmodern idea in art led to end-of-art theories, an apparent sign of a break with the past, with modernism. One may thus wonder if it is possible to speak of a fundamental change in the history of art and art production through the transition from modernism to postmodernism" [31].

A detailed explanation of art in postmodernism in Lea Laurent's 'The idea of the postmodern is art' shows key features in how postmodern art has a heavy influence on other forms of art, like literature and cinema. She speaks about a break [32].

"The emergence of the postmodern idea in art led to end-of-art theories, an apparent sign of a break with the past."

This break helps lead us away from previous movements, firmly setting them apart in terms of art [33].

“Postmodern taking place first in the context of pop art”.

This difference is explored further in ‘What is the difference between modernist work of art and postmodernist work of art’ by Mina Dreki, where she points out one of the most defining features of postmodern art [34].

From the research on this part of key features, I have come across, a highly detailed view of the movements has been established; most of the movements usually differ from each other in terms of situations and societal and economic norms. The theory in itself, through my research, has helped bring about an understanding of the difference between the real and the copy being non-existent [35]. The fact that the copy could be taken as real in itself through an understanding of signs further pushes the point of postmodern shows tending to be regarded as historical documents in itself, which helps prove that newer art forms, especially film and television, have a definite reference in some way, shape, and form to older events that have taken place in history, which henceforth helps take these postmodern television series in a direction toward becoming a historical document [36].

2.2. Emergence of Postmodernism from Modernism

“The primary distinction between modern and postmodern is that they differ in tone: The modernist writers like their romantic ancestors are dedicated to their art and make large claims for it, seriousness is dominant, whereas postmodern writers reject the ontological claim of art, satirize the more extravagant claims, and focus on the absurdity of it all.”

‘In Modern and Postmodern,’ by David Bergdahl, Bergdahl explores what brought a change between the Modern and Postmodern. His writings give a clear indication of a key difference in films being Tone. He goes on to explore [37].

"The modernist writers, like their romantic ancestors, are dedicated to their art and make large claims for it, seriousness is dominant, whereas postmodern writers reject the ontological claim of art, satirize the more extravagant claims, and focus on the absurdity of it all."

He makes this exploration using obvious key features of how films came about during the pre-production stages [38].

Absurdity is seen in the spectacle, the spectacle in terms of television series, understanding of an absurd narrative to bring about an understanding of the past. This past includes figures, events, idols, etc., with no clear connection in narratives but rather clearer indications of events but with a different

connect. A different narrative Atheists tended to dominate the understanding of the past with atheistic writings of plots for television and a complete do away with God or the concept of religion [39].

This paper aims at giving a proper understanding of postmodernism, its different stages, using different film analysis, and most importantly, doing a comparison between other film movements to understand how it is a compilation of the previous movements in the way of postmodernism. This compilation, which is still extremely relevant in making successful television, both from the television series maker himself/herself in terms of creative freedom and distributors or producers. This liberty tends to give more variety in terms of content [40].

2.3. Tropes

Understanding postmodern tropes were key. Hence a large part of this research deals with tropes and understanding how other texts emphasize this importance.

With time, popular culture was key to bring about an audience. TV series makers used this to their advantage, creating shows with mass appeal, which led to more connection between the audience and characters, reliability being key. TV series makers were given more creative freedom than the previous film and television movements. Keeping in mind the production side of things, filmmakers and film distributors were in a win-win situation.

Intertextuality refers to understanding and then using an older text in a newer way in a similar way to the above point. Texts used in newer times had a newer twist to them. Shows like ‘Riverdale’ emphasized this use of older text with a newer narrative.

The spectacle was used to try and enforce the way newer art forms made their mark.

2.4. Family Guy and the Concept of Being Politically Incorrect

Postmodernism brings about an extremely important sphere of filmmaking and television, creating elaborate plots while doing away or breaking away from older filmmaking norms alongside paying homage to these very norms.

“Anti-Rationality as the main feature of postmodernism has stipulated the intensification of its attention towards its sphere of the creation of the subject of knowledge.” (Artashkina, 2018)

‘In Hermeneutics, as a methodology of the postmodern and the post-postmodern eras’ by Tamara A. Artashkina, the emphasis laid is different. A more anti-rational structure is put forth, emphasizing a show as a family guy to crush previous norms. The anti-rationality showed through with

the show's creators emphasizing a disconnect from these said norms, which was laid concrete with atheistic writing and outright bashing of religion and the concept of, in particular, Christianity.

