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**A Critical Analysis of the Socio-Political Events in the US during
Trump's Term as Depicted in the Simpsons' Situation Comedy**

**Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
Master's Degree in Literature and Civilization**

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Abstract

The Simpsons are the longest-running and most popular American animated sitcom series. The show became famous for predicting future events. This study aims to determine if the Simpsons situation comedy could accurately predict future events by chance or if the show's writers could know about events before they happened in real life. It examined the relationship between the events depicted in the Simpsons and occurred in real life during Trump's presidency. A qualitative content analysis approach was employed to analyse four episodes of Simpson's series that showcased the events selected to test the hypothesis of predicting events. A visual indicator was utilised as a research technique to record all significant events to understand every unit of analysis. The analysis showed that Simpsons simulates the American lifestyle; it satirises social and political issues. In addition, the study showed that the events that claimed to be future predictions were inaccurate and did not resemble the actual events.

Keywords: The Simpsons, Sitcom, Prediction, Qualitative Content Analysis, Visual Indicator.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

QCA	Qualitative content analysis
VI	Visual indicator
CA	Content analysis

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General Introduction

Introduction

The present research is a critical study investigating how the Simpsons sitcom series predicts reality. Five socio-political events during Trump's tenure (2017- 2021) depicted in the sitcom series were taken as units of analysis. These include Trump's presidency, the COVID-19 outbreak, the death of the basketball star Kobe Bryant and the U.S. Patrol at its Border. The Sitcom has gained imaginary fame and unparalleled audience interactions due to its detailed description of some world events before they transpire. The expression "the Simpsons predicted" has sparked a controversy among social networking users and raised the suspicion that the Simpsons is more than just a cartoon. In this context, the prediction phenomenon as a concept was explored by Buanani (2021). He stated that prediction is a process of speculating what will occur in the future based on the direction of the phenomena in the past. It has four stages which indicate that prediction can be studied systematically. In this sense, the Simpsons were perceived to have predicted several events in different fields, such as economics, politics, and sociology, and dealt with these events sarcastically. An excellent example of this satire is the prediction of Trump's presidency in America. Buanani (2021) found several possibilities for these predictions; some were deliberate, while others were coincidental.

Furthermore, after Donald Trump became the president of America in 2017, the Simpsons gained popularity about the prediction. This statement was better illustrated in an article by Yeromin (n.d), presented in an interview with the author and producer of the Simpsons. In this regard, Al Jean mentions that the prediction was just a joke based on a logical basis, as Trump knew and stated that he wanted to contribute to the presidency. Besides this, Trump was not far from the media, as he participated in series, documentaries and films, including the famous movie "Home Alone," which presented him as a familiar face to the public. Finally, the author stresses

the importance of audio-visual media on the impact of the political image (this applies to all the events predicted by the Sitcom).

Additionally, the Simpsons are considered a postmodern sitcom. Stańczyk (2017) stated that the Simpsons is a postmodern sitcom because it is further away from what was known at that time, where the family was the source of happiness, and there were no problems. For example, the father should be wise and the mother just a housewife, but this does not occur in the Simpson. The Sitcom became directed at adults because it is not from imagination, and idealism does not appear closer to reality. For example, the father, Homer, is sometimes considered reckless, the mother, Maggie, works outside the home, and the town of Springfield and the Simpsons often have a problem. For further details, the following section provides a brief overview of the series and discusses expert commentary on the Simpsons.

Background of the study

The Simpsons is an American animated sitcom created by Matt Groening for the Fox Broadcasting Company. The series is a satirical parody of a middle-class American lifestyle epitomised by its family of the same name, consisting of Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa and Maggie. The show is set in the fictional town of Springfield and parodies American culture, society, television, and many aspects of the human condition. Groening conceived the family shortly before soliciting a series of animated shorts with the producer James L. Brooks. He portrayed a dysfunctional family and named the characters after members of his own family, substituting Bart for his name. The shorts became a part of The Tracey Ullman Show on April 19, 1987. After a three-season run, the sketch was developed into a half-hour prime time show and was an early hit for Fox, becoming the network's first series to land in the Top 30 ratings in a season (1989-1990). Since its debut on December 17, 1989, the show has broadcast 530 episodes and the twenty-fourth season ended on May 19, 2013(Ucan, 2017). Initially, the series was specific for public entertainment, but afterwards, the target shifted to discussing more critical social, political, and

religious issues. Melamedoff (2017) criticised and discussed how the Simpsons create negative stereotypes and racial microaggressions. At the same time, Florberrger and Lundborg find it pleasant and amusing. They stated that in the past twenty-five years, the Simpsons has probably become one of the top recognizable and well-liked sitcoms in the globe. Its satirical humour draws fanbase worldwide. (2014, p.01). Hence, commentaries on the popularity of the Simpsons are not novel; however, the prediction of recent socio-political events is an emerging area of investigation which requires rigorous academic studies. To this end, we present the current study's problem statement and its main aim.

Statement of the problem

Recent trends in predicting socio-political events through the Simpsons have led to a proliferation of grey literature and academic attempts to investigate the prediction phenomenon. However, critical questions remain about the controversial simulations of events in the show. To better understand whether the Simpsons is predicting the future or divulging plans, in-depth qualitative research is needed. Accordingly, this research aims to critically analyse the relationship between some socio-political events during Trump's presidency and what was broadcasted in the series years before these events.

Research questions

The current study attempts to answer the following questions:

Research Question 1: How have postmodern simulation theories dealt with the theme of prediction of the events in the Simpsons sitcom?

Research Question 2: How did the Simpsons predict future events during Trump s presidency?

Research question one investigates whether the Simpsons sitcom predicted future events by coincidence or whether writers could travel through time and gain information that enabled them to learn about events before they occurred.

Research question two examines the relationship between the events depicted in the Simpsons sitcom and eventually occurred in real life during Trump's tenure. This raises another question of whether all the events portrayed in the Simpsons happen.

Methodology

This research employed a qualitative content analysis approach to data analysis to answer the research questions. Berelson (1952, p.55) stated that content analysis is a suitable research method to describe the communication's manifest content systematically. Content analysis is the appropriate method for this research because it enables the analysis of visual and spoken data such as series and movies. The analysis focused on the following units: season 11, episode 17: (Bart to The Future, 2000), seasons 04, Episode 21: (Marge in Chains, 1993), season 23, episode 01: (Falcon & D'ohman, 2011), and season 20, episode 21: (The Coming to Homerica, 2009). Additionally, visual indicators were used to interpret beyond the meanings of the colours and the characters used and produced in the Simpsons.

Significance of the study

This research provides an account of the prediction phenomenon in sitcoms through critical analytical insights into so-called predicted socio-political events in the Simpsons. In this sense, the current study can guide the readers in exploring the relationship between the events depicted in the Sitcom and the actual socio-political events that occurred during Trump's presidency, whether it is predicted or not.

Personal motives for conducting the current research

Besides, the academic reason for conducting this research to complete our training in the current Master's programme. We have been personally motivated to take on this topic in the following ways:

- Interest in American Culture.
- Interest in situational comedy, especially The Simpsons sitcom.
- A curiosity to investigate the message suggested by mass media that the Simpsons predicted future events.
- To the best of our knowledge, there is a lack and scarcity of academic endeavours to investigate this topic.

The structure of the study

This dissertation is composed of two chapters. The first chapter is theoretical, and the second is analytical. The first chapter is titled "Literature Review" and has two sections. The first section, titled "The Simpsons and Situation Comedy", began by presenting the general background of the Simpson. The second section is the theoretical section titled "The Simpsons: Predictive Programming Vs Coincidence"; this research section deals with the theories used in the study while conducting the Sitcom. The second chapter is the practical section titled " Research Design and Data Analysis". This chapter outlines the methodology employed to address the research questions guiding the current study. Additionally, it presents the critical analysis of the selected four socio-political events in Trump's presidency from the episodes in which similar events occurred. The dissertation concludes by summarising the study's findings and discussing the study's contribution to the existing body of knowledge. The limitations of the project are also addressed.

CHAPTER ONE

Literature review

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Introduction

The first step in answering the research questions was to review the existing literature and present an account of the themes generated from the search. This chapter explains the main concepts of this study and provides a synthesis of our examination of the empirical literature. The first part of this chapter presents the theoretical underpinnings of the study; including a presentation of the key concepts on the subject of sitcom and its history, the Simpsons series and its popularity, and studies the Simpsons as a postmodern comedy and its role in representing the social, political and cultural issues in the USA. The second part involves the Simpsons as predictive programming and a postmodern simulation.

Section One: The Simpsons and Situation Comedy

Sitcom definition:

According to Feasey (2008), the sitcom genre is a hilarious classical narrative programme that repeatedly employs core characters, a regular setting, and different versions of the same storyline. The term sitcom is an abbreviation often used for situation comedy. Sitcoms are considered a subgenre of comedy. It emerged in the USA, where it is the most popular genre of a TV show. However, sitcoms were first hosted on the radio in the 1920s (*Sitcom*, n.d.; Feasey, 2008). The popularity of this genre grew after being adopted by the small screen. Nevertheless, the evolution and expansion of this kind of series made it an independent genre from which some subgenres are derived. Several researchers could classify a comedy into numerous groups or genres, and depending on the sort of categorisation, all classifications could be regarded as valid. The most dominant type is family comedy, workplace comedy or friend's comedy.

