

Free essay on us and them of television to have and to have not

[Media](#), [Television](#)



“ Us and Them” is a story written by the known American author David Sedaris. It begins with a family that moves. Sedaris’s family must move first from a place in the country in New York State and then to North Carolina. In North Carolina things are very much different because there it is possible to see that there are other people living next to them. This new change is what makes life different. In that difference Sedaris is able to do what he was not able to do before, compare himself to his neighbors. When it comes through the mother’s friend that there is a family that has not TV, it is clear then to David that this family is not as good as his family. This is interesting that he looks down on them for not having something that he has. Many today say that TV is bad because people spend too much time on it. So while Sedaris is looking down on the family, he should actually be looking up to them because they are better off than him. He looks down on them for what they do not have and does not see any good that could come of this. This is called ironic.

There is a family called Tomkey in the same neighborhood as Sedaris. As a boy he discovers that they do not have a TV. This makes him to get a great interest in this family. He cannot imagine life with no TV. He cannot imagine what they do all day. He decides to look into their windows to find out what it is that they do all day. Here we find evidence of Sedaris looking down upon the family. Pity in the English dictionary is defined as “ the feeling of sorrow and compassion caused by the suffering and misfortunes of others.” But Sedaris when he is a boy looking at the family. He says that he did not want to become friends with these children but instead just wanted to look down upon them, pity them, from a distance. He writes here, “ but friendship

would have taken away their mystery and interfered with the good feeling I got from pitying them" (Sedaris, 802). But the question here is whether or not he wants to pity them or feel better than them? Perhaps he just wants to see them because he has a TV and they do not. If he actually pities them based on definition of pity, he sees then that it means compassion. But as we shall see later with the candy, he has no compassion for them.

The Tomkeys do not have a TV, but they do have a boat. And it is clear that a boat costs more than a TV. So it is not as if the family of the Tomkeys is a poor family. The family does not believe in a television. In this way, it is not that they cannot have one, but that the father of the family, Mr. Tomkey, thinks it is bad to have a TV. Here he says that, "The only place that seemed truly different was owned by a man named Mr. Tomkey, who did not believe in television." He does not believe in it because he wants to keep his children from having fun? He does not believe in it because he thinks that it is a waste of time that will come to no good? Or perhaps he thinks that it is better for his family to do things like be inside of a boat. This is the most guessed reason that can be thought of as to why Mr. Tomkey denies his family the pleasure of having a television. Instead of kids all weekend being inside watching cartoons or other shows that mean nothing, they are out on a boat, getting fresh air and pleasant well-being of being surrounded by a lake. Irony again that the parents of Sedaris agree that television is bad and should not be for kids or family. They say that "I don't know that I believe in it, either" (Sedaris, 802). Here though is the more irony, that they continue to sit and watch it even though they maybe not believe in it. They are trapped by it because everyday they sit around and they watch it instead of

being with their family.

The Tomkey if one must choose which family to be in is the better family. It is because they have parents who take them to the lake and obviously care about their family enough to not use television as an excuse to be away from there. There is the fact that a room full of people watching TV is not really a room of people together. It is just a room of people next to each other who are all in their own little world that is being created by the television. Sedaris worries and wonder what these kids do not understand for not having television. But then one must know if Sedaris is any better. When he has the opportunity to show kindness, and prove himself really better, he is the one that is to be pitied. When he has the chance to share and make himself seem better by a value that is real like generosity, he fails. Here is the true color of the self of Sedaris as a kid. The Tomkey kids he only knows from the outside. Perhaps instead of being away from them, if had made the choice to make their friends, he would have real pity with compassion and want them to have candy. But he does not know this family or these kids. He only knows what they do not have. And he misses what they do have, which is a boat and a happy family life. As an adult, maybe it is that Sedaris understands this lesson and this is why he is writing this story so that people can learn from it and become better from it.

What we learn from this is that someone can look down on someone for something, but really they are not better. They are only better in their mind. Sedaris in the story thinks he is better because he has a TV and so those who do not have a TV do not know and are worse for it. But what we really see from this is that there are more things than TV. And having less of a TV,

might meaning that they have more of a life than those who are trapped by the TV every night.