

Lane Hanlon

Prof Horton

Final Project

14 December 2016

I knew I wanted to do a project dealing with gender in *The Simpsons*, but I wasn't sure how to go about it or what questions I wanted to answer in relation to it. It wasn't until I watched the season 20 episode, "Four Great Women and a Manicure" that I knew I wanted to concentrate on the way women are represented in this series. I wanted to see if there was an obvious difference in the way that women were portrayed in relation to the men as well as to what extent they were. I wanted to reach my hypothesis based on both a literary and "scientific" journey. I assumed that I would see

With that being said, I used the collective group work on all the seasons of *The Simpsons* to see if I would have enough information in the gender tag to complete my task. Once I established that I did, I then went through each season and hand picked an episode that represented the way that gender was presented in the large scope of the episode. This is based on the number rating system of each tag in our class spreadsheet. So I went through all the "3s" and picked episodes that focused exclusively on gender issues and not on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, etc. By gender issues I am referring to that of "societal norms" one expects out of a gender- and in this case focusing singularly on women.

Once I had all my preliminary information set out, I then began to look at outside sources. I wanted to see if the episodes in the seasons align with certain important national issues dealing with women's rights, feminism, and women's legal history. I did find some congruencies with these dates, but there were also some that were not cohesive. In some cases the episodes that matched the dates took place up to 10 years after the event. I would say I was surprised at the amount that "women's roles" were made fun of throughout the series, but honestly, I'm not. From the very first episode I ever watched (season 6) I noticed a blatant attack on women's issues and feminism. I predicted it would get better throughout the series, but it stayed relatively the same, if not worse in some cases. I then continued to look at outside sources because I was looking for a formula or spreadsheet that was created for all of the scripts of the episodes. I wanted to prove my theory of lack of female representation in the show by the use of dialogue from each character. I came across a website that presented this information, but didn't have a way to access the initial information. So I used their graphs and sourced them because I could generate the information to create them myself.

For the presentation of my information, I set up a "timemap" website, because I felt it was the easiest way for me to present my thoughts in an easy-to-read manner. I also created an interactive timeline and an interactive map through two different websites. However, my lack of any type technological skills kept me from being able to use them. I had completed everything for them, but they weren't up to the standard I had created in my head, so it was better to just exempt them from the presentation. I then began to assemble all of my information onto my

website. I wanted to separate the graphs, my analytical information, and my analysis of a single episode so that they were all easy to follow. I used images from each episode to help the visualization of the gender roles present in the show.

I could have concluded, even without this study, and just by watching the three seasons I was assigned, that *The Simpsons* plays at the gender stereotypes quite a bit. One would think that they did so in order to point out wrongdoings in society, but it's not that at all. In most cases they are genuinely making funny of certain stereotypes by generalizing the group and then exaggerating their activities. For example, the "college feminist," was a stereotype that one episode portrayed. By the end of the episode, there were hundreds of feminists parked out in the Simpson's front yard protesting Homer. They were poking fun at feminists and their stereotype of needing to "nitpick" and complain about every thing. Doing this presentation definitely led to some insightful information into the way the show views female ideologies (and also male) and allowed me to view this information in a media that is a very large part of popular culture.