

Unpacking the Depiction of Arabs and Muslims in the American Animated Sitcom *Family Guy*: Distortion and Stereotypes vs. Satire and Politics

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Abstract:

This paper unpacks the depiction of Arabs and Muslims in the American animated sitcom *Family Guy*, questioning the intertwinement between distortion, stereotypes, satire, and politics. Building upon postcolonial and postmodernist theories, the paper analyses two key episodes to understand how such depictions foster harmful narratives and contribute to prejudice on TV. Findings reveal that *Family Guy* often perpetuates the “Bad Guy Syndrome,” framing Arab and Muslim characters as one-dimensional villains and nourishing the concept of “Otherness” pointed out by Edward Said and Michel Foucault.

Keywords: Arabs and Muslims, Depiction, *Family Guy*, Animated Sitcom, Stereotypes, Satire

1. Introduction:

When cartoons for adults or animated sitcoms are thought of, very few references may cross one’s mind. These latter dominate the general viewership section of television, though they are regarded by the layman as less mature and

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often silly compared to movies and other TV series. Among those few references, a noteworthy one is Fox's *Family Guy*, which has grown to be a representative of the genre, together with *The Simpsons*, *South Park* and *American Dad*. By taking family issues and the societal structure into account, *Family Guy* makes use of satire, irony, sarcasm, and dark humour grotesquely to deal with various themes like political, ethnic, cultural and religious representation of multiple communities and ethnic groups. One of the ethnic groups *Family Guy* often depicts is Middle Easterners in general and the Arabs and Muslims in particular, focusing on their religion, culture, mindset and even physical traits. Unfortunately, building on the infamous Hollywood "Bad Guy" cinematic prototype, Arabs and Muslims are frequently portrayed as villains in *Family Guy*, reinforcing, therefore, harmful stereotypes and perpetuating negative narratives about them. The "Bad Guy Syndrome" in cinema and TV and more particularly in a prime-time animated sitcom like *Family Guy* disproportionately affects Arabs and Muslims, casting them as "Usual Suspects" and villains the fact which not only harms their image and labels them as the "Other" but also positions them as victims of a broader narrative that fuels prejudice and misunderstanding in a world that is becoming a global village. (Hicham M., 2018)

Many critics and experts on the matter claim that in a media landscape that is rapidly diversifying in terms of both producers and consumers, many forms of media like animated sitcoms continue to portray Arabs and Muslims almost exclusively in the context of terrorism or violence, particularly on North American television. (Shaheen, 2009) The desire to tackle terrorism from the Arab world extends well beyond television programming since it has been, as well, visited by literature (Said, 1978) and movies, music (Alsultany, 2012) and more recently, Netflix series, picture books, and even regular cartoons meant to entertain children. In the process, Arabs and Muslims have continued to be stereotypically depicted as terrorists or potential terrorists out to destroy the West's system of values and lifestyle and threaten democracy by spreading despotism, Sharia law and Islamic culture, which has been overwhelmingly and perpetually reduced to hostility and violence against the West (Khshaifaty, 2019).

As a parodying satire, Fox's *Family Guy*, as mentioned earlier, is one of the few American animated sitcoms in the last decade expected to re-imagine American precepts of ethnicity and ethnicity-based stereotypes. The creators of *Family Guy* chose to expose and inflate the long-held stereotypical notion of Arabs and Muslims as terrorists. Historically, the Arabs and Muslims are usually depicted as "brutish outlaws and objects of ridicule who are bloodthirsty, ruthless, villainous, irrational and barbaric as a universal truth" (Said, 1978) *Family Guy*'s own stereotypical depictions of Arabs and Muslims are not just the product of

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purposes of entertainment, as the animated sitcom also embodies systemic power relation of domination and oppression.

The main impetus of this paper, accordingly, is to unveil the mechanisms by which the prime-time animated sitcom *Family Guy* uses stereotypes to depict Arabs and Muslims and how this depiction often turns out to be a mere caricatural representation and an exaggerated portrayal that highlights certain features for comedic or satirical effect. Furthermore, it is argued that this depiction is more or less negative and biased, and often culminates in the calculated and systematic stigmatisation of Arabs and Muslims. As a matter of fact, much research conducted by eminent scholars on the mass media's effects on the social construction of negative stereotypes and the stigmatisation of Arabs and Muslims following 9/11 supports this approach. (Shaheen 2009) Devoid of reason, the stereotyping of Arabs and Muslims led to a mass dehumanisation movement towards them. (Alsultany 2012) Therefore, this paper will also explore the probable intertwinement between representation, misrepresentation, and political satire, which is considered a cornerstone and fundamental aspect of any animated sitcom's function. The analysis will lean upon Postcolonial and Postmodernist theories to unpack the ambivalent and controversial depiction of an ethnic and cultural group that is becoming central to all political, societal and media-related debates, the Arabs and Muslims. (Mecheri, 2023 and Mohamed. K 1989)

