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Race in JoJo's Bizarre Adventure

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Race plays a part in media whether we're aware of it or not, not just on the part of the audience but on the part of the creator as well. For some people the racial stereotypes they witness or are fed through repetitive imagery seem normal to them thus they see nothing wrong with the scenes they create that perpetuate those stereotypes. Anime has been subject to this critique in the United States. Americans are currently in the midst of cancel culture, which sometimes amounts to an unhealthy obsession with outing perceived injustices in entertainment media. In this way, political consideration can hinder audiences' ability to appreciate the art of narrative. At the same time, while fans of anime and manga aren't wrong for citing their favorite entertainment media as examples of amazing storytelling, characters, and settings, but sometimes they turn a blind eye when it does come to light about how, in some series, non-white characters are treated differently from their white counterparts. One of the papers I use in this paper talks about a basketball anime where a Japanese basketball team is trying to prove that hard work is more valuable than pure talent. Most of the antagonists and opponents are foreign but most of the black basketball characters are delinquent in nature and, in one case, a black American is depicted as the brawn to the brain of a white American. This doesn't necessarily mean the Japanese author is aware that they are writing stereotypes, however. The aforementioned paper I'm using on this topic by Anne Lei (2018) is what I will be referencing most throughout this paper as I take a look at JoJo's Bizarre Adventure through this lens. More specifically, I do this

in Part 7, which takes place in 1890 America which is a few years after the civil war, and in Part 6, which focuses on the curious case of Enrico Pucci, a dark-skinned Italian American who people prefer to be black. Taking a look at the black characters within these narratives, as well as the one exception being Pucci, I would like see how these characters were handled by Hirohiko Araki. I am putting my black characters at the forefront and making them the center of attention in my narrative. Unlike Pocoloco and Mike O. we see my characters throughout the whole narrative and how their race during the 1890s affected who they are as characters, while keeping intact the JoJo formula of testing and developing the main characters and their views which came as a result of being a black person in 1890s America.

We should begin by summarizing and dissecting Lei Anne's work on this topic titled *Constructing Race in Anime*. As previously mentioned they focus on a basketball anime called *Kuroko's Basketball* but also another anime called *ACCA: 13-Territory Inspection Dept.* Anne identifies 4 patterns within the two anime they talk about in the article: Pattern 1 is how the black characters are drawn more stereotypically than the Asians or whites, Pattern 2 is how those same characters fit into a real life race or ethnicity that fulfill stereotypical roles associated, Pattern 3 is how all dark skinned characters are either antagonists or have ulterior motives, and Pattern 4 is how in global oriented settings dark skinned characters are practically invisible even in settings based off of the real world.¹ Both anime have strong suggestions towards a wider fictional world that reflects our own and who consistently fit into these four patterns.² The author also goes out of their way to focus on the triangle of race instead of the binaries of race since their focus is specifically on, how their implementation makes whites and Asians superior over black and

¹Lei, Anne. *Constructing Race In Anime*. Oregon State University, 2018.

²Lei, Anne.

brown people.³ This means instead of focusing on blacks and whites they focus on blacks, whites, and Asians, and how they are constantly positioned throughout the story and especially when put together in one setting. Something that should be noted, which the author does diligently, is that although these stereotypes appear that doesn't mean the authors are fully aware they are stereotypes much like how we all grow up with biases we may not be aware are considered biases.

Starting with *Kuroko's Basketball*, a sport anime about the main character Kuroko who goes against his old basketball teammates, who are on different teams, the author has identified that this series follows Pattern 2 and 3 with the characters Papa, Jason, Aoimine, and Hiazaka.⁴ Papa and Jason prove to be stereotypical black characters: their height and athleticism being the prominent features the protagonist's team has to overcome, their use of violence, and their purely irredeemable and antagonistic behavior.⁵ They are treated as the muscle of the opposing teams and used to illustrate in the overall theme that hard work pays off and natural talent isn't as important as it may seem.⁶

Things get a bit interesting when we meet Aoimine and Hiazaka. Both are Japanese but both are coded as black through their appearances and delinquency and both are equally violent.⁷ However Aoimine deploys violence with reason. At one point he uses violence to defend his opponent Kuroko's honor when one of his teammates trash talk how they performed even though Kuroko beat them. While Aoimine is redeemed in the narrative and goes to support Kuroko it

³ Lei, Anne. *Constructing Race In Anime*. Oregon State University, 2018.

⁴ Lei, Anne.

⁵ Lei, Anne.

⁶ Lei, Anne.

