

The simpsons and its influence in society essay

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American popular culture has a tremendous effect on everyday people. It is a fact that they get most of their information about the world through American films and television shows whether they want them or not. The popular television series, 'The Simpson's' can be seen as an example of an American popular culture that has radically affected not only America but the whole world.

It has brought a representation of the American family across the world, and with it, expressed important issues and matters that concern our society no matter where the show is watched. The Simpsons is a satire, but despite any good intentions many of the general public see it as "subversive and ultimately harmful to their own well being" (Eric Garrison, 2001). In 1992 President George Bush stated that: "The Simpsons is a bad influence on children." Some critics even think that the show should be taken off the air. One of the main issues that some of the public holds against the show is stereotyping and the way religion is handled, how other races and their beliefs are mistreated, no matter if it's a Hindu or Hispanic character. When criticizing the Simpson family many people turn to Bart the son, as the greatest corrupter of the American familial ideal.

Bart does not obey his parents do his homework or clean his room. His motto "underachiever and proud of it" made its way out of the mouths and onto the shirts of kids across the. Parents and school teachers nationwide have explained that Bart's disrespectful thoughts and actions are hardly what American children should use as a model. The question of family values within The Simpson's has also been under criticism.

In the first few years Homer Simpson was the well to do dad and admirable as well, but soon Homer is transformed from a hard working Dad, to a sloppy lazy Dad who barely cares about his son Bart. “ Gone is that Dad that works hard to pay for the family’s debts, replacing him is Parody Homer. ” (Eric Garrison, 2001) In one episode a power plant worker is disgusted at how lazy Homer is, near the end of the episode he carelessly says to Homer, “ you are what’s wrong with America Simpson”. Where is the message of family that has once been in the show? Instead we just find a parody of the average American worker. Critics argue that “ The Simpson’s is scrutinizing all of society, but underneath it all there is no family values or ethics of those values being used today”(Eric Garrison, 2001).

But, Isn’t that what the show is aimed to do, show what’s wrong in America? Put a mirror in front of the American family to make them realize of the truth about their society? Although The Simpson’s has been greatly criticized, there are also those who have praised the show as influential. Within the very first season the show began to point fun at many American issues and provided their own ethical solutions to many moral dilemmas. And behind all the satire is the real core of the show, family. The show itself says that “ religion, politics, whatever, shouldn’t be what it’s all about; it should basically be about being a good person and taking care of your family. (Eric Garrison, 2001) The creator of the show Matt Groening once said that “ There’s a sort of an unspoken rule that we have on the show, which is we can do humor as dark as we want to, but the show itself is a celebration of the family” (2001) The Simpson’s can be seen as a way of bringing families together, I remember back in the day when all my friends and I congregated

religiously to watch the Simpsons, and although it was in Italy, we could all relate to the satire and humor of the show, and such congregation might just be the image the show reflects at its opening sequence of the Simpsons family gathering together in front of the TV. The Simpson's ability to captivate many families across the world is because " The Simpson's presents a family unit that is all at once unique, attainable and loveable.

" (Eliezer Van Allen, 2000). James L. Brooks said that " The Simpson's represents the normal American family in all its beauty and horror" (2000). Dr Will Miller explains that viewers see a cracked mirror image of our own families in The Simpson's. People watch the family functioning and can identify with many of their daily troubles while simultaneously laughing at them. The Simpson family is not perfect and makes no pretense at being perfect.

" Despite their two dimensional, four fingered existences; they present a hopeful American family" (2000) a cracked mirror image of our own imperfect but loveable selves. Week after Week the viewer's attitudes about religion, education, politics and sexuality are challenged. Though The Simpson's is a cartoon the sophisticated satire says quite a bit about American life, " especially on the issues of gender, feminism, sexuality, religion, and family values" says Matthew Henry professor at Richland College (1998).

The success of the Simpson's shows that the manner in which real life in pictures and humor is created has evoked interest all over the world and in people of all ages. Perhaps the most important reason for the success is that

The Simpson's deals with situations and matters in the lives of ordinary people in an ordinary town. It may be that the Simpson's criticism of American ways of living and the frequent making fun of the American Dream offers Americans an unthreatening possibility to take a look at them in the mirror and to laugh at themselves. The Simpsons is a positive influence for anyone with the wit to pick up the deeper meanings hiding behind the sarcasm. There is no doubt that Homer Simpson will be a loveable, misunderstanding, middle-aged underachiever until the day he dies, and until then the world will be listening to what he has to say and learning from it.