Other scholarly definitions, such as the one introduced by Mintz (1985), of sitcoms focused on the features of the genre itself. In this regard, Mintz (1985) defines sitcoms as:

Situation comedies are weekly half-hour plays involving a recurring cast of familiar characters who face new adventures initiated and resolved in each episode. The program opens with characters in a state of normality, that is, going about their business in their usual place, manners, and roles...The "situation" of the sitcom is the interruption of this normality. (p.42)

The above definitions highlight several characteristics of sitcoms. These features are the same ones that make sitcoms different from other comedy shows. For example, it is different from stand-up comedy because it depends on the same characters throughout the series. Although the Simpsons, as a cartoon, is unlike most other comedies in terms of a sitcom, it follows the same formula that sitcoms have followed since the mid-1950s (Boedo, 2020, pp. 12). The Simpson belongs to the Animated Sitcom genre.

Taken together, these definitions can be summarised in the following statement. Situational comedy, often a sitcom, is a significant broadcast genre in the United States. It is the country's most popular category of prime-time television, with over four decades of entertainment.

Sitcoms have evolved considerably in response to changing styles, public preferences, and rapid industrialisation. The following section tracks the history of sitcoms and their development across the years.

History and development of sitcoms

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, radio became an inexpensive form of home and family entertainment, and radio comedy was at the height of its popularity (Wertheim, 1976, p. 501). Between 1948 and 1952, television began to overtake radio as the dominant home-based media. The 1951 television series "I Love Lucy" was the first to use a multi-camera system to film for a live audience. According to Gitlin, "The live audience reaction to Lucy

and her cohorts brought a feeling of authenticity to the program" (2014, p. 31). Network executives in the 1950s and 1960s felt that escapism and good family depictions were the best ways to gain viewers' hearts and minds. The mid-to-late 1960s brought a slew of new social and political topics, which only separated the sitcom from reality.

On September 30, 1960, Americans saw animation as a featured show during prime-time hours on television for the first time when *The Flintstones* began a six-year run on ABC (Ziegler, 2013, p. 01). Gitlin (2014) stated that numerous animated programs have aired during the prime time since then, with varying degrees of popularity. Vibrant programs were missing from prime-time lineups from the ending of the *Flintstones* in 1966 until the airing of the *Simpsons* on Fox in December 1984 (2013, p. 01). Boch (2016) mentioned that “The *Simpsons* shaped and defined the animated sitcom as a genre” (p. 31). The growing popularity of animated sitcoms has opened an avenue to the expansion of the US market, resulting in the genre becoming part of the Western popular culture after its introduction to an international audience (Dhaenens & Van Bauwel, 2012; Larson, 2003, as cited in Zsila, Urbán, Orosz, & Demetrovics, 2020, p. 394)

The contemporary sitcoms framework has been consistent from its inception; nevertheless, its substance has altered dramatically as it covers a variety of modern social themes, attempting to represent societal changes occurring at the time. More significant comic trends also influence the evolution of the sitcom. The comedy changed, adopting more of the feminist movement and presenting women's paradoxical societal positions due to changes in the family unit's domestic structure. As a result, the writers and producers strive to create realistic settings for their audiences, as sitcoms are merely a mirror of societal developments. (Mills, 2005, p. 42–5, as cited in Boedo, 2020, p. 17). Topics such as divorce, leader women and single moms emerged in situation comedy shows (e.g. *The Lucy Show* 1962-1968, *That Girl* 1966-1971 and *Julia* 1968-1971). In addition, Single-camera shows started to be dominant in the shows. *How I Met Your Mother* 2005-2014 blends both single-camera elements with

multi-camera elements, tapes of the completed episodes were shown to an audience, and their reactions are recorded for the show's laugh track. In "How I Met Your Mother", Neil Patrick chose to not shoot in front of a live audience; he stated that he likes shooting without a live audience because he is a stickler for authenticity, no matter how broad or nuanced the acting is. He finds the multi-camera crowd tremendously distracting since it's an inauthentic setting (Bryant, 1989).

The Simpsons

Series such as *The Simpsons* gained massive popularity among children and adults alike and inspired many global adaptations. *The Simpsons* is a sitcom family comedy created by Matthew Abram Groening. It is about a nuclear family of five members living in Springfield's small town. Each of them has its traits dealing with different issues and topics. This sitcom sarcastically represents postmodern American society. Matt was invited by the film producer James L Brooks where he was asked to produce a short sitcom. The sitcom first aired in April 1987 on the Tracy Ulman show (Abspoel & Huohvaniaen, 1999, p. 735). After three seasons, the sitcom was first aired as a half-hour show on the network Fox Company in 1989. Fox Company is an American Broadcast Television considered the fourth network (competitive network). It was a subsidiary company for the New Corps network as "Twentieth Century Fox" and then purchased by Berry Dollar and Rupert Murdoch; Perren (2004) stated that "Murdoch made the first 'official' statement regarding the formation of Fox at their annual trade convention (INTV) in January 1986" (p. 126). "The show has broadcast 684 episodes and 31 seasons since June 2020, and it is still produced" (Moreno, 2020, p. 16-17).

Due to the diversity of the age of viewers, its themes have also varied, like politics, religion and social issues. Politics was one of the themes that attracted viewers. The series' presentation of political parties contributed to the understanding and streamlining of American party policy (White & Homelman, 2011). On the religious side, Christianity has been shown in several episodes

because it represents the majority of American society. The Simpsons reflect religion and adherence to religious beliefs sarcastically. In the episode titled "Homerpalooza", Homer reveals his faith; when he is asked about it, he replies, "You know the one with well-meaning rules that don't work in life. Uh, Christianity" (Folki, 2006, p. 15). Also, "the sitcom deals with social issues such as gender, health, crime, education, pop culture and collective identity, the diversity of subjects contributed to the construction Springfield town" (Stephen J and Seth L, 2006, p. 129-130).

Main Characters of the Simpsons

Matt Groening created the Simpsons characters and ideas to present the reality and portray the American society and families by representing their problems and the conflicts between family members and their happy moments together. The Simpsons is a traditional nuclear family with five members: the father, Homer J Simpson, the mother, Margorie Boviarr Simpson, the first-born child Bartholomew Jojo Simpson, the older Daughter Lisa Marie Simpson and the youngest child Margret Simpsons. In addition to their pets: the dog Santa and the cat Snowball. (Abspoel & Huohvaniaen, 1999).

Homer is the head male and the father of the Simpsons, working at the local nuclear power plant. After high school graduation, he married Marge because she was pregnant with Bart. Homer is represented as a lazy, troublemaker, and reckless who prefers to eat and watch TV. However, despite his laziness and behaviour, he loves his family and stands by them. (Abspoel & Huohvaniaen, 1999).

Marge is the head female of Simpsons and the mother of Simpsons. Unlike Homer, she is a responsible, more rational parent who has an essential role in the family. She is the one who solves problems and guides her children and Homer. In addition, Marge has been involved in different works, such as the police station (Abspoel & Huohvaniaen, 1999).

Bart is the first child and protagonist of the Simpsons family, 11 years old. He is a naughty, troublesome kid in the house. He makes his dad a fanatic; he loves the adventures and does not interested in school, he is his mother's favourite child, and he prefers his dog Santa. (Abspoel & Huohvaniaen, 1999).

Lisa, the older daughter of the Simpsons, is eight years old. Unlike Bart, Lisa is intelligent, hard-working, privileged and more rational than him. Lisa cares about world problems rather than her childhood. Despite her intelligence, she is often underestimated in her family. (Abspoel & Huohvaniaen, 1999).

The youngest child in the Simpson family, Maggie is a less critical character among the family who does not speak. However, she always showed up when carrying the pacifier (Abspoel & Huohvaniaen, 1999).

Minor Characters of the Simpsons

Furthermore, the supporting characters play a supportive role to the leading characters. One supporting character is Ned Flander, the neighbour of the Simpsons family. He is very religious, which could be interpreted as representing the conservative American society. Another one is Mr Brun's character, a demanding boss and of the rich of Springfield town. Krusty is a comedy clown who owns a hamburger shop. Moe Homer's friend has a beer shop. Salma and Patty are Marge's sister's twins. Finally, fat Tony is the friend of Lisa (Ucan, 2017).

The Simpsons in The Early Years of Broadcasting

The series began airing as a Christmas special on Ulman's Prime Time show, where the American family is together, thus gaining popularity and earning a high viewing rate (McNamee, 2022). At first, the show was funny episodes motivated by amusement away from politics, religion and sensitive things that make a fuss. Still, once the series gained its fame years after the show, it touched on these topics to attract viewers more than all ages.

