

## **I'm (Not) A Girl: Animating Experiences of Girlhood in *Bob's Burgers***

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### **Abstract**

Discourses of girlhood increasingly acknowledge its mutability, with the 'girl' as a complex image that cannot adequately be conceptualized by age or biology alone. Likewise, theories of animation often foreground its disruptive potential. Taking an interdisciplinary approach that encompasses girlhood studies, animation studies, and screen studies, this article analyses the representation of the two main girl characters, Tina and Louise Belcher, in the animated sitcom *Bob's Burgers* (2011–present). Taking this concept of mutability as its central focus, it argues that animation is an ideal medium for representing girlhood, given its disruptive potential and non-linear capacities, whereby characters are often frozen in time. With no commitment to aging its young female characters, *Bob's Burgers* is instead able to construct a landscape of girlhood that allows for endless reversal, contradiction and overlap in the experiences of Tina and Louise, whose existence as animations reveals girlhood as a liminal space in which girls can be one thing and the other – gullible and intelligent, vulnerable and strong, sexual and innocent – without negating their multifarious experiences.

### **Keywords**

adolescence

animation

*Bob's Burgers*

gender

girlhood

puberty

sitcom

Halfway through the first season of Fox's animated sitcom *Bob's Burgers* (2011–present), Tina Belcher (voiced by Dan Mintz), the family's eldest daughter, celebrates her thirteenth birthday ('Sheesh! Cab, Bob?'). While her parents struggle to afford the birthday party that she desires, for Tina the party is an important rite of passage. It will not only mark her officially becoming a teenager, but –she hopes – her first kiss with a boy. For Tina, these two moments constitute a more fundamental shift: that of *girl* to *woman*. It is a transition that this particular episode suggests is both irreversible and inevitable, only for that assumption to be overturned by *Bob's Burgers'* wider negotiation of girlhood and female adolescence, as this article will explore.

Theories of girlhood increasingly acknowledge the mutability of the notions of 'girl' as an individual and 'girlhood' as both a state of being and a space to enact gendered expectations of childhood and adolescence. The label 'girl' carries with it a variety of assumptions and expectations, and numerous theorists have highlighted the difficulty in defining what is meant by the term. Social constructions of girlhood are often limited by assumptions made on the grounds of race, class, sexuality, ability and nationality (Currie, Kelly and Pomerantz 2009; Brown 2011; Keller 2015), and thus it is important to recognize girlhood not as a straightforward designation based on age or biology, but as a cultural construction, absorbing and reflecting dominant discourses regarding childhood, adolescence, gender, sexuality, race, politics and identity (Currie, Kelly and Pomerantz 2009). As Christine Griffin argues, 'there is nothing essential about girlhood' (2004: 29); rather, it should be recognized as a site of production, negotiation and cultural-political construction. Since the 1990s (following the foundational work on girls and girlhood by Angela McRobbie [1991]), there has been an upsurge in work examining girlhood as a discursive site, where a girl is 'not simply something that someone *is* [...] [but] something that one is discursively

constituted *as*' (Eisenhauer 2004: 79, emphasis in original). Likewise, Marion Brown suggests that girlhood is a place where meaning is 'collectively produced and reproduced, always shifting, neither static nor linear' (2011: 109). It is this refusal of linearity that this article will explore, examining the ways in which girlhood is represented and constantly reproduced in the animated world of *Bob's Burgers*, where the animated state of its characters implies a static state that is belied by its continual telling and re-telling of narratives of girlhood.

As a medium, animation has the fundamental capacity for disruption (Wells 1998: 69). Jay Leyda, in discussing Sergei Eisenstein's affinity with the animated form, suggests that it was animation's 'rejection of once-and-forever allotted form' that appealed to the Russian filmmaker (Leyda 1986: 46). It is this inherent mutability – what Wells (1998: 22) considers 'the very condition of the animated film' – that offers the potential for disruptive, radical or non-linear representations. Though this capability is primarily utilized in a visual manner, as characters and images metamorphose and undergo changes of form, this mutability is also worth considering in a representational sense. Free of the constraints of live-action realism, the aging of actors (and thus characters), and the demands of absolute narrative logic, animation offers a space in which mutable states of being – in this case, the state of being a girl – can be explored without succumbing to a linear model of girlhood and adolescence. Liz Faber and Helen Walters suggest that animation occupies 'a space between film-making, art and graphic design' (2004: 6), and this concept of a 'space between' is equally productive when considering animation in relation to female adolescence and the spaces in between girlhood and womanhood, to which *Bob's Burgers* consistently returns.

The mutable nature of both girlhood and animation allows for a productive interdisciplinary intervention, bringing together aspects of animation studies and girlhood studies to demonstrate that the animated form is a productive method of illuminating the

complexities of girlhood on screen. In this sense, ‘mutability’ signifies a state of shift and change. Crucially, this is not change *on the way* to something else, but the state of changeability itself, with the implicit understanding that this change may occur in more than one direction, and may not be permanent. Just as an animated character may be flattened by a falling anvil, only to shake it off in the next frame, girlhood may too be characterized by being in a constant state of flux, reversal and change, which here the term ‘mutability’ attempts to encompass. It bears some relation to Renold and Ringrose’s use of ‘multiplicity’ and ‘malleability’ to characterize girls’ lived experiences (2008: 317–8), while foregrounding the unstable nature of girlhood and of animation, privileging the change and reversal inherent to an understanding of both.

The choice of *Bob’s Burgers* as an animated series through which to examine representations of girlhood is primarily based on the prominence of two young female characters at its centre. Though animation has been discussed as a site of female subjectivity and representations of girlhood in relation to, for example, children’s cartoons (Hains 2007) and Japanese manga (Gwynne 2013), American animated sitcoms, generally aimed at an adult audience, have been less willing to construct nuanced depictions of girlhood. Currently airing adult animated sitcoms, including *The Simpsons* (1989–present), *South Park* (1997–present), *Family Guy* (1999–present), *Rick and Morty* (2013–present) and *Big Mouth* (2017–present) all maintain a focus on their boy characters, with girls designated primarily as sisters or schoolmates, often there to be mocked, humiliated, or tolerated. Though Lisa Simpson has been at the centre of numerous episodes since *The Simpsons* began in 1989, and Summer Smith began to participate in more of her brother Morty’s adventures beginning with season two of *Rick and Morty*, these characters are often still marginalized or subject to limited characterization. *Big Mouth* has been somewhat more willing to address its girl characters and their experience of adolescence, although the focus remains primarily on its hormonally-

afflicted boys. Here, *Bob's Burgers* differs in its commitment to constructing Tina and Louise as complex representations of two very different young girls.

