Race Relations in Two Episodes of *South Park* and *The Simpsons*

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Abstract
This article focuses on the popular and controversial adult-oriented American cartoons, South Park *and* The Simpsons*, and the manner in which these cartoons comment on the issue of race and ethnicity; specifically, the issue of the relationship between whites and blacks.*

Keywords
Race, African-Americans, cartoons, *South Park*, *The Simpsons*

Due to its ethnic diversity, the United States has gradually earned several sobriquets such as *melting pot*, a *salad bowl* or a *mosaic*. Undoubtedly, millions of newcomers have had an impact on American culture since they come from different cultural backgrounds and have brought their habits and customs to the United States. As Christopher Bigsby claims: "America can scarcely be understood unless it is acknowledged that its motor has been fueled by immigration."[1]

On the other hand, immigrants have also been seen as a threat to the dominant American culture, which "grew out of the nation's early history and was English-speaking, Western European, Protestant and middle-class in character."[2] This attitude is illustrated by the results of a Gallup poll taken in 2010 in which 45 percent of respondents favored a reduced level of immigration.[3]

Although African-Americans cannot be regarded as typical immigrants, they had to assimilate into American society as did any other immigrant group. *The American Ways: An Introduction to American Culture* contains comments on this process: "Assimilation in the United States has been much more successful for white ethnic groups than for nonwhite ethnic groups. Of the nonwhite ethnic groups, Americans of African descent have had the greatest difficulty in becoming assimilated into a larger culture."[4] This problem is conditioned by the position in society which African-Americans were given when they were brought to the United States as slaves; therefore discrimination against them seems to be rooted very deep in the cultural psyche.

This notion is supported by the results of a Gallup poll taken in 2008 which found out that 56 percent of Americans admit that racism against blacks is widespread in the United States.[5] Although the situation seems to become better and better every year, the position of African-Americans in society and the relationship between whites and blacks are still far from being ideal.

1 Christopher Bigsby, "Introduction: What, then, is the American?" in *The Cambridge Companion to Modern American Culture*, ed. Christopher Bigsby (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 15.

2 J. Crandall et al., *The American Ways: an Introduction to American Culture* (White Plains, NY: Prentice Hall Regents, 1997), 148.

3 "Immigration." In *Gallup* [online]. c2011 [accessed 2011-01-09]. Available at: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/1660/immigration.aspx>.

4 Crandall et al., *The American Ways*, 151.

5 Jeffrey Jones, "Majority of Americans Say Racism Against Blacks Widespread," in *Gallup* online, August 4, 2008 [accessed 2011-01-09]. Available at: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/109258/majority-americans-say-racism-against-blackswidespread.aspx>.

The issue of race and ethnicity is discussed not only among politicians and the public; it is also examined in the media and often portrayed in popular American film and television comedy, including adult-oriented cartoons. This article compares and contrasts different methods and techniques which are used to depict the relationship between whites and blacks in the two episodes of *South Park* and *The Simpsons.* Both of these series have integrated issues of race and ethnicity into their storylines.

African-Americans in "Here Comes The Neighborhood"

The first episode of *South Park* to be considered is "Here Comes the Neighborhood," which revolves around the issue of the relationship between blacks and whites and originally aired in 2001.[6] Token Williams, who comes from a very wealthy family, is teased for being rich by his friends. Therefore, he decides to invite wealthy people to South Park in order to have someone to relate to. His plan succeeds and a lot of wealthy people move into the neighboorhood. The residents of South Park do not appreciate the state of affairs and try to banish the newcomers from their town. Since Token, his family and all the wealthy people who moved to South Park are African-Americans, the episode naturally centers on the theme of race relations. A detailed analysis of the episode reveals many allusions to the historical development of the position of African-Americans in American society.

As the episode proceeds, another rich black family moves to South Park and the townspeople watch from across the street.

