

Well, Stan, gay people are evil, evil right down to their cold black hearts which pump not blood like yours and mine but rather a thick vomitous oil that oozes through their rotten veins and clots in their pea-size brains, which becomes the cause of their Nazist patterns of violent behavior. . . . Now you go outside and practice football like a good little heterosexual.

Context is everything. Regular viewers of the show have become accustomed to Mr. Garrison's increasingly psychotic denials of his own homosexuality; there is a later episode in which he does come to terms with his own sexuality. In this episode, though, Big Gay Al performs a similar function as the John Waters character. Al is the voice of tolerance who teaches Stan to accept his dog's insistence on wearing a pink scarf. In *The Simpsons'* episode, everyone but Homer gets the lesson, whereas in the *South Park* episode, no one but Stan gets it. Homer's thick-headedness is comic, but Stan's inability to share his big gay lesson with his community lends a tragic hue to essentially the same message.

I would like to conclude with a discussion of a rather easy satiric target, which both shows tackle: the commercialization of Christmas. We can count on both to offer a satiric comment on this topic each year, just as we can count on "The Grinch who Stole Christmas." One of *The Simpsons'* best Christmas satires begins with Bart accidentally burning the family's tree along with all the presents. He lies and tells his parents he saw robbers taking their stuff. The whole town feels so bad for them they chip in and present the Simpsons with a bucket of cash, which they promptly squander. Once the townspeople learn that it was a scam, they clean out the Simpson house because, as Moe the bartender explains, "We just hated staying mad at you." All that's left in the house is a washcloth. Presumably *because* it's the only thing left, the entire family ruthlessly fight for its possession, as the episode concludes. What mighty contests rise from trivial things!

In "A Very Crappy Christmas," the town of South Park becomes economically depressed when the townspeople attempt to celebrate the holiday by sharing peace, love, and goodwill and shunning the holiday's commercial aspect. The boys must then find Mr. Hankey the Christmas