According to Fink (2019), the show started to lose significance because the story has become clumsy, repetitive and redundant due to the lack of creativity compared to the first episodes. One of the main episodes that caused this decline is "That 90s show" season9, episode11. This episode began with Bart and Lisa filming as they discovered their mother's college degree, even though she did not attend college. Then, Marge flashbacks to the past. Many fans resent this episode because it is trying to change the Simpson family's history, which was broadcasted in the second season episode12. This episode was a turning point and received criticism as it was called the "worst episode ever" (Middlemost, 2018, p.3).

The popularity of the Simpsons sitcom

The Simpsons family sitcom programme received many global awards for its popularity. Among the factors that led to the Simpsons family's popularity is the diversity of its themes and the age of its viewer. It portrayed the reality of contemporary American society beyond idealism. Also, the sitcom deals with different themes such as religion, politics and social issues. Although these themes were presented but filmed sarcastically, the use of various references increased its popularity. For example, "Home Alone", the famous Christmas movie, references "Homer Alone" episodes where the events seem like the movie. Moreover, there were rumours that the Simpsons had predicted the reality.

The Simpsons and postmodern comedy

Postmodernism is a critical movement that appeared in many fields of life such as art, architecture, media, philosophy, politics, literature and sociology that rejected and neglected the traditional values of modernism in the second half of the twentieth century. The postmodernity in media occurred in the focus of the style rather than content. This movement is characterised by the rejection of order, rationality and certainly. Also, it is featured by the lack of metanarrative, which leads to openness for variety and diversity without surety. Postmodern works are recognised for the wide use of intertextuality in art and literature. These works indicate each other using pastiche

and parody, the figure of literature in postmodernism. Parody is the imitation of original works sarcastically, while pastiche is the imitation of other works for imitation. The use of intertextuality leads to irony, which is a postmodern feature. Those mentioned above are frequently used to break and display the traditional aesthetic norms and traits. The Simpsons are considered a popular postmodern sitcom programme that portrays contemporary American society in 1987. Torun (2017) stated that "Simpsons family as postmodern because of the rejection of traditional values present in classic family broadcast in the 1950s or 1960s. This section's part aims to present the Simpsons as postmodern comedy" (p.199).

The postmodernity in this sitcom is depicted in The Simpsons' values. The Simpsons family reflects the American society and their reality apart from the perfection portrayed in the traditional sitcoms such as "The father knows the best". The father is the centre and prominent member of the family. At the same time, the mother is the housekeeper only, and the children always show respect to their parents—this family neglect all the conventional values and principles. The sitcom portrays father Homer often doing reckless work that leads his family to trouble, misguided decisions, and a lack of self-confidence. In one of the episodes titled "the father knows the worst", the irony of the traditional sitcom "the father knows the best" presents how the father, Homer, embarrassed his child Bart and Lisa. Moreover, the mother Marge seems to have taken on the role of father and mother together. At the same time, she does housework and parenting, but she also makes the most important family decisions and jobs outside the house, like working in a police station where she deals with corruption and crime in the town (Torun', 2017).

Despite the Simpsons family's comic in nature, it is the closest to contemporary American society, where it sarcastically portrays his problem. The series' episodes' viewing differed from what it was showing. The episode started with something frivolous, and then events turned into something meaningful, presenting the reality that is one of the reasons that made him famous. Although years have passed since the programme was broadcast, the youngest children have not spoken. While Springfield, their hometown, is not a distinct location in America, it can be found

in several states. They live in no specific place and at no particular time. The Simpsons family refuse to adhere to the norms of a traditional sitcom.

Furthermore, Christianity is the most widespread theme which presents the American Society. The Simpsons present Christianity in a sarcastic way that reflects postmodernity. In addition, the use of fragmentation where the part of the episode is not related to each other is reflected in broadcasting the episodes. They often seem unconnected, but only in one episode (Folki, 2006).

Intertextuality is considered the most critical fundamental postmodern aesthetic trait used by The Simpsons. The Simpsons family is among the first famous shows that highlight this technique. The sitcom is distinguished by its account of the reference to cultural symbols, modern and tradition for ironic sake, and the writers often use popular and diverse connections suitable for adults and young people to attract viewer's attention, such as philosophers and politician's words, film and book scenes, modern music, famous works and arts. Postmodern works rely on pastiche for most of their works rather than production (Folki, 2006).

The Simpsons, as a postmodern television show, features the unusual and complex shape of characters that appear to be primitive. Matt Groening, the producer state that the appearance of the character is due to his inability to paint. Besides that, commercials and advertisements took considerable time for the show to advertise the products (Baderoon, 1995).

The family show the Simpsons have made American society "particularly" aware of how to live in a postmodern world (Baderoon, 1995).

The Simpsons' role in representing the social, political and cultural issues in the US

The Simpsons reflect the stereotype of American society, the inefficient and rash person who cannot manage his life. According to Boss, "the series is, first and foremost, a satirical show; an exposé of American culture and values; it questions the established order of American

democracy and implicitly proposes a utopian alternative – specifically, a society that is undivided by class and hierarchy” (2018). Even though Simpson is known for his satirical audacity, he uses it smartly. Rather than being plain, his jokes are subtle. It conveys information in an instructional manner, intending to create a smile rather than causing anger. Because of its acceptance in popular culture, comedy is often one of the best vehicles for challenging stereotypes and intolerance. Thus, the Simpsons, through its long-running discussed several social, political and cultural issues. The following three themes were selected: family, religion, and historical events.

As mentioned perversely, the most dominant theme in the Simpsons is “Family”. The Simpsons is a sitcom that mocks the everyday lives of ordinary American families. The show's creators-built Springfield to represent the United States to criticise the American lifestyle. They used satire and parody so the viewers could relate to the plot and comprehend its message. They look like a typical nuclear family, a father, a mother, and three children, but the Simpsons have their issues like most American families. Through these issues, the writer discusses the current American family dilemmas and proposes a solution. In the sixth episode of the eighth season of “A Milhouse Divided”, the show discussed divorce and how it affects the children's life. It shows how people sometimes do not figure out how lucky they are until they lose it.

According to several religious leaders, the Simpsons are one of the most successful, entertaining, irreverent, and religiously essential shows on television today. According to Mark Pinsky ,the Simpsons is the most intelligent Comedy show in terms of educating families and people in understanding what it means to live as a religious believer in a diverse society. He presents a compelling case, helped by the hysterically entertaining book (2007). They always say grace before meals and go to church every Sunday. In addition, when the Simpsons need help, they immediately pray to God. Christianity, the dominant religion in Springfield, is not the only religion criticised in the series. Other religions, some less well-known by worldwide fans of the show, have been the focus of at least one episode and then become part of the show, referred to or joked about in subsequent performances. These include Pentecostalism, Roman Catholicism,

Hinduism, Judaism, Islam and Buddhism. Each was introduced in plot lines through family, friends and supporting characters, often with a boost from celebrity cameos. For example, in "My Pods and Boomsticks", in the seventh episode of season 20, Bart meets a new Muslim boy at school, Bashir bin Laden, and invites the neighbours over for dinner. Homer's worry eventually gets him, and he offends Bashir and his parents. Homer goes to the Bin Laden home to apologise, but his paranoia strikes again when he observes Bashir's father with sticks of TNT and thinks he will blow up Springfield Mall. This episode satires how people believe that Muslims are bad people and connect terrorist attacks to Muslims when that is not always true.

The Simpsons often utilise references from famous historical events and media icons in American culture, such as "The Scopes Monkey Trial", to convey their argument. The Scopes Monkey Trial definition is:

Also known as the "Monkey Trial" (July 10–21, 1925, Dayton, Tennessee, US), a highly-publicised trial of a Dayton, Tennessee, high-school teacher, John T. Scopes, charged with violating state law by teaching Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. The trial's proceedings helped bring scientific evidence for evolution into the public sphere while also stoking a national debate over the integrity of evolution that continues to the present day. (Britannica, 2021)

This trial was simulated in the twenty-first and penultimate episodes of the seventeenth season. After watching a museum exhibit on evolution in which creation is called fiction, Ned Flanders and Reverend Lovejoy forced Principal Skinner into demanding creationism be taught in classrooms and teaching evolution is banned in schools. Lisa was so furious that she started teaching students secretly evolution theory, which got her arrested. And opens a debate about creationists vs evolution. The writers used the trial to show their side because it was media iconic. Also, they used Lisa to represent how the new generations think.

Section Two: The Simpsons: predictive programming Vs coincidence

The Simpsons as predictive programming

Predictive programming is one technique that contributes to explaining ambiguity about the prediction of media the future events. Most predictions that happened were either coincidental or based on facts. Moreover, media through entertainment TV shows makes viewers more receptive to these events. When the events are constantly shown on television simplistically and recreationally, the unconscious mind accepts them. This technique is seen as a prelude to future realities, reducing the public's reaction.

Definition of predictive programming

Predictive programming is a subtle form of psychological conditioning provided by the media to acquaint the public with planned societal changes to be implemented by our leaders. If and when these changes are put through, the public will already be familiarised with them and accept them as natural progressions, thus lessening possible public resistance and commotion (Wood, as cited in Beaver, 2018, para.1).