⁷ Lei, Anne.

still stands that no dark skinned character ever starts out to support the protagonist.⁸ Hiazaka, as one of the irredeemable dark skinned antagonists, has a progression of delinquency described in a flash back about his behavior, such as stealing and being liberally violent, and his “upgrade” in delinquency status by putting his hair in corn rows.⁹ He’s also depicted as misogynistic when he attempts to hit on a girl who was already in a relationship, including his surprise to her almost effective resistance against him before she was saved by Kuroko and the others. I mention this moment in particular because the woman who was being hit on was Alex: the white, female American coach for the Japanese basketball team Kuroko is in. The author points out how she had doubts about the Japanese being good at basketball but one practice session proved her wrong.¹⁰ Although she vocalizes her doubts she easily accepts that she was wrong and is quickly redeemed. Even as a white woman she is still treated like one of many foreigners who doubt the skills of the Japanese.¹¹ This higher position of whites in *Kuroko’s Basketball* is further stressed by Nash, a white, American, basketball player who is allies with Jason. Nash directs Jason’s violence strategically, positioning him as a higher authority, to Jason similar to that of a master and his guard dog. Although he is an antagonist, Nash’s motives aren’t revealed until his public speech about how he thinks ill of Japanese basketball. His antagonism is very delayed and given the benefit of the doubt, unlike Jason or the other dark skinned characters whose antagonisms are clear and upfront.¹²

It would be wrong of me to not also mention Liu Wei: a Chinese member on one of the opposing Japanese basketball teams. Unlike Papa, Wei being Chinese is never brought up

⁸ Lei, Anne.

⁹ Lei, Anne. *Constructing Race In Anime*. Oregon State University, 2018.

¹⁰ Lei, Anne.

¹¹ Lei, Anne.

¹² Lei, Anne.

compared to Papa whose foreignness was tied to his height and race.¹³ The interesting thing is that Liu Wei is taller than Papa yet the focus is on how foreign a non-Asian is to the Japanese.¹⁴ Dedicating this small section to a minor Chinese character is very symbolic of how much focus is put on other non-Asian Japanese compared to the Western foreigners that appear throughout the anime. It's also worthy to be reminded that this anime's big theme is about how hard work is more important than pure talent. This means that the main character Kuroko, who is Japanese, is teaching this lesson to not only other Japanese but also other foreigners who doubt that the Japanese are good at basketball. While a positive idea to promote the positioning of the Japanese to be the ones to teach this lesson to non-Japanese teams and players, alongside irredeemable or antagonistic foreigners, and cementing this idea by winning each game, is very telling about how the races presented are positioned.

Moving from the world of basketball to the world stage itself, *ACCA: 13-Territory Inspection Department* is an anime, similar to the previous series, with implications that real world influences and cultures exist within, and even beyond, the thirteen districts of the empire the narrative focuses on. Thus Pattern 4 can be seen.¹⁵ All thirteen districts pull from some aspects of cultures around the world: one district is based off of Okinawa; another is based off of revolutionary-era France, another based off of the Midwest of the United States, and so on.¹⁶ Furawau is based off of the Middle East and is the only district featuring dark skinned people. Although the district representing Okinawa exists they lean more towards looking white than dark skinned.¹⁷

¹³ Lei, Anne.

¹⁴ Lei, Anne.

¹⁵ Lei, Anne. *Constructing Race In Anime*. Oregon State University, 2018.

¹⁶ Lei, Anne.

¹⁷ Lei, Anne.

Furawau is deemed the most foreign out of all the districts even before their antagonistic nature is revealed, both through the main villain and the people of the district itself who later follow in his sentiment to secede from the empire.¹⁸ Liliu and his family are the main antagonists and leaders of Furawau. When his antagonism is revealed he's shown abusing his colleague to keep him in line and under his thumb. Pattern 3 is shown through Liliu's deceitful or snake-like nature as the face of his district: appearing nice on the surface to hide his ulterior motives.¹⁹ Liliu's motives are to take the throne, secede from the monarchy, and stay in power. His greed for power, and in turn the money and resources of his district, desire for the throne, abuse of his colleague, and terrorist act of using the district inspector, our protagonist, to assist in the secession are all stereotypes of Arabians.²⁰

ACCA's world, within other districts beyond Furawau, is an attempt at being not the most Western but the most white.²¹ The aforementioned Okinawa district should have darker skinned people but instead have white looking people. This makes the district and the people of Furawau, before their antagonism is revealed, seem more foreign than before.²² The district is also known for its abundance of oil which makes it the main supplier of energy for the monarchy. Once they secede a new source of energy is found in one of the other districts. So not only was Furawau going to be in competition with another district as the monarchy's main source of energy but their secession was symbolic of their foreignness being incompatible to the rest of the "state."²³

While there are white antagonists and a red herring antagonist that is suggested to be Native American, they are either redeemed or no longer suspects. In both of these cases the

¹⁸ Lei, Anne.

¹⁹ Lei, Anne. *Constructing Race In Anime*. Oregon State University, 2018.

²⁰ Lei, Anne.

²¹ Lei, Anne.

²² Lei, Anne.

²³ Lei, Anne.

potential antagonists from their respective districts appear white, even the Native Americans. The stereotype of anime with their characters having multicolored hair is also taken into consideration and is now an in-universe trait that people can have.²⁴ Even though this is a possibility in-universe, and is therefore canon to have hair colors beyond brown, black and blonde, there still is a lack of dark skinned characters beyond Furawau.²⁵ This creates an all-white or all-Western empire that no longer has any foreign elements to it, that being dark skinned people.²⁶

While these patterns are formulated from two out of countless anime, the suