

EPISODE 22: THE DECADE REVIEW
2010 - 2019 ANIME ANALYSIS & REVIEW

Note from Jamal:

Hey All!

Thanks for reading the show notes. This is probably the biggest episode I've done to date; even bigger than last week's 2019 Opening Review. Although this isn't the final episode of the year (and a more reflective episode will be coming out next week), it feels like we have already gone on quite a wild and interesting journey, even though it has only been 22 episodes. Thanks for all the support (of simply listening to the episodes) - it honestly keeps me motivated to keep the show running. Speaking of support, I'd really appreciate if you left a REVIEW on Apple Podcasts, so others can see the show in the Animation & Manga category! Enjoy the show the week!

I think it would be impractical to talk about every year that I covered in the episode, as the episode is rather long-winded. Instead, I will discuss the 'highlights' and the most interesting parts of the decade that I spoke about, to avoid repetition (and protect your sanity).

2010: Fullmetal Alchemist: Brotherhood (2009) + Bakemonogatari (2009)
I'm treating 2010 quite informally, as I'm taking a look at the shows that bled (despite them both starting initially into 2009) into the 2010s and still have their names widely recognised, even though we've reached the end of the decade. Both of these anime stand out from a structural point of view; FMAB is very smooth to the extent where it is hard to separate the show into arcs (as it is one coherent, unified narrative). The Monogatari Series (starting with Bakemonogatari (2009)) also had a tiny spot in 2010. Structurally, this anime is constructed to still be largely fluid, however the implementation of 'arcs' and the non-chronological order (assuming you're watching in the release order, or 'Shaft Order' as sometimes called) of the narrative spices things up a bit.

2011: Steins;Gate + Mirai Nikki + Anohana
Steins;Gate taught me one thing and I only started to realise that this was so important just recently. The lesson is that having a story tethered to a wider idea / theme / concept is so valuable in enriching content and progression of that very show. Ideas like deterministic chaos as called by mathematician Edward Norton Lorenz provide us with a new perspective that goes beyond our already existing



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understanding of time travel (unless you're an expert already).

Mirai Nikki is what I think put the 'yandere' archetype on the map. There's not much that I personally liked about *The Future Diaries*, however I admire it for pushing this type of character and sensationalist theme further into the mainstream.

Anohana attempts to be the 'classic tear-jerker' anime and although I am confident that it can succeed in doing so for others, however, I personally was not able to connect that much with this one. With this being said, I still enjoyed it, and is quite well constructed from a thematic point of view. Tackling the topic of loss most definitely seems tricky and I think it was handled with a lot of grace and thought.

2012: *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure* + *Sword Art Online* + *Daily Life of High School Boys* + *Nazo na Kanojo X*

If you're reading this I am almost certain that you are aware of *JoJo Kimyou na Bouken*. What makes me so happy about it is that (hopefully) it never fails to make the anime community laugh and have some fun, whether that is ironic or unironically. Part 6 and beyond will probably be a big name in the 2020s.

Sword Art Online is the arguable catalyst for the contemporary Isekai sub-genre wave. Weirdly enough, *Sword Art Online* is an 'interesting' example to other writers, studios, etc. on how to put together an anime of this type, considering that now it is labelled the 'leader' that began this trend. *SAO* is the show we love to hate and with its success in sales and viewership, it has worked out extremely well for A-1 Pictures. Maybe, just maybe if one confidently keeps up their narrative, no matter how subjectively shoddy, things might just work out for what it is you're trying to portray.

Danshi Koukousei no Nichijou is the anime that sparked my love for sketch-comedy. The simple answer to why I like it is because it is just loads of fun! And I like watching funny things!

I don't know why I watched *Nazo na Kanojo X*. Maybe it was because it looked a bit like *Neon Genesis Evangelion* (1995). Some may consider this show as cursed, but it was a fun time.

2013: *Attack on Titan* + *The Devil Is a Part-Timer*

You should be aware of *Attack On Titan* by now - even if you haven't watched it, the notifications for the arc analysis have infiltrated your phone some way or another. Iyasama's writing is layered and interesting to analyse (that's the gist of everything I've said across the 3 episodes).

Hataraku Maou-Sama came at the perfect time: when the isekai wave was just getting started. Reverse Isekai is a great concept that I wouldn't mind seeing more of, however it is likely to get quite boring if they end up doing the

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same / similar routinely things which we're aware of, such as finding a property, getting a job, etc. I would need to be presented with a new and exciting one first before making a complete judgement.