Using media to present future events and show them to the public, the mind becomes more receptive. Beaver (2018) stated that predictive programming is a way to reduce resistance from constantly presenting concepts, even though it is unlikely to happen. Comedy TV shows and media indirectly affect the unconscious mind of the viewers. At that time of the event, they seem more receptive. As a prophecy, they must accept fate, unlike the first time when it happens in reality. Predictive programming as a prediction theory may seem like a phenomenon, but it is based on facts and truth. The importance of this theory is to reduce the public reaction and tendency to make it more receptive to future events. (Beaver, 2018)

Conspiracy Theories

They are defined as “an explanation of historical, ongoing, or future events that cites as a main causal factor a group of powerful persons, the conspirators, acting in secret for their benefit against the common good” (Unscinski, 2018, p.3). After the events in the late 1990s and early 2000s, such as the death of Princess Dian, the 7/7 attack, the world war on terror and Obama's presidency. This theory has been associated with these events, making social scientists more interested. However, these scientists consider those conspiracy theories just wrong beliefs (Unscinski, 2018). Recently, postmodern theorists have started to investigate conspiracy theories to make various points about the uncertain nature of authority, knowledge, political participation and cultural activity in the united stated after the Second World War. Consequently, conspiracy theories have sparked primary policy debates (Hunemorder, 2003).

The Simpsons and Successful Prediction of the future

The Simpson's entertainment program has distinguished itself from others with its various predictions in various fields by portraying the daily life of the Simpson family, whether in politics, health, sport, science, technology or social life. For example, in season 6, episode 12, which was broadcasted in 1995, this episode portrayed Lisa talking to her fiancé with a smartwatch, although that was unlikely to occur. However, Samsung invented a smartwatch over the years to communicate with it (Bouanani, 2021). Thus, the success of predictions in the series led to his popularity. Of course, not all of the Simpsons' predictions events happen, but some of them occurred. For example, one of Simpson's successful predictions, which has generated widespread media outcry, is Trump's assumption of the American presidency.

The Simpsons as a postmodern simulation

Postmodern simulation, which appears to be sweeping the West's situation comedy, creates several vital situations that are difficult to comprehend and distinguish between simulation and reality. Simulation, simulacra, and hyperreality are some of the conditions discussed in this paper. Based on these debates, the implications of postmodernity for the Simpsons are investigated. This section discusses the simulation and simulacra theory and its application in the Simpsons. Jean Baudrillard wrote a book called *Simulation and Simulacra*, published in 1981. It is focused mainly on the importance of pictures in contemporary culture and how these images mediate reality. Also, this section will study the reasons that lead to the appearance of digitally altered scenes and faked events.

Simulation and simulacra

Baudrillard (1994) stated, "Simulation is the generation by models of a real-life of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal" (1994, p.01). A "simulation" is a reproduction or imitation of reality that serves as a replacement for truth. The Simpsons is an excellent example of simulation. It portrays the American family "ideal family" in real life, and real-life events: social, political and cultural issues mentioned previously.

Simulacra, according to Baudrillard (1994, p.02, as cited in Young & Bougen, 2012, p.02), refers to techniques that, while offering depictions of the real, allow reality to morph into hyperreality as copies proliferate rather than being exact replicas of the genuine thing. According to Baudrillard, this process has spread across our surroundings more and more. He observes a recent change in this process: how simulacra now anticipate rather than simulate the real, as it is through simulacra that we discover the real, with reality being forced to conform with simulacra. Because the simulator's measurements and presumptions produced simulacra and led to realities, their transformation led to the creation of more simulacra and realities.

Simulacra and simulation also discuss the relationship between symbols and signs and contemporaneity (simultaneous existences). According to Baudrillard "all reality and meaning have been replaced with symbols and signs, and human experience is a simulation of reality"(as cited in Ghirardi, 2021, p.66). Furthermore, these simulacra are not merely mediations of reality, nor even false mediations of reality; they are neither rooted in reality nor conceal reality; they simply conceal that anything like reality is significant to our current understanding of our existence. Thus, the simulacra that Baudrillard refers to are significations of how culture and media symbolism produce practical reality, the acquired knowledge by which our lives and shared existence are rendered legible. According to Baudrillard, society has grown so saturated with these simulacra. Our lives have become so saturated with societal constructions that their endless mutability has rendered all meaning meaningless. The "precession of simulacra," as Baudrillard put it, is a phenomenon (Young & Bougen, 2012).

Postmodern simulation and reality

According to Trambo and Antony (2020), "hyperreality is a representation, a sign, without an original referent. It is a semiotic concept" (p. 3315). It is related to media, pictures, and films to exaggerate and alter reality. Trambo and Antony (2020) suggest that the negative impacts of hyperreality are visible in our media and literature fields. It is a threat to contemporary society associated with reality and its copies. Illusions of reality are constantly formed, and they pretend as the originals (2020, p. 3315). People nowadays are confused about truth and its simulation, and as a result, we can't tell what's real and what's not in the world surrounding us. There are several examples of hyperreality (Baudrillard, 1988). The most recent and dramatic instances of hyperreality may be found in media depictions of culture, such as *The Simpsons*, which have influenced the reconstruction of reality in the simulation image. We are constantly witnessing the replication of human roles, relationships, and qualities that were first represented on the screen, television, or in other media, in natural life occurrences. When these characters are imagined in soap operas, situation comedies, and films, they get copied by the audience and therefore appear

in "reality." As a result, the Simpsons' scribbled occurrences appear to repeat themselves as reality. The Simpsons have had a tremendous impact on language and sparked discussion. Webster's English Dictionary, for example, is where the exclamation 'D'Oh' and the term 'embiggen' entered the language (New York Times Upfront, 2018, as cited in Boss, 2018, p.46). This explains how the Simpsons affect reality.

Thus, "it is evident that television is equally capable of affecting social change, using the same means by which it shapes our language; it allows us to "construct reality from ideas," (Baudrillard, 1987, p. 479, as cited in Boss, 2018, p.46). It controls the viewer's habits, language, and preferences, making them lose absolute trust. This suggests that Simpson's predictions could be a copy of a copy. It imitates a real-life event that the show copied, and then the viewer simulacrum it.

The Simpsons and digitally altered scenes

Fans frequently perceive similarities between real-life events and situations from The Simpsons' 31 seasons as prophecies. For example, a series of faked screenshots recently went viral, making it appear as though the Simpsons writers predicted the Notre Dame fires, Black Lives Matter, the Beirut port explosion, and Lisa Simpson's clothing in the episode Bart to the Future (See Figure 1, in the appendix)

A picture accused showing from an episode of the television show The Simpsons began to spread on social media in mid-April 2019, after a fire broke out at the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, with the claim that the longest-running American sitcom had once again "predicted," the future: "The Simpsons show did not predict the fire at Notre Dame" (Evon, 2019, para.01). This photo has been digitally manipulated and depicts a cartoon rendition of the Notre Dame Cathedral that formerly stood in the fictional city of Springfield. The church was not on fire, and Mr Burns was not standing outside in the original shot from the seventh episode "Husbands and Knives" of the ninetieth season. Although in this episode, after undergoing plastic surgery to become a "trophy

husband," Homer is pursued by an angry crowd into Springfield's Notre Dame Cathedral with Marge in his arms, so there is an angry crowd with pitchforks and torches in this scenario, and the church never burns down in the episode. The original image on the left and the Simpsons "prediction" image on the right (See Figure 2, in Appendix 1)

Fake images have also been circulating online, claiming that the creators of The Simpsons predicted the death of George Floyd, a black American who was murdered by a police officer and his colleagues on May 25, as well as the ensuing protests. The graphics, however, are not from the TV show The Simpsons. They were initially shared on Instagram by Italian artist Yuri Pomo on May 30, 2020, days after Floyd died in police custody (See Figure 3, in Appendix 1). Pomo posted his drawn to raise awareness about the racism facing African-American society. He stated:

with this piece, I would like you to think deeply, taking the chance to bring The Simpsons as an example for the cause. The Simpsons have always been everyone's childhood, so I suppose the message will be clear and strong enough (2020).

After a massive, deadly explosion in Beirut in August 2020, a video circulated on social media supposedly showed how the long-running animated show "The Simpsons" had predicted the catastrophic event (See Figure 4, in Appendix 1). "Summer of 4 Ft. 2," the last episode of the show's seventh season, in which Homer buys illegal explosives. However, using the explosives, Homer destroys a dishwasher, not a whole town (See Figure 5, Appendix 1). The explosion in the "Beirut prediction video" is from a separate episode of "The Simpsons," a mini-episode titled "The Ned Zone," which aired during the 16th season's "Tree House of Horrors" (See Figure 6, in Appendix 1). Homer presses a nuclear bomb button after he gets shot. Social media users accompanied the two scenes and pretended it was a natural scene.

