Intro (00:00:00):

[Intro Music]

Gilcy (00:00:18):

Hello. We're your senshi-sational hosts Gilcy and Drucilla!

Drucilla (00:00:23):

Hello!

Gilcy (00:00:23):

Welcome to Moon Moment. The podcast where we discuss the Sailor Moon canon for what we affectionately call, you guessed it, moon moments.

Drucilla (00:00:30):

Moments that we feel exemplify what Sailor Moon stands for and represents. Last time we looked at the final episodes of the first season. Today, we're going to do something a little less devastating.

Gilcy (00:00:46):

Yup. For our season finale, we have a special guest here to talk to us about all things anime and animation. John Maher is a journalist covering the book business for publishers weekly and animation for vulture and elsewhere. He treats his anxiety with Animaniacs his depression with dark wing duck and his PTSD with Princess Mononoke.

Drucilla (00:01:09):

Everyone welcome John Maher to Moon Moment! Yay!

John Maher (00:01:16):

Hi everybody. It's nice to be here with my two colleagues,

Gilcy (00:01:22):

Colleagues?! Excuse you.

John Maher (00:01:25):

I'm excused.

Gilcy (00:01:26):

...colleagues.

Drucilla (00:01:29):

We have a lot of topics to talk about with John today that refer back to a lot of questions that we had during this first season. But before we dive into all of that, we have a couple of really special shout outs. First off, incredible, super amazing shout out to listener Bradley who gave us our first ever feedback! Yay!

Gilcy (00:01:57):

Yes!! [cue Gilcy's loud, way too excited happy noises]

Drucilla (00:01:59):

So—

Gilcy (00:02:00):

No, Drucilla literally texted me this and I was super fuc—super happy.

John Maher (00:02:08):

You were super FUlfilled.

Drucilla (00:02:08):

[Drucilla dying of laughter in the background]

Gilcy (00:02:10):

Super FULFILLED. Thank you SO much. It means the world to us when people shout us out and give us little comments because we are both fan girls at heart.

Drucilla (00:02:23):

And you can do so via the contact us page on our website, or just atting us at, @moonmomentpod on Twitter. The other shout outs that we have: shout out to North America, which is 77% of our listeners, the U.S. is front of the pack there—which, you know, makes sense—9% of our listeners are in Europe with Germany at the forefront, and 6% from South America with Brazil being the big dog there. Which isn't surprising cause I know that Brazil has a lot of Miraculous Ladybug fans. So I wonder if there's sort of a crossover there.

John Maher (00:03:14):

It's uh, it's also got a pretty, pretty excellent animation industry itself too.

Drucilla (00:03:21):

So thank you to everyone who's listening. Um, we hope you stick with us. Season 2 will be starting in November. So check us out then! But let's talk some anime and animation with our fabulous friend, John Maher.

Gilcy (00:03:38):

Apparently we are just COLLEAGUES to John Maher. But whatever. It's fine.

Drucilla (00:03:44):

Oh yeah. Excuse me. Colleagues.

Gilcy (00:03:45):

Friendship is redacted.

John Maher (00:03:47):

I'm sorry, was this, is this not some sort of professional, uh, situation here? I mean, I've even been told that I can't curse. So I'm assuming I was supposed to hype up the professional.

Gilcy (00:03:59):

That's already gone with your intro.

Drucilla (00:04:03):

I mean, there were, there were definitely, um, like tears in our last, almost tears in our last episode.

Gilcy (00:04:11):

Oh god there were so many tears.

Drucilla (00:04:11):

And so—so much squee-ing in previous episodes. I do feel like professionalism—

Gilcy (00:04:19):

Flew the coop!

Drucilla (00:04:19):

Yes, exactly.

John Maher (00:04:21):

I'm here to— here to, to, to put you back on task. Um, I, I have really terrible news for both of you, uh, and all of your listeners, uh, which is that I am not going to cry at all. Uh, not that I don't cry over animation a lot because I do. But I, I am not going to answer all the questions you have because there's absolutely no way that I'm going to be able to do that. Uh, and I [laugh of shame] have never watched Sailor Moon. So this is going to be a really fascinating conversation.

Gilcy & Drucilla (00:04:52):

[cackling in the background]

Gilcy (00:04:53):

See, the reason why you're here is because you're a huge animation nerd and what you know could, kind of, help cover what we don't know. Um, because we've definitely talked a lot about stuff like, oh, what was prevalent in maybe nineties animation or like feminism in anime in the nineties. And it's not just anime that we were talking about too. Stuff from Western media has come up, Western animation. We've definitely talked about Miraculous Ladybug. I was telling Drucilla earlier that there was something I found with Bob's Burgers. And then there's also, I mean, Star vs. the Forces of Evil and all of that. Which I KNOW you've seen so—

John Maher (00:05:36):

Well—

Drucilla (00:05:37):

Yeah. I mean, we had a huge discussion our last episode, episode 11, about how, how intense the last two episodes of Sailor Moon are. And no other episode in the season comes close to being that. And you know, we were discussing how today it feels like animation, or like Gilcy said, Western animation isn't afraid to go those places. The kind of dark places with mature themes. Whereas in the nineties I was watching Rugrats. Okay? Like you didn't really get a lot of dark stuff back then.

John Maher (00:06:15):

I'm going to, I'm going to right off the bat dismiss that entire assessment of Rugrats as, uh, someone who identified very deeply with animated characters with dead parents. The Mother's Day episode of Rugrats and the exploration of what it's like not to LOOSE a parent, but to LIVE with a lost parent, to discover that you lost a parent was like really, really powerful and very emotional. Um, although when you were a kid watching Rugrats, you probably didn't clock that. Uh, and that's kind of a really amazing thing about Western animation for children in particular in that period is that it really started to tackle tough topics, uh, in ways that parents would get, but kids would not. Um, but that's, that's off topic here.

Gilcy (00:07:00):

No, I think that's very much in topic!

Drucilla (00:07:03):

Yeah. And it's also a great example of how I watched that episode. And I, you know, I care for those characters. I cared for Chuckie, but I had both of my parents. So it didn't hit me the same way it hit you. And the same thing from— any example is escaping me right now— but something might hit me differently than the way it hits you. Like the last two episodes of Sailor Moon. Like, I don't know if John watched them, if he would cry over them, the way me and Gilcy did!

John Maher (00:07:37):

You never know. But it's interesting that you bring Western animation into it. And I think maybe the best thing I can do for our conversation here is to sort of give a little bit of a survey of how the magical girl trope became what it is. And interestingly, it actually starts in the West. In fact, two different aspects of what we consider Sailor Moon's major contributions to animation as a whole, both arguably come from the West. One being the magical girl trope and the other being the transformation sequence. So we can, we can start with a magical girl trope, which brings us back to 1964. And in fact, it brings us back to live action, believe it or not. Um, because when Sally the Witch, Mahotsukai Sally is, is the, uh, the Japanese name for Sally the Witch, which is a 1966 anime about— oh god, I think it's like, it's, I mean, it's a witch. She's a princess who arrives in the world of humans. She looks like a human and she brings all her magical powers to this world. And, you know, sort of does all this magic in this world of humans. This is, this is the sixties in anime and you can imagine that it was kind of a choppy program. Early origins of anime were sort of very cheaply produced. And that's a really long story that we probably won't get into today. But Sally the Witch was influenced by two very famous Western media properties of that period, Bewitched and Mary Poppins. So if you look back at the magical girl trope, it's actually probably not that surprising to realize that it all kind of goes back to an American sitcom where a housewife could make magic things happen. And a, and you know, a trio of witches—is that what Bewtiched was? I haven't seen much of Bewitched. I'll be honest.

Drucilla (00:09:36):
No, only one witch.

John Maher (00:09:36):
One witch.

Drucilla (00:09:36):
But I think her mother was also a witch. But who— uh Adora [Ed. note: Her name is actually Endora][But I was close!-Drucilla] I think— who would pop in every now and then.

John Maher (00:09:44):
Adora. Which is extra interesting considering that we are later going to get to another Adora—

Gilcy (00:09:50):
She-Ra!

John Maher (00:09:51):
But, um, then there's Mary Poppins, you know, your, your magical house nanny. So those two shows— well, that movie in that show both were—well, Bewitched was cited specifically by the creator of Sally the Witch as like an influence. But Mary Poppins came to Japan in 1965. Like that's when the dub of Japan— of Mary Poppins came and in 1966 Sally the Witch came out. Bewitched came out around, in Japan around the same time as Sally the Witch. So maybe whoever was creating Sally the Witch was watching Bewitched in sub, I'm not sure. And with a lot of this history, because it's so niche, it gets a little hazy. But that was kind of the— that was kind of the beginning of magical girl anime. And at that point it was very literally witches, right? Like it was, it was rooted in Western conceptions of the witch. There was a— a few years later, there was another magical girl anime. So the Japanese name for magical girl is mahou shōjo (魔法少女) . So there's another mahou shōjo in the late sixties called Himitsu no Akko-chan (ひみつのアッコちゃん) which is The Secrets of Akko-chan. And that is about an ordinary girl who is granted magical powers in reward for a good deed. Uh, I'm gonna, I'm gonna credit Sugawa Akiko at Nippon.com. I did a lot of, uh, research into this topic before this conversation, and she has a really great article about this. So it's worth, it's worth checking out her article if you're, if you're super interested. That is kind of a little more similar to what you eventually see in Sailor Moon. And from there, there's this whole long arc of different shows, uh, through the seventies and eighties that eventually lead to Sailor Moon. And a lot of them are with young girl witches. So we, we end up seeing that kind of coalesce into Kiki's Delivery Service in the nineties, right. You know, that trope kind of moved its way into the Miyazaki side of animation later on. But that— there were a lot of shows— a few shows in the seventies and eighties that really got into this. But that was before, obviously, anime was huge in the States. And I don't want to get to, I could get really, really deep into this. So I'm going to stop for a second and see if you have any questions.