“A postmodern film's purpose is to break the cultural consensus of late capitalism by creating a new logic. In other words, postmodern films restore the erotic energy that capitalism sucks away by applying a colorful mixture of creativity, irony, and pastiche...”

‘In the beauty of postmodern cinema’ by Baher Hussein explains this above break. “Family guy” addresses this capitalism in a twisted narrative, ranging from different shows about this direct effect on the American citizens and how it affects the world around them through sometimes subtle and, at the same time, in your face hints [41].

2.5. Is “Family Guy” A Document of History?

In terms of the key features of a postmodernist piece of art, the family guy checks all the boxes. It dives into using absurdity to show a form of pastiche of previous art forms shows a form of homage toward previous artists. The question arises whether the youth see it as a way to appreciate the past or whether it is a document to understand and, in certain ways, relive the past through the present modes of how artists work and come up with their respective work using their creativity merged with past tropes. The research done according to the topic of my direction has seen several understandings of the past and how the future does away with the past. It does so by representing the past, making it difficult for people to understand the difference between the copy and the original.

“All of these are seen through the perspective of the decade they were made, provide a sense of past, although the setting is in the future” [42].

"It is dangerous to unmask images since they dissimulate the fact that there is nothing behind them."

‘In Simulacra and Simulation’ by Jon Baudrillard, which is one of the most important books on postmodernism, he explores the concept of the copy, and we see this being explored through a show like family guy and seeing the historiography being biased, which the narrative of family guy tends to do with referencing older times, events, characters, etc.

Using the above-mentioned references further, the study deducing that postmodernism can be considered a historical document [43].

3. Objectives

The study's main objectives are to bring about a proper understanding of the postmodern term, the effect postmodern visual arts in terms of television have on an audience, and, most importantly, on history itself [44]. The following are the proposed objectives: -

1. Using this concept of post modernity to bring about a connection between postmodernism and history.
2. Understanding the television show family guy as a true postmodern show.
3. Making clear that postmodernism is and can be considered a historical document.
4. Historiography has an inherent bias, showing that a historical document is a perspective (opinioned) in nature.

4. Methodology

This segment deals with an understanding of how this research has been accomplished. The data is gathered in one phase. An online platform was used to determine how many possible respondents the researcher would have for a possible in-depth interview. The in-depth interview data was collected in two ways, personal face-to-face interview or recorded telephonic/Video-call interview. The group targeting this was young adults, who were studying or working between 20 and 28 years of age, most urban residents in India, Dubai, England, and Germany [45]. The reason is the show's availability being mostly on streaming websites and selecting OTT platforms, making it less readily available to a larger audience. The other reason being the westernized adult nature of the show grasping most people around the young adults' age groups. The participants were selected based on responses received upon being asked either on social media platforms or face-to-face discussions on their knowledge of the topic and, in particular, the series. The other part of the methodology involves in-depth visual, textual content analysis of the show, "Family Guy," using several references other than the show itself in papers, write-ups, online, etc.

4.1. Sample Size

The sample size of the in-depth interview was narrowed down to 11 after conversations regarding the show, an understanding of the show, and frequency in viewership to help attain a more subjective view of their opinions on certain topics, tropes, and the research question as a whole.

4.2. Participant's Profile

The participants ranged from the ages of 20-28. There were nine male participants, with seven of the 9 participants currently studying and the other currently working. The remaining two female participants were both students.

4.3. Data Collection

The data collection for the paper by the researcher was done between May and August 2020. The content analysis for the visual text was done in-depth throughout the four months, while the in-depth interview data was collected toward the latter half of June, moving to July end. The content analysis involved a study of the show's entire 21-year duration, with episodes where background, write-ups about the show, and critical reviews by reputed papers and journals online. For the in-depth interview, the estimated number of participants reached out to although was 20. A response of 11 was received in total. The interviewees were given a slot timing of 15-20 minutes each due to the availability of time chosen by them. The questions were prepared subjectively to give them freedom of thought, with each objective question leading most of the time to a follow-up subjective question depending on the interviewee's response [46].

5. Results and Discussion

The research findings and analysis are divided into two, content analysis and in-depth interviews. Using two qualitative methods, the researcher has come across several observations. Through the 'Grounded theory' (Glasser & Strauss, 1967) has relied on open coding to attain his results in the in-depth interview format of data collection. Using open coding, the researcher was able to gather a definite set of important themes [47].

5.1. Content Analysis

The first part of the researcher's findings is the content analysis of the television show "Family Guy." The researcher did an in-depth visual text analysis for four months. Understanding the show, themes, structure, etc., had been studied and read about in great depth. "The television show revolves around a similar concept to the Simpson's, albeit one that is highly focused on a very direct satire of contemporary culture and its impact on society, especially in terms of everyday American life."

(On “Family Guy,” 2020), an understanding of the show's theme is generated out of it, being a representation of a stereotypical American household mix. A patriarchal father, Peter Griffin, a hard-working mother, Lois Griffin, tolerates Peter's antics. Their son, Chris, who likes his father, is not the brightest tool in the shed, their daughter Meg, their newborn baby, Stewie, who speaks with an English adult man, and their dog Brian, who also speaks and dabbles in most adventures throughout the show, living in Quahog, which seems like your average everyday American neighborhood. The satire plays as a central theme throughout the narratives. Absurdity is a trope followed throughout the show, shown through Brian, the dog, and Stewie sharing a friendship similar to an adult one. The show follows the ‘narrative theory,’ observes Todorov, in great depths with equilibrium, disruption, realization, restoration, and equilibrium again. "Narrative theory is based on the concept that people are essentially storytellers. Storytelling is one of the oldest and most universal forms of communication. So, individuals approach their social world in a narrative mode and make decisions and act within this narrative framework,” analysis Fisher, which leads each episode, which starts at equilibrium, to usually wander off to different narratives within one itself, then eventually through the cycle finally come back to equilibrium, being an adult comedy animated series with most references to older pop cultures, the audiences for the show were initially people in their late 30s, which gradually changed, like family guy writers aimed at more modern references to appease young adults and late teens.

The family guy characters have definite reasoning for their mannerisms and general creation in terms of shape, thought process, etc. With bricolage being of key importance, the writer is focused on a deliberate attempt to pay homage to older cultures of television and American culture. Brian, the family dog, is primarily a similar figure in design to Snoopy, a character from ‘The Charlie Brown and Snoopy show.’ The character of Stewie is thought to be conceived from ‘Jimmy Corrigan, the smartest kid on Earth,’ a comic strip. The similarities in the design of both characters and the fact that Stewie is portrayed to be a baby with an adult mind with several episodes showing him doing things well beyond his years with clear indications of the connection between the two. The family as a whole is thought to be a recreation of the typical American family. Postmodernism plays a part in this, where the reality of the happy family is far from what we think it is. The reality gets interchanged with the copy of reality, which relates to absurdity in terms of narratives followed. The show has political incorrectness throughout in a humorous tone. Racism and stereotypes tend to take up a central theme when the role jokes about serious matters are sometimes subtle and other times not so subtle. The writers emphasize having these to the face ‘shock value’ type moments to keep the audience guessing [48].

5.2. Pastiche, Intertextuality, Political Incorrectness and Historical Bias

The show is a stark contrast to other shows. The use of cutaways or sometimes flashbacks introduces several different narratives or meta narratives. These extra narratives help take the narrative either forward or down another path depending on the show's writing, which helps create depth within the show and give it more chances of going down different avenues if the writers choose to do so. The irony is an important part of the show; it starts right at the beginning, with the intro song or title track. The lyrics of the song play into this irony. Speaking about modern values in the theme song "It seems today, that all you see is violence and movies and sex on TV, but where are those good old fashion values, on which we used to rely. Lucky there is "a family guy!" which is a contrast to the actual theme put forth in the premise of the actual television series. Playing further into this irony is the use of stereotypes and absurdity. In the episode, 'Prick up your ears,' the stereotype of Asian driving was alluded to and picked. Americans are having a pre-existing notion of Asians being bad drivers. Hence the stereotype was picked up on. Absurdity in stereotypes gets picked up on the show more often than not. In another episode, 'Boopa-dee Bappa-dee,' the show shows the family travel away to Italy, where the show stark stereotypes of Italian men in terms of dressing, accent, etc [49].