Conclusion

This chapter establishes the theoretical framework of the research and serves as a prologue to the next chapter, which covers the most significant aspects of the subject. The notion of a sitcom is defined in this chapter and its history and growth phases. The selection of the Simpsons series as the subject for this research is justified by its popularity and availability of resources to conduct this study. Simpson's simulation and hyperreality theories have also been discussed as theories utilised to examine occurrences in the following chapter. The next chapter will present the methodological approach employed in the current study and analysis of the data.

CHAPTER TWO

Research Design and Data Analysis

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Introduction

This thesis aimed to contribute to the knowledge of whether the Simpsons predicted the future during Trump's presidency. More specifically, this research sought to examine if The Simpsons predicted future events or not. This chapter highlights the research methods used throughout this thesis and the various methodological decisions discussed. A qualitative content analysis (QCA) of the Simpsons episodes was employed to accomplish the stated objectives. Then, the scenes selected were introduced; Donald Trump's presidency, COVID-19, and Kobe Bryant's death, and using these scenes was also justified. The selected events were studied and analysed using qualitative content analysis (QCA) and visual indicators (VI). Finally, the chapter details the various codes and themes drawn from the analysis of the selected units of study from The Simpsons and discusses whether they predicted future events.

Research methodology

This research utilised the QCA method to gather and analyse the relevant data. Berelson stated, "Content analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of the communication" (1952, p.55). Content analysis (C.A.) was appropriate for this research because the information can be gathered and analysed from visual or spoken text such as series, movies and T.V. shows. The research method follows three main steps: formulating a research question, deciding on a unit of analysis, and inductive coding. The observational examination is the essence of QCA and was deemed the best fit to conduct our analysis around the credibility of Simpson's prediction of socio-political events during Trump's presidency.

Qualitative content analysis approach

According to Merriam Webster Dictionary, the first known use of C.A. was in 1940. Several definitions were given for C.A. due to the developments in methods and the uses of this

same tool for new dilemmas in different fields. Some of the reports presented are as follow: Merriam Webster Dictionary defined C.A. as: “analysis of the manifest and latent content of a body of communicated material (such as a book or film) through a classification, tabulation, and evaluation of its key symbols and themes to ascertain its meaning and probable effect “(content analysis, n.d.). for Stone “CA is any research technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specified characteristics within text” (Stone, Dunphy, Smith, & Ogilvie, 1966, p. 05). While Berelson defined CA as “a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication.” (1954, p.489, as cited in Stone, Dunphy, Smith, & Olivie, 1966, p. 11). The term "objective" is used by Berelson to emphasise that the technique should be clear and repeatable via other researchers. Berelson defines "systematic" as "all relevant content is to be analysed in terms of all relevant categories." (Stone, Dunphy, Smith, & Ogilvie, 1966, p. 11)

QCA is “an approach of empirical, methodological controlled analysis of texts within the context of communication, following content analytical rules and step by step models, without rash quantification” (Mayring, 2000, section 1, as cited in Drisko & Maschi, 2016, p. 02). It is a research method for subjectively interpreting the content of text data using a systematic coding and pattern-finding procedure (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278 as cited in Sauv , 2021, p. 63). QCA considers both implicit and explicit ideas, allowing the researcher to identify the meaning of a text in its context, which will help study the Simpsons series. Researchers use C.A. to learn about media products’ aims, purpose, and impacts. They can also conclude the authors and audiences of the study materials (Luo, 2019). Furthermore, the C.A. may be utilialitative judgments by checking words and concepts' meaning and semantic connection. After identifying straightforward research questions, Neuman (as cited in Astuti, n.d.) stated that there are six stages in conducting content analysis:

1. decide on units of analysis,
2. develop a sampling plan,

3. construct coding categories,
4. coding and intercoder reliability check,
5. data collection and analysis,

Visual indicator

VI is a "marker" that allows users to rapidly locate an item with a critical distinguishing feature among a group of otherwise similar things (Harley, 2016). VI is used to make some items stand out from the crowd. They do not require the user to do anything but serve as communication tools to alert them to something meaningful. Indicators do not always emerge, although they do under specific circumstances. Hands can take the shape of icons, typographic styling, expanded size, colour variations, and animation to deliver their message (Winter, 2018). One of the grounds for contextual analysis of animation output is visual indications (Ucan, 2018).

Research design

The structural research framework of the QCA and methods used in the research and units of analysis are presented in this section.

The use of the QCA approach and VI methods in studying the Simpsons

VI method is used to analyse what is visible and what can be observed by the eye. For example, when using a scene from The Simpsons, the characters are analysed by their external appearance, i.e. the visual thing that distinguishes this figure from the others in the scenario. Furthermore, analysis of the colours used for each has a sign and an indication of something. For example, yellow symbolises logic and wisdom, blue refers to comfort, positivity and beauty, orange symbolises health, and grey represents depression and sadness (Ucan, 2018).

Finally, lighting, or the light analysis. When the illumination varies, the subject is different, so if the scene is sunny and luminous, it indicates a happy set. The opposite is true; if the location is full of black clouds, the subject will be mysterious and bleak (Ucan, 2018).

Scenes selection

This research will analyse four socio-political scenes from the series Simpsons and their relationship to the real-life events of Donald Trump's U.S. presidential term between "2017 to 2020", which created a media sensation when it occurred, and that is because of its relationship with The Simpsons. The first selected scene is political, from season 17 episode 11 ;(Bart to the future); this scene portrayed Bart travelling to the end, simulating U.S. President Donald Trump before taking the presidency. The second scene is social, from season 04 episode 21 ;(Marge in chains); in this scene, a severe infectious disease that spreads rapidly by coughing and sneezing is called "Osaka flue", emulating the events of the coronavirus pandemic in 2020. The third scene is social, from season 23, episode 01;(The falcon and D'ohman); Kobe appeared as one of the many people who fought Wayne Slater during his special training. The final scene selected is "The U.S. patrol its border" in season 20, episode 21; (Coming to Homerica). It is a political scene where many residents of a neighbouring town filmed their migration due to food poisoning to Springfield.

Data analysis and interpretation

This section is about analysing the episodes "Bart to the Future", "Marge in Chains", and "Coming to Homerica". In addition, study the relationship between the events that the Simpsons predicted and the episodes it aired.

Donald Trump and the Simpsons

According to Encyclopaedia Britannica, Donald John Trump, 45th President of the United States (2017–21), was born on June 14, 1946, in New York, New York, United States. He built and refurbished many hotels, casinos and office towers during his career, accumulating a net worth of billions (Duignan, 2021).

Analysis of episode 11, season 17, "Bart to the Future."

The 17th episode of the eleventh season premiered on March 19, 2000, and is the second episode in which the Simpsons appeared in the future. This episode was written by Dan Greaney and directed by Michael Marcant (Bart to the future, n.d.). The events of this episode took place in the city of Springfield,

The Simpsons visit the park. However, the insects had invaded it, so Homer had to go back, and on the way back, they entered a casino for the Native Indians. Bart meets a Native American man who shows him the future. He sees the future as a 40-year-old who has achieved no success in his life, and his sister Lisa became President of the United States. After winning the election, Lisa appears in the White House office with several officials to tell them, "As you know. we have inherited quite a budget crunch from President Trump". Then she knows that "the country is broke». Lisa needs to raise taxes because she is now dealing with the challenge of trying to help the country. However, people will be furious if she labels it a tax increase. As a result, Milhouse, her assistant, offers a temporary refund adjustment as a fantastic method to outright lie. Bart explained what a quick refund adjustment means. Lisa assigns him to the secretary's job of stating facts at Camp David. In the end, he discovers that she did that to exclude him.

Several characters appeared in this episode, including the Simpson family, the residents of Ogdenville and some of the villagers. In addition, there are flat and round characters. In this episode, Homer is a flat character. He only looked for his joy. He chose to gamble and even listed his son's name as a collateral mortgage.

Bart is the episode's protagonist. The main story is about him. He is a rounded character. After seeing his future, he decided to try to change to gain a better lot. Marge is a flat character. In this episode, she was helping Homer look for treasure. The character Lisa also did not change through the storyline.

These episodes contain a fictional event, which is travel to the future. It allows the writer to send implicit messages and ideas. It is an excellent technique to attract audiences.

Donald Trump wins the presidency.

Trump was also being parodied for his first presidential run as a Reform Party candidate in 1999. The campaign had commenced while the episode was being produced. In a case of life imitating art, Trump was elected President in 2016. New York City real estate developer and reality T.V. star Donald Trump served as America's 45th president from January 2017-January 2021. The billionaire businessman ran as a Republican and scored an upset victory over his Democratic opponent, Hillary Clinton, in the 2016 election. Before winning the U.S. presidency, Trump never held any elected or appointed government office. He had considered a presidential bid on several earlier occasions before the 2016 race but ultimately opted not to run. In 2011, Trump began questioning whether then-President Barack Obama was born in the United States in T.V. interviews. In the following years, he harnessed rumours about Obama's birthplace to help grow his audience on social media and gain notice in the world of conservative politics. (The White House released the Hawaiian-born President's short-form birth certificate in 2008 and his long-form birth certificate in 2011.)

