5. To what extent can the set episode be regarded as postmodern?

- in modern texts we see more binary representations of gender, in a post-modern text we expect more fluid representations. NO
- hyperreality – simulacra YES
- however realist narrative N
- Individualisation – women able to have a choice YES NO
- Intertextuality YES
- still uses traditional structuralist theory – Todorov NO
- but also flexi-narrative YES

The set text can be regarded as postmodern to some extent. Hyperreality is evident in the set episode, and is constructed through the media language in the 'disruption' scene when Joe buys Anita. Anita is constructed as a simulacra of a woman, appealing to Joe because she is beautiful, passive, nurturing, and can be sexual.

- 'perfect' woman represented as a commodity, something that can be bought with money – evidence of simulacra – when Joe decides to go and buy a synth – an 'upgrade' – something not real but is better than a real woman e.g. Anita vs Laura.
- "standard domestic model" – salesman
- soft passive voice – she follows all commands without question
- real woman being replaced by a synth – Laura replaced by Anita, Laura as a failure as a woman/mother/wife. Cross-cutting between Anita preparing to cook for the family "it's almost dinner time, what would you like?", and Laura arriving on the train and struggling to get home. – Laura is constructed as flawed, and Anita as managing to do everything the family needs.
- Binary opposition of Laura and Anita – through mise-en-scene construction e.g. Laura's hair as messy, Anita's as perfectly straight and in place, Laura's make up and skin as flawed and ageing, Anita's as flawless and doll like. Anita's costume as pristine, Laura as dishevelled.
- can return Anita after 30 days if not satisfied, "can we change her if she's not pretty?" – evidence that characters prefer the hyper real to the real.

Humans might also be considered to be postmodern because it uses intertextuality to create meaning, and so the active audience must decode these references to have a deeper understanding of the episode.

- it's a remake of Real Humans – unoriginal
- Hawkin family, name is close to Stephen Hawkins – suggesting science fiction genre conventions
- iRobot – opening scene – give textual analysis – pre-credit scene foreshadows the disruption, synths being sentient
- sci-fi genre reference e.g. robots becoming conscious.
- Stepford Wives – simulacra – women as servants, perfect women.

Humans might also be considered postmodern because of the narrative structures used. This is evidenced in the use of flexi-narrative which is more challenging for audiences to watch and make sense of.

- multi-stranded narrative – it is debatable which storyline is the primary narrative arc – in first episode it is unclear how those different stories might interweave in later episodes.
- rejects structuralism – unclear who the hero is, or how we are positioned – creates enigma as we wait to find out who emerges as the hero, if at all.
- also uses non-linear structure – flashback narrative device to disrupt traditional linear structure.
- However – it also follows Todorov's theory of equilibrium e.g. establishes equilibrium and disruption in the first episode, though no closure and foreshadowing of further disruption in future episodes. Lots of enigma, lots of questions we want answered.

Another reason Humans might not be considered postmodern is because of the representation of gender; in modern texts we see more binary representations of gender, in a post-modern text we expect more fluid representations:

- female synths as domesticated, objectified, passive.
- men as dominant – created the synths, selling the synths, buying the synth. – Van Zoonen representation theory.
- most ethnic minority characters are synths – black female synths seen in the brothel-Gilroy theory
- Individualism – Laura possesses this, but she is constructed as a failure and is replaced in her family. She has the agency to go out and have a career, but because she challenges stereotypes she is punished and viewed as failing her family.