2. Family Guy: An Overview of a TV Phenomenon:

Family Guy is an American animated sitcom created by Seth MacFarlane for the Fox Broadcasting Company. It premiered on January 31, 1999, as a mid-season replacement, and quickly developed a devoted fan base. However, after three seasons, the animated sitcom was cancelled by Fox in 2002 due to low ratings, leading to longer creative disputes between Fox and MacFarlane. The show was brought back by the network in 2004 and became its longest-running primetime scripted series, alongside *The Simpsons*. Technically speaking, *Family Guy* is animated with the traditional 2D vector-based technique. Each episode has a fixed runtime of 22 minutes and is divided into three acts, with the use of cutaway gags. The animated sitcom had become notable for its unique humour outlined by a blend of juvenile humour, surreal humour, occasional surrealism and fourth-wall breaks. In 2018, it was the most merchandised television series, and as of early 2023, it has received eleven "Primetime Emmy Awards", been nominated on more than twenty occasions, as well as several "Annie Awards", "Teen Choice Awards", and a "Peabody Award".

The pilot of *Family Guy* was pitched to Fox as a "Family sitcom, with a meaner and more outrageous skewed point of view" to freshen up the Saturday and Sunday night animated line-ups. Animated television shows during the late 1990s

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were represented only by the animated sitcoms of *The Simpsons*, *South Park*, and *King of the Hill*; thus, Fox was looking for more shows in that genre. MacFarlane baptised the animated sitcom with the name *Family Guy*, then designated its central character and caricature of MacFarlane's own dog, an anthropomorphic grey and white dog named Brian with a New England accent. Fox was delighted with the cast and design of the pilot, green-lighting the animated sitcom of thirteen episodes for the first season of *Family Guy* in 1998. The animated sitcom had a diverse production crew, initially led by MacFarlane. The staff consisted of experienced adult animated television show writers, separated into two teams: one to produce a draft of the script on layout, while the other was responsible for consecutive productions. The production crew responded to higher show quality for a weekly television series. Though the pilot episode was described as "bizarre" by producer Mike Henry, Fox only ordered the episodes of the series without modifications.

3. Peter Griffin: *Family Guy*'s Prototype of the Stereotyped All-American Citizen:

Peter Griffin, in many ways, is another naïve but stubborn Homer Simpson, as both men represent the stereotypical American couch potato father and husband who loves drinking beer and watching TV all day while gossiping and messing about and around. The two men are, in fact, the prototype of the modern white, Christian, patriotic middle-to-working-class American citizen. Peter Griffin, particularly as a main character in *Family Guy*, serves as a satire of the American family man and naive patriot, who is sometimes manipulated by the media and brainwashed by political discourse. Moreover, his character draws attention to the controversies surrounding various local and world issues like the presidential elections, the war in Iraq, and American values. To some extent, Peter Griffin represents a caricature of the average American; hence, it may seem that this character does not have much screen time to present the stereotypical depiction of Arabs and Muslims. However, given the fact that he is very vocal about his views, his opinions on Muslims and Arabs carry a weight perhaps greater than that of other characters in the animated sitcom.

In line with post-9/11 criticism of Arabs and Muslims and the rise of irrational Islamophobic resentment, Peter Griffin and *Family Guy* as a whole frequently homogenise Arabs and Muslims into a collective "other" that encompasses Persians, Pakistanis, Turks, Kurds and Berbers. (Said, 1978) The pilot episode features Peter performing a crude joke about horrible things he wished upon certain countries. The very first on the list is "bomb the disrespectful cigarette out of Arab country" with a rough Arabic-sounding edit on the word

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“Arab”. Another microaggression occurs in an episode, in which Peter goes to a football game, slanging: “What is this, a picture from all the fat Muslims in the country auditioning for the role of the Haji sumo!” On several accounts, he blatantly foregrounds the racial pejorative ‘towelhead’. On other occasions, he would straight up accuse Muslims at a national level of carrying out mass actions, for instance, in another episode. He even goes as far as to indicate association with terrorists, explaining why a Hebrew inscription delimits an area. This is typified by an episode around the 11th minute. The character, in the remarks, “so I switched to Cokie, is depicted angrily bombarding Middle Eastern villages, referring to “dot-com terrorists”.