The relation between the episode “Bart to the Future” and the presidency of Trump

In 2016, Donald Trump made history by becoming the first person to be elected President of the United States without serving in the government or the military. His four years in the White House exposed enormous schisms in American society, but he left little question that he is a character unlike any other in history. The episode revealed that Trump, after his presidency, inherited a considerable debt. Humour is the unit that we will focus on in this episode.

The animated situation comedy is known for sarcasm and harmful humour. Therefore,” lively sitcom viewers may have similar humour styles that would explain their preference for such media content. According to Martin et al.” (2003, as cited in Zsila, Urbán, Orosz, & Demetrovics,

2021). Given that animated sitcoms employ satire and malicious humour and that viewers prefer to choose media content that reflects their self-concept, it is reasonable to assume that viewers of animated sitcoms have greater aggressive humour levels than non-viewers (Zsila, Urbán, Orosz, & Demetrovics, 2021). The writer used humour and sarcasm to portray how they subtly send messages in a funny context.

COVID-19 and the Simpsons

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is caused by the coronavirus 2 that causes severe acute respiratory illness (SARS-CoV-2). In December 2019, the new virus was discovered in a group of individuals with atypical pneumonia in Wuhan, China. By the end of January 2020, that illness spread quickly from human to human, and the medical range of infections was expanding. Therefore, there have been multiple adjustments to the case definition for COVID-19 in mainland China due to increasing evidence of the epidemiological and clinical range of infections (Tsang et al., 2020).

Analysis of episode 21, season 04, "Marge in Chains."

"Marge in Chains" is the twenty-first episode of the fourth season of The Simpsons. It aired on May 6, 1993. In the attack, Marge was arrested for robbing a store after forgetting to pay for an item in Kwik-E-Mart.

The events of this episode took a setting in Springfield town. At Simpson's home, Homer watches an infomercial for an orange juicer, and despite being comically noisy and inefficient, he and the entire village buy the thing. However, unfortunately, at the factory in Osaka, one of the workers had the flu, spreading it to all the juicers shipped to Springfield, generating an epidemic.

The flu outbreak in the Japanese city of Osaka was announced on television in the town. In the following scene, the virus is visible green on the road. The town appears to be free of its population after a policeman uses his gun to eliminate the virus by shooting it but fails and infects

it. All of Simpson's family is infected with the virus except Marge. She cares for all family members, as the symptoms of this virus are a high fever, inability to work, and acting like a normal condition. Marge goes to the "Kwik-E-Mart" store to buy home supplies, but she is arrested for theft during her exit. Marge and Homer go to hire a lawyer to defend her, Lionel Hutz, but he loses the case and arbitrates Marge to 30 days in prison.

Homer showed no interest in his home. The Simpsons' house became a mess, and the children were dirty. The children liked what Marge was doing even at the annual bread shop loss because she was responsible for selling marshmallows. The committee could not buy the statue of President Abraham Lincoln, forcing them to buy another figure, making the people angry. When Marge was released from prison, all the town residents welcomed her, and a statue of her was created and rotated.

The main event in this episode is Marge's arrest and how that affected the family. Osaka Flu is mentioned to support the main storyline to raise events to the story's climax.

The relation between the episode “Marge in Chains” and the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020

In 2019, Coronavirus emerged in the city of Ohan, China, and then spread to the world. In the episode, the virus spread from Osaka, Japan. Through shipping boxes, where it took 6 to 8 weeks to arrive. According to the World Health Organization, COVID-19 lives on surfaces from two to nine days due to several factors. Also, the Coronavirus cannot be seen by the eye, while the virus in the scene can be seen and respects the traffic light. As mentioned, Covid-19 originated in China, while the virus that appeared in the episode spread from Japan. This means that the event is inaccurate in predicting the pandemic before it happened.

After the spread of Covid-19, Simpson's prediction became viral on social media. Memes of the shipping worker sneezing a virus in the boxes led to fever among the town's citizens. The news spreads in the newsletters where they used the term Coronavirus. However, while analysing the episode in this scene, they used Osaka Flu. Osaka Flu, called Hong Kong Pandemic, occurred

in 1968 and ended in 1969. The Simpsons creators used this event to help the raising actions of the main line story. The scene was manipulated to show that the series had predicted the covid-19.

The death of the basketball star Kobe Bryant and the Simpsons

On August 23, 1978, Kobe Bryant was born in Philadelphia to Pamela and Joe Bryant. Bryant's parents chose the word bean as his middle name in honour of Kobe's father, Joe Bryant, known as Jellybean when he played in the NBA (National Basketball Association (Chadoyan, 2020). He was a member of the gold-medal-winning U.S. men's basketball teams at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games and the 2012 London Olympic Games and his professional achievements. Bryant composed the poem "Dear Basketball" in 2015, and it was adapted into a short film of the same name two years later, which he also narrated. The film received an Academy Award nomination for the best animated short film. In addition, Bryant wrote *The Mamba Mentality: How I Play* in 2018, in which he discussed his approach to basketball; the title was inspired by a moniker he earned during his playing days, "The Black Mamba." Bryant and his 13-year-old daughter were among nine persons killed when a chopper carrying them to a ladies' basketball tournament crashed on January 26, 2020 (Augustyn).

Analysis of episode 21, season 04, "Marge in Chains."

The first episode of season 23, "The Falcon and D'ohman", began by informing viewers that the previous episode's survey about the relationship between Ned and Enda would be announced. Then Homer is shown sneaking into his work late and manipulating his work card as he filed on time. Homer enters the guard office and is surprised that there is a replacement for his friend with someone named Wayn, who shows his seriousness in his work. Marge at home prepares a snack for her child but refuses to eat it because they have been deceived and prefer routine. While Wayn is on the road and the atmosphere is rainy, Homer meets him, and they go to his friend Moe's bar. In the meantime, a gangster walks into them to steal them, and Wayn catches him and makes art moves. Homer invites his friend to dinner. Homer asks him about the secret of his fighting

techniques, remembering his short training period and wrestling with many famous characters like doll Chucky and basketball player Koby Bryant. The next day, news of the Wayne fight is published and honoured by his boss at the nuclear plant, but he remembers his past when he was at the CIA and hit him, so he gets fired.

Homer hosts his friend Wayne at his house until he finds work and home. When he was asleep, he spoke loudly about his previous tasks upsetting everyone in the neighbourhood. Wayne's last news went viral on YouTube, and as the Ukrainian Gangster Victor watched the news, he saw this video and knew it was Ryan who killed his wife and decided to go to America and avenge him. When he arrived at the village, he met Homer and hijacked him.

When Wayne heard the news, he went to Homer's place of detention and rescued him and killed Victor with a piece of ice. Homer went home, Wayne decided to move out of their house, and Marge proposed a new place of work in the village. Wayne remembers himself during his new job in North Korea and suffered there. At the end of the series episode, Ned and Enda thanked viewers for their vote to continue their relationship.

This series episode featured distinguished characters, including Wayne and Victor the Ukrainian and the Simpsons, their neighbours and friends. The characters varied between flat and round.

Wayne is a round character who appears in his first scene, working as a replacement for the nuclear station guard. He did not want to form a friendship with Homer, and he was photographed as severe and determined; his work also appeared in a combat scene with a gangster at the Moe bar because he was a member of the intelligence centre -CIA -After Wayne becomes Homer's friend, news of Wayne's heroism spreads on T.V. and is honoured by his boss. However, he remembers his past with intelligence. He beats his boss, whom he was fired at the time. He seemed to run away from them because they wanted to clear his memory, hosted by Homer in his house and form a good relationship with the family. Homer is abducted by one of Wayne's

enemies, and Wayne decides to help him. Wayne kills his enemy Victor and returns to Homer's house but decides to leave because he has many enemies. In these scenes of the episode, Wayne's character is serious, mysterious, love to help others, masters many martial arts, and is a former CIA member with a sophisticated iron arm that sometimes makes him a fantasist.

Victor is a flat character, a Ukrainian gangster whose wife was accidentally killed at a party by Wayne, so he decides to retaliate and kill him. By chance, watch a video on YouTube, and Wayne notices Victor travelling to Springfield Town in America to search for him. He takes Homer hostage. Wayne's tip kills him at the ice-skating court by a piece of ice. Victor is a wealthy Ukrainian figure who has a child who wants to celebrate her birthday.

Homer is a flat character. In his first scene, he comes late to his work which refers to his laziness; he meets Homer Wayne first time and wants to be a friend with him, then he meets him outside work in a rainy atmosphere, and they go together to Mo's bar when he saves Wayne Homer from the gangster he invites him to dinner, When he was fired, he hosted him at his house until he found work. Homer is a lazy, weak person who sometimes looks strong and stupid and works on Springfield's Nuclear Station; he loves making friends and helping them.