Gilcy (00:12:17):
That's really cool that anime— this whole thing of anime started in the West with Bewitched. I actually saw that when I was prepping for this episode and I always thought it started with, um, the anime Magical Utena. I think that's how you pronounce it. So I was just kind of shocked that the West had any kind of influence on anime at all. But yeah, I just, I also saw that the magical girl trope didn't really exist.

Um, it was more of like the fighting thing? Fighting stuff for boys. And then from that, it evolved into magical girls fighting. Like fighting girls. Correct me if I'm wrong.

John Maher (00:13:03):
No—

Gilcy (00:13:03):
Like this is all—

John Maher (00:13:05):
I mean, the, the thing with history, especially of an art form that people are only, you know, really getting into in the past, like 30 years in our country, right? Is, like, you can read the documents any way you want. Like, part of history is, is creating it while you're assessing it. I think Utena came later actually. I'm pretty sure Utena came after.

Gilcy (00:13:30):
Yeah it came— it came after.

John Maher (00:13:30):
I'm pretty Utena came after Sailor Moon.

Drucilla (00:13:32):
Yeah. One of the, one of the directors from Sailor Moon, uh, is the one who created Utena along with a bunch of other people. But, yeah. He's...the name I'm completely blanking on what his name is. I'm so sorry.

John Maher (00:13:51):
It's um... It's Kunihiko Ikuhara.

Drucilla (00:13:53):
Yes, yes, yes.

John Maher (00:13:56):
Almost definitely. Cause he...I'm pretty sure he was like the main force behind Utena. So it took until the eighties, until magical girls kind of became magical young women. Which is absolutely the start of where you talk about masculine power fantasies and sexualization of magical girls. Right? But before that it was sort of younger witches. And there was another really interesting and important thing to note here. A series specifically to note here, which actually doesn't have anything to do with magical girl genre, but does have to do with the shōjo genre and anime made for young girls. And that is Heidi, Girl of the Alps. Um, so Heidi, Girl of the Apls came out in 1974. It was around the same time that Space Battleship Yamato came out. Which was like THE anime in the, in the early to mid-seventies for boys in particular. Sort of a prede— you know, I think it was a predecessor to Gundam. Um, very much, you know, it was, it was the space battle ship. I mean, space battleship is literally in its name. Like it's absolutely like a sci-fi war anime. And Heidi, Girl of the Alps was very much the opposite. It was about a little girl living in the Swiss Alps. And there's a lot of, you know, again, you can have a conversation here about like Western

culture and, and Japan's fascination with it. Specifically after World War II, but before then, as well. And Heidi, Girl of the Alps is a really, really interesting series for a couple of reasons. For one, it was directed by Isao Takahata who was one of the two great creators from Studio Ghibli along with Miyazaki. In fact, Hayao Miyazaki also worked with Takahata on this series. Um, so the two of them made it. And you would imagine being something made by Takahata and Miyazaki. It had extraordinary animation for a television series at all in the seventies that was animated, let alone in Japan. But it also kind of was such a grueling production situation that, that it, it gave Miyazaki reason to say, "I'm never doing TV again," sort of film. Um, but, but it was very popular among girls in Japan and we're talking like, so, so just to— just to like talk a little bit about the production here, um, because I nerd out on production. Uh, Astro Boy's average number of cells per episode were 2,500, right? Heidi's were 8,000.

Drucilla ([00:16:42](#)):
[chuckle of astonishment]

John Maher ([00:16:42](#)):
And not— and none of them were reused. Astro boys were like constantly reused. The 8,000— and Heidi's average episode, on average, were not reused.

Gilcy ([00:16:52](#)):
Oh wow.

John Maher ([00:16:52](#)):
Like it was four times the quality of Astro Boy, arguably based on how you, how you determine quality and animation. But it was so much more closely animated. And it's why you could see that with the production schedule, Miyazaki would've been like, "screw this, I'm never doing this again". But it— it made an impact. And it showed that anime was something that, that young girls were interested in, in Japan. And so it, it began to make an argument for the kind of cartoons that would eventually spur on Sailor Moon for one. Uh, on one end. And eventually—

Gilcy ([00:17:30](#)):
Card Captor Sakura.

John Maher ([00:17:32](#)):
Mhmm! Utena. Right?

Gilcy ([00:17:35](#)):
Yeah.

John Maher ([00:17:35](#)):
And, and on the adult end, something like Only Yesterday, which Takahata made in 1991. Or even even 10 years later, Miyazaki branching into science-fiction with, um, uh, why am I on it? I'm literally looking at a picture of it on my wall right now, Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind.

Gilcy ([00:17:53](#)):
Ahh Nausicaä!

John Maher ([00:17:53](#)):

So that had a big influence too. And then the eighties came, then there were some shows about some magical girl shows. I'm sorry, I'm laughing because one of them is literally called Magical Angel Creamy Mommy. The other one is called Fairy Princess Minky Momo. So we are just like, you know, uh, and then—

Gilcy ([00:18:23](#)):

Oh Japan.

John Maher ([00:18:23](#)):

And then in 1992, you get Sailor Moon. [laughter]

Gilcy ([00:18:29](#)):

I mean Sailor Moon is really big because I think two of the big things that Sailor Moon kind of paved the way for, or at least are very known for that people pull from, are the transformation sequences. Because that's all over in Miraculous Ladybug. If we have any Miraculous Ladybug listeners. Drucilla.

Drucilla ([00:18:50](#)):

Yeah!

Gilcy ([00:18:50](#)):

Um, and even Star vs. The Forces of Evil. Whenever Star is transforming into her butterfly form. Like Steven Universe, whenever there's a transformation sequence with the Gems. It's always that bright, really colorful rainbow-esq-like silhouette that's happening. And I think there's, that's besides being like the magical girl trope. And then I know we talked about like She-Ra as well with...Andora? Adora? Adora.

John Maher ([00:19:19](#)):

Adora.

Gilcy ([00:19:19](#)):

That is her name. Yes. Adora. And that as well, also has a transformation sequence.

John Maher ([00:19:28](#)):

So transformation sequences are interesting because they come outside of the, of the magical girl genre. I would be remissed by the way, if I didn't, if I didn't mention Majokko Megu-chan. Uh, Meg the Little Witch from 1974.

Gilcy ([00:19:40](#)):

Ahh! Yes. Yes.

John Maher ([00:19:40](#)):

Which is the first time I believe, or at least the most like the time when people started using the term, majokko. M-A-J-O-K-K-O as a term for magical girls. Before that they would use mahō tsukai. Which I

think is witch, right? Majokko, which is, uh, you know, that, that was the word that they would very often use afterward. Okay. The, the, the transformation sequence. So that's an interesting history too. For a couple of reasons. One being it's another, and I'm not sure. And I would need to dive a little bit more deeply into this to find out. But I, I think, I think it must have existed before this. In fact, I bet.

Gilcy (00:20:25):

It has to have! Right?

John Maher (00:20:26):

I'm goog—

Gilcy (00:20:27):

I feel—

John Maher (00:20:27):

I'm googling right now. Um...

Drucilla (00:20:30):

Yeah, cause I can't imagine some variation of it didn't exist, even if it was, you know, a Gundam transformation sequence. It's still the same basic principles.

John Maher (00:20:42):

Well, I'm wondering if it actually, I'm wondering if the first instance of the trope comes from The White Snake Enchantress from 19—

Gilcy (00:20:52):

Is that an anime or?

John Maher (00:20:52):

From 1958, which is— it's an anime. It was one of the first three animated films to be released in America. They released it as Panda and the Magic Serpent here. And there's a snake that transforms into a princess. And transformation sequences in culture, you're talking basically every mythology has one.

Gilcy (00:21:11):

Yeah.

Drucilla (00:21:11):

Mhmm.

John Maher (00:21:11):

Um, so from the Greeks to the ancient Japanese, transformation sequences are not exactly like revolutionary—

Gilcy (00:21:17):

Revolutionary.

John Maher (00:21:17):

—Girl Utena [haha]. But I like— sorry.