Keller et al. (2015: 529) explicitly call for scholarship that 'give[s] visibility to a variety of girlhoods', in a bid to draw attention to more nuanced understandings of representations of female adolescence, including girls who have traditionally been marginalized in considerations of film and media. Sarah Hentges suggests that amongst the most marginalized adolescents on screen are those who fall outside of being straight, white and middle class (2006: 13). Here, *Bob's Burgers* remains an interesting case study. The Belchers have been described as 'kind of' American by voice actor Kristen Schaal, complicating a presumed white, American identity; their ancestry has been described as French-Canadian by creator Loren Bouchard, who has also hinted at the family's possible southern European, Jewish ethnicity (Nguyen 2011). Neither are the Belchers comfortably middle class. Though Bob owns the family restaurant, numerous episodes focus on their financial difficulties as they struggle to keep the business, and the family, afloat. Louise's rejection of traditional femininity and romantic heterosexuality also hint at a potentially queer identity, much as her brother Gene (voiced by Eugene Mirman) also cultivates (Barnett 2017). As such, it is my contention that *Bob's Burgers* resists the marginalization of girl characters so often seen in adult animated sitcoms, and constructs images of girlhood beyond the strictly normative, opting instead for a complex, nuanced representation of girlhood that is worthy of further exploration.

*Bob's Burgers* was created by Bouchard, who previously co-created the animated series *Home Movies* (1999–2004), and developed by Bouchard and Jim Dauterive, who worked as writer and executive producer on *King of the Hill* (1997–2010). The series retains the archetypal family set-up established in *The Simpsons*, *King of the Hill*, *Family Guy* and *American Dad!* (2005–present). American animated sitcoms such as these most commonly

focus on the conventional image of the ‘American neurotic middle-class family’, though Dhaenens and van Bauwel point out that within this convention, there is space for resistance, subversion and destabilisation (2012: 126). Certainly, as noted above, *Bob’s Burgers* resists a straightforwardly ‘middle-class’ designation; furthermore, despite the conventional family set-up, like many animated sitcoms *Bob’s Burgers* articulates resistance through form. Here, I wish to focus primarily on Tina and her younger sister Louise (voiced by Schaal), and this article will discuss both characters in relation to constructions of girlhood, beginning with Tina, who, as noted above, becomes a teenager in *Bob’s Burgers*’ first season and has remained as such ever since.

Initially, as noted, this is constructed as a definitive turning point for Tina. At the beginning of ‘Sheesh! Cab, Bob?’, Tina’s mother Linda (voiced by John Roberts) reminds Bob (voiced by H. Jon Benjamin) of the importance of turning thirteen: ‘This is the year she becomes a woman’, she states, underlining the central conceit of the episode. The assumption that Tina is ‘becoming’ a woman, and so leaving girlhood behind, emerges again as Tina tells her classmates: ‘I’m having a birthday party this Saturday. It’s co-ed. Because I’m becoming a woman’. Later, acting as the DJ at the party, her brother Gene dedicates a song to ‘the birthday girl... pardon me. Birthday *woman*’.

In her extensive work on girls and girlhood, Catherine Driscoll suggests that girlhood is often constituted as ‘a stage to be passed through’ on the way to womanhood (2002: 2). Girlhood is often evoked as a pathway, one whose successful traversal ends in ‘being a woman’ (2002: 2). The underlying assumption of this episode reflects the dominant discourse about girlhood and female adolescence: that Tina’s thirteenth birthday will mark her transition to ‘woman’, a place that is temporally, emotionally and physically distinct from ‘girl’, and from which Tina cannot return. At the episode’s climax, after realising how hard her father has worked to earn the extra money for the party, Tina thanks him, adding: ‘I’m

sorry I didn't appreciate everything you've done for me. I didn't appreciate it as a girl, but I do appreciate it as a *woman*'.

For Driscoll, the dominant discourse of a linear movement from girlhood to womanhood obscures the mutable nature of adolescence and the experience of being a teenage girl. She states that: 'Feminine adolescence is not a transitional period but an assemblage of transitions, many of which are repeatable or reversible and all of which are culturally specific, subject to interpretation and regimes of power' (Driscoll 2002: 58). This repetition and reversibility is a crucial aspect of the way in which Tina and Louise are represented in *Bob's Burgers*. 'Sheesh! Cab, Bob?' reveals Tina as a character who, it seems, is perpetually navigating the space between 'girl' and 'woman'. Far from her thirteenth birthday marking a linear transition into being a woman, Tina oscillates between various points of female adolescence throughout the series. In constituting Tina as a teenager in this episode (and thus every episode thereafter), *Bob's Burgers* embarks on a prolonged negotiation of girlhood and its numerous transitions, variations and reversals. As an animated sitcom, not bound by the logic of aging, temporality or physical change, *Bob's Burgers* is able to subvert the assumption of linearity so prevalent in traditional discourses of girlhood, and instead open up a space in which the plurality of experiences of being a girl can be mediated. In doing so, there is a potential for resistance to dominant narratives of girlhood. Animation does not rely on naturalism (Tueth 2003: 135), and so can exaggerate and enact change without the requirement of permanence (Dhaenens and van Bauwel 2012: 126). This makes for an interesting method of representing girlhood, given the transience and reversibility of both.

### **Animation and the subversion of linearity**

The animated nature of *Bob's Burgers* is a central facet of its nuanced representation of girlhood and adolescence. As an animated sitcom, it subverts the notions of linearity that are often associated with girlhood (that is, the assumption that there lies between girlhood and womanhood a one-way path). The animation also raises issues regarding the bodily vulnerability of girls and questions surrounding the physical changes associated with female adolescence, which will be discussed in due course.