2014: Haikyuu!! + Ping Pong the Animation

Haikyuu stunned me in how well produced and put together it was; this was one of the first tastes I got of sports anime and it was a very good way to get into it. Ping Pong the Animation on the other hand was a bit more complex, in a good sense. What struck me with this show was how it was able to make a sport have higher stakes than what one would initially think it had. Ping Pong as a sport was transformed into a philosophy, or a way of life and even a conversation between two competitors. This is potentially my favourite of the decade thematically.

2015: How to Raise a Boring Girlfriend

SaeKano is most likely my favourite harem at the moment. The harem genre as a whole provides a lot of breadth and different 'harem setups', however from what I have watched of the genre, there doesn't appear to be as much depth as I would have wanted. SaeKano on the other hand provided a sufficient amount for me, providing an insight into the life of those trying to break into the heavily competitive doujin / doujinshi industry almost from nothing. The show does not shove 'harem stuff' into your face, but subtly threads it into the narrative so it is not lost among all the noise. I was sceptical when I first started this series, but by the end of the second season (I reached it in about 2 weeks) I was almost bawling. Highly recommend for the harem fans.

2016: March Comes in Like a Lion + The Disastrous Life of Saiki K.

3-Gatsu no Lion is a very precious anime to me, as I feel as if it was one of the few out of anything I had watched which showed an almost-perfectly accurate depiction of daily life. Pretty much every event within this narrative is grounded in reality and portrays emotional hardship smoothly, as well as honestly. Saiki K. is a celebration of the comedy genre and shows us what is really possible with a boy who has psychic powers and a bunch of distinct, polarizing characters thrown into one show. The comedy is extremely witty and everybody (including every side character and one-episode-wonder character) has some comedic value to add to the show, providing non-stop laughs across every sketch.

2017: Scum's Wish + Love and Lies

These anime are very similar, so if you are fond of one, you will probably be a fan of the other (Koi to Uso is probably the slightly more PG and long-winded

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version of Kuzu no Honkai). Both are quite buried in Epicureanism / Hedonism (philosophical ideas); whether this is intentional, I'm not so sure. With this being said, as a harem fan I had fun with both of these, but if I was to remain 'neutral' I wouldn't put these on the top of my 'recommendations pile', however I respect how both shows are committed to the concepts they are tethered to (although Kuzu no Honkai is probably a bit more committed).

2018: SSSS Gridman

Personally, I thought that this show did not get the recognition it deserved, considering how smart it was by the end. As a good amount of Studio Trigger works go, there was a bit of risk involved; in this case it was the decision to use 'evident' 3D models for the mechas & kaijus. I would say I was a bit scared initially, but now I look back at it, I think it paid off when one considers the initial look of the kaijus and mechas in the original 'Gridman' show. This show proves that structure can be really taken advantage of, as it is only until the very end of the show that one's perspective of everything they just watched is challenged.

2019: Kaguya-sama: Love is War + Mob Psycho 100 II

I probably regarded Love is War so highly because of my bias to sketch-based comedy, but even if that didn't exist, I believe I would have loved it anyway as it really picks apart the Rom-Com sub-genre and disregards 'progress' within romantic relationships. Also quite a few running jokes. Oh yeah, there's the Chika Dance too.

Although I tried my hardest not to discuss sequels, I think Mob Psycho 100 II has been my favourite anime of 2019, due to how well composed it was from a structural point of view, how visually appealing and consistent it was and finally how tight it was to the themes it initially introduced. Thank you ONE for a beautiful piece of storytelling.

This decade has been wild and I most definitely would not consider putting it down. The 2010's have given me a lot of confidence that anime has so much more to give and we are only just beginning to understand what the flexible and sleek medium of anime has to offer.

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MUSIC IN THIS PRODUCTION:

[8Bit Title Screen](#) by Joth

[Mandatory Overtime](#) by Joth

“Anomaly”
by Eric Matyas
www.soundimage.org

SOURCES REFERENCED IN THIS PRODUCTION:

All the facts on the anime discussed came from [MYANIMELIST](#). Be sure to check out [my personal page](#), where the majority of the links to their designated pages can be found.

Anime discussed:
Fullmetal Alchemist: Brotherhood
Bakemonogatari
The Future Diary
AnoHana
Steins;Gate
Daily Life of High School Boys
Mysterious Girlfriend X
Sword Art Online
JoJo’s Bizarre Adventure
Attack On Titan
The Devil is a Part-Timer!
Kill la Kill
Haikyuu!!
Ping Pong the Animation
How to Raise a Boring Girlfriend
Assassination Classroom
Battlefront Blood Blockade
One Punch Man
My Hero Academia
Mob Psycho 100 (I & II)
The Disasterous Life of Saiki K.
3-Gatsu no Lion
Scum’s Wish
Love and Lies
Darling in the FranXX
Goblin Slayer
SSSS Gridman
Wotakoi: Love is Hard for Otaku.

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