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Micro Macro Reading

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<div align="center">Process</div>

The beginning of my accompanying project was a difficult task, as I had no idea where to initially begin or even what to do. Not being a huge fan of the show, I thought about what I wanted to focus on for my final project, and realized that I was interested in the what I knew about the show without ever watching an episode – people are very fixated with the idea that there are various episodes throughout all 28 seasons of *The Simpsons* that have supposedly predicted the future. By that, people mean that there are events, occurrences, and plot lines within episodes that are later seen in the real world.

After choosing my topic, I had to figure out how these episodes are able to make people believe that they are literally "predicting the future." I decided to look into satire, the use of humor, irony, or exaggeration to expose people's vices, usually in the context of topical issues. From here, I wanted to research what satire is, why satire works so well for *The Simpsons*, and how satire functions in each episode that supposedly "predicts the future."

To start my research, I first had to find episodes that are believed to have predicted the future. I read many list-articles and narrowed it down to 30 conclusive episodes that all agreed on predicting events, ranging from Miley Cyrus's music video to the invention of a FaceTime to the presidency of Donald Trump. From there, I looked at the tags that we generated as a class, but did not find any interesting information – there was not one tag that stood out to be a

signifier of a prediction. From there, I looked into what event each episode predicted and how it occurred in real life, and then categorized the episodes into the way each predicted the future, labeling them as either a current event, celebrity, or technology, to see if there was one main way that the writers used satire. Events were the main way (13 episodes); technology had 9 episodes and celebrity had 8 episodes. Current event predictions were ones that were events that actually happened, such as 9/11 or faulty voting machines. Technology involved products being shown in episodes that were later actually created, such as the baby translator and smart watches. Celebrities were events that involved a celebrity, such as the death of Prince and the Beatles responding to old fan mail. I then created a simple pie chart, describing the breakdown of prediction types.

At this point, I then created a timeline that showed every episode. The beginning showed that the air date of each episode and I had each event last until the event, occurrence, or product actually appeared or happened in the real world. By creating this timeline, I learned that the episodes were generally about 10-20 years prior (generally around 14 years) to the actual happening, which I thought was very surprising. Because of this, I argued that the *Simpsons'* creators have a good grasp on society and satire, so much so that they are able to target the way society currently works and can use humor and irony to comment on how society will progress.

To complete my project, I created a Prezi visualization that answers what satire is, why satire functions so well in *The Simpsons*, and then went through each episode and described what happens, how it "predicted" the future and the use of satire that made the "prediction" possible. I also included my graph and timeline.

Based off of my findings, I was not surprised to see how satire functioned in each episode, based off of what the so-called predictions were. However, I thought it was interesting to see that a few episodes were just coincidences, but that viewers are all convinced that they are literally predictions into the future. There was nothing necessarily shocking that I found out, I did not really expect there to only be one category of ways for the writers to comment on society (in terms of things like technology or celebrities) that would lead viewers to think that the episodes predict the future.

In conclusion, I found that the writers and creators of *The Simpsons* have a good grasp on how to properly use satire in an effective way to address issues and beliefs that society has, in a way that they are able to assume how society will progress, as they have been able to "predict things" twenty years into the future. They also clearly have a good read on the way society functions as a whole. By doing so, these writers have been able to create an influential sitcom that is obviously very successful, as it is currently the longest running sitcom. I think that a major point to take away from this project is that literary techniques truly do work if they are used correctly. Without the proper and astounding use of satire throughout the 28 season span of *The Simpsons*, there is no way that that viewers would truly believe that these episodes are capable of predicting the future; without satire, each "prediction" would be a major coincidence.