All (00:21:25):

[laughter]

John Maher (00:21:25):

They're not necessarily revolutionary. I believe that might've been a seminal one. Although I'm blanking on, I don't think it's exactly the same way that we see transformation sequence tropes. Now, the way we see transformation sequence tropes now, arguably is from He-Man and the Masters of the Universe. Although around the same time in Japan, there was a show called Uchū Keiji (宇宙刑事ギャバン), which is usually translated as either Space Cop Gyaban or Space Sheriff Gavan. Depending on, on the exact translation in which there was also a, a transformation sequence. And not that long after that. So there's this kind of like, there's kind of a, a couple of parallels here. He-Man in 1981 and She-Ra 1985. And you've got transformation sequences in both. And both of those are American shows. In fact, they were produced by Filmation in collaboration with Mattel, because at that point, everybody was just making shows to sell toys and He-Man was originally Mattel toys. And then they made him into a show. She-Ra, they spun off from He-Man and it was a collaboration between Filmation and Mattel. But Filmation unlike most companies making limited animation in the U.S. and that time did not use offshore production. They actually made their shows in the U.S. So it was American animators who were making these transformation sequences, which makes, which makes it less complicated in some ways than if they were Japanese animators doing transformation sequences for American companies. At that point, you would wonder "where exactly is this trope coming from". In this case, in animation, in the U.S. It existed in 1981. And Uchū Keiji came out in 1982. Were the Japanese watching He-Man? I don't know. We'd have to look into the distribution and it gets complicated there. But then after that came Super Sentai, which we in the U.S. call the Power Rangers. Uh, and THAT is another classic transformation sequence, which absolutely influenced Sailor Moon. And so when you're looking at, at, at transformation sequences, Sailor Moon is a really interesting case because if you go back and look at the She-Ra transformation sequence, okay, fine. It's a little sexualized because like, she's a beautiful curvy lady animated in the eighties and they do the whole sexualized because it was the eighties and it was made for, for a TV audience, whatever. But the emphasis was still on like the physicality of She-Ra. She becomes more physically powerful. When you look at the Sailor Moon, that transformation sequence is much more about how beautiful they are and how, how young they are. There's this sort of sexualization of youth that, that also in some ways attaches to their increased power once they've transformed, which is sort of an inversion of assumptions about femininity. That's very, very interesting. Um—

Gilcy (00:24:28):

Yeah. We've talked so much about the ages. Most notably the age differences in the romances that have been happening in Sailor Moon. The big one is obviously the one with Mamoru and Usagi. And that whole part of just the weird sexualization slash fetishization of young— they're literally 14 year old girls, which is, it's hard to forget. Sometimes we do forget sometimes. And whenever that comes up, it's like, oh my god, what are you doing? Why, why are you, a college student, pursuing a 14 year old girl? There's something a little skeevie about it.

Drucilla (00:25:11):

Yeah. It took this rewatch for me to realize that Mamoru is a piece of garbage.

Gilcy (00:25:17):

UGGHH! Yeah. So that, that whole thing with the sexualization of younger girls is not the greatest thing in the world with Sailor Moon. I think there was also a lot of censorship that happened too. I think you talked about the, um, the form of She-Ra during that transformation. And there, apparently with the, when Sailor Moon came to Western audiences, they tried to keep the "Western" quote unquote Western audience in mind because they were trying to do it for younger audiences. And so they like censored the under boob or something. And there's a lot of when they're in the baths, they just had to raise the water higher. So you couldn't see like the silhouette of the boobs. And then I think there's also, they got rid of some of the panty...panty. Panty. [me struggling to figure out how to say this word without the Filipino accent] I can't say it. I can't okay. I will say it in my, um, in my Filipino accent, but the panty shot, um, even though they're just like leotards. Um, so it's just kind of the whole sexualization of young, young, YOUNG. Children it's a little weird

John Maher (00:26:29):

We're speaking specifically about, at this point, you're talking about the DiC?

Gilcy (00:26:36):

Ah yes. Yes. The DiC [Pronounced dick. I am ASHAMED readers/listeners😭😭😭]

John Maher (00:26:38):

Yeah—so that's— are you allowed to say that or does Drucilla have to uhhhh...

Drucilla (00:26:43):

It's— usually people call it the DiC [pronounced dEEk] dub. I don't know where Gilcy got that.

Gilcy (00:26:47):

Is it..oh [realization dawning on me at the crimes I have committed]...the DiC [pronounced dEEk]...DiC dub...

Drucilla (00:26:47):

[laughter] It's dEEk.

John Maher (00:26:52):

And there was a lot of reasons for that dub to be the way that it was. And that adaptation was interesting because like, to go back actually to Super Sentai, Mighty Morphin Power Rangers had just become like a huge hit in the U.S. And I think that was one of the main reasons why Sailor Moon was, was brought over in the first place, because they saw an audience there and they thought, "hmm, what if, what if like, what if this works". Of course it did tremendously, um, in, in a similar way to Dragon Ball-Z with the exact opposite intended audience. Arguably. Although of course, this is where you ask a really hard question. Is Sailor Moon a shōnen, or a shōjo? Is it actually for young women or is it for young men? And I will let the two of you discuss that question, because I think you will have more interesting assessments, but I, I do think there was a, there was a lot of editing in that in terms of—

Gilcy (00:27:50):

There's SO much editing.

John Maher (00:27:50):

OH! The character names, like EVERYTHING. Like they changed everything right?

Gilcy (00:27:53):

The character names, the whole like sexual orientation of some of the characters.

John Maher (00:27:57):

Oh yeah. Queerness was just utterly and absolutely erased from the show.

Gilcy (00:28:03):

Mhmm. Just, oh, there's just so much.

Drucilla (00:28:07):

I will say—

Gilcy (00:28:07):

Like, I think we could make a whole episode about it.

Drucilla (00:28:10):

Oh yeah. Um, I will say I think it, the, the reason, I mean, it's not the only reason a lot of these changes were made, but when Sailor Moon came out in the U.S. It was directed at a much younger audience than I think it was in Japan.

John Maher (00:28:29):

Guess why.

Drucilla (00:28:29):

And so—

Gilcy (00:28:30):

Because it was animated.

John Maher (00:28:32):

Nope. Because they had a deal with Bandai to make toys!

Gilcy (00:28:39):

OHH! It's back to the toy thing again.

John Maher (00:28:41):

Oh yeah. I mean, and also it was directed toward a younger audience because it was directed toward an audience that would ask their parents to buy them Sailor Moon toys. Anyway, sorry Drucilla.

Drucilla (00:28:52):

No! That— No, I think it's really fascinating. Cause, um, I was one of the OG crowd. I watched it as it was coming out. But I also remember not being able to find Sailor Moon stuff anywhere. In order for me to find the manga or anything that was licensed, I could only get it, we would occasionally take like a shopping trip day and we'd go to a city that was much bigger than my hometown, about an hour and a half away that had, you know, an enormous mall, they had multiple bookstores. Most of my Sailor Moon stuff has Hot Topic barcodes on it.

John Maher (00:29:40):

Oh man.

Drucilla (00:29:40):

Because that was the place I could find it!

Gilcy (00:29:42):

Hot Topic. Oh man.

Drucilla (00:29:44):

And it's so strange to hear about, oh, well obviously the primary reason was to sell toys. To sell merch. And as someone who loves Sailor Moon back in the day, I couldn't find that merch. I couldn't ask my parents, "Oh, please buy me the shirt that I found at Walmart", because there wasn't anything there. And yet now, as we said in the past episode, everyone today is super lucky because if something is really popular, you can find merch for it anywhere because companies have learned the power of licensing and how much money that it makes them.

Gilcy (00:30:25):

I would be so cool if I were younger and into anime because when I was younger and in a middle school full of white people— I'm sorry.

John Maher (00:30:37):

Why are you apologizing to us?!

Gilcy (00:30:37):

But I— everyone thought I was weird!

All (00:30:42):

[laughter].

John Maher (00:30:42):

This is all my fault!

Gilcy (00:30:42):

That was weird because they were like, oh, you're Asian. You should like anime. So like why? And then me being self-conscious and like trying to come into my own. And I'm just like, "just because I'm Asian, I don't like anime that much", as I was hoarding all of this anime stuff, but it's just like, it's nice. It's in a way it's nice seeing all of this merch and how easily accessible it is. But man, I'd be so COOL if I were younger! Born in the wrong generation.

John Maher (00:31:17):

No, it's true. I've had this, I've had this same thought. Although obviously for me, it's, it's a very different sort of identification issue. And not to, not to comment on something that's really, it is so ridiculous that that is their assessment for so many reasons. One being that it's an assumptive conflation of Filipino culture and Japanese culture and like, yes, America, eff-ed both of those countries up. But not in the same way. And they are otherwise like very, very different in terms of their cultures.

Gilcy (00:31:47):

SO different.

John Maher (00:31:47):

And the idea that Japanese animation is like, everybody in Asia's interest was absurd. I mean, oh, shocker, white kids were racist when you were a teen— you know, when you were in middle school.

Gilcy (00:32:00):

I could go on about all of the things that have happened to me as like an Asian-American growing up in a predominantly white suburb.

John (00:32:08):

Yes. I am sure.

Gilcy (00:32:10):

Yeah, exactly. And the whole mistaken I was, I was asked by a past roommate why I didn't just learn— just know Japanese because I was Asian.

John Maher (00:32:23):

What?!

John Maher and Drucilla (00:32:23):

[gasps of astonishment].