The focus of the show being postmodern relied heavily on pop-culture references. Thriving on postmodernism, the family used episodes like 'Wasted talent' (Collard, 2000) and 'Petergeist' the writers explore direct mockery of pop-culture references from films like Charlie and the Chocolate Factory' analyzed by Margulies. The Lord of the Rings,' studied by Osborne, where a family guy used direct references from the films in the episode. In wasted talent, the same narrative of Charlie and the chocolate factory is used with similar jingles. The Episode Petergeist sees multiple direct references to The Lord of the rings. Intertextuality is seen in great depth in the "Three Kings" episode, studied Sulkin. It focuses on three Stephen King films using direct references to these narratives. Using three of his films, 'Shawshank Redemption' observed by Marvin, 'Stand by Me,' studied by Evans, and 'Misery' observed by Nicolaidis, the "Three Kings" episodes uses "Family Guy" characters placed in these three films in the same setting, attire, and situation as them. Family Guy uses its twist in terms of dialogue and narrative to its advantage. Understanding that there is a direct reference to Stephen King, the writers used an upfront, non-subtle approach. These episodes use a very direct understanding of setting imagery and imagination, making the audience immediately understand the reference. Through this, we tend to pick up on subtle hints of this postmodernist trope leading to a documentation of the culture of American cinema and culture with the use of a bias in terms of a narrative change.

When the question of political incorrectness comes in, the family guy uses it to garner the idea of ‘shock value. This shock Value is key in attaining more eyes in terms of viewership. In the episode ‘Transfat’ (Wild, 2019), a hit is taken at the ignorance suffered by Peter. The episode revolves around the topic of transgender and is considered a sensitive topic in America. Peter tends to brush off this topic with his ignorance about how he thinks transgender means something completely different from what it is... "What is Transgender, anyway? Is that the stuff in potato chips?" Peter is quoted saying.

With religion and politics, family guy dives deep into direct references to Christianity and outward referencing, using their narratives. The concept of Jesus as God is used humorously. Several episodes like ‘Blind ambition’ (Callighan, 2005) use Christianity in some way, shape, or form. In this episode, in particular, God is shown flirting with women at a bar, which is an outright attack on religion and Christianity in particular. ‘The movement’ (Mull, 2020) deals with a current political scenario with America and the ‘Black lives matter movement. Indirect observation is made on the topic, using humor to address the situation.

The observations made after doing an in-depth analysis of content and family guy, in particular, reveals that history is subjectively written in the same way the portrayals of history are on family guy. "History is imperfect and biased, and it always has omissions. The most common omissions are the bits that the writer of that history took for granted that his readers would know" [50].

5.3. In-depth Interview

A total of 11 interviews took place after a small individual discussion between the researcher and probable interviewees. Having established that each interviewee has a definite idea of the topic and the show, family guy. A telephonic/video call was set up individually depending on the comfort of the interviewee. A time slot was given for each interview. A set of 8 questions was asked, with each of them having a subjective part. The interviews revolved around family guy as a postmodern show, their opinions on the show and its political incorrectness, and whether they felt that a postmodern show like the family guy could be considered a historical document.

The research findings found that all the participants were frequent viewers of the show with an average weekly viewership rate four times a week. Regarding political incorrectness and portrayal of political narratives, 3 out of the 11 participants stated further research on topics after being shown in the show. The ability to relate was a common trait revealed by the participants along with a common theme of satire noticed by the majority of the participants; audience viewership and shock value was a common trait stated by the majority of the participants with one participant, Akshay (Male, 26) stating,

"they will say something that feels politically incorrect." Alluding to the shock value point. The participants also all commented on the politics shown in the show, with all of them noticing a definite trend in constant use of political indications in terms of timing of seasons and politics of America. When questioned about political incorrectness, 2 of the 11 had no opinion about it, with the others alluding to the constant noticing of racist commentary throughout subtle narratives and direct narrative shots at certain communities. Towards the end of the interview, every participant was asked whether they felt a family guy could be considered a historical document even with all its incorrectness. Out of 11 participants, 2 felt that it could not. The rest all agreed either partially or fully that it could be considered a historical document. While most emphasized culture and historical events and characters' portrayal as the key reason, the rest pointed out a bias in history and historiography as a key reason for the family guy being considered a historical document. One of the other participants observes this. Rohan (Male, 23) says, "If you think about historical narratives and historiographies, A lot of the times you do see a particular historian's perspective."

Through both the in-depth interview and content analysis, the researcher noticed a definite trend that helps bring about an understanding of a postmodern show like family guy trending toward being a historical document.

5.4. Limitations

The limitations faced by the researcher were due to the coronavirus pandemic. Due to the pandemic, no face-to-face interviews were permitted, and contacting more people for group discussions was subsequently disapproved by the researcher. The ability to not meet face to face to conduct interviews also gave the interviewer less time with the interviewee. Along with having frequent connection issues, telephonic conversations were a little difficult to conduct [51].

6. Conclusion

Postmodernism is an important theme explored in television and cinema, relevant even in today's time. Having a clear understanding of the term is crucial in understanding the mindset of content creation in general. Having an understanding of this helps us know that postmodern content or television shows rely heavily on referencing. Being a key trope, referencing helps give us a clear idea of history. History in terms of culture, art, etc., having a key understanding of referencing is relied heavily on by postmodernism. The researcher, through this paper, has tried to bring about an

understanding of a postmodern show like a family guy being considered a historical document through numerous references combining the literature review, data collection, and final analysis of visual text and in-depth interview, which helps give a clear understanding of how the show is a historical document through an understanding of how historiography being biased as a whole. Using its narrative, the family guy has established that it in some way is a document of history in terms of being a visual text.

7. Contribution to this Theory

The researchers have attempted to highlight bias in history, which leads to newer forms of art like postmodern art being established as a visual text. The key highlight of the paper leads to understanding true postmodernism and its tropes to develop a show which can be politically incorrect, like family guy, also representing a definite document even with having a different narrative from what history shows us.

References

- Adorno T.W. (2001). *The culture industry*. London. Routledge.
- Artashkina, T.A. (2018). Hermeneutics as a Methodology of the Postmodern and the Post-Postmodern.
- Baudrillard, J. (1994). *Simulacres et simulation (Simulacra and simulation) Michigan*: University of Michigan press.
- Baudrillard, J.B. (1994). *Simulacra, and Simulation Michigan: University of Michigan press*.
- Begdahl, D.B. (N.D.) Modern and Postmodern (Page -3)Bender, L. (Producer).
- Tarantino, Q (Director) (14th October 1994) Pulp Fiction (Title) United States of America: Miramax films.
- Brooks J.L. (Executive Producer) Silverman D. (Director) (1989) The Simpsons. The United States of America. 20th television.
- Coontz, Stephanie. "Leave it to the beaver" and "Ozzie and Harriet": American Families in the 1950's," In the Way we Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trip (New York: Basic books, 1992, 28).
- Dreki, M.D. (N.D.) What is the Difference between Modernist Work of Art and Post Modernist.
- Evans R.J.E. (17th January 2000) in defense of history. W.W. Norton Company.
<https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/historiography>
- Evans, A.B. (Executive Producer) Reiner, R. (Director) (1986) Stand by me. The United States of America. Columbia pictures.
- Fisher, W.R. (1984). Narration as a human communication paradigm: The case of public moral argument. *Communication monographs*, 52, 347-367.

Foster, G. (Executive Producer) Shapeero, T. (Director) (2009) *Community*. The United States of America. Sony pictures television.

Glaser, B. & Strauss, A. (1967) *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Mill Valley, CA Sociology Press.

Goldwater, J (Executive Producer) Krieger, L.T. (Director) (2017). *The United States of America*. Warner bros television distribution.

Griffith, D.W. (Executive Producer) Griffith, D.W. (Director) (1915) *the birth of a nation*. The United States of America. David W. Griffith Corp.

Gunther, Marc. "The extinction of mass culture, CNN Money, 12th July 2006.
http://money.cnn.com/2006/07/11/news/economy/pluggedin_gunther.fortune/index.htm.

Hussein, B.H. (25.4.18) *The Beauty of Postmodern Cinema*.

Jones, A (Executive Producer) Foster, J (Director) (2011). The United Kingdom. Zeppotron.

Kourtoglou, Z.K. (N.D.) *From Metropolis to Blade Runner: Modernism and Postmodernism in Science Fiction*.

Laurent, L.L. (N.D) *The Idea of the Postmodern in Art*. (Page-1).
https://www.academia.edu/23623039/The_idea_of_the_Post_Modern_in_Art

Lyotard J.F. (21st June 1984) *The Postmodern Condition: A report on knowledge*. The University of Minnesota Press.

Macfarlane, S. (Executive Producer) Purdum, J.P. (Director) (17th February 2019) Wild, W. (Writer) Transfat (Season 17 episode 13) *Family Guy*. The United States of America. Fox, 20th Television.

Macfarlane, S. (Executive Producer) Purdum, J.P. (Director) (25th July 2000) Collard, D. (Writer) wasted talent (Season 2 episode 20) *Family Guy*. The United States of America. Fox, 20th Television.