In terms of linearity, animated sitcoms – like other forms of animation, from cartoon strips to film – are able to subvert the aging process. In freezing their characters in time, animated sitcoms undermine the notion of girlhood as a transitory stage. Valerie Walkerdine, exploring the character of Annie in relation to representations of girlhood in popular culture, observes that Annie was created with the intention that she would never ‘grow up or older’, and thus exists as a perpetual child (1997: 86). Annie began life in Harold Gray’s *Little Orphan Annie* cartoon strip (1924-2010), where for 86 years she existed as an eleven-year-old girl. Despite the changing social, political and cultural contexts that Annie existed within, the character remained, throughout, the same innocent, likable orphan girl (Walkerdine 1997: 84). Bobbie Ann Mason discusses the same phenomenon in relation to Nancy Drew, the protagonist of Carolyn Keene’s series of young adult mystery novels. Though this relates to a novelized character, rather than an animated one, the principle of denying the process of growing up remains the same. For Mason, Nancy Drew is ‘an eternal girl’ who, by virtue of not aging during the course of the novels, is rooted in a ‘place outside space and time’ (1975: 75). Mason argues that the eternal girl presents a ‘false ideal for women’, as it sidesteps any of the issues associated with the negotiation of girlhood; rather, Nancy Drew is permitted to exist as ‘an inspiring symbol of freedom’ at the expense of exploring the complications of female adolescence (1975: 75). This is the inherent danger of anchoring a character to a specific age. Other popular fictional series aimed at young female readers, such as Ann M.

Martin's *The Babysitters Club* (1986-2000), utilize a similar tactic in keeping their characters the same age, despite multiple school year cycles. Arguably, such characters present a false image of girlhood as a space of stability, when in reality it may be anything but.

However, I would argue that *Bob's Burgers* does not avoid aging its young characters for the sake of stability, but rather the opposite. Girlhood is no longer a marker on a path to womanhood, or a static collection of expectations about female children. Rather, it is revealed as a messy, contradictory space in its own right; a space that must allow for the negotiation of childhood, sexuality, puberty and existing gender expectations, without the assumption of a static identity that can neatly be labelled 'girl'. Through Tina, Louise, their classmates, and even their brother, girlhood becomes a complex and unstable site.<sup>1</sup>

Renold and Ringrose's discussion of rupture and resistance in relation to girlhood (2008) is a useful lens through which to consider this instability. They suggest that while girls may engage in 'sustained resistance' of gendered expectations, they may be more likely to enact 'moments' of rupture which, though brief, represent a challenge to heterosexist, gendered constructions of girlhood (2008: 319) and as such may disrupt the notion of girlhood as a linear, contained state of being. On the subject of female adolescence specifically – that period of girlhood generally associated biologically with puberty and culturally with the space between childhood and adulthood – Driscoll argues that rather than seeing adolescence as transitional, it would be more usefully conceptualized as 'a contingent and in some senses reversible movement' (2002: 198). To view adolescence as a transitional state acknowledges its liminality, but also risks framing adolescence as a linear process that

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<sup>1</sup> Gene has been known to refer to himself as a girl on a number of occasions, and sometimes dresses in girls' clothes. His pursuits – music, fashion, cheerleading and acting – retain a performative aspect that further lends itself to this feminized characterisation.

must be traversed and eventually completed. Narratives of adolescence that have as their goal the achievement of adulthood, and the social expectation of stability associated with it, risk losing sight of its 'reversible' nature, whereby childhood and adulthood are continually negotiated in a liminal space that reveals overlaps, contradictions and slippage between the two, recalling those 'ruptures' discussed by Renold and Ringrose. This suggestion of reversal and ambiguity finds expression in animated representations of girlhood, which offer potentially endless opportunities to explore a character's experience of a particular life stage. In animated series, characters' ages and appearances remain static, often for decades; Lisa Simpson, for example, has been eight years old since 1989. In *Bob's Burgers*, Tina's thirteenth birthday is succeeded by numerous Halloweens, Thanksgivings and Christmases, but her fourteenth birthday never occurs, nor is it likely to, no matter how long the series may run.

As a result, animated sitcoms offer the potential for a prolonged exploration of childhood and adolescence, endlessly repeated and revisited. Rather than using the characters' static ages to avoid an exploration of girlhood, *Bob's Burgers* opens up the possibility that girlhood can at once encompass childishness and maturity, anxiety and assuredness, and reliance and independence. Furthermore, it does not insist on rendering girlhood as a one-way progression of time and development, whether physical or emotional.

Generally, animated sitcoms have cleaved to traditional gender roles, particularly in terms of their female characters. Chase Wesley Raymond's (2013) work on gender in animated sitcoms highlights the ways in which the mother's role, in particular, is delineated along traditionally gendered lines. Most often, the mother's interactions take place within the home, or else at outside locations that reinforce her maternal role; for example, the children's school, or the grocery store. Linda largely conforms to this pattern, albeit with the home often substituted for the family restaurant beneath. Equally, as Raymond observes, any activity

taken up by the mother outside of the domestic realm is curtailed by the end of an episode (2013: 202), and *Bob's Burgers* consistently sees Linda returned to her gendered position as wife and mother within the family, no matter how she may have temporarily broken out of these prescribed roles. For example, when Linda does take a job outside of the restaurant, having complained that Bob does not pay her, she finds herself dissatisfied with life away from her family as a grocery store supervisor, and returns home by the episode's conclusion ('Lindapendent Woman'). Though Linda is constructed as a multi-faceted character – theatrical, competitive and somewhat eccentric – she largely conforms to the gendered expectations of the wife and mother in animated television sitcoms, following the long-established pattern evident in the show's predecessors. Though there are exceptions, Linda's storylines often take place within the confines of the restaurant: for example, her speed-dating venture ('My Fuzzy Valentine'), or her decision to turn the family home into a bed and breakfast ('Bed and Breakfast'). When she does venture beyond the restaurant, the episode usually focuses on her attempts to return, such as when she takes a disastrous flying lesson with a lecherous instructor ('Seaplane!'), or when she becomes lost after locking her keys and wallet in her car ('Eat, Spray, Linda'). As an adult woman, Linda is limited by assumptions of fixity associated with her status as Bob's wife and their children's mother: Linda *is* these things, and transgression beyond these boundaries can only be temporary.

This temporariness differs from that of her daughters. While Linda is returned, each episode, to her primary roles, Tina and Louise have no concrete state to which they can be returned. Their adventures, obsessions and interactions are not negated, but rather added to their experience of girlhood, fostering the idea of girlhood as multi-faceted, where the reversibility discussed above should be viewed as allowing for complexity rather than invalidation. As such, both characters offer more scope for a subversion of femininity and the exploration of girlhood as a construction, albeit in different ways. As the two dominant

representations of girlhood in *Bob's Burgers*, Tina and Louise offer two very different images of girlhood and of femininity. Although *Bob's Burgers* does maintain some sense of time passing, with characters making reference to events that have occurred in previous episodes, this does not extend to the aging of the characters. The freezing of Tina at the age of thirteen allows for a protracted reflection on teenage girlhood and the state of female adolescence; equally, Louise's character explores some of the complexities of pre-pubescent girlhood and the negotiation – and potential rejection – of traditional femininity.

### **'I'm a smart, strong, sensual woman': Tina's teenage girlhood**

Tina's character began life as a boy named Daniel, who appears in the un-broadcast pilot episode of *Bob's Burgers*. Daniel Belcher is recognizable as the prototype of Tina. He possesses the same dark-rimmed glasses and blue clothing, and his dialogue is unchanged. However, in an interview with NPR, Bouchard speaks about the decision to change the character's sex based on the feeling that Daniel did not stand out as a character against the other Belchers (NPR 2016). In the short term, the creation of Tina satisfied the desire of the network to have a 'differentiated' oldest sibling. In the long term, Tina emerges as a complex character embodying many of the contradictions and anxieties seemingly specific to being a teenage girl, which makes it all the more notable that she began life as a teenage boy.

Tina's girlhood is variously a site of anxiety, desire, curiosity and despair. Driscoll argues that 'feminine adolescence is performed in transitional roles – including daughter, virgin, bride, model, girlfriend, schoolgirl, shopper, dieter, and so on – that do not necessarily lead to the mature concretization of Woman' (2002: 57). This can be seen in the construction of Tina's character, as throughout the series, she takes on a variety of roles, both across whole seasons and within individual episodes. She is a dutiful daughter, the most willing to do as she is told by her parents and the most unwilling to break the rules. She is the

conformist older sibling, who nevertheless becomes involved the vast majority of Gene and Louise's schemes and pranks. She is a schoolgirl who is desperate to be accepted by the popular girls in her class and, to this end, gets 'drunk' on margarita mix ('Bad Tina') and pretends to have a ghost boyfriend who lives in a shoebox ('Tina and the Real Ghost'). Yet, at other moments, she is confident enough to tell a boy he is a bad kisser ('The Land Ship'), and to reject the messages she is sold by romance novels ('The Belchies'). Tina is a girl who likes to play with toy horses, and has a bedroom covered in horse-themed posters, and yet in this same bedroom she devotes hours to writing erotic fan fiction. Tina's character is free to be placed in a number of these roles without ever being committed to womanhood; for Tina, 'girl' and indeed 'woman' remain un-concrete.

This oscillation between various roles allows for a negotiation of a number of traits traditionally associated with cultural constructions of girlhood. Mendes et al. suggest that '[i]mplicitly, girls are constructed as vulnerable, gullible, and in danger, and their possible autonomy, strength, and resilience is denied, as are questions of power and identity' (2009: 112). Tina is constructed within this framework, and yet emerges as a resilient, autonomous character on numerous occasions, breaking out of the potential confines of the vulnerable teen girl model. As such, her character once again acknowledges the discursive restrictions of girlhood, and endeavours to circumvent these boundaries.

On the one hand, Tina's gullibility is particularly emphasized. She is often slow to understand the jokes and asides of her family and classmates, and is prone to take them literally. In 'Bob Fires The Kids', she becomes an unwitting drug mule for a couple of middle-aged hippies who used Tina's innocence to their advantage, employing her to distribute marijuana to the local community under the guise of delivering blueberries. In 'Tina-Rannosaurus Wrecks', Bob allows Tina to drive the family car around an empty parking lot; prone to panic, she manages to crash into the only other car in the lot. Here,

Tina's vulnerability is foregrounded. In crashing the car – and bungling the ensuing insurance cover-up, which involves her setting fire to a house – she is revealed as a danger to herself and to those around her (Figure 1). Tina herself acknowledges this when she professes mournfully, 'Louise is right. I'm a firestarter and a jinx. I'm going to destroy this family'. Yet it is later revealed that Tina has been the victim of their insurance broker's own scam. Knowing that Tina is liable to cause another disaster, the broker manipulates the situation to ensure that Tina causes a fire. Tina's vulnerability is, in this instance, imposed upon her without her knowledge and exploited.

**Figure 1:** Tina and Bob survey the damage after Tina crashes the family car in 'Tina-Rannosaurus Wrecks'.

Gullibility also extends to Tina's romantic encounters. The narrative of Tina and Jimmy Jr.'s relationship constructs Jimmy (voiced by H. Jon Benjamin) as the ostensibly oblivious target of Tina's affections, with Tina perpetually adoring and continually disappointed. Despite Jimmy Jr.'s brusque indifference, and his propensity to string Tina along when it suits him, Tina persists in believing that they are destined to be together and that, with a little more effort, she can convince him of this fact too.

Subverting the dominant discourse of vulnerable girlhood, however, Tina also emerges as a strong, resourceful young woman in other episodes. This again is testament to the fact that Tina is permitted to be both one thing and the other. The fact that she is always a thirteen-year-old girl reveals these states – both vulnerable and strong, gullible and perceptive – as simultaneous. In 'Mazel-Tina', she becomes the uber-efficient co-ordinator of classmate Tammy's Bat Mitzvah, complete with headset and schedule. As a hall monitor, she causes – but then averts – a crisis involving an escaped classmate ('Midday Run'). In 'The Belchies',

when Louise is trapped in a deserted taffy factory and the wrecking ball is imminent, it is Tina who comes up with a plan to save the day. Having spent most of the episode eager to impress an oblivious Jimmy Jr., taking her cues from a romance novel, Tina shakes off these particular expectations to co-ordinate the rest of the group in rescue. Casting aside the novel, onto whose cover she has superimposed her and Jimmy Jr.'s heads, she proclaims:

Stupid book! I'm sick of acting like a dumb, helpless girl just so  
a hot boy who dances his feelings will notice me. That's not  
who I am. I'm a smart, strong, sensual woman. Now here's how  
we'll get Louise out.

Here, Tina demonstrates an awareness of competing narratives of female adolescence. In this instance, she rejects the discourse of vulnerability as a necessary trait of romantic femininity in favour of a discourse of female independence and resourcefulness. This is not to say that she does not return to the former, but rather that the series acknowledges multiple narratives of adolescent girlhood and permits Tina to explore them in tandem.

Elsewhere, Tina's strength is demonstrated in her willingness to stand up for her own beliefs, regardless of the judgements of those around her. Perhaps most significantly, in 'Bad Tina', when popular girl and Tina's friend/tormentor Tammy (voiced by Jenny Slate) threatens to read out Tina's self-penned erotic fiction to the rest of the school, Tina decides to face up to the embarrassment and read out a new story of her own. The denial of autonomy that Mendes et al. identify as a discursive condition of girlhood is reversed here, as Tina claims her identity as a sexually-curious teenage girl, a role that does not negate the vulnerability associated with it – Tina risks significant embarrassment in front of her classmates –but sees her refuse to deny a part of her identity.