Gilcy (00:32:23):

And I was like—YEAH! I was like, it doesn't make sense for me to know Japanese because Filipino, like Tagalog, is very heavily based in Spanish. And it would be easier for me to learn Spanish. And she looks at me and she's like, "...but you're Asian".

John Maher (00:32:43):

Wow.

Gilcy (00:32:43):

I was like, "excuse me?!"

John Maher (00:32:47):

Yeah. Someone never actually learned anything about, uh, colonization in any capacity.

Gilcy (00:32:55):

Yeah I mean the Japanese—

John Maher (00:32:55):

Also like—

Gilcy (00:32:55):

Oh go ahead!

John Maher (00:32:55):

Well, my family's from, my family's from Europe, like, should I know Basque like, what in the hell is that?

Gilcy (00:33:01):

Exactly! And I feel like this is, this is a very common trope when it comes to growing up as Asian-American and just knowing, like being interested in Asian pop culture. And it's just, it it's like a double-edged sword. You know, I love that everyone knows anime, knows Sailor Moon. I can bring it up in a casual conversation and it'll immediately click. That they will know what it is. And I can like connect with them with it. But on the other hand. YA'LL!! You miss— [frustrated noises].

John Maher (00:33:33):

I know. I mean, there's, there's another really strange thing about that too. Which is—and Emily Yoshida has a really great essay on this. I forget where it was. I think it was at Verge. And I think it came out around the time that everyone was complaining about Scarlett Johansson being cast in Ghost in the Shell.

Gilcy (00:33:49):

Ahh!

John Maher (00:33:49):

And, and dug very deeply into the history of portrayal of characters in anime. And how one would not necessarily assume while watching an anime that its characters are Japanese. Because the facial features on a lot of these characters are not necessarily deliberately Japanese. They are often deeply rooted in assumptions of whiteness.

Gilcy (00:34:17):

Mhmm.

John Maher (00:34:17):

And although the main character of Ghost in the Shell is—I mean, she's an Android. Right? But her name is... Oh god... What's her last name? It's— it's— it's Matoko right? Her first name—

Gilcy (00:34:34):

I've never seen Ghost in the Shell. So...

John Maher (00:34:37):

Oh man. It's—

Gilcy (00:34:37):

I was definitely there for the, the discourse that was happening with Scarlett Johannson.

John Maher (00:34:43):

It's Matoka Kusanagi. So the major's name is, is a very clearly Japanese name, but when you—.

Gilcy (00:34:48):

Very Japanese.

John Maher (00:34:48):

But when you look at the character. The character's face is sort of in some ways— it's well, and animation is like everything's stylized, right? So it asks you constantly to wonder about your assumptions based on people's facial, on facial recognition. And like, so it's even weirder to me that kids would say that. Because kids don't usually have that. I mean, you know, kids parrot their parents. And so the answer here is their parents told them that's Japanese. Or that's Asian and their response was, "oh you're Asian". You must like, because they wouldn't watch Sailor Moon and be like, oh, what a Japanese show. How would they know? How would they know any of the tropes growing up in like some white ass suburb—excuse me— a white as hell suburb. Can't— well that's even worse! I stopped! I'm stopping!

All (00:35:37):

[laughter]

Gilcy (00:35:41):

It also assumes how you watched or when you watched Sailor Moon too. Because when I watched it, when I was very young, the first time I watched Sailor Moon was in the Philippines. And I had never seen the first few episodes in English. So I grew up with Sailor Moon in Tagalog because that was what I would watch when I was in the Philippines. And it's really interesting to note that Sailor Moon has touched so many people regardless of culture. Because when I was telling Drucilla about how I had come across Sailor Moon, it was very much, despite our culture and, like, how we grew up, it's still something that we've connected on as well, too.

John Maher (00:36:25):

Yeah. Sure!

Gilcy ([00:36:25](00:36:25)):

Um, and I know like Sailor Moon has obviously been like dubbed in so many different languages. Um, it can't just be Tagalog. But it's kind of, I don't know. I don't know where I was going with this. But it's reached— it's— what is the word? It has a lot of cross-cultural things.

John Maher ([00:36:43](00:36:43)):

Universalities is the word.

Drucilla ([00:36:45](00:36:45)):

Global appeal?

Gilcy ([00:36:45](00:36:45)):

Yes! Universal? Okay.

John Maher ([00:36:45](00:36:45)):

You're looking for universality or global appeal.

Gilcy ([00:36:50](00:36:50)):

Universality. [struggling with pronouncing the word for an embarrassingly long amount of time in the background]

John Maher ([00:36:51](00:36:51)):

I, it is. It's got a universality to it. Um, for, for a lot of reasons. I mean, one being, I am not, I, I did not grow up a fem in any capacity, but I would imagine that in most patriarchal cultures, there is a fantasy for women and femmes who want to believe that they can own their body and the power that they have within them and use it for good and have control over themselves in, uh, in society in general.

Gilcy ([00:37:30](00:37:30)):

Yeah.

John Maher ([00:37:30](00:37:30)):

And like, there's a lot of that too, almost all magical girl, you know? And, and, and of course there's the desire to be special and to be unique and perceived as such. But not otherized for it. Which is also a universal thing.

Drucilla ([00:37:46](00:37:46)):

And I think a big draw for Sailor Moon, for Usagi in particular, is that you can be clumsy and not great at school. Not great at really anything except frisbee. But be...not only be beautiful, but also get stuff done.

Gilcy ([00:38:09](00:38:09)):

Yeah.

Drucilla ([00:38:09](00:38:09)):

You know, you can be bad ass. Uh, you can fight against a great evil or a small evil, um, and you can be, you know, women contain multitudes. Like, you can be all of these things. It doesn't have to be one or the other.

Gilcy (00:38:24):

Yeah. What's great about Sailor Moon is that there is no set, set thing? Set trope. For what a girl or a woman is. Like, take, for example, even the core Sailor Scouts, right? Ami is this super shy, super bookish nerd. And then there's, Makoto, who's super athletic, super tomboy-ish, and Usagi is...one could argue she's usually she's the trope that says "I'm the damsel in distress" because she just cries a lot. She's very whiny in the first episode. And she— you kind of get to see her grow into her own. But it's very nice that Sailor Moon says, "look, there are— women are very, multi-faceted. Girls are very multifaceted. But they can still get stuff done". And it doesn't matter how they act. It's more of, I guess, their heart.

John Maher (00:39:19):

Which I again, I think makes this whole, you know, which, which makes the transformation sequence even more interesting because the transformation sequences for all of these girls is focused so clearly on like on how they become more beautiful. And more like, I mean, beautiful is probably the right word. It's, it's, it's a, it's an exaggeration of the sexuality of the teen girl. Which OOH. But also then they take that sexuality and—

Gilcy (00:39:50):

Wield it.

John Maher (00:39:51):

Wield it. And do powerful, like commit powerful acts. And change the world through it. There's lots of ways in which you could go and compare that to mythology. But this is not, you know, I mean, you, you mentioned damsel in distress Gilcy. This is not Helen of Troy, right? This is not someone who's just like, you know, a beautiful woman waiting for a man to come get her like they are—

Gilcy (00:40:15):

Yeah, exactly. Like Usagi's transformation item is literally a compact mirror in one of the seasons and a compact mirror is very much a thing of femininity. It's something that's part of makeup. And usually with society, they think makeup is a very feminine thing. And it's, it's nice to see something that quote unquote is feminine is empowered and it's kind of like weaponized and it is something that makes them stronger.

John Maher (00:40:49):

Ah, look, this stuff is fascinating. It's really fascinating for a lot of reasons, the way in which Sailor Moon.you know, when we were putting together the a Hundred Sequences that Shaped Animation on Vulture, we did not include the She-Ra, you know, the She-Ra transformation sequence. We included the Sailor Moon transformation sequence. And I think some people argued it was the wrong call. Sort of the same reason that people argued that including the Cowboy Bebop intro was the wrong call because the Bebop intro was SO rooted in the animations of Saul Bass and the sixties for like the James Bond movies that people were like, that was a pastiche. But the whole show was a pastiche for Cowboy Bebop and Archer and the Venture brothers didn't. I think those, those sequences aped Bebop as much as they age Saul Bass. In fact, I don't think they would have even thought of the Saul bass sequences without

well Archer maybe. And I think that's as important for Sailor Moon too. Because when you talk about like, when we were putting together the Vulture list and we didn't put the She-Ra transformation sequence in because the Sailor Moon one really, really cemented it as a trope in later magical girl shows and other, I mean, other anime. While also it's, I don't know. It felt to us when we were taught, when we were talking about it. It was both the quintessential version of it and the most influential, even though there were earlier sequences that it took from. Whoever blurbed it, I forget who it was. I'm sorry, whoever blurbed it! It might've been, um, it might've been Amelia Cook of Anime Feminists. But— and it might not have been her. I honestly don't remember who wrote this. Or whoever wrote this piece. The blurb literally mentions that it influenced, She-Ra and the Princesses of Power. And honestly, I think it did. She-Ra Princess of Powers animation, you know, like transformation sequence clearly influenced Sailor Moon. But Sailor Moon's clearly influenced She-Ra and the Princesses of Powers' version as much as She-Ra did. The original She-Ra. And, and isn't that something! You know, we already talked about how it influenced Steven Universe.