> MR. GARRISON: That's the fifth family of them that's moved here. Seems like all of a sudden, South Park is being overrun by those types.
> GERALD: Hey! W-what are you saying? What "types"?
> MR. GARRISON: You know, those types! Rich people!
> JIMBO: Oh. I don't take kindly to rich folk. I remember back in the day, rich folk weren't allowed in South Park! Now they're movin' here in droves!
> SKEETER: They're gonna be sending their kids to our schools, and mixin' them with our pure, non-rich kids!
> MR. GARRISON: Oh, yeah, and it won't be long before they drove all of us poor underachieving people out of town with inflated real-estate costs!
> SKEETER: Damn, I hate those stupid richers!
> MR. GARRISON: Yeah. [calls out] Hey, rich guy! Hey, cash-chucker! Yeah, I'm talkin' to you, richer! What's in the huge box, richer?! Your checkbook?[7]

The scene contains numerous references to race relations. Firstly, the townspeople disagree with rich black families moving into their poor white town before it actually happens. This aversion represents the rigidity of traditional residential settings, which still divide urban areas into black and white sections. Crandall describes these settings: "Although segregation and discrimination are against the law, residential patterns create largely segregated neighborhoods in many urban areas."[8] Secondly, Jimbo's rejoinder, "I remember back in the day, rich folk weren't allow in South Park" hints at the period of American history in which black people were not welcome in certain towns. For

6 "Here Comes The Neighborhood." Production Number 512.

7 *South Park*, 512, 9:26-10:13.

8 Crandall et al., *The American Ways*, 155.

instance, Bart Landry mentions a number of northern states, including Pennsylvania, Ohio and Illinois, which passed laws to prevent migration of free blacks into their states after the abolition of slavery.[9] The third reference is when Skeeter discontentedly comments on possibility of mixing poor and rich children in one school; he, in fact, addresses the issue of racially segregated education, which was in reality practiced until the mid-1960s. Godfrey Hodgson elaborates:

> Both Northern and Southern cities were racially segregated in residential terms and this residential segregation was reflected in schools. Efforts to change this by such court--approved devices as busing were bitterly resented as white-working families felt they were being asked to shoulder an unfair share of the burden of racial transformation.[10]

In addition, according to John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss, the tendency toward segregation increased as white parents kept children away from schools open to all in an effort to force authorities to set aside separate facilities for blacks.[11] Last but not least, Lindsay Coleman claims that the epithets Mr. Garrison invents to address his new neighbors, such as "richer" and "cash-chucker," are apparent substitutes for "nigger" and "spear-chucker."[12] The comments made by the townspeople subtly imply that the hostility toward newcomers is based on race and ethnicity rather than on envy of material wealth. Nonetheless, neither the black nor the white residents of South Park question the nature of these comments, considering them to be based on an aversion toward wealthy people and their property.

Another allusion to race relations is made when three rich men come to the local pub and order a beer. Everyone in the pub glares at them and they are refused to be served. The proprietor of the pub explains to them why they are not welcome: "Maybe you didn't see the sign out front. This bar is for people livin' below their means only!"[13] Although the rich men are upset about the way they are being treated, in the end, they leave the facility. A similar allusion to racial segregation is made when a rich family sits in the back of a crowded bus. They meet with hostility from other passengers and they are told to change their seats. One angry passenger explains: "If you're going to ride the bus in South Park, you're gonna have to sit in the front, that's where the first-class seating is!"[14] The family does not argue with the passengers and sit in the front of the bus.

These two scenes satirize the concept of "separate but equal" policy maintained by the United States till 1964. As Werner Sollors summarizes, this concept meant an exclusion of former slaves and their descendants from ordinary citizens' rights. Racial separation applied to all public facilities such as schools, parks, hospitals, public transportation, restrooms, restaurants and drinking fountains. It forced blacks to inhabit

9 Bart Landry, "The Enduring Dilemma of Race in America," in *America at Century's End,* ed. Wolfe (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), 202.

10 Godfrey Hodgson, "The American Century," in *The Cambridge Companion to Modern American Culture,* ed. Christopher Bigsby (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 41.

11 John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss, Jr. *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), 407-408.

12 Lindsay Coleman, "Shopping At J-Mart With The Williams: Race, Ethnicity And Belonging in *South Park,*" in *Taking* South Park *Seriously*, ed. Jeffrey Weinstock (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008), 137.

13 *South Park*, 512, 11:29-11:38.

14 *South Park*, 512, 13:48-13:54.

a separate, inferior and unequal world.[15] The afore mentioned scenes are ironically satiric, since the public facilities for rich people of South Park are not inferior to those for regular poor townspeople. In fact, the wealthy black people are forced to use better and more luxurious public facilities. For example, the three rich men are sent to have a drink in the new and expensive *Wolfgang Puck's* pub; and the rich family on the bus has to sit in "first-class" at the front of the bus. The wealthy people feel frustrated and discriminated against because they are forced to inhabit a separate world, although this world cannot be described as inferior.