4. An Overview of the Portrayal of Arab and Muslim Characters in *Family Guy*:

There is no secret that most of the Arab and Muslim characters in *Family Guy* derive from a stereotypical depiction of them in Hollywood movies. This portrayal can be seen as a satirical representation of how Arabs and Muslims are often depicted in American movies and television shows, approached in the same or similar fashion. *Family Guy* converted some of these negative attributes on screen in a comedic format and amplified them to create the magic of an animated sitcom: irreverence and polemics. On the one hand, there is a social function in satirising the notion that others have when viewing the limitations and fixation on ascribing perceptions to a few. On the other hand, *Family Guy* has developed an Arab character that conforms to the conventions of what is seen as caricatures of that ethnicity in the minds of many, so ironically, it sells out to the same proclivities that it pokes fun at. Since the beginning of the series, there have been initial images of the portrayal of Arabs and Muslims in the animated sitcom.

The Characters of Dr. Hematti, Mahmoud, and Ameer in the animated sitcom embody all stereotypes that apply to an Arab or Muslim as perceived by Westerners. Dr. Hematti, for instance, only talks in a tongue-tied Arabic accent, has no actual coherent lines, and is shown as a nonsensical doctor. Mahmoud has a full beard and wears a headscarf and long pants, and is shown in a small, dimly lit room with only a desk and a chair, trying to seduce an adult woman. Most of the Arabs and Muslims in *Family Guy* are hence depicted following the character, whose only trait is that they are Arabian-like Bedouin, according to the long-established stereotypes inherited from Hollywood cinematic representation and early European travel narratives. In all appearances, the Arab attributes of those characters are highlighted without even a semblance or rationale of a backstory or a wider plot. Characters such as Dr. Hematti and Mahmoud mentioned above operate under a frame whereby they are merely the representation of what is there on paper without any verification or accuracy. There are several Arabs in *Family*

Guy who do not reappear in the animated sitcom after their debuts, just like those transient and fleeting Arab characters of *The Simpsons*.

Ameer, Karam, and Chris are three of these characters who are meant as one-off character puzzles. It is difficult to ascertain any attributes beyond these. The characters do share a few attributes, such as how they refer to girls as 'prize' or 'covet.' Karam is a caricature of the 'one lucky contestant' character that is put forward as the stereotypical bridegroom of choice in America. There is a background and some aspects to Karam, reminding the viewer how one might understand the worldview of these characters.

5. Recurring Arab Characters:

Although the show features some one-off Arab characters, most of the characters that can be identified as Arab or Arab-American are recurring characters. *Family Guy* features a total of three recurring Arab/Arab-American characters: Abu, Osama Bin Laden, and Mahmoud. Of them, Abu is a character whose characterisation deviated from the prevailing characterisation of Arabs and Muslims on the animated sitcom, while Mahmoud and Osama Bin Laden were portrayed stereotypically as fanatical jihadists, bloody terrorists, and primitive Orientals.

Abu first appears in the episode "The Hand that Rocks the Wheel" of season 8. He is a sympathetic Arab-American character who owns a convenience store. The character reappears in two other episodes: "Candy, Quahog Marshmallow" of season 11 and "Candy, Quahog Marshmallow" of season 19. During his reappearance in "Candy, Quahog Marshmallow", Abu has an argument with Cleveland Brown over who should win customer of the month and leaves the set when the argument escalates. Later in the episode, Abu is pleased when he wins customer of the month, saying, "Thank you all for this. I stand before you proud . . . of my record as a customer, steadfast and true. Please honour me with your applause." He is then fully embraced by other characters. During the argument, he is portrayed as a character with a kind heart who only desires recognition.

Mahmoud first appears in the episode "Patriot Games" of season 9 and reappears in two other episodes: "Candy, Quahog Marshmallow" of season 11 and "Candy, Quahog Marshmallow" of season 19. His first appearance is as a terrorist who jumps on the field of a football match armed with an AK-47 rifle, shouting "Get down! Get down, everyone! This is a terrorist threat!" He then starts to explain what is about to happen. He is soon shot dead by a sniper, which causes what he calls a "human meat grater". In his next appearance, he shoots Las Vegas police officers and threatens that "the shower cascade will pour down obliteration

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on your city!” He abandons his mission after winning only two overhead water sprinklers after learning that the rest of the plan doesn’t require water damage to the hotel. He simply hopes for some C4 explosives as a parting gift.

Osama Bin Laden, without any surprise, is recurrently used as a figure of satire in *Family Guy*, reflecting the sitcom’s approach to tackling sensitive and polemical topics with irreverent humour. In episodes like “The Best Chris,” bin Laden is depicted in a way that highlights the absurdity of his notoriety and the media’s fascination with him. In this particular episode, he appears in a comedic context, interacting with the animated sitcom’s main characters in an exaggerated and often ridiculous manner. The scene plays on his infamous image, contrasting it with the sitcom’s signature irreverent style. This portrayal serves to critique how figures like Bin Laden become sensationalised in popular culture.

The animated sitcom’s use of dark humour often invites mixed reactions, as it seeks to balance comedy with commentary on serious subjects. Bin Laden’s character is presented not just as a terrorist but as a caricature, emphasising the surreal aspects of his presence in the public consciousness. Overall, *Family Guy* uses Osama Bin Laden’s appearance to provoke thought and laughter, showcasing its trademark blend of humour and critique.

Snapshot 1: Jesus Ironically Saves Osama Bin Laden. Episode 12, Season 12



Snapshot 2: Bin Laden Al-Qaida Studio, Parodying the movie Zero Dark Thirty



6. One-off Arab Characters:

Family Guy exhibits the Stereotypical Depiction of Arabs and Muslims through several characters. These characters are scarce and purely involved in gag-based situations without any noteworthy participation in narratives. Such characters include Dots, who is a terrorist from an unidentified Arab country; an unnamed store owner; a quick Arabic-speaking bearded guy; Munir, a delivery guy in a scene; and unnamed dancers with heads of terrorist-associated states. These characters do not promote any subplots or background for future episodes, rather are cameo-like embodiments displaying farcical actions, indicating their grouchy or outrageous nature.

Yet glimpsed once, the Arabic-speaking characters portray overall Western stereotypes of Arabs and Muslims, but some accomplish it in exaggeratedly humorous ways. Dots provocatively walks with lowered shoulders and a mischievous visage, yet ponders why he is typecast as a fuss. He sees the Geigers – an Old West-styled, sweetly speaking, gun-toting, religiously hateful family. To intrigue the audience's attention, he ignites his cell phone, resembling a detonator. Nonetheless, the intimidating Geigers, like Dots' family, relish the scheme by setting a computer with a bomb a week earlier. Then, in a slapstick, slap-brain action, havoc ensues, accompanied by silly shouting and untying Mickey Mouse-shaped sailing trees. All disgraced, Dots reflects on the preposterous blunder. The genre-breaching scenes lack contextual coherence and careful over-exaggeration,

diverting from *Family Guy*'s convention. Despite these, Dots and his Eastern Asian fellows are not intense but tedious.

The Arabic-speaking characters in the *Family Guy* viewpoint exhibit typical Muslim and Arab modes. The store owner is quick yet talkative with linear manners, following a text that precisely yet absurdly matches the postulated stereotype. The stereotyped character highlights overt English alterations, sub-expressions, and tag questions. The character's couplet-punctuated simple-but-sufficient English replicates Arab disciplining schemes.

7. Exploring Arab and Muslim Stereotypical Depictions in *Family Guy*: A Close Look at Two Key Episodes:

7.1. First Episode Analysis: "Patriot Games":

The episode "Patriot Games" opens with many of its iconic elements, chiefly how the citizens of Quahog fall victim to Griffin's impulsive escapades. Peter Griffin, the protagonist, whose ignorant and childish personality has long served as the joke's sacrificial lamb, takes the plunge into his long-standing obsession with the sport of American football, ignited after witnessing a bluff, misfiring huddle avalanche his favourite team's chances against the Washington Redskins. However, Peter's descent into football culture signals a new era in *Family Guy*'s well-documented negativity toward Muslims, with harsher jokes not even exempting children. In particular, two critical moments function as the contours of the cartoon's discourse regarding Islam.