Marge is a flat character who appears in a scene of her children snacking as she prepares a snack for them, imagining that she was on a cooking program, asking Marge to teach Wayne some tricks and techniques in driving in her last scene, and she proposed to work for Wayne in the town of Springfield. Marge is a responsible person for her children and Homer; she loves cooking, and one of her dreams is to take part in a cooking competition (master chef).

Bart is a flat character. When his mother prepared him a snack, he refused because he did not like to deceive. Bart learned from Wayne how to defend himself. He used these movements in the school canteen when one student wanted to bully him. In the series episode, Bart's character is not fool-loving; he likes to learn and defend himself because he suffers from bullying.

Lisa is a flat character and loves the routine featured in a scene with Bart as she learns martial arts from Wayne.

Maggie is a flat character, she has not spoken yet, but she understands what she is being told and uses her game to express her opinion.

Kobe Bryant appeared in one scene for seconds fighting Wayne at a training centre, holding a basketball.

Ned and Enda are flat characters, neighbours of the Simpsons. At the beginning of the episode, viewers were informed that the result of the previous voting would be announced about their dating at the end of the episode. However, they appeared together in one house during the attack as a hint to viewers.

Lenny and Carl are flat characters, friends of Homer. They appear in two scenes, the first at the nuclear plant and the second at the Moe pub, and Carl has several gold medals, which point to his experience in many areas.

Moe is a flat character; pub owner and friend Homer owns a gun to defend himself in danger.

Homer's father is a flat character, and old appeared as he had much help and wanted to die when he knew he was still alive, so much sadness.

The episode occurred in the present in the town of Springfield; Wayne took the town as a place to disappear from his enemies and the CIA.

The music and the lighting differed in different scenes. For example, in the background of Wayne's fight with the gangster, I played music pointing to the mystery. On the other hand, when the scene with the Ukrainian gangster was shown, I played classical music. All these effects

influence the viewer and make him integrate with each set. As for lighting, if the light is weak and the atmosphere is rainy, it indicates a bleak atmosphere.

Topics varied between the continuity of the relationship between Ned and Enda and Wayne, a former CIA member, where the episode contained many exciting action scenes, self-defence, and the fight against evil.

The relation between the episode “Marge in Chains” and Kobe Bryant’s death

There is no strong relationship between the outbreak of the series "The falcon and D 'Ohman" and the end of basketball player Koby Bryant except that the player's picture appeared in one scene for a few seconds.

This event was highly sought after by social media users. However, there was no connection between the episode and the death of Kobe Bryant. News began to spread shortly after the player's death, and footage of the scene was manipulated, combined with another video.

The U.S. Patrol its Border

The Biden administration predicted in early 2021 that the southern border would see the highest number of migrants two decades after immigration plummeted in 2020 due to the COVID-19 epidemic. President Biden has kept most migrants out of the country because of the epidemic, but unaccompanied children and certain families have been permitted to stay. As a result, thousands of unaccompanied children have been detained in U.S. custody over the last decade, with many being kept for days in border facilities that are not equipped to handle them. As a result, 1.9 million people were apprehended along the southern U.S. border in 2021, with most arrested being deported (Cheatham, Felter & Roy, 2022).

Analysis of Episode 21, Season 20, "Coming to Homerica"

Matt Groenning created this episode, which first aired on May 17, 2009 (Jahansneier, 2009). The events of this episode took place in the city of Springfield, where many residents of the nearby village of Ogdenville from their original town to the town of Springfield.

The title of this episode is "Coming to Homerica" and is closer to "Coming to America" but closer to the main character Homer to attract a more exciting way to attract the interest of viewers from the title, and the town is part of America.

The episode begins with Krusty the Clown playing chess with a monkey. He is told that the home load detector misrepresents the results. He is also informed that Krusty Burger is Aswa Burger globally and decides to produce a new plant burger using the cheapest vegetables with a strong advertisement on the Vaz stations. In the following scene, the residents of Springfield village decline to buy it. Homer and his family also go to buy some of it and eat it, the residents of the town love this product, but it eventually causes them food poisoning. It is investigated and searched for the cause of this poisoning. They discover that it is from the barley station imported from the harvest station in the village of Ogedenville, located in the southeast of the town. Residents of Ogdenville village deteriorated after the barley harvesting station was reported to be public, and the city residents became unemployed. The residents found a solution only to migrate to Springfield and settle there and work.

Homer hires two immigrants to fix the house's roof, while Marge hires a nanny to take care of her children and do housework. This nanny notes that Maggie has not spoken yet and puts some of them under her tongue. Maggie meets her sister Selma She and her immigrant lover as they show their enjoyment of the presence of Ogenvillians as they work in their place. A child in the neighbouring village challenges Bart to skateboard. Bart appears to show his talent, but eventually, he hits the bus and his arm breaks. His parents take him to the hospital but find many patients, Ogdenville residents waiting their turn for hours, and nurse girls with a Norwegian language form

to fill out. Marge gets angry and leaves the hospital upset by the number of migrants and decides to treat her son herself.

The mayor of Springfield Village announces an emergency meeting to discuss the migrants' order and stop allowing them to come to the village with the support of the entire population. Then Homer goes to his friend Moe's bar to drink beer but finds that his friend has replaced his usual beer with another widespread migrant. In addition, he exchanged Springfield residents' coins for their coins. At the entrance to the village are cops Lou and his fellow deficiencies, who are too lazy to guard the border, thinking about using the people and giving them guns and liquor, led by Homer, who suggests that they name the group as a kind of honour and propose to the "Nazi", but they ask him to stop.

Homer and his friends continue to try to find a way to guard the border and eventually agree to build a wall between the two villages. Marge contests it because she believes children should be friends of different cultures and regions. Suddenly Maggie was the first to pronounce the word for her in Norwegian, which immediately changed her mother's ray by telling her husband to build a wall "make it as tall as the sky and deeper than hell". They hire "Barley jacks" for the process. During the construction, the villagers share their stories, thus increasing their understanding and love. When the wall's construction is completed, the villagers feel nostalgic and longing for some of them, opening a door in the wall and running loud music. Finally, the villagers come back happy together, in the last scene showing the Norwegian flag.

The events of the episode seem realistic, not fictional, close to the realities of the American family and society.

Several characters appeared in this episode, including the Simpson family, the residents of Opendeville and some of the villagers there are flat and round characters.

The inhabitants of Ogedenville town are regarded as round characters who are immigrants from Norway who settled in America and are interested in agriculture. Most of its citizens were farmers who left their town because of the unavailability of work and migrated to the city of Springfield. At first, they looked weak and poor and cared about the daily grind of the villagers, but then their number grew, and the town became full of them.

In the Simpsons, Homer's round characters in the first episode look lazy and have weak personalities, and He hires two immigrants to repair the roof of his house. In one scene, he felt like he did not find his favourite beer, but he challenged himself and drank Norwegian beer, which led to his drunkenness and the corruption of his work. Nevertheless, the end of the loop changes and contributes to the wall's construction and shows its seriousness in working and finding solutions.

Marge is a flat character, and Marge hired a migrant woman called Inga to help her care for the children. Bart broke his arm and brought him to the hospital in one scene but finds him full of migrant residents. She went home upset and treated Bart by herself, showing her responsibility.

Bart is a flat character, is the naughty child of the family who highlighted his sight when he challenged a child from the town of Ogedenville, but eventually, his arm broke. In another scene, he emerged when the village met to find a solution, and since he was a rioter who hit a baseball that shot his father Homer, he was outraged by him.

Lisa is a flat character who plays the intelligent girl and has scenes when she corrects her father's information.

Maggie is the youngest child in the family who has yet to speak; when nanny Inga puts a drop of oil under her tongue at the end of the episode surprises her family with her first pronunciation but in Norwegian.

Krusty, the clown, is a flat character. He was informed that his home pregnancy detector failed. His burgers were classified as the worst, so he decided to make another vegetarian product, showing his determination and persistence.

Moe is a round character who owns a beer pub, despite his friendship with Homer, but when he finds the money, he is no longer interested in and indifferent to it as he replaces the beer with Norwegian beer plus coins.

Salma is a flat character. Selma's sister appeared in one scene with a migrant named Thor Bjorn, where she hired him to take care of her garden but fell in love with him.

Lenny and Carl are flat characters, and they are Homer's friends who contributed to the construction of the wall around the town and were portrayed as loyal friends of Homer.

Mayor Joe Quimby is a flat character, the mayor of the town of Springfield. However, due to the increasing number of migrants, he made an emergency meeting for the town's residents to discuss and find solutions. Through scenes, he was responsible and close to the residents.

Chief Wiggum and yellow officer Lou are flat characters. They were two very lazy policemen on the town's borders who have suggested that they should use the people to protect the walls, which seems fanciful because the police are the ones that are working to protect the people and not the other way around.

Most of the characters in this episode were realistic. On the side of sex, they were not often discriminated against, but Marge's role influenced Homer's decision as she once agreed to build the wall.

The types of music in the episode vary depending on the spectacle. For example, when Ogdenville village degradation occurs, sad and tragic music emits an air of melancholy and sadness in the viewer.