The townspeople resolve to banish rich newcomers from South Park once and for all. They discuss possible solutions in the pub.

> MR. GARRISON: Those richers are getting snooty. We've got to show those richers they're not welcome here!
> NED: What do you mean?
> MR. GARRISON: How about tonight, we sneak up to one of their houses, and right on their lawn we'll set fire to a big lowercase "t"!
> JIMBO: Lowercase "t"?
> MR. GARRISON: Yeah, for "time to leave"! Jimbo, you take some folk and build a big wooden lowercase t! I'll take the rest and get some gas and torches ready![16]

Setting fire to a big lowercase "t", which resembles in shape a cross, is an apparent reference to burning a Latin cross, which according to *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* was a practice of the Ku Klux Klan to intimidate its targets.[17] Once again, the townspeople conveniently ignore this historical connection and genuinely believe they are setting fire to a big lowercase "t" for "time to leave." In a guest voice characterization by a real life celebrity (a common device of *The Simpsons*) African-American NBA player Kobe Bryant, who has moved to South Park with the other rich people, notices what is happening on his lawn. He goes out, looks at the burning lowercase "t" and says: "Tee, Tee. - Time to leave?"[18] By this statement he makes the situation even more ironic because the audience expects him to reveal or at least comprehend the symbolism.

Another allusion to the Ku Klux Klan is made at the end of the episode. Having united, the rich people march on the town's square to petition for the end of separate bars, bus seating and restaurants. The townspeople watch the march on TV and they wonder whether they could do anything else to banish the rich people from South Park.

> MR. GARRISON: What scares rich people more than anything?
> JIMBO: Ghosts?
> MR. GARRISON: Bingo! Rich people don't want to live in South Park if they think it's haunted! Everyone get some sheets from home! If we can't chase the richers out, we'll spook 'em out![19]

While the mayor is giving a speech and promising to abolish all segregation laws, the townspeople appear in the square dressed like ghosts and start to scare the rich people making ghost noises. The rich people are terrified and precipitously leave the town.

15 Werner Sollors, "African Americans Since 1900," in *The Cambridge Companion to Modern American Culture*, ed. Christopher Bigsby (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 154.

16 *South Park*, 512, 12:00-12:10.

17 Theodor Cross, "A Brief History of the Ku Klux Klan," *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, 14 (1996): 32.

18 *South Park*, 512, 12:18-12:25.

19 *South Park*, 512, 17:39-17:45.

The townspeople's ghost costume, i.e. a costume made of a white bed sheet with a hood, explicitly refers to the Ku Klux Klan robe.[20] However, neither the townspeople nor the rich people perceive the iconography associated with this white supremacist organization and, as Coleman claims, the appearance of townspeople in hoods has racial resonance only for viewers since the costumes are treated as theatrical props by the townspeople.[21] Unlike the townspeople and the rich newcomers, a viewer who is at least faintly familiar with American history is certainly able to identify the connection between white robes with hoods and the Ku Klux Klan.

This scene supports Matt Sienkiewicz and Nick Marx's suggestion that the creators of *South Park* commonly employ hyper-irony in the cartoon: "The show uses this sort of irony in order to turn the ostensibly racist jokes back on the viewer who by momentarily seeing the program as racist is forced to question his or her own assumptions and latent prejudices."[22] In other words, during the entire episode the tension between the new and the old residents of South Park is never articulated as racist and the reason for ostracizing African-Americans is supposed to be their wealth rather than their color, and, consequently, jealousy rather than racial prejudices. Nevertheless, the viewer perceives the tension as racist judging from frequent and obvious references to race segregation issues and the Ku Klux Klan iconography. This constant ignoring by the show's characters of obvious allusions to historical racism may confuse the viewer, who might start to think that it is only him or her who sees the racist allusions. Therefore, by means of hyper-irony, i.e. turning the jokes back on the viewer, the viewer might feel embarrassed for his or her racist assumptions and is thus forced to question his or her latent prejudices.

A crucial turning point comes in the very last moment of the episode when the men of South Park gather in front of a mansion which once belonged to a wealthy black family, and discuss their success in banishing the rich people from the town.