Macfarlane, S. (Executive Producer) Purdum, J.P. (Director) (8th March 2020) Mull, M. (Writer) The Movement (Season 18 episode 14) *Family Guy*. The United States of America. Fox, 20th Television.

Macfarlane, S. (Executive Producer) Purdum, J.P. (Director) (7th May 2006) Wild, W. (Writer) Petergeist (Season 4 episode 26) *Family Guy*. The United States of America. Fox, 20th Television.

Macfarlane, S. (Executive Producer) Purdum, J.P. (Director) (10th May 2009) Sulkin, A. (Writer) The three kings (Season 7 episode 15) *Family Guy*. The United States of America. Fox, 20th Television.

Macfarlane, S. (Executive Producer) Purdum, J.P. (Director) (5th May 2005) Callighan, S. (Writer) Blind Ambition (Season 4 episode 3) *Family Guy*. The United States of America. Fox, 20th Television.

Macfarlane, S. (Executive Producer) Purdum, J.P. (Director) (17th November 2013) Wild, W. (Writer) Boopa-dee- Bappa-dee (Season 12 episode 5) *Family Guy*. The United States of America. Fox, 20th Television.

Macfarlane, S. (Executive Producer) Purdum, J.P. (Director) (1999). Zuckerman D.Z. *Family Guy*. The United States of America. Fox, 20th Television.

Macfarlane, S. (Executive Producer) Purdum, J. P. (Director) (19th November, 2006) Chevapravatdumrong, C. (Writer) Prick up your Ears (Season 5 episode 6) *Family Guy*. The United States of America. Fox, 20th Television.

Makunika, N. M. (N.D.) *Post Structuralism and Post Modernism*.

Margulies, S. (Executive Producer) Stuart, M. (Director) (1971) *Charlie and the chocolate factory*. The United States of America. Paramount Pictures.

Marvin, N. (Executive Producer) Darabont, F. (Director) (1994) *The Shawshank redemption*. The United States of America. Columbia pictures.

Melies, G. (Executive Producer) Melies, G. (Director) (1896) *Arrival of a train at Vincennes station*. France. Star film.

Mendelson, L (Executive Producer) Melendez, B. (Director) (1983) *The Charlie Brown and Snoopy Show*. The United States of America. Warner bros. television distribution.

Michaels, L (executive Producer) King, D (Director) (1975) *Saturday night live*. The United States of America. NBC universal television distribution.

Nicolaides, S. (Executive Producer) Reiner, R. (Director) (1990) *Misery*. The United States of America. Columbia pictures.

On family guy and postmodernism: The narrative and postmodernism (6th, July 2020) retrieved from <https://phdessay.com/on-family-guy-the-narrative-and-postmodern/>

Osborne, B.M. (Executive Producer) Jackson, P. (Director) (2002) *The Lord of the rings*. New Zealand. The United States of America. New line cinema.

Parker, R (Executive Producer) Cooper, H. (Director) (1972) *Maude*. The United States of America. PITS Films.

Shwartz, S. (Executive Producer) Thomas, B. (Director) (1995) *the Brady bunch*. The United States of America. CBS television distribution.

Silver, J. (Producer) Wachowskism (Director) (31st March 1999) *the Matrix* (Title) United States of America: Warner bros.

Silverman B. (Executive Producer) Einhorn R. (Director) (2005) *The Office*. The United States of America. NBC Universal television distribution.

Sternheimer, K. (5th October 2009) *soap operas and postmodern theories* (Blog post). <https://www.everydaysociologyblog.com/2009/10/soap-operas-and-postmodern-theory.html>

Tansy Rayner Robert Quotes. (n.d.) Brainyquote.com Retrieved 21st August 2020, from brainyquote.com website: https://www.brainyquote.com/citation/quotes/tansy_rayner_roberts_682946

The Basics of Philosophy/Modernism (N.d.). https://www.philosophybasics.com/movements_modernism.html

Thomas, A (Executive Producer) Koura, G/Dimmick, D (Director) (1989). The United States of America. 20th television.

Todorov, T. (1969) *Structural analysis of narrative*. Duke university press.

Ware, C. (1995) *Jimmy Corrigan, The smartest kid on Earth*. The United States of America. Pantheon Books.

Wiene, R. (Director) (1920) *The cabinet of Dr. Caligary*. Germany. Decla-bioscop.