This episode took place in no time on the southeastern border of Springfield Town and the border of Ogdenville Town of America. This is about illegal immigration. When the situation deteriorated, the residents of the neighbouring town decided to migrate to Springfield, which is better off than it is.

The episode's central theme was illegal migration and a lack of interest. If the Shi 'ayr harvest had been verified, the village would not have reached a dire state. The director's message to young and old viewers is that everyone has to do their job well and master it and unity in work and help some survive. Finally, with different cultures, languages and regions, humanity brings together the entire population of "American unity."

The Relation between the Episode "Coming to Homeric" and the Patrol of the U.S.

Border

Before Trump assumed the presidency of the United States of America, the country was portrayed as one that suffered from an increase in illegal immigration from several continents and consequently affecting it in many areas, both economically and socially, especially from her southern border, during Trump's presidential tenure (2017-2020) he Ordered border soldiers to reduce the number of illegal migrants and not to allow them into the state either side of the series "Coming to Homeric", which was shown in 2009, years before the event took place on the ground. However, the main idea of the episode was to find a solution to illegal migration. In other words, America is already suffering from many such migrants for decades. However, in recent times it has been focused on the southern border of the state, and this is what was filmed and narrated in the series, where the village of "Ogdenville" is located in the southeast of the town of "Springfield."

From what we notice through the study, there is undoubtedly a connection between the real-life event "simulation". However, we cannot say that the series foreshadowed the events but chose a common political problem for the United States, where the majority of the population is familiar with it and trying to find a more reasonable and rational solution that the viewer can accept

away from imagination. This is particularly relevant to "The Patrol of U.S. Border" and "Coming to Homericia."

Discussion

Our findings support Torun (2017), who mentioned that The Simpson is a postmodern sitcom representing the American family apart from the idealism. Also, Pinsky (2007) states that in terms of educating families and people about what it means to live as a religious believer in a varied society, The Simpsons is the most intellectual Comedy program. He makes a persuasive case, aided by the fact that the book is hilariously amusing. Therefore, The Simpsons is a simulation of American society in which the sitcom represents reality. This sitcom conveys a message of humour and satire. Our findings concur with Folki (2006), that claims that the Simpsons portray severe problems and issues in a cynical way, such as religion and politics.

Abspoel and Huohvaniaen (1999) stated that the Simpsons characters were shown simulating reality away from the ideal and humour of previous sitcoms. The father oversees the family, the mother is a housewife, and the children obey their parents. This supports our findings that this sitcom is a simulation of reality and, simultaneously, a satire of previous works.

According to previous studies, the Simpsons are cynical about many areas of American society, including political and social. For example, the Media hype about the show when Trump presided over the USA in 2017 was an episode mocking Donald Trump before he won the presidency. His statement to run for the presidency was also copied in some movies, including the famous Christmas movie Home Alone in which he briefly appeared. The producer of the series Matt Groening stated that the idea was to be ridiculed as a character to delight viewers. When the Coronavirus spread in 2020, social media sites began ruminating that the Simpsons series predicted the coronavirus pandemic. However, according to previous studies, the cold disease is originally widespread and known for its rapid infection if it is not an accurate prediction, so the prophecy in

the series was incorrect. It was just a spectacle of significant episodes to satisfy viewers. Thus, it supports our results about humour and satire.

According to previous studies and our analysis of the episodes of the series, some events were adapted to natural circumstances, such as the Coronavirus. The Coronavirus first appeared in China; however, the virus began in Japan. This supports our results about simulation. As for the death of the Koby baseball player, it was not conducted in the series, and it was combined with a scene from Simpson's show in which Koby appeared for seconds and a scene from another cartoon.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this is the practical chapter of research where the first chapter's information and theories were used in analysing selected scenes. Initially, methods were explained and how they were used to analyse and choose three different episodes and their relationships with the socio-political events that occurred during Donald Trump's presidential term. Then we defined the real-life event and the applied process to analyse these selected scenes. Finally, results were discussed to study the validity of the hypotheses.

The following section presents a conclusive account of the findings generated throughout the analysis presented in this chapter.

General Conclusion

This research aimed to investigate whether the Simpsons sitcom comedy predicted the socio-political events during Trump's presidency. Based on the qualitative content analysis approach and visual indicator method, it can be deduced that these four events analysed and studied their relationship with the Simpsons were not a prediction of the future and are based on previous facts where the results indicate that there is no evidence of these predictions. The producer of this comedy show and the crew did studies on these events, like Donald Trump's character. Although these events have occurred in reality, a few have come true, as this comedy series has more than 600 episodes, which means there is a possibility that a few will be achieved. Additionally, disruptive events have been linked to the series even though there is nothing to do with the event but attract the public and public opinion because of rumours like "the death of Koby Bryant".

The Simpsons is a developed sitcom comedy produced by Matt Groening. Compared to sitcoms of the past decades depicting the ideal family, the Simpson family is considered a postmodern sitcom. The series was first aired in Ulman's show in 1989 on Christmas, where the family is together. With the different themes of the series being political, social and economic, the series won the admiration of the American community of all age groups. Despite the fame of the series and obtaining high views, in one episode, the viewership declined, and many viewers and critics asked to stop the show, but it was resolved and continued. The Simpson family consists of five members: Father Homer, Mother Marge and the three children Bart, Lisa and Maggie, and their neighbours and friends: Moe, Carl, Lenny, Ned Flanders, Ina, Salma and Petty. Each of them has a personality that distinguishes them from others. The series contributed to the presentation of political, social and cultural issues in the US, where the producer of this comedy show took a way to publicise these issues in a sitcom suitable for all age groups.

This study illustrates the Simpsons' socio-political predictions during Trump's presidential reign. However, it also raises an issue about the writer deliberately presenting these issues and

predictions in his comedy show for fun and entertaining viewers or whether there is a motive behind this show. Furthermore, the study addressed various theories, including predictive programming VS Conspiracy theories. First predictive programming refers to the influence of TV shows on the person's inner mind, where the mind automatically becomes constrained and oriented toward those events. Secondly, the conspiracy theories, which means that this comedy show is a conspiracy and cannot be just for amusement, and the show has been produced for future conspiracies. Moreover, simulation and simulacra are the imitations of reality or the reworking of truth, where The Simpsons represent the best example of a tradition, but humorously. In contrast, simulacra are a copy of the hyperreality version.

This study's critical analysis and conclusions helped address the research's primary questions. By analysing some episodes of the Simpsons, this thesis has shown that the events of the episodes were just a simulation of reality and used satirical factual events from the political and social realities of American society. In addition, the events of the series and its predictions of the future were not accurate, and there is also a difference between Simpson's events and actual events.

Although some of the study's questions were answered, some remained unanswered because the results could not address all the events predicted by The Simpsons. Among the obstacles, we encountered during the study was the lack of resources. As far as we know, the topic is new and still under consideration, as there are insufficient resources to support any type of investigation.

Thus, and based on these conclusions, the present study recommends a future study to critically analyse the Simpsons' predictions on the other issues and themes. It also recommends investigating these predictions from different angles. Additionally, this study taught us that rumours are not always accurate, and no one can predict the future and how the media affects humans. Before we did the study, we had no idea what predictions existed in the Simpsons.

However, after finishing the study and the analysis, we discovered that these predictions were inaccurate. They simulate reality and are cynical of the American way of life.

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Appendix 1

Figure 1 Lisa Simpson's clothing



Figure 2 Notre Dame



Figure 3 Justice for George



Figure 4 Beirut Explosion



Figure 5 Summer of 4Ft.2



Figure 6 The Ned Zone



الملخص

يعتبر مسلسل الرسوم الهزلي "الكوميدي" أطول سلسلة أمريكية وأكثرها شهرة. اشتهر المسلسل بتنبؤاته للأحداث المستقبلية. الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو تحديد ما إذا كان مسلسل "عائلة سيمبسون" له القدرة على التنبؤ بالأحداث المستقبلية أو أن كتاب هذا المسلسل قادرون على التنبؤ بالأحداث قبل وقوعها. إضافة إلى أنه يدرس العلاقة بين الأحداث التي تم تصويرها وعرضها في العرض والأخرى التي حدثت في الواقع أثناء عهدة الرئيس الأمريكي دونالد ترامب. تستخدم الدراسة منهجية تحليل المحتوى النوعي من خلال تحليل أربع حلقات من المسلسل وتحليل المحتوى لدراسة الأحداث المتعلقة بالموضوع. أستخدم المؤشر البصري كمنهج بحثي لتسجيل جميع الأحداث المهمة من أجل فهم كل وحدة. تظهر نتائج التحليل أن مسلسل عائلة سيمبسون هو محاكاة لأسلوب الحياة الأمريكي. كما أظهرت الدراسة أن الأحداث التي زعمت أنها تنبأت بالمستقبل لم تكن دقيقة ولا تتطابق مع الأحداث الحقيقية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: سيمبسون، المسرحية الهزلية، تنبؤ، تحليل المحتوى النوعي، المؤشر البصري .