> GERALD: They were so scared, I'm sure they'll never be back!
> MR. GARRISON: That's great! And now we can sell all their homes, and become... millionaires!
> JIMBO: But then you had us do all that for nothing.' Don't you see: If you get rich sellin' these homes, then there will still be rich people in South Park.
> RANDY: Yeah. You'd become what you hate.
> MR. GARRISON: Well yeah, but at least I got rid of all those damn ni-…[23]

The episode ends without letting Mr. Garrison finish the word "nigger." Yet his intention is apparent. At this point, the racial tension of the entire episode is released and the viewer realizes that his or her racist suspicions were correct despite the fact that racism has never been mentioned overtly during the entire show. The whole concept of hyper-irony is questioned. That unfinished word at the end can be seen as a reversal of the entire tone of the episode, the notion that the episode undercuts the racial prejudices. Yet it cannot be claimed that the surprise ending makes the episode racist. Even though it does not undercut racial prejudices, it does draw attention to the fact that racism and hostility

20 See "Here Comes the Neighborhood", Production number 512. Available at: <http://www.southparkstudios.com/fans/downloads/images/season-5/page-20 >.

21 Coleman, "Shopping," 137.

22 Matt Sienkiewicz and Nick Marx, "Beyond a Cutout World: Ethnic Humor and Discursive Integration in *South Park*," *Journal of Film and Video* 61.2 (2009): 8.

23 *South Park*, 512, 21:10-21:37.

toward African-Americans is still present in American society. The results of the aforementioned Gallup Poll from the year 2008 and Coleman's words that racism still pervades American social life confirm this assumption.[24]

South Park creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone commented on this episode: "You almost create a world where you don't believe racism exists till the last line when you just ruin it."[25] Their commentary exactly describes the feelings the viewers have when watching this episode. Due to ignoring all racist allusions and not pointing out the irony, the viewers believe, although it seems ridiculous, that there is no racial tension between blacks and whites in South Park. The end of the episode destroys this misconception and confirms the hidden assumptions that the hostility was based on race and ethnicity after all. Racism and the tension between whites and blacks do exist in the town of South Park, and since *South Park* reflects and comments on the problems of American society, it can be concluded that by employing this fragile topic of race relations in the series, *South Park* once again uses satire to highlight a problem which might be seen as solved but which is, in fact, far from being so.

African-Americans In "The Color Yellow"

Unlike *South Park*, *The Simpsons* has addressed the issue of the relationship between blacks and whites only marginally. Since more African-Americans reside in the town of Springfield than in the town of South Park, it might be assumed that the involvement of African-American characters and reflecting on race relations would be even more frequent than in the case of *South Park.* Contrary to all expectations, the authors of *The Simpsons* do not extensively exploit the demographic composition of Springfield and seldom involve African-American characters, such as Carl Carlson, Dr. Hibbert, Bleeding Gums Murphy and Lou the cop, for the purpose of commenting on their "blackness." If these African-American characters are involved, their presence in episodes is scarcely focused on their African origin and never overtly comments on racial tension. Instead, their appearance in episodes is connected with the job they perform or the relationship they have with the Simpson family. For instance, Dr. Hibbert is almost exclusively depicted performing his job of a local doctor.[26] His character is used as a critique of health care rather than a commentary on race relations.[27]

The character of Carl Carlson, Homer's co-worker, is the most prominent black character that appears on the show on a regular basis, thus leaving the authors ample opportunity to introduce the topic of race relations. Nevertheless, his character is seldom used to remark upon the issue of race and ethnicity. On rare occasions, however, he is confronted with comments based on racial stereotypes. For instance, in the episode "The Children of a Lesser Clod," Carl is irritated by his colleagues, who hold high expectations of his performance in a game of basketball, "I'm so sick of everyone assuming I'm good at basketball because I'm African-American." Confirming the assumption, his performance is excellent and he plays basketball like a professional.

24 Coleman, "Shopping," 132.

25 Trey Parker and Matt Stone, "Audio Commentary" in *South Park: The Complete First Season: "Mr. Hankey, The Christmas Poo"* (Comedy Central, 2003).

26 "Bart the Daredevil." Production Number 7F06.