The topic of sexuality and girlhood has always been a difficult negotiation. Renold and Ringrose point out that narratives of passive sexualization have become 'the hegemonic

discourse of childhood sexuality', neglecting the existence of 'girls' sexual agency' (2013: 248). The notion that 'girlhood is understood as naturally directed towards sexuality and yet categorically to be protected from sexuality' remains the dominant maxim (Driscoll 2013: 291). Yet in *Bob's Burgers* Tina's sexuality is a central component of her characterization. Her crush on Jimmy Jr., the son of Bob's restaurateur rival, is enduring and her excitement at being able to have a thirteenth birthday party hinges on the anticipation of a potential first kiss with him. However, Tina's interest is not limited to kissing boys. She has a self-confessed obsession with boys' butts, and numerous episodes feature her talking about, or checking out, the butts of boys she meets. In one such example, she watches Jimmy Jr. walking down the beach, lamenting the fact that 'just when I think I'm out, those cheeks pull me right back in'. It is also revealed that Tina has a secret peephole into the boys' locker room at school, which she uses to spy on their lower legs. In presenting Tina's exploration of her own sexuality, in which the illicit glimpse of a boy's shin is still a significant, hormonally-charged event, *Bob's Burgers* recognizes that female adolescence is a space in which desire and sexuality are constructed, and does not attempt to deny this aspect of Tina's character. Tina is also a prolific writer of erotic fan fiction, turning to her own subgenre of 'erotic friend fiction' when she has exhausted the supply of fictional worlds to enhance with erotic overtones. 'Are there any shows or movies left in the world that you haven't perved up?' asks Louise in 'Bad Tina', while the camera pans across a variety of her earlier efforts: 'Erotic *Harry Potter*', 'Sexy *Simpsons*', 'Erotic *Law and Order*'. Rather than hide these stories, Tina displays her notebooks openly on a bedroom shelf, and her writing is common knowledge amongst her siblings: 'What kind of a maniac gets up an hour early to write erotic fan fiction?' demands Gene, apparently more perturbed by the early hour than the content of Tina's notebooks.

Because Tina is an animated character, this aspect of her character can perhaps be explored more freely. The body harbouring these sexual feelings is rendered less threatening by its reassuring fixedness. Tina is not real, and her being animated underlines this. Her physical reactions to boys – from visible nerves and dilated pupils to her pleasure at being squashed up against Jimmy Jr. in a lift, her frequent lingering stares at boys’ butts and crotches, and her propensity for inhaling sweaty items of boys’ clothing – and her vivid imagination, which the audience is privy to on numerous occasions, have the deniability of being drawn. The threat posed by the adolescent girl’s autonomous sexualized body is negated by Tina’s animated status. Her sexual subjectivity is secured through limiting her desire to two dimensions. Within these two dimensions, however, *Bob’s Burgers* offers equal consideration to the emotional and physical complexities of adolescent girlhood. Tina never does more than kiss a boy and grab his butt, but the reality of her developing sexual desire is not erased. Indeed, Louise – fresh from an apparently short-lived crush on a member of a boyband – is impressed by Tina’s handling of her constant desire for boys: ‘If that’s what your life is like, how are you even alive? You have a crush on almost every boy you know. How do you do it? Feeling that way for three hours was way too much for me’ (‘Boyz 4 Now’). Louise concludes: ‘You’re a strong woman, Tina’. The fleeting discovery of the physically overwhelming hormonal feelings associated with female adolescence and desire gives Louise a new found respect for her old sister, amounting to an acknowledgement that adolescent girlhood often requires a great deal of resilience.

Alongside these explorations of Tina’s sexuality sit other interests and activities more readily identifiable as those of a young girl, most notably her obsession with horses. This manifests both in a love for real horses, and as a part of the fandom of *The Equestronauts*, a

horse-themed parody of *My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic*.<sup>2</sup> Horse stories are perennially popular amongst young female audiences (McHugh 2011: 66), and Tina's love for them is reflected in the numerous posters on her bedroom walls and her collection of toy horses. A love of horses is often read as a substitute for sexual desire on the part of girls (Dekkers 1994; McHugh 2011), which would certainly cleave to Tina's characterization, yet *Bob's Burgers* presents Tina's horse obsession as symbolic of innocence and childhood on more than one occasion. In 'Bad Tina', she pretends not to care about her toy horses in order to appear more mature in front of Tammy, Zeke (voiced by Bobby Tisdale) and Jimmy Jr., yet later whispers reassurance to one of the horses. When Tina's prize toy horse Chariot is stolen by a group of grown men at an Equestranauts fan convention ('The Equestranauts'), Bob rescues it for her, only for Tina to be seen packing it away at the end of the episode, telling him, 'I'm just getting a little old to play with dolls, you know?' (Figure 2). Yet Tina is seen playing with her toy horses in subsequent episodes; much like her thirteenth birthday, packing away Chariot is less a sign of the end of girlhood and more proof of its mutability.

**Figure 2:** Tina packs away Chariot in 'The Equestranauts'.

When her notebooks are stolen by Tammy, Tina experiments with being a 'bad' girl in order to ingratiate herself with Tammy and prevent her from sharing her erotic fiction. The bad girl is one of three dominant discourses of girlhood identified by Marion Brown, in which the emphasis is on aggression, sexualization and exclusionary behaviour, often reflecting a 'mean girl' narrative (2011: 114). The figure of the 'mean girl' has become

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<sup>2</sup> Specifically, *The Equestranauts* parodies the fantastical, cutesy nature of the most recent addition to the *My Little Pony* franchise, *Friendship is Magic* (2010-present) and in particular the older male fans, or 'Bronies', who have established themselves as a significant portion of the show's fandom. As a young girl, Tina finds herself in the minority when she attends an *Equestranauts* convention populated by middle-aged men.

increasingly prevalent in discussions of girlhood, reflecting the construction of a ‘nice-mean continuum of the feminine’, a discourse in which meanness is an accepted facet of white, middle-class femininity (Ringrose 2006: 418). Consequently, the ‘bad’ or ‘mean’ girl has, in recent years, become a common trope in teen media, particularly film (Hentges 2006). In essence, the ‘Bad Tina’ episode sees Tina try on the stereotypical role of rebellious adolescent. She neglects her babysitting duties, is rude to her parents, gets ‘drunk’ on her mother’s margarita mix, and pretends to renounce her interest in horses and zombies in favour of texting, make up and parties. Yet Tina’s adolescent acting out is not the harbinger of the next stage of teenage life. It is one of numerous roles that Tina takes on and discards as part of her experience of being a girl, and one that points to the complicated and overlapping narratives of girlhood and adolescence that coalesce in one character. In revealing Tina’s ability to be a bad girl, but also her ability to reject that behaviour and thus that label, *Bob’s Burgers* engages with one dominant narrative of girlhood while destabilising the expectation that only one label may be claimed.

