

Representational View of the Simpsons.

The Simpson began as a short series of cartoons in the late eighties. It was in 1989, when the Fox Broadcasting Company employed Matt Groening, a cartoonist, to make the Simpsons into 13 half hour episodes that began its path to fame. No sooner had the show aired than the Simpsons became the highest rated show on Fox. However along with the high rating came huge criticism about the content of the show. The Simpsons seemed to satire the educational system, religious system, the American political system and all the American institutions that the American people believed strongly in. It seems to be one of the most controversial programs on TV today because of this.

The Simpsons consists of a family of seven. Homer and Marge as the parents, Bart, Lisa and Maggie as the children, a cat Snowball II and one dog Santa's Little Helper. The characters of the show were named after Matt's real family. The Simpsons are a stereotypical view of an American family and this is another thing that the show has been criticised for. They live in a small town called Springfield. There are many similarities between the Simpsons family and a traditional sitcom family, however they are far from being an ideal family.

The Simpsons have been called a 'dysfunctional' family, for not sticking to the familiar family traits that other sitcom families do, for example, the Cosby show or the Walton's. The show's executive producer, Mike Scully, said 'critics have blamed the Simpsons for being dysfunctional family but they forgot the part that they are still a family and a lot of other families don't survive marriages.' They have been called dysfunctional as the Simpsons are not always happy, they always seem to have money problems, Homer is a lazy father and Bart is always naughty. However to me the Simpsons show a more true-to-life family one that all people of any age can relate too. We all know that all children are not perfect or that not all families get on all the time but the Simpsons family sticks together whatever happens.

HOMER. J. SIMPSON.

Homer is one of the many characters in the show that is stereotyped. He is a stereotype of a typical male middle class, white, American man, as he has a beer belly, is not very bright and is always thinking of food. He is the father of the family, but has very little control over them. Homer works in a nuclear power plant as a safety inspector. His very rich boss, Mr. Burns, owns the plant that Homer works in. Mr. Burns does not think much of Homer, he thinks Homer is a 'stupid lay about' because he does no work. Homer hardly ever thinks before he acts, for example, he bought Lisa a pony because she said she did not love him anymore, but ended up giving it up as they could not afford it.

Compared with Ned Flanders, as a father, Homer is not the happiest of the kindest, but like Ned, Homer loves his family. Homer does not like Ned very much but Ned considers Homer as a friend. Ned is always happy and very religious; this is exaggerated a lot on the show. He is famous for saying 'howdy-doddlely'. Ned also outstages Homer, not on purpose, for example, in the episode called 'Simpsons Roosting on an Open Fire.' Homer puts up Christmas lights but they are not very good then Ned put his on and they are excellent. The Flanders role is to highlight the negative points of the Simpsons family life.

Each character has a particular characteristic for them, Homer's is that he only has two strands of hair and he loves his food, especially donuts, 'umm.....Donnuts'.

MARGE SIMPSON.

Marge is the mother of the family. She too is a stereotyped as a housewife. Marge does not get out much but does most of the running around for the family and has hardly any time for herself. Marge is the more dominant one of the marriage. She is a very kind, loving mother.

When you compare Marge with Mrs Lovejoy, the vicar's wife, Marge is not a gossip or as religious as Mrs. Lovejoy but is a considerate and sensitive lady. She loves all her children very much no matter what they do. For example, when Bart ruined Thanksgiving by setting Lisa's centrepiece on fire, Marge still forgave him afterwards. Marge keeps her family together, and although more tired and stressed out than usual sitcom mothers her role is actually quite similar.

Marge's main characteristics that all people associate with Marge is her tall, blue hair and she always says 'ummmm...'

BART SIMPSON.

Bart is the oldest son of the family and the most mischievous. Bart's character was created to be a typical naughty schoolboy. He is constantly getting into trouble and is always playing pranks on people, especially Moe. Bart always rings up Moe's Cabin asking to speak to someone, for example, 'Can I speak to Daily please? First initials, I.P.' then Moe says 'hey everyone listen I.P Daily.' and then everyone laughs at him.

If you compare Bart to Tod Flanders, his neighbour, Bart looks like the devil. Tod is exactly the opposite to Bart, he is extremely religious, happy, constantly singing hymns in his sleep and he never says anything bad to his parents or friends. Overall Tod seems to be the perfect child.

Bart's main characteristic that all people associate with his character is his sayings. For example, 'Eat my shorts!' or 'Don't have a cow man!' but his most famous one is 'hay rumba!' He is also well known for the comical lines he writes at the beginning of each episode, for example, 'I will not sell land in Florida.' And 'I will not teach others to fly.' As he writes this we know that these are all things he has done in school and has got into trouble for. This also further increases the show's satirisation of the educational system.

LISA SIMPSON.

Lisa is the most intelligent member of the family. She enjoys various sorts of activities to do in her spare time. One of which is to play the saxophone. She loves to play it even though Homer hates the noise it makes. Lisa also loves to read and write essays, she has written a number of competition essays and one of which won her and her family a free trip to Washington DC. As well as being an intelligent young girl, Lisa is an A grade student and she hates getting anything lower than an A. She also has a good sense of morals, for example, when Homer was stealing cable or as he put it getting 'free cable'. Lisa was totally against it because it was unethical.

Lisa's character is not stereotyped as much as other characters in the show, for example, Apu; he is a typical Indian character in the show. He owns a Quickie-mart with an Indian accent. This is a one-dimensional view of an Indian man. Lisa is an eight-year-old girl who has the mental mind of a person twice her age. Lisa has been told that 'sometimes she is too clever for her own good.' In some ways however Lisa plays the part of a typical sitcom daughter, well behaved, and more intelligent than her older brother.

MAGGIE SIMPSON.

Maggie is the baby of the family and loves them all very much. Even though Maggie is only one year old she has achieved so much. However in many ways she is a stereotypical view of a baby, always sucking on her dummy, and playing. However Maggie is one of the few clever Simpsons. She has learned how to spell her own name on an Etch-A-Sketch, she has wandered around town by herself, shot the richest man in Springfield, and has survived living with bears in the wilderness. However Maggie has still not said her first words. Her main characteristic is the noise she makes when she sucks her dummy, 'suck suck...suck suck....'

Even though the whole family are very different they all love each other a great deal, which is what gets them through all the difficulties they have come across. The end of each episode has the family resolving their problems and although they are criticised for being 'dysfunctional' I believe that they actually portray a more realistic family unit. A solid family that works through problems together is certainly not something to be criticised especially in this day and age.