27 Homer's Triple Bypass." Production Number 9F09.

The only episode which directly comments on the issue of relationships between whites and blacks is the thirteenth show of the twenty-first season called "The Color Yellow."[28] Nonetheless this episode does not provide any complex reflection upon African--American and white relations. The episode introduces the Simpsons' ancestors, who helped a black slave escape to freedom.[29] Instead of reflecting on slavery, the episode focuses on the relationships among the members of the Simpsons family in the past. At the end of the episode, Lisa learns that some of her ancestors were of African origin.

> LISA: We're 1/64 black!
> BART: That's why I'm so cool!
> LISA: That's why my jazz is so smooth.
> HOMER: That's why I earn less than my white co-workers.
> LISA: Why did you try to keep us from finding this out?
> GRANDPA: It's hard to explain this to a young person … but people of my generation are … you know …
> LISA: Racist.
> GRANDPA: That's it![30]

Having employed various racial stereotypes, this final scene is the only one in the whole episode which contains allusions to the issue of race relations. Whereas Lisa's and Bart's utterances describe positive stereotypical judgments about African-Americans, Homer's explanation of his failure at work alludes to a more serious issue. His remark might be understood in two different ways.

Firstly, it comments on racial inequality as regards the amount of money earned, stating the widely-known statistic that blacks receive a lower average salary than whites. Crandall corroborates this, claiming that "The median income of a married black man working full time is 23 percent behind a married white man."[31] Similarly, the results of a Gallup poll show that 42 percent of respondents believe that racism is the major factor in the lower income levels of African Americans.[32]

Secondly, as it is generally known that Homer is an irresponsible and incompetent employee, the reason for his lower salary is not connected with the color of his skin. Homer's comment might be satirizing the blame of ethnic origin for failure in one's life. As stated in Crandall, 44 percent of blacks say their problems are due to white discrimination against them. Some claim that many African-Americans have given up on ever receiving equal treatment within a society dominated by whites. Unsurprisingly, only 21 percent of whites agree.[33] Similarly, according to Natalie Masuoka, racial minorities, including African-Americans, view race as the cause for many significant social problems, whereas whites do not adopt the same attitude.[34]

The latter explanation for his comment is based on evidence from numerous situations of the show, for instance when Homer's incompetency nearly caused a nuclear

28 "The Color Yellow." Production Number MABF06.

29 See *The Simpsons*, "The Color Yellow", MABF06, Available at: http://tvmedia.ign.com/tv/image/article/107/1070860/the-simpsons-color-yellow_1266861260.jpg .

30 *The Simpsons*, MABF06, 20:10-20:30.

31 Crandall et al., *The American Ways*, 154.

32 Jones, "Majority of Americans Say."

33 Crandall et al., *The American Ways*, 155.

34 Natalie Masuoka, "Political Attitudes and Ideologies of Multiracial Americans: The Implications of Mixed Race in the United States," *Political Research Quarterly*, 61.2 (2008): 255.

meltdown.[35] However, it is still disputatious as to what exactly is being satirized, since the meaning of Homer's comment might be understood differently by viewers from different cultural backgrounds. African-Americans might perceive the final scene differently from Caucasian Americans. Duncan Stuart Beard agrees, claiming that "Culturally divergent interpretations of the show are closely connected to diverse readings of the show and thus affect the potential efficacy of its satirical element."[36] Given this, it might be concluded that the ambiguity of Homer's comment results in attempting to address a broad audience since viewers will inevitably project their own attitudes into decoding the final scene.

The final dialogue between Lisa and Grandpa illustrates different perceptions of the status of African-Americans in American society. Whereas Grandpa, who embodies opinions of the older generation, feels humiliated by having an African-American slave as his ancestor, Lisa, representing the progressive and enlightened young generation, does not feel greatly disturbed by this fact. The direct confrontation of these characters demonstrates a gradual development in the perception of blacks by white majority. The character of Lisa and her open-minded opinions represent the positive changes in the perception of African-Americans and their status in American society, which was substantially changed in the 1960s. As Crandall comments, the civil right laws of the period eventually helped to reduce the amount of white prejudice toward black people and caused a significant degree of assimilation of blacks into the larger American culture.[37] Sollors describes this change as follows: "While the United States and the beginning of the twentieth century was an impressively active producer and exporter of racial stereotypes and ideas inspired by racial segregation, a century later US politicians typically criticize anything which seems racist."[38] By contrast, the character of Grandpa represents the rigid attitudes toward African-Americans which were and have been maintained by people who experienced racial segregation and disagreed with the change of social paradigm in the 1960s. As illustrated in Franklin and Moss, the improvement in the status of African-Americans was not accepted without vigorous opposition. Although there was a notable decline in discrimination, the period following the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was marked by strong resistance to its enforcement.[39] Similarly, Donna R. Gabaccia claims that even years after the passage of the Civil Rights Act, the color line was still "a national dilemma."[40] In addition, the results of a Gallup poll taken in 2007 showed that Americans aged 50 and older are less likely to approve of interracial marriages than those between 18 and 49 years of age.[41] And as interracial marriage is used by scholars as key indicator of racial and cultural assimilation,[42] it can be concluded that the older generation of Americans still feel noticeable differences between blacks and whites, and do not easily identify with the idea of racial equality.