Gilcy (00:43:02):

Right. The creator is like—sorry—but just the creator is just such a huge Sailor Moon fan. I mean, even with Steven Universe, there was a cameo of one of the Sailor Moon's manga. I can link it. I'll, I'll send you the link so that the viewers can see it. But there's a volume of a Sailor Moon manga in Steven's drawer... Drawer? Drawer? [Man really struggling with pronouncing things today] In the, the episode is called House Guests. And it's the first season episode 27. And it's just really cool. How, how influential Sailor Moon has been. Like, even though it's an older anime, it's, it's popping up in a lot of modern things.

John Maher (00:43:45):
Well.

Gilcy (00:43:45):
Go ahead!

John Maher (00:43:45):

Is it an older—IS it an older anime? And then we get into a whole other series of questions here. Which is how do we determine "older animes"? I mean, the first anime that hit American shores came in 1958. 1958! Think about that. It took another 50 years— 58 to 68; 68 to 78; now— 40 years! 78 to 88; 88 to 98;— 40 years for like Cowboy Bebop. Right? Which I think 39 years for Toonami. So the history of anime hitting the U.S. Is fascinating for a lot of reasons. But if you want to talk about really like when the animate boom began here, yes, you have to talk about the nineties and you have to talk about technology. Because you specifically have to talk about how before VHS, there was no way to get anime here, aside from whether or not a television show, a television network was going to broadcast it. At which point you had to send film! Like you had to send film! So there was a very good reason why in the like eighties, nobody was sending a ton of anime to the United States to stream to, to, to broadcast on television. Because you would have had to send copies of the films. Once VHS technology became a thing and Betamax. RIP. Pour out a little liquor for Betamax. It suddenly became a possibility. And that's why you have so many fan dubs in the early nineties. Because people could get these VHS's of untranslated, Japanese anime and start translating them. In fact, a D-I-C DiC is not the first version of Sailor Moons hit American shores. A.D. Vision was! That came in '92. It was VHS. And that was, uh, a company that brought that is more famous for bringing Neon Genesis Evangelian. Um, but, but they

brought, they brought the first two seasons of Sailor Moon to the US. Three years before most people watched it.

Drucilla (00:45:48):

Yeah. And I, when I was doing prep for the podcast, um, I read a book called The Incredible Untold Story of Sailor Moon by Shane Black. And, um, I mean, I have thoughts about this book as a history of Sailor Moon that I won't go into now. But, uh, but yeah, he talks about how Sailor Moon was in the U.S. and it did not do well. And then right around this time you started getting these major... He says Pokemon was a huge wake up call to U.S. TV distributors. With like, "oh hey, these cartoons from Japan actually can sell. They make money. Why don't we try these?" And then that's when you start getting Sailor Moon being relicensed by DiC them, putting out the first two seasons. And before we go too far away from, from the transformation sequence talk, um, something else that, that Shane Black says in that book. It was something that I'd never considered before and I really liked it. How Usagi actually has two transformation sequences. You have the one that everyone knows, obviously, Sailor Moon. But she also transforms into the moon princess.

Gilcy (00:47:17):

Ah that's right she does!

Drucilla (00:47:19):

And it's, it's not flashy. Usually it's just, you know, like a crossfade and she's wearing it. But in a weird way, she is arguably more powerful in her princess, feminine attire than she is in her warrior gear.

John Maher (00:47:36):

Oh yeah. And there's a whole Japanese history here. Like Japanese mythology history here, but I will let somebody else, uh, who is not a—you know—white dude explain. But, um, but you know, I—that recalls for me— did any of you watch, um, Tale of the Princess Kaguya? The uh, the Isao Takahata anime? So he's another— he, I mentioned him earlier. He's— he and Miyazaki were the two great creators of— at Studio Ghibli. And Takahata was in the business way before Miyazaki. Like he—the two— like Miyazaki, he'd got his start working for Takahata. Which is interesting because Takahata was not an animator. He was a writer. He worked almost exclusively in animation. But he never drew. He was just very exacting of his animators. So his films are very interesting for that perspective among others. The Tale of the Princess Kaguya is a ver— is, is an adaptation of a very traditional Japanese tale. Which is the Tale of the Bamboo Cutter. And it's, uh, for anyone who's listening, who doesn't know this tale. Basically, a bamboo cutter goes into the woods. Chops into a piece of bamboo that is glowing and finds a tiny princess. Grows into a girl. It grows into a princess. And eventually, um, she is taken by the court of the Buddha. I think, if I'm remembering this correctly. Basically like taken to the Moon. And she transforms into a moon princess. And her transformation is sort of beautiful and terrible because she loses all her memories and attachments to earth. She becomes someone else entirely. And, and, and her power is rooted in her position as a princess. Which is, in itself, a very— someone with a better knowledge of how Japan perceived royalty than I, could probably interpret this more effectively. But I do—I do think that's an interesting parallel.

Drucilla (00:49:28):

I think I've seen an adaptation of Kaguya. But I, I think it was a movie. Not a, like, show.

John Maher (00:49:35):

It's a—it's a movie.

Drucilla (00:49:36):

Oh okay. Then I think I have seen it. It was a long time ago. But yes. I do remember that final scene of her leaving, but also like looking back at her parents and knowing that she's not going to remember them.

John Maher (00:49:50):

It's the opposite, right? She achieves power by becoming the Moon Princess, but actually she's powerless over her fate. Which is a very complicated parallel.

Drucilla (00:49:59):

Which, I think, you know, lines up really well with Sailor Moon, because the whole thing is what you're destined for. Like your—you can't change your destiny. Like, she loved this guy in a past life and they're in love in this one. Her friends were her bodyguards basically in the past life. And now they're her bodyguards again. She can't just be a normal girl, which is a recurring something that she fights against a lot. She just wants to be a normal girl. But she has this responsibility to protect the Silver Crystal. And, uh, there's no stopping it. She, she can't just wash her hands of it because the only thing that will protect her friends, her family, the earth is this crystal. And she's the only one that can use it. And so any other topics that you wanted to dive into?

John Maher (00:50:57):

Well, I think I hit a lot of the stuff that I want to talk about. I mean, if you guys have questions for me, you should, you should ask them. God only knows if I have answers. I have. I—like I said, I've seen very little Sailor Moon. Um, I think I've said I've seen none. That's not entirely true. Uh, I've seen a little bit of Sailor Moon. And I had an ex who would call me Tuxedo Mask sometimes. Which made me upset because I knew he was a shi— sorry. I knew he was a bad guy.

Gilcy & Drucilla (00:51:26):

[laughter]

Drucilla (00:51:28):

And the crazy thing is, uh, you know. If— this opens up a whole other can of worms that we like, we can't even get into,

Gilcy (00:51:36):

I think it just needs to be a whole—

Drucilla (00:51:38):

The manga—

Gilcy (00:51:38):

A whole episode on its own. Honestly. Where we talk about the ages.

Drucilla (00:51:42):

[laughter] Yeah exactly!

Gilcy (00:51:42):

And the sexualization of these 14 year old girls.

Drucilla (00:51:47):

But like the idea of manga adaptations into anime. Because their age gap is not that drastic. In the manga, he is in high school and they're two years apart, maybe three. But for some reason, they made that change in the anime. And I was thinking about how— I am not like— a lot of people don't like the original adaptation of Fullmetal Alchemist. You know, obviously like the manga was still going on when they were making the show and so it just completely diverges. Sort of very similar to what Sailor Moon does. And then some people, some people swear that Fullmetal Alchemist Brotherhood is better because it adapts it a lot more closely. But then—.

John Maher (00:52:35):

[chuckles] I'm leaving my opinion off of this. I'm not—I'm not saying anything.

Drucilla (00:52:37):

You get—

Gilcy (00:52:41):

Oh no.

Drucilla (00:52:42):

But see—that's, it's sort of the same thing with Sailor Moon and Sailor Moon Crystal.

Gilcy (00:52:47):

Right.

Drucilla (00:52:47):

Because the original anime, the nineties anime is very, very different from the manga because they were being produced at the same time. And ultimately the anime went off in different directions. You know, it stuck to like a bare outline of what Takeuchi was doing. And.. But with Crystal, they had everything. And so they adapted everything almost exactly as it is in a manga. There are some changes that I think they did for the better. And then there are changes that maybe they changed in regards to the times. Like I'm specifically thinking of when in the anime, she gets drunk and passes out and Tuxedo Kamen kisses her without her consent. In Crystal, they change it to where she's just sleepy. He still kisses her, but she's not drunk when he does it. But you know, I think—

John Maher (00:53:47):

We love a post-hoc rationalization.