The first instance occurs precisely at the moment when Peter's imminent arrival at the Redskin try-outs is impeded by the catch in the night sky of a pair of jets, pointed toward the probing of two veiled figures. This scene marks the introduction of these two Muslim characters into the gallery of Quahog residents. Their treatment is noteworthy in how the shape of their planes is exaggerated into a stark curvilinear shadow constructed by the screen's greyness. This represents the "stereotype" of Muslims' hatred and vigilante qualities noted earlier. The consequence is the imminent crash of one of the planes. Given that it is traditionally seen that the inner-tenacity designated to cartoons increases threefold when it takes on a faux-stylised treatment, stronger intentions of vilification are emitted from these characterisations. The character then becomes a poignant caricature of Muslims per se.

The representation of the scarf as entirely black makes the character heterogeneously dressed. Various neat folds forming a urinal shape constructor with a cylindrical basin expose the circumvention of the visual transparency of this being, a clear negation of both wishes; explicable misdeeds and exposure of

mentalities pursued. The aggressor on the counter seat wears a bulgy camouflage-coloured coat, inhibiting even partial exposure of the whole body and discursively rejecting guards at airports. The Muslim character here is once again underscored to articulate Islamic misogyny, contemptible for Western values and lifestyles, and a “threat” entirely preposterous and villainous. (Said, 1978)

7.2. Second Episode Analysis: “The Cleveland-Loretta Quagmire”:

Family Guy’s portrayal of the Middle East took another stereotypical turn in the episode “The Cleveland-Loretta Quagmire,” which served as an introduction to Cleveland Brown’s character and his friend Quagmire’s misguided efforts to woo Cleveland’s wife. The episode featured Quagmire unsuccessfully trying to woo Cleveland’s wife, Loretta, with an irreverent lust-driven attitude, a hilarious portrayal of Cleveland’s dismay at the loss of his wife, a mediocre portrayal of their reconciliation, but most importantly, a stereotypical depiction of a Middle-Eastern airline containing a suicide bomber on board. The stereotypical representation of Middle Eastern people and Muslims has taken a funnier turn but has become irresponsible; after the tragedy of September 11, 2001, despite the animated sitcom being praised for tackling many taboo topics.

In this episode, the airline containing a bomb is introduced with a typical Middle Eastern man being portrayed with exaggerated features, as one notices when he enters the frame. He has a thick beard, whose sharpness draws a straight line from the moustache through the chin, with a big, protruding nose. Yet, he ingrains a frightening feeling. His raucous inflexion and phrasing further complement his impersonation of the paternalistic character. He expresses, “We will now execute ze threat,” which probably refers to an unexpected attack from the pilot. Idiomatically, it gives birth to a contrasting meaning from its origin, as it is supposed to point out the risk arising from the flight, aligning with an unpleasant and creepy character. However, this doctorly embellishment does not take over the delightful sarcasm coming with a flight announcement mentioning that “by popular request,” “No Cops, No Tek, No Zealot, and No P.A.L.” will not be tolerated on the plane”. Due to its outrageous imposition, the previous harsh atmosphere ironically fades away and becomes lulled.

The trigger for appreciating the humour in this scene exists in a larger context, comparatively. It is a close equivalent to a more elaborate and sophisticated development of characters and narrative in the previous episode, in which several poke-fun factors are involved with a referential awe. Additionally, compared to the American football scene in the previous episode, which must be understood to appreciate the humour properly, it requires no shared knowledge to comprehend the Japanese culture in the Middle Eastern scene of “The Cleveland-Loretta

Quagmire.” There is a dullness existing as a “cultural barrier” for Family Guy’s humour appreciation; no referential awareness is needed to understand the humour.

8. Discussion in the Light of Postcolonial Perspectives: Distortion and Stereotypes vs. Satire and Politics:

It seems that the depiction of Arabs and Muslims in Fox’s prime-time animated sitcom Family Guy serves as a critical lens that enables examining the intersection of distortion and stereotypes with satire and political discourse in Popular Culture broadcast on TV. Building upon the theories of scholars such as Edward Said, Michel Foucault, and Jack Shaheen, we can scrutinise how these depictions contribute to broader societal narratives and power structures.