35 "Homer Goes To College." Production Number 1F02.

36 Duncan Stuart Beard, "Local Satire With a Global Reach: Ethnic Stereotyping and Cross-Cultural Conflicts in *The Simpsons,*" in *Leaving Springfield:* The Simpsons *And The Possibility Of Oppositional Culture*, ed. John Alberti (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004), 277.

37 Crandall et al., *The American Ways*, 154.

38 Sollors, "African Americans Since 1900," 169.

39 Franklin and Moss, *From Slavery to Freedom*, 508.

40 Donna R. Gabaccia, *Immigration and American Diversity: A Social And Cultural History* (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 2002): 213.

41 Joseph Carroll, "Most Americans Approve Of Interracial Marriages," in *Gallup* [Online].

42 Masuoka, "Political Attitudes," 253.

To sum up, *The Simpsons* offers a rather limited commentary on the issue of the relationship between blacks and whites. Although African-American characters regularly appear on the show, they are not primarily used to either question racial stereotypes or satirize racial prejudices. Seldom does the cartoon dedicate episodes to commentaries on the status of African-Americans in American society. Exclusion of this topic might express the authors' attitudes that this issue has been resolved, or indicate the intent not to be controversial. One reason, the former explanation is not plausible is because various sources contradict it. For instance, Landry claims that whites still hold negative stereotypes about blacks.[43] Likewise, Crandall agrees that, "A gulf between the whites and blacks is still present."[44] Last but not least, the results of the Gallup poll cited above confirm Landry and Crandall's opinions. The other explanation – the effort of the show not to be controversial – seems more probable. Although *The Simpsons* satirizes faults of American society, the criticism, as suggested by Gray, is rarely if ever scathing.[45] Likewise, Henry suggests that although the show established itself as a biting satire on American society, its sardonic edge has waned in recent years.[46]

The lightweight episode "The Color Yellow" certainly confirms this notion. In his review, critic Robert Canning says: "I guess it is difficult to find the humor in slavery, even for *The Simpsons*."[47] As a result, instead of a caustic comment on slavery and assimilation of African-Americans into American society, the episode provides only brief insight into the issue and does not fully exploit the potential of its plot.

To conclude, *The Simpsons*, as compared with *South Park*, fail to effectively satirize the fragile issue of the relationship between whites and blacks. *The Simpsons* contains mild and light-hearted humor and does not aim to evoke indignation, whereas the voices of *South Park* offer severe criticism and the show is not afraid to explore this politically incorrect issue in greater depth. It would seem necessary to employ a bitter or darker tone in order to highlight and utilize the complex and controversial nature of racism for satiric purposes. But *The Simpsons* is (or at least has become) a light-hearted and sympathetic prime-time show not capable of such biting criticism. On the other hand, *South Park* is able to employ such a tone and very often openly comments on this issue. Therefore, viewers who do not miss the point, on this subject and others, can enjoy the humor on a deeper level and identify prejudices, confront their own attitudes and question false beliefs about racial and other forms of equality within American society. Such deep reflection is in the case of *The Simpsons* is not the goal.

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44 Crandall et al., *The American Ways*, 154.

45 Jonathan Gray, "Television Teaching: Parody, *The Simpsons,* and Media Literacy Education," *Critical Studies in Media Communication,* 22.3 (2005): 233.

46 Matthew Henry, "Looking For Amanda Hugginkiss: Gay Life On *The Simpsons*," in *Leaving Springfield:* The Simpsons *And The Possibility Of Oppositional Culture*, ed. John Alberti (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004), 225.

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