Drucilla (00:53:50):

Yeah. [laugh] But yeah. It's— with Crystal being such a straight adaptation. I don't think, I mean, I think I said in the last episode that people who love Sailor Moon love the nineties anime. That's why they love Sailor Moon. When they talk about Sailor Moon, they're talking about that anime. They're not talking about the manga. They're not talking about Crystal. I think people hate on Crystal so much because they went into it, expecting it to be basically the nineties anime. Or they were expecting the manga to be closer to the nineties anime. And it really wasn't. Yeah. And it's so interesting because you can see— bringing it all back around. This whole sexualization of young women, because I think I showed Gilcy the comparison between nineties Moon Princess, Usagi.

Gilcy (00:54:41):

Ah yes. The dress.

Drucilla (00:54:41):

And Crystal Usagi. And it's like, she has had a boob job. And the main female villain, her dress is much more revealing and she has a much more prominent bust. It's so interesting. The... I guess, you know, the changing with the times, I don't know.

Gilcy (00:55:02):

And also with, with the Sailor Moon Crystal, how the girls are drawn. They're very, I know they're closer to the manga. But I prefer it as the, the older version, because I don't know. The, the way that they're drawn. They're very slender. They're very long and lean and no one looks like that. Like I get that they're trying to be as close to the manga as possible. But what I liked about the, the older, like the nineties version was that they were drawn less like toothpicks and more—er closer to what humans actually look like.

Drucilla (00:55:37):

They had meat on their bones.

Gilcy (00:55:38):

Yes! They had meat!

Drucilla (00:55:40):

They were still thin, but they had meat on their bones. And that's why that was a really prominent criticism of Crystal. When they did Sailor Moon Eternal, they adapted season four into the two movies. They brought on one of the original character designers from the nineties Sailor Moon. I'm forgetting their name. I'm so sorry, uh, to do the character designs for this movie,

John Maher (00:56:05):

I think criticism of, of how the characters are drawn and body shape is really fascinating for me for a variety of reasons. One of which being that Japanese animation often seems like it has more realistic portrayals of body types and shapes than American animation. Not always, but a lot of the great American animation we talk about—not the crappy stuff in the eighties where it's just like action nonsense. A lot of those eighties shows in the U.S. have very, sort of, like, crazy buff man and crazy— and they're not accurate, but they're at least sort of vaguely rooted in physiology. Japanese shows are a lot more. Japanese animation is closer often to— aside from the Chibi style—anime tends to have a

very, not realistic portrayal. But less iconographical, right? You're not talking about what we now in the U.S. call the CalArts style. Which means nothing. It doesn't mean anything. We're not even talking about the IPA style, the early limited animation. You're not talking about—like Fred Flintstone is not an accurate body type either. You know, Gerald McBoing-Boing is not an accurate body type. Uh, Dexter from Dexter's Laboratory is not an accurate body type. Dee Dee is not an accurate body type.

Gilcy (00:57:23):

According to Sailor Moon Crystal, Dee Dee is!

John Maher (00:57:27):

Nigel—well. And that's where it gets—that's where it gets interesting. But like, you know, think of, think of American animation. Like Nigel Thornberry. Like not exactly, you're not talking about like someone with a very, uh, he—his head is like, like his head is half my body size. Um, you know, and maybe, maybe that's how Tim Curry's voice sounds when, when manifested into an animated, like whatever. But, so I think there might almost, in some ways, be undue criticism to Japanese animation. In terms of realistic nature of how a body is characterized. At the same time, Japanese animation has a very similar exaggeration to what we see in some ways in American comic books. Where you're talking about massive breasts, massive butts, waists that basically don't exist. And that, in some ways that's even more complicated, right? You're talking about— that's iconography of sexualization. And yeah, it's fan service-y often because there was this pivot from people who wa— And I don't know when this happened. I mean, maybe it was the eighties. When adult animation first started to become a thing. And the seventies in comic books, in the U.S. at least. When after the sixties, alt-comics movement really pushed things in a, in a darker direction. DC and Marvel kind of pivoted to even darker stories. Not that Marvel wasn't already kind of dark, but they got hornier in the seventies for sure. And the characters during the eighties in particular got way sexier. And at that point, one, kind of, was prompted to ask: who's reading these comics? Is an outrageously busty Wonder Woman, really for like 10-year-olds that this comic book was supposed to be for, in the fifties? I mean, fine. Okay. Ten-year-old old boys are horny, whatever, but like, not like— what?! Like that?! Honestly, I was a 10 year old boy and I never, like, I never would have— never would have read a comic book specifically to see Wonder Woman, half naked. The question of fan service itself is: who are the audiences at this point? And that brings us, to an extent, back to my question for the two of you earlier, that neither of you answered. So I'm putting you on the spot right now. Is it a shōnen or a shōjo ? Is this show for young women? Or is this show for young boys? Or for like teenage boys? Who is the show for?

Gilcy (00:59:40):

See, it's weird. It's weird because when Sailor Moon does feminism, they do it pretty well. Because again, back to the conversation of, there is no particular type of girl that can be strong. There's a lot of portrayals of women as having different personality types and they are still strong. But yet it's like, YES women empowerment! Yes, there's even an episode where Usagi is trying to make a wedding dress. And her teacher is being married. And it was one of those instances where typically in, I guess, typically in stories, it's usually the girl that's going after the guy. And being weepy, "please take me back", blah, blah, blah. But for this episode, the guy was going up to the woman and being like, "please take me back" and he brought flowers. And it's something that I don't see as often in media. And it just, when Sailor Moon does feminism, I think it does it pretty well. But when it comes to the panty shots and the removal of gender things and sexuality. Questionable. So I don't know. There's, can I say it's both? I don't know Drucilla, what do you think?

Drucilla (01:01:01):

I really want to claim it as shōjo. But I think the manga is definitely shōjo because as we talked about last episode, it's more of a romance that just happens to have a magical aspects in it. But the anime is the opposite. It is a magical girl show that just happens to have a little bit of romance in it, however poorly it's done. Um, I look at shows like Love Is War and my first instinct is, "oh, that's a shōjo", because it's a romantic comedy. But no it's classified as shōnen. And so, I think it, I think Sailor Moon sits on the fence. But ultimately I would classify it as shōjo, because to me shōnen is more action filled. Whereas the anime takes a lot of time to focus on the girls and their interactions with themselves and their schoolmates and random people that they meet.

Gilcy (01:02:08):

Well, then wouldn't that also be like slice of life? Like it wouldn't necessarily be shōjo or shōnen.

Drucilla (01:02:16):

No, because you still have the magical girl aspect to it. And I don't think I would— like there's... Okay. I may get roasted for this, but there are like, there are stakes in Sailor Moon. Whereas I think in a lot of slice of life stuff, you don't really have those types of stakes. So yeah, I think my, I think my ultimate opinion is it sits, it really sits on the line, but I think I got to give it to shōjo. Because it just feels like there are, there's more attention given to everything that's not the fighting and the transformation. And, and I'll be the first to admit I've complained a lot this season that, you know, Usagi is kind of lame when it comes to fighting. And I wish she was a bit more tougher.

Gilcy (01:03:14):

Mhmm.

Drucilla (01:03:14):

And I wish we saw more tactical stuff—

Gilcy (01:03:17):

Right.

Drucilla (01:03:17):

From Ami. You know, I wish we saw more of the girls fighting together. Having said that, I also think a lot of the reasons why people love this anime so much is because you spend so much time with the girls as girls. Not as Sailor Scouts, but as their civilian selves.

John Maher (01:03:39):

So I'm going to challenge a little bit, this, this conception here, um, Drucilla specifically because I don't think, well, let's use an example that you used earlier in this conversation. Let's, let's use Fullmetal Alchemist. I would argue that the vast majority of Fullmetal Alchemist is not fighting or even adventure. It's the exploration of interpersonal relationships and the unpacking of traumatic experiences and the unraveling of mysteries. In both iterations, right? In both Fullmetal Alchemist and Fullmetal Alchemist Brotherhood. And this is something that we see in a lot of anime. Which is a painstaking approach to narrative that involves a whole lot of expository conversation that both ratchets up the tensions between characters while explaining their motivations and how they got there. And I would argue that

that FMA is the prototypical shōnen. Now, I will, once again, note that I have not seen Sailor Moon. So I don't [laughs] like don't, don't listen to me. But based on what you just said, that sort of one of my questions. Which is, is it all that different from a shōnen that is more focused on character development than fighting? Like it's, it's clearly not Dragon Ball-Z.

Gilcy (01:05:00):

And also going into—

John Maher (01:05:00):

Like we can all agree on this.

Gilcy (01:05:02):

Right. I was also going to say, um, I don't know if any of you have seen Soul Eater. Um, but that's also classified as a shōnen, but there's a lot that goes in behind the characters and the motives of why they are in this school. There's even a whole episode about the sword. And I don't know, it just, it feels like Sailor Moon should be both. I know that's such a cop-out answer.