When it comes to ethnic, cultural and religious “misrepresentation”, Edward Said’s concept of Orientalism presents itself as instrumental in understanding how an animated sitcom like Family Guy perpetuates stereotypes of Arabs and Muslims. According to Said, the West constructs an image of the East that is steeped in exoticism and otherness, depicting Eastern cultures as inferior and barbaric. (Said 1978) In Family Guy, this is evident in the exaggerated and often unjustified crude representations of Arab characters, who are frequently depicted as dangerous terrorists or figures of ridicule. These portrayals reinforce the fabricated image of the Arab as the exotic “Other,” (Said 1978), a cliché that not only dehumanises but also perpetuates a sense of fear and hostility. The animated sitcom amplifies existing stereotypes, using humour as a veneer to mask the underlying prejudices, thereby normalising these distorted images in the collective consciousness of its audience.

Michel Foucault’s seminal theories regarding “power and discourse” further elucidate the implications of Family Guy’s representations. Foucault argues that power is not merely repressive but is also productive; it shapes knowledge and discourse. (Foucault 1969) In the context of Family Guy, the depiction of Arabs and Muslims as violent or irrational people(s) serves to reinforce societal norms and justifies “surveillance and control” over these ethnic groups. According to Foucault, one should therefore question what is beyond the laughter, as the humour in the animated sitcom often operates within a Foucauldian framework, where the laughter it elicits masks a deeper critique of societal fears surrounding terrorism, for instance. By framing these characters through a lens of absurdity, Family Guy inadvertently contributes to the “normalisation of surveillance” and suspicion directed at Arab and Muslim communities, embedding these narratives within the fabric of the very American cultural discourse. (Foucault 1966)

Jack Shaheen’s outstanding research on cinematic and media representations highlights the significant role that animated sitcoms like Family Guy play in

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shaping public perceptions of Arabs and Muslims. (Shaheen 2009) Shaheen argues that ethnic, cultural and religious portrayals in movies and TV often perpetuate a monolithic and negative image of these groups, reducing them to mere caricatures. (Shaheen 2001) Accordingly, in *Family Guy*, the use of one-dimensional characters such as Mahmoud and Osama Bin Laden, as stated earlier, exemplifies this phenomenon. While the animated sitcom may employ satire, it often lacks a nuanced understanding of the complexities of Arab and Muslim identities. Instead, it relies on reductive stereotypes that contribute to the stigmatisation and dehumanisation of these communities, echoing Shaheen's concerns about the media's role in reinforcing harmful narratives. (Shaheen 1984)

9. Conclusion:

Without any doubt, the depiction of Arabs and Muslims in the American animated sitcom *Family Guy* serves as an important case study in the intersection of media representation, cultural stereotypes, and political satire. Throughout this paper, we have so far been able to explore how the animated sitcom employs humour to navigate complex themes related to ethnicity, culture, religion and societal norms. While *Family Guy* aims to critique and satirise various aspects of American political and social life, its portrayal of Arab and Muslim characters often reinforces harmful stereotypes rooted in Orientalism, as articulated by Edward Said. (1978)

Fox's prime-time animated sitcom exemplifies the "Bad Guy Syndrome," casting Arabs and Muslims primarily as villains and perpetuating a monolithic image that lacks depth and nuance. Through the lens of Michel Foucault, we have seen how these representations not only reflect societal fears but also contribute to the "normalisation of surveillance and control" over marginalised communities. (Foucault 1966) The humour that arises from these portrayals, rather than challenging prejudices, often serves to entrench them further in the public consciousness.

Jack Shaheen's insights into media representation in works like *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People* and *The TV Arab* illuminate the broader implications of *Family Guy*'s characterisations. The reduction of Arab and Muslim identities to caricatures undermines the rich diversity within these communities, perpetuating a cycle of stigmatisation and misunderstanding. While satire has the potential to provoke critical thought, *Family Guy* frequently falls short by relying on outdated and simplistic portrayals. (Shaheen 2001)

In conclusion, *Family Guy*'s treatment of Arabs and Muslims highlights the ongoing challenges of media representation in a post-9/11 context. As the global landscape continues to evolve, the responsibilities of creators and producers to

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portray diverse cultures with accuracy and respect become increasingly vital. The analysis of this animated sitcom underscores the need for a more nuanced understanding of identity in media, one that transcends stereotypes nourished by Islamophobia and the fear of the “Other” and invites dialogue rather than division and inclusion rather than exclusion. Ultimately, recognising the power of media representations can pave the way for more equitable and informed portrayals of all cultural groups in contemporary TV storytelling.

10. List of Snapshots:

Snapshot 1: Jesus Ironically Saves Osama Bin Laden. Episode 12, Season 12

Snapshot 2: Bin Laden Al-Qaida Studio, Parodying the movie Zero Dark Thirty

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