

A boy in the London Hamleys toy store holds a “Once Upon a Time Princess Rose” Peppa Pig toy, which sings when you hold its hands.



Her friends are fellow mammals given to barking and bahhhing, according to species. Episodes, each about five minutes long, typically involve the ordinary rites of childhood, especially those experienced playing outdoors. They marvel at their reflections in a mud puddle, prompting Peppa’s father to try explaining the science behind mirrors – until he sees he’s boring the kids, gives up and calls the phenomenon “magic.” A staple of the show is that in the final scene all the characters on screen fall on their backs laughing. That’s the overriding message of the show: Life is funny.

As inevitably as popularity spawns controversy, Peppa has drawn scrutiny. On parenting blogs, some writers have questioned whether Peppa, prone as she is to mischief, is the ideal role model. She certainly isn’t as

The British cartoon swine is a global star. Just don’t call her the next Winnie the Pooh, says Brunswick’s **KEVIN HELLIKER.**

PREDICT THAT YOU’LL SOON HEAR ABOUT PEPPA Pig, if you haven’t already. That name is gaining force with such speed that you might even hear mention of it in a professional setting, for instance during that coffee-and-fruit-fueled social exchange that precedes board meetings. Among 5-year-olds, “Peppa Pig” mentions are so common that their parents increasingly can’t help bringing the conversation into the office, as I can attest. My 4-year-old’s case of Peppa fever had me a little worried until I canvassed other parents in Brunswick’s New York office. Among this crowd, I discovered, Peppa is a celebrity on the order of Beyoncé or LeBron James.

reverent as Barney, the purple dinosaur who ruled the kingdom of toddlers when my 24-year-old was a child. But Peppa is far less irreverent than Angelica, the tyrannical star of Nick’s “Rugrats.”

In China, Peppa became a symbol of rebellion for the so-called “gangster” culture, prompting the removal of some 30,000 Peppa videos from a popular app. But children there can still stream it – and do they ever. Online, everything Peppa is going viral in Asia, and in-store Peppa merchandise is hard to keep stocked. Increasingly there are Peppa sightings at theme parks.

In New York, meanwhile, my daughter now wears Peppa pajamas, purchased from The Gap. Is there any better evidence that the piglet who first charmed British toddlers has conquered the world?

Peppa airs on Channel 5 in the UK and on Nick Jr. in the US. Here in New York, my daughter watches it exclusively on YouTube where, if allowed, she would consume a dozen episodes consecutively.

In my office, I asked aloud what seemed like a reasonable question: Is Peppa the successor to that other British-accented cartoon animal, Winnie the Pooh?

“It’s not even a contest,” retorted my colleague Edward Stephens, clearly indignant. He spends a lot of time with his nieces and nephews, so he has seen and heard quite enough of Peppa. “Peppa is constantly yelling. Winnie is wise and loyal (if bizarrely clad in a shirt without pants) and softspoken. His friends – Tigger, Eeyore, Kanga – have depth too.”

But what does Edward know? He’s 31 years old. ♦

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Suddenly **PEPPA**, World-Famous Pig

Launched in 2004 by a London animation studio called Astley Baker Davies, Peppa is a cartoon girl, a talking, cycling, laughing, sometimes conniving girl who happens to be a pig, her sentences punctuated by piggy-like snorts. She lives with her mother and father and little brother, all snort-prone fellow pigs, in human-like circumstances. They have a house, a television and an automobile (an early criticism of the show, quickly addressed, was that Peppa didn’t wear a seatbelt).