### **The ‘girl with glasses’**

As a nerdy, bespectacled teenage girl in an animated sitcom, Tina is perhaps most reminiscent of Daria Morgendorffer (*Daria* [1997–2002]). Both fit the ‘girl with glasses’ trope discussed by Cindy Conaway, in which glasses act as a ‘symbolic shorthand’ indicating ‘intelligence and the social limits that go with brilliance’ (2007: 49). On cartoon characters, as on live action characters, glasses are rarely incidental. They function as a marker of intelligence, but also often of social awkwardness, or what Conaway calls ‘social cluelessness’ (2007: 50). In Tina, as in Daria, this assumption holds firm. Both characters exist outside their school’s popular clique; both exhibit signs of the aforementioned ‘social cluelessness’; both are pigeon-holed as geeky and are prone to sarcastic outbursts. The

significant difference between the two, barring their slight disparity in age (Daria begins as a sophomore in high school, and unlike most animated characters does progress through school – and therefore ages – as the series progresses), is in their confidence and their level of comfort in their own identity. Daria resists the conformity of her peers. She clarifies that she does not suffer from low self-esteem; rather, ‘I have low esteem for everyone *else*’. Tina, meanwhile, exists in a state of both wanting to be true to herself, and being desirous of a status that would afford her entry into the popular clique dominated by Tammy and Jocelyn (voiced by John Roberts).

This tension is revealed in Tina’s inevitable makeover in ‘Bad Tina’. Conaway suggests that girls with glasses are generally subjected to the makeover narrative, the assumption being that following this makeover, their beauty will be revealed. Being seen is substituted for seeing. As Mary Ann Doane observes, ‘[t]he woman with glasses signifies simultaneously intellectuality and undesirability’, until she removes her glasses, at which point ‘she is transformed into spectacle, the very picture of desire’ (1982: 50). Here Tina consents to a version of this. At Tammy’s behest, she removes her glasses, experiments with make-up, and styles her hair in a side ponytail. In a subversion of the trope, however, Tina does not appear beautiful. Rather, she appears vaguely ridiculous, squinting short-sightedly and wearing what amounts to garish face paint (bright blue eyeshadow, circles of rouge and pink lipstick) (Figure 3). Emerging from the bathroom with Tammy post-makeover, younger classmates Andy and Ollie (voiced by Laura and Sarah Silverman) shriek in unison and exclaim, ‘Bathroom clowns!’ Again, part of the rejection of this trope can be related to the conventions of animation, and the tradition of returning a character to their original state at the end of each episode. Tina’s transformation cannot last, and in this lies a particular power to subvert the ritualized geek-girl makeover.

**Figure 3:** Tina reveals her new look in ‘Bad Tina’.

### **Louise: The ‘Other’ Daughter**

If Tina is firmly rooted in an exploration of teenage girl culture in *Bob’s Burgers*, then her younger sister Louise presents a notable counterpoint, acting as a foil for dominant discourses of girlhood. This is not to compare Tina and Louise, who straddle either side of female puberty; rather, this section will discuss Louise’s own alienating experience of girlhood and the character’s subversion of existing girlhood narratives.

Louise, the Belchers’ nine-year-old daughter and youngest child, is constructed both within and without girlhood. Though she is recognizably a girl by virtue of age and gender, her status as pre-pubescent and pre-adolescent excludes her from some of the narratives of identity, desire and adulthood explored above. Her girlhood is also complicated by her rejection of socially constructed femininity. Louise’s appearance is dominated by her pink bunny ears, without which she is hardly ever seen. The exception to this is when her ears are stolen by bully Logan in the episode ‘Ear-sy Rider’. For the duration of her bunny ears being missing, Louise is pictured with her hood up until they are returned to her. Louise’s head – and most of her hair – has never been seen. In appearance, Louise’s status as ‘girl’ is complicated by the animal ears she insists on wearing. In effect, they allow her to function as both ‘girl’ and ‘not-girl’. Bouchard has referred to Louise as a ‘creature’, noting the ‘cognitive dissonance’ between seeing Louise as a ‘little girl and Bugs Bunny at the same time’. He points to the episode ‘Mutiny on the Windbreaker’, in which Louise gets an extreme manicure that turns her fingernails and toenails into long claws (Figure 4), as a conscious decision to explore Louise’s more feral nature (Adams 2013).

**Figure 4:** Louise instructs the manicurist to give her claws in ‘Mutiny on the Windbreaker’.

Rebecca Hains, discussing the proliferation of intelligent girl heroines in children's cartoons of the 1990s and 2000s, notes the use of 'niceness' as a positive trait when constructing girls. She goes on to suggest that female characters who reject this trait are liable to be shunned. 'Smart girls' use of niceness allows them to have agency and power in their cartoon worlds', she states. 'However, when compared with being 'smartmouthed', and therefore socially outcast, being strategically nice is reinforced as the smart girl's only socially acceptable choice' (2007: 74). As Hains points out, in children's animated series such as *The Powerpuff Girls* (1998–2005), *Totally Spies!* (2001–14) and *Kim Possible* (2002–07), the cultural expectation that girls should be 'nice' remains, even as these series develop intelligent girl protagonists. Deviation from the expectation of 'niceness' leads to characters being rendered outcasts. Louise is certainly intelligent, however she revels in the rejection of niceness. In 'Sliding Bobs', Tina imagines an alternative universe in which Linda marries health inspector Hugo (voiced by Sam Seder), rather than Bob. Linda and Hugo's children are blond, conformist versions of themselves. Louise becomes Charlize, a princess-obsessed, skirt-twirling little girl eager to please her parents, the epitome of nice. Hearing this story, Louise brands Tina a 'monster', so appalled is she by the suggestion that she could ever be such a girl. When she does express kindness or a heartfelt emotion – generally to her own surprise – it is achieved only after a visible internal struggle. 'What is this feeling I'm feeling right now?' she demands in 'Bob Fires The Kids'. 'It's like I'm sad for another person? Is that a thing? Am I going crazy?!' Louise's rejection of niceness and empathy is a cornerstone of her characterization. Like Tina, she offers a more complex representation of girlhood, engaging with dominant discourse (in this case, the 'nice' girl) only to resist its power.

Louise's explicit rejection of the princess culture embedded in the imagined Charlize underlines the broader rejection of ideal femininity that her character enacts. She is

characterized as self-confident, adventurous, and somewhat maniacal, the instigator and leader of most of the children's schemes, with a propensity for manipulation and an admiration for violence. Mary Celeste Kearney draws attention to the ways in which young girls are 'encouraged to manifest their diminution physically [...] as well as sonically' (2013: 8–9), a cultural expectation that Louise fundamentally rejects, being loud, boisterous and physically marked by her bunny ears, which make her taller and more noticeable than she might be otherwise. Louise constructs *herself* outside of girlhood, only to be concerned by the physical and biological realities of being a girl. She is distrustful of teenage girls and disdainful of puberty in general. She refers to Linda and Tina as the 'Menstruation Nation' ('Spaghetti Western and Meatballs'), preferring to spend time with her father and brother. Louise frequently designates herself as one of the 'boys'. Her best friends are twins Andy and Ollie Pesto, and Regular-Sized Rudy (voiced by Brian Huskey). When Linda accompanies Tina on a school trip, Louise is gleeful that it will be 'just us guys' at home, wondering what she, Bob and Gene will do 'without their boobs in the way' ('The Grand Mama-Pest Hotel'). This may be read less as a comment on Louise's gender identity than her rejection of the social constructions of girlhood that may serve to restrict Louise as she approaches adolescence. This is expressed at various points in the series, as Louise is faced with the reality of her own adolescence. When she attends a Boyz 4 Now concert with Tina under duress, Louise declares with disgust that 'there's a lot of puberty in there', and attempts (unsuccessfully) to wait outside ('Boyz 4 Now'). At Tina's birthday party, Louise appoints herself as Tina's 'kissing coordinator', telling her sister: 'Kissing is like a fight with lips' Louise is happy to coach Tina on the logistics of kissing, yet shows no interest in the romantic aspects of Tina's quest to kiss Jimmy Jr. Her analogy demonstrates that, for Louise, the appeal of kissing lies in its perceived violence. Likewise, she is horrified when she discovers that she has developed a crush on Boo Boo, a member of Boyz 4 Now. Louise's

solution to these confusing new feelings is to track down Boo Boo on the band's tour bus and slap him in the face. Equally, when she witnesses a female biker opening a bottle of beer between her breasts ('Ear-sy Rider'), she triumphantly yells, '*Now I want them!*' The implication here is that Louise is ambivalent towards female puberty until she sees a practical use for the breasts she will one day develop. For Louise, the only way in which she is able to conceive of the physical and emotional aspects of puberty is through the prism of violence and action.

Despite some outward concessions to being a young girl, such as the nightlight that she is seen with in numerous episodes, Louise appears to see herself as bigger, fiercer and more cunning than others do. Recalling Mendes et al.'s suggestion that girls are often constructed as 'vulnerable, gullible, and in danger', Louise, like Tina, embodies the negotiation between the points of vulnerability and resilience. When the children discover a valuable lump of ambergris (a large, solidified waste product excreted by sperm whales) on the beach, Louise spearheads their campaign to sell it for \$30000, slipping away from Tina and Gene in order to do a deal on the pier with small-time criminal The Nose ('Ambergris'). Over Louise's demands for the money, he notes: 'You're early. And you're rather tiny'. Louise's counters, in exasperation, 'Yeah, yeah, I'm a little girl. Sorry I'm not huge and old' Yet it is precisely the fact that Louise is a 'little girl' – and thus seen as both vulnerable and gullible, as Mendes et al. suggest – that allows The Nose to take advantage of her. Taking the ambergris, he admits that he is robbing Louise, stating, 'You're very small. It just makes sense'. Despite Louise's obvious fury at being thwarted by The Nose, he is unrepentant, holding the ambergris out of her reach as she strains to get it back. 'Remember? You're small' (Figure 5).

**Figure 5:** The Nose reminds an infuriated Louise that she is just a little girl in 'Ambergris'.

Linda's attitude towards Louise suggests a desire to have Louise conform to a more appropriate image of girlhood, as demonstrated in 'Slumber Party'. Here Linda organizes a sleepover and attempts to cultivate some friends for her daughter, despite Louise's protests. While Linda coordinates a fashion show, tie-dying activity, and cupcake decorating, Louise schemes to send all the girls home by exploiting their fears. Linda's attempts to bond with Louise at a mother-daughter therapy seminar fall equally flat when Louise conspires with another unwilling child to escape the seminar in favour of laser tag ('Mother Daughter Laser Razor'). In both episodes, Louise eventually capitulates, in part, to her mother's wishes. In 'Slumber Party', she invites one girl, Jessica, to remain and spend the night after being impressed with the girl's stealth skills. In 'Mother Daughter Laser Razor', she finally bonds with Linda after they team up in a game of laser tag. Yet it is notable that in both cases, Louise's capitulation happens on her own terms. Her invitation to Jessica to spend the night at the sleepover is predicated upon her admiration of the girl's non-feminine skills; her acknowledgement of Linda is similarly based on her appreciation of Linda's willingness to 'kill' their seminar leader in the laser tag arena, with an appreciative yell of, 'Mom, nice!' when Linda fires the winning shot.

There are suggestions, however, that Louise is on the verge of female adolescence, as explored in the episode 'Boyz 4 Now' and revisited in 'Bye Bye Boo Boo'. Boyz 4 Now is a parody of boybands and the ways in which they are marketed to, and consumed by, a largely female teenage audience; Tina is a fan of the band, and able to describe the band's carefully cultivated identities to her younger sister in great detail. As noted above, Louise is disdainful of the teenage girls who flock to the band's concert. Yet within minutes of the concert beginning, Louise finds herself overcome by the sight of band member Boo Boo onstage, clutching her rabbit ears and screaming his name along with the rest of the crowd. Louise is

subsequently horrified by the suggestion that she has developed her first crush on a boy, and expresses a desire to slap Boo Boo in the face, a desire that the sisters are able to fulfil by sneaking on to the band's tour bus and confronting them. When she next encounters Boo Boo in 'Bye Bye Boo Boo', she finally admits that she likes him – 'I mean I like him, but I hate him' – and satisfies herself with slapping him again. The contradiction of Louise's feelings for Boo Boo are, in fact, a useful microcosm of the way *Bob's Burgers* deals with adolescent and pre-adolescent girlhood more generally, as neither one thing nor the other; and, in being neither, is frequently able to be both.

For Louise, puberty – seen through the prism of her crush on Boo Boo – presents a threat to her self-identity and to her otherness. In admitting her crush on Boo Boo, she risks admitting herself to the ranks of the teenage girls, including her sister, that she so disdains. Yet her otherness is preserved by the subverted temporality of the animated form. Her crush is suggestive of one element of Louise's girlhood, but it need not define it. Like Tina, Louise's girlhood is mutable and unfixed. As a result she presents an opportunity to undermine dominant discourses without denying their prevalence in cultural constructions of young girls.

## **Conclusion**

Animated sitcoms have often foregrounded the exploits of their child characters, from Bart Simpson (*The Simpsons*) to Stewie Griffin (*Family Guy*), Morty Smith (*Rick and Morty*), the young teens of *Big Mouth* and the boys of *South Park*. What is notable is that girl characters are less likely to command significance in the narrative, and are often the subject of ridicule or marginalization. *Bob's Burgers* deviates from this model by establishing Tina and Louise as complex girls whose navigation of their girlhood becomes an underlying, but constant, structuring thread of the series. As such, it is a significant series through which to examine

images of girlhood in popular culture. Beyond this, it allows for a highlighting of the animated form as a useful tool for representing the complexities and reversals of the young female experience, as this analysis has explored.

Key to this negotiation of girlhood is the existence of the *Bob's Burgers* universe outside of conventional linearity, and this owes much to the animated nature of the series. In their work on girlhood and cinema, Frances Gateward and Murray Pomerance suggest that a girl's primary social importance stems from her existence as 'future woman' (2002: 13). What animation offers is a splintering of this assumption of a girl as future-anything, mirroring established and emerging discourse on girlhood which recognises its inherent reversibility, incongruity and mutability. While each individual episode has its own internal linearity, and the narrative is broadly located within human logic (the Belchers being, after all, an animated version of a human family), the existence of the characters in a suspended temporality that denies the aging process opens up a space in which girlhood and its intrinsic contradictions and complexities can be acknowledged, allowing girlhood and early adolescence to be understood as a liminal space in which girls are neither one thing or the other; or, indeed, one thing *and* the other. The animated nature of the series also permits an exploration of adolescent female sexuality whilst containing the apparent threat that this poses within the drawn lines of Tina's body, and allows Louise to exist as both girl and creature, blurring the boundaries.

Though on-screen images of girls have begun to multiply and proliferate since the 1990s (Handyside and Taylor-Jones 2016), these images are often bound by familiar tropes, stock roles and narrow definitions of acceptable girlhood, even though there may be space within this for empowerment (Hentges 2006). Through the prisms of both girlhood studies and animation studies, this analysis of *Bob's Burgers* has sought to demonstrate that animated images of girlhood should not be overlooked when considering how girlhood and female

adolescence are negotiated in popular culture. Indeed, *Bob's Burgers* routinely subverts some of the most dominant, culturally ingrained narratives of girlhood – from ‘vulnerable’ to ‘bad’, ‘nice’ to ‘mean’ – to reveal a space in which girls may be all or none of these at any given time. If, as Gateward and Pomerance note, girls’ experiences have often been ‘hidden’ culturally (2002: 13), the repetition and revisiting that is characteristic of an animated series such as *Bob's Burgers* is one possible way of revealing these experiences. Because Tina and Louise do not get older or undergo permanent physical change, and thus do not ever leave behind their girlhood, their representation becomes a constant re-enactment of female adolescent experience, shown from multiple angles and revealing multiple facets of being a girl. That girlhood is perhaps best understood as a series of transitions, reversals and overlaps, rather than as a linear trajectory of experience and identity, is thus given recognition. As such, the characters of Tina and Louise complicate straightforward narratives of ‘being a girl’, and their existence as perpetual children offers, not stability at the expense of complexity, but rather an acknowledgement of the inherent mutability of girlhood.

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### **Television programmes**

*American Dad!* (2005–present, United States: Fox)

*Big Mouth* (2017–present, United States: Netflix)

*Bob's Burgers* (2011–present, United States: Fox)

‘Sheesh! Cab, Bob’ (season 1, episode 6)

‘Bed and Breakfast’ (season 1, episode 7)

‘Spaghetti Western and Meatballs’ (season 1, episode 9)

‘The Belchies’ (season 2, episode 1)

‘Bad Tina’ (season 2, episode 8)

‘Ear-sy Rider’ (season 3, episode 1)

‘Bob Fires the Kids’ (season 3, episode 3)

‘Mutiny on the Windbreaker’ (season 3, episode 4)

‘Tina-Rannosaurus Wrecks’ (season 3, episode 7)

‘Mother Daughter Laser Razor’ (season 3, episode 10)

‘My Fuzzy Valentine’ (season 3, episode 13)

‘Lindapendent Woman’ (season 3, episode 14)

‘Boyz 4 Now’ (season 3, episode 21)

‘Seaplane!’ (season 4, episode 3)

‘Slumber Party’ (season 4, episode 9)

‘Mazel-Tina’ (season 4, episode 13)

‘The Equestranauts’ (season 4, episode 17)

‘Ambergris’ (season 4, episode 18)

‘Tina and the Real Ghost’ (season 5, episode 2)

‘Midday Run’ (season 5, episode 8)

‘Eat, Spray, Linda’ (season 5, episode 18)

‘Sliding Bobs’ (season 6, episode 1)

‘The Land Ship’ (season 6, episode 2)

‘Bye Bye Boo Boo’ (season 6, episode 16)

‘The Grand Mama-Pest Hotel’ (season 7, episode 13)

*Daria* (1997–2002, United States: MTV)

*Family Guy* (1999–present, United States: Fox)

*Home Movies* (1999–2004, United States: UPN/Adult Swim)

*King of the Hill* (1997–2010, United States: Fox)

*Rick and Morty* (2013–present, United States: Adult Swim)

*The Simpsons* (1989–present, United States: Fox)

*South Park* (1997–present, United States: Comedy Central)

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