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- a. The Simpsons is the brainchild of Matt Groening. The creator of the 'Life in Hell' series, Groening was asked by James L. Brooks to design a sixty second animation to be aired on the Tracey Ullman Show in 1987. Groening originally intended to use his 'Life in Hell' character, however at the last minute created a cartoon family based upon his own family. The short animation was a success, resulting in half-hour cartoons airing on Fox television in 1989. The Simpsons has been a "popular and critical favourite" ever since. (Steiger, 1999)
- b. Heroes have had a significant impact upon the consumption of The Simpsons. Characters Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa and Maggie form a stereotypical dysfunctional American family "making it extraordinarily easy to relate" (Olson, 2000). The persona of Bart was initially intended to be the focus of the animated series, a rebellious young boy who appealed to all age groups. However, Groening soon found that Homer was actually the most popular character and the entire Simpsons' family became the basis for one of the most successful television programs ever created. Each of Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa and Maggie have a very distinct personality and often flaws that are commonplace amongst the audience. Through the role of heroes in The Simpsons, a diverse audience of "not only children and teenagers, but adults well beyond their Mickey Mouse and Looney Tunes years" (Steiger, 1999) is attracted to the popular culture. As such it is evident that heroes in The Simpsons have resulted in increased consumption.