Drucilla (01:05:32):

And see when John said that, my first instinct was to walk back on what I just said and say, "oh, well, you don't really see that in Sailor Moon", because for the most part, every episode stands on its own. And I feel like you don't see a lot of serialization. Because they were having to balloon out a 13 chapter manga into a 46 episode anime. And I'm not knocking filler, uh, by no means. Because the filler is what makes Sailor Moon great, because you have these opportunities to see the girls interacting. But I also think, you know, I—[sigh of frustration] I'm going to drop— we also have a Tik Tok. [laugh] And I've just made a Tik Tok for our channel @moonmomentpod. Find us there! I talked about the ski bunny episode in which the girls, uh, specifically Usagi and Rei end up getting trapped by a monster. And they have this conversation about ultimately them not fighting over Tuxedo Kamen. And you know, I said on the Tik Tok that this is really the first episode of where I can see that these girls are really friends. Because I feel like the show tells us stuff a lot, but it doesn't show us. And I think it's just a victim of the, I dunno, non serialization of it. And cause I mean, again, shows today are so tight. Shows can be so tight depending on who the audience is for. What platform it's going on. And yeah, my first instinct, I don't know, it's weird. My first instinct was to walk back on what I just said. And said, no, no, no, they don't have interpersonal relationships. Like you don't see them getting along, but I guess when you put it that way...Mmm... but also...

John Maher (01:07:38):

Uh, to be fair, I'm causing you some trouble. I think it's fairly clearly a, a shōjo. I, I think what is a good question here is: In the United States, do those categories matter as much as they do in Japan, right? So in Japan, shōjo are oriented toward young women. 8-15 I think is the general range. And shōnen are oriented toward young men. You know, pre-teens, early teens. Is it relevant in the United States? Does it matter if it's a shōjo in Japan? We would call it, that here to honor the way that the Japanese would consider it. As a sub genre or as a, as a particular target audience and anime. But that asks some really interesting questions when, when you talk about the audiences for enemy in the United States. Are they very, very different? And I think in a lot of ways, they are. A lot of shows that I would assume, or, you know, a lot of shows that the, that are shōjo like clear, obvious shōjo, the two of you have definitely

seen and been interested in. And probably were when you were 14 year olds and you were girls at that point. And—

Gilcy (01:08:47):

Oh, hell yeah! When I was younger, I was violent! I was like, "yes! Let's watch them beat each other up!"

John Maher (01:08:52):

Right! A hundred percent! And I, I loved Anohana. I still love Your Lie in April. I love these shows that are saccharin, beautiful, heartbreaking, preteen dramas. And these are, these are shows that like—well, Violet Evergarden is fascinating because it's a, it's a post-war show, which adds like a whole other level to it.

Gilcy (01:09:13):

GORGEOUS animation.

John Maher (01:09:13):

But I—no I love, I love all that. Oh my god. It's so good. It's so good. That's a— it's Kyoto, right? It's Kyoani

Gilcy (01:09:20):

You would know it more than I do.

John Maher (01:09:22):

Yeah. It's Kyoani. It's a Kyoto animation. I thought so. You can always tell what their style is. They also did. Um, another magical girl anime actually. God, what's it called? Um, Sound! Euphonium is not the one I'm thinking of. But that's really good. Uhh god, what is it? They had a series. That has a girl. She's magical. [frustrated noises]

Drucilla (01:09:44):

You gotta to give me more than that. If I'm gonna try!

John Maher (01:09:47):

Hold on. It's the—it's the me—AH! The Melancholy of Haruhi Suzumiya

Gilcy (01:09:52):

OH!

Drucilla (01:09:53):

Oh!

John (01:09:53):

Um—

Gilcy (01:09:55):

Okay! I didn't like that show either.

Drucilla (01:09:57):
I did NOT like show.

John Maher (01:09:57):
What?! Really?!

Drucilla (01:09:59):
I just, I couldn't stand Haruhi!

Gilcy (01:10:00):
I couldn't do it! I couldn't do it!

John Maher (01:10:00):
Ya'll wildin'.

Gilcy (01:10:02):
Yeah.I think I got through like half of the first season and I just like gave up. Because she was just so annoying. I'm so sorry.

Drucilla (01:10:12):
I did watch a very—

John Maher (01:10:12):
No. It's okay. [clearly very heartbroken and NOT okay disappointment]

Drucilla (01:10:12):
Very fascinating, like 40 minute long video that talked about the Endless Eight. That was fascinating to watch. But I did not finish the actual anime.

Gilcy (01:10:23):
Yeah...

John Maher (01:10:25):
The way that you stream it in the U.S. is different from how it was broadcasted in Japan.

Gilcy (01:10:29):
Yeah. I saw that. The weird, there's like a weird— there's two different ways to watch it. Right. There's the way that they, it aired in the U.S. And then there's— it like skips around.

John Maher (01:10:41):
Yeah.

Gilcy (01:10:41):

It's kind of weird.

John Maher (01:10:42):

Listen, everyone's got their own take on stuff. I think it's great.

Drucilla (01:10:47):

But to go back to your question about, "does it matter in the U.S". I think it matters only as shorthand because if you're describing, and obviously it only works for people who are, you know, quote unquote in the know. But if you're describing a show to a friend, "Hey, I just saw this. It's really cool. It's a shōjo". That gives you this. Okay. So I can understand. I have an idea of what to expect. And so I think, it only, for us in the U.S. It only matters as much as a reference point. But I mean, also I think questioning whether something falls into a certain category is really important. Just because it makes you think about something. And, I know a piece of media in a completely different way.

John Maher (01:11:40):

Well, I think that's, I think that's true. I think it's nice for a shorthand. Especially among people who love anime. Although with a show like Sailor Moon, it's almost pointless. Specifically, I think, because you're talking about a show that has broken through into the mainstream from anime. To the point where MY MOM has heard of Sailor Moon. She doesn't know anything about it, but she knows that it is an anime that has pretty girls in it. That's like enough. So I think that's, I think in, in the case of something like Sailor Moon it almost doesn't matter whether or not it is shōjo or, or shōnen. And then maybe the conversation veers into that. Which is that with a show is big as Sailor Moon, is it relevant? How it was conceived in Japan for American audiences? Is that relevant? Whereas with a show that is much less well-known here, even if it's a well-known show there, right? Like Paradise Kiss, which is a classic josei at this point. Trying to explain that to someone here, you're never going to try to get someone into Paradise Kiss unless they already know anime, but just aren't into josei. At which point you'd be like, "well, if you've never seen a josei, let me tell you about Paradise Kiss". So I think that's, at some point, it brings us back to the fact that while anime has broken very deeply into American culture, in a lot of ways. There are still places where people really don't know. I think it is likely that a lot of people are going to find Cowboy Bebop for the first time through the live action adaptation. Even though that ACTUALLY makes my blood boil. Like, like literally makes my blood boil. And I'm into it, whatever, whatever, like, you know, go make that money. I mean, you know. I hope John Cho makes that bread!

Gilcy (01:13:18):

I'm just thinking of the people that that's saw, like Death Note and their first thing is the live action Death Note. Ohhh...[sigh of frustration] I— don't watch the live action Death Note.

Drucilla (01:13:27):

Well. I mean, we all felt the same way when we were watching Crystal every other week. Man, everyone's, you know, there's going to be a whole generation of their first—cause at that point, I can't remember if the Viz dub had come out yet. Or if it was going to come out soon. There was a whole generation of their first experience of Sailor Moon was Crystal. And you had, I mean, besides the not great plot stuff, you also had really crappy looking animation. And I understand there's been discussions about that. The fact that it was, it was made to stream versus being put on TV and then put on a streaming platform. There's not as much money behind those shows that are made to go directly online.

And so that's kind of why it looks so janky in places. What you said about the just general zeitgeist of anime growing and manga too, you also, you know, you have this five—10 years ago, you have like, no one would know what josei is, but now the people who were targeted like, "Hey, here's a shōjo anime for you to watch" are now old enough to where they can be targeted. Like, "hey, here's a josei to watch. So I think, um, it's just one of those things where you just have to wait. And the audience will grow because they have grown up with this idea of anime. And you know, it's just over time, it'll grow into it.

John Maher (01:14:55):
Next stop, a Sailor Moon josei.

Gilcy (01:15:00):
You know want I want?! I want Sailor Uranus and Sailors Saturn. Give that to me.

Drucilla (01:15:05):
Neptune.

Gilcy (01:15:05):
Would love that!

Drucilla (01:15:05):
Saturn is 12 years old.

Gilcy (01:15:08):
NEPTUNE! Sorry.

Drucilla (01:15:09):
We're talking about AGE!

Gilcy (01:15:10):
Oh god NO! Not! Ah! No! Sailor Neptune!

Drucilla (01:15:10):
Talk about AGE DIFFERENCES!

Gilcy (01:15:10):
PLEASE NO!

All (01:15:10):
[uproarious laughter].

Gilcy (01:15:10):
I—

John Maher (01:15:18):

Gilcy— Gilcy just self canceled. I—you know.

Gilcy (01:15:22):

Oh NO!

John Maher (01:15:22):

I thought that if anyone was going to cancel themselves on this chat, it would be the white man among the three of us. You know what Gilcy, you just did some WORK right there girl.

Gilcy (01:15:31):

[laughing from shame in the background] I do NOT ship them together!

Drucilla & John Maher (01:15:36):

[laughter]

Gilcy (01:15:36):

Sailor Uranus! I want something of those two because they don't have enough screen time together. At least I don't think. And I also would love to have more of Makoto and her— I'm just a big fan of Makoto and in and am in love with her. So I would like that too. Aged up.

Drucilla (01:15:57):

I mean, there's, there's so much opportunity to do more on the Sailor Moon universe, but I mean, if you're as rich as Takeuchi is, you don't need to. Alright! I mean, we've covered a lot of ground.

John Maher (01:16:08):

I hope so 'cause I don't know anything else about anything at all. Actually. Like I've like I've expended everything even remotely resembling the manga space.

Drucilla (01:16:16):

No. It's really fascinating to think that, I mean, it's kind of sad almost to think that in a weird way, Disney is partially responsible for magical girl genre. As if they don't have enough IPs under their control now.

John Maher (01:16:33):

Yeah...

Drucilla (01:16:33):

Although, I did do a Tik Tok where I talked about how the Walt Disney corporation owned the English rights to Sailor Moon for a very brief time.

John Maher (01:16:43):

I will say that it is worth noting that just because Disney had a property that influenced the genre, I don't think, I don't think Disney gets to claim the magical girl.

Drucilla (01:16:54):

Yeah I agree.

John Maher (01:16:54):

I mean, there's a lot of things that Disney can claim for sure. And of course the magical girl genre has a very deep root in any kind of folklore. Which Disney mined as much as it possibly could. For reasons that are worth exploring in another podcast. But I don't think Disney gets to claim this one. You want to talk about how the young women, protagonists of Disney made all of animation, have a focus on young girl and young woman protagonists in a certain sense for a certain type of story. I think it's sort of inevitable that in some ways Disney was going to have an influence on it. But I, when we talk about these, these anime, we're not talking about anime that are indebted to Disney. In fact, I can't imagine a Disney movie of the same era as Sailor Moon in which the heroine wielded a weapon and fought evil herself. Think about the movies that came out at the same time that Sailor Moon—1992, right? 1992 Disney movies.

Drucilla (01:17:56):
I think Aladdin came out in 1992.

John Maher (01:17:56):
Aladdin came out in 1992. It was still a movie in which Jasmine's predominant power was seducing Jafar. Fake seducing Jafar.

Gilcy (01:18:08):
Mhmm.

John Maher (01:18:08):
You can't even compare it. Like I don't think Disney would have even tried. Belle's power. Ariel's power. They were still fundamentally stereotypically feminine, conversational, convincing people of things. Having that starry eyed, wish to see something bigger than what they wanted. I don't think Disney could have even tried. Like I don't think it would have conceived of the possibility. Disney had an easier time doing that with animal characters than it did with actual young women. And I would have to look to see if there were any young women, animal characters that Disney did. Disney animators went off and made their own movies with like The Secret of NIMH, Mrs. Brisby. That was a tough enterprising female lead. But—.

Gilcy (01:18:49):
No Disney gets a lot. No.

John Maher (01:18:50):
Disney doesn't get this one. They're not allowed to have Sailor Moon.

Drucilla (01:18:52):
No, I'm I'm on board.

John Maher (01:18:53):
They can't take it away!

Drucilla (01:18:53):

I don't want to, I don't want to give Disney Sailor Moon.

Gilcy (01:18:56):

Yeah. Booo!

John Maher (01:18:57):

Yeah. Get out of here! They aren't allowed. They didn't distribute it. They didn't create it. They don't get credit for it. Even with the Mary Poppins angle. Forget it. No, no chance. They have enough.

Drucilla (01:19:08):

Yeah.

John Maher (01:19:08):

Bob Iger has enough. My God.

Gilcy (01:19:10):

So I think—

Drucilla (01:19:10):

Yeah!

Gilcy (01:19:11):

Would that wrap up the—our episode?

John Maher (01:19:14):

No, we can't leave it with Bob Iger! We've gotta say something else!

Drucilla (01:19:18):

Okay. Really quick. Something that I wanted to say in our last episode, but did not have a chance! That, if you are familiar with the DiC version, you know that when Sailor Moon goes to fight Beryl, a very kick-butt song called Carry On comes on. It is very iconic. However, during the original Japanese, obviously does not have that song. I was shocked because I did not remember this. The song that plays over her fight with Beryl is the theme song to Sailor Moon. And there's something about that song being there. I thought I was done crying and then that song came on and it just, for some reason, it just hits differently. And you know, it just got me thinking, like I've talked—I won't go into all of it here. Cause I've talked a lot about the sound design and the music for the Japanese version versus the dub. Music and sound design isn't something I think about a lot in anime. And it's the same thing sort of with just movies in general. I may occasionally notice a score or two, but for the most part I don't. But this rewatch something just clicked and so many things stood out. Again, you'll never take Carry On away from me. But something about having the theme playing while Sailor Moon fights Berryl for the last time and, spoiler alert, dies doing it to it. It's just, there's something so powerful about that.

Gilcy (01:20:59):

A lot of crying.

Drucilla (01:21:00):
I cried. Again.

John Maher (01:21:03):
They're important. Music cues are truly very important. And Drucilla, it's like midnight girl.

All (01:21:11):
[laughter]

John Maher (01:21:11):
[utterly distressed] Why'd you— Why'd you JUST bring up music cues?! I can go for HOURS.

Drucilla (01:21:11):
I'm SORRY!

Gilcy (01:21:12):
I guess this just means you have to come back to the show.

John Maher (01:21:16):
UGH! We should've just ended with Bob Iger.

All (01:21:19):
[laughter]

John Maher (01:21:19):
Yeah. I— now I'd love to like watch a couple of representative examples of, of Sailor Moon and listen to the soundtrack. Like hear how it works. But I think I'm gonna wait.

Gilcy (01:21:29):
Alright!

John Maher (01:21:29):
Not tonight!

Gilcy (01:21:29):
So I guess this wraps up our episode! Look forward to the second season. Beginning in November, we will start with episodes 47 through 50. Check out our social media on Twitter and Instagram @moonmomentpod. Don't forget to check out our website at moonmomentpodcast.com. There you'll find show notes and transcripts of every episode.

Drucilla (01:21:53):

So John, where can people find you online if they want to start following you and hear more rants, digressions, everything about anime and animation?

John Maher (01:22:02):

Yeah. I don't want to be found. Don't find me.

Drucilla (01:22:06):

Okay [laughs].

John Maher (01:22:06):

My, uh, my Twitter handle is my name @JohnHMaher, M-A-H-E-R. My newsletter that I am really not writing at all these days and really have to finish. My next iteration of is Tears for Toons. You can find it on letter drop, but it deals with, with animation and, uh, and childhood trauma, principally. Uh, of which there is a whole lot in animation. And I write pretty regularly for Vulture and occasionally for Polygon about animation. So you'll find me around. Twitter is probably the best bet, though.

Drucilla (01:22:39):

And tell people, uh, I'm blanking on the exact name of the article. I'm so sorry, your... Hundred Years of Animation that won an award.

John Maher (01:22:48):

Yeah— oh. Okay, you're sweet.

Drucilla (01:22:50):

I'll put that in the show notes, but everyone should check that out. It is pretty amazing.

Gilcy (01:22:53):

Sometimes John Maher can do things.

John Maher (01:22:55):

You're sweet. Yeah. So my, uh, my best friend, my best friend, Eric Vilas-Boas, and I ran a website called The Dot and Line for five years, uh, where we covered animation. Sort of from a fan perspective. And it got us enough attention for Vulture to ask us to write this piece. Well, ask him. And he, he, he told them he wouldn't do it without me. Which is very sweet. It's called "The Hundred Sequences that Shaped Animation". And it is a history of animation from an American perspective. So there was a lot of Japanese stuff there, but it's, it's focused on American animation and what influenced American animation rather than like a global perspective. Although we, we tried to— anyway, "The Hundred Sequences that Shaped Animation". It's a long list on vulture. In my opinion, it's one of the best resources you can go to, to really kind of understand the history of animation. We start in 1892, we end in 2019 and there are clips for every single sequence. So unlike a book and I love books, but you can watch the sequences. And with animation, which is such a visual art form, I just, I think it's really important to be able to access them. That's on Vulture.com. "The Hundred Sequences that Shaped Animation". I hope you like it.

Drucilla (01:24:03):

As I was reading it. And I got closer and closer to the 1990s, I was like, "is John Maher going to have Sailor Moon on here, if not we might have to throw down".

John Maher (01:24:13):

[laughter]

Drucilla (01:24:13):

Sailor Moon is on that list ladies and gentlemen. So yeah. Um, let us know what you thought of this episode. We'd love to hear your moon moment musings, and you might just get a shout out like earlier in the episode. Obviously, if you'd like to support the podcast, please rate, review, share, subscribe, all that good stuff. It helps Moon Moment stay afloat amidst the vast oceans of podcasts. I'm Drucilla. And I'm Gilcy

Gilcy & Drucilla (01:24:38):

[attempted to say it together but failed miserably] Until next time we'll be back moon! ...Oh.

Drucilla (01:24:44):

That was terrible.

Gilcy (01:24:44):

Okay wait—

Drucilla (01:24:44):

Bye!

Gilcy (01:24:47):

That was so bad! Wait—

All (01:24:48):

[laughter]

Gilcy (01:24:48):

Bye!

Outro (01:24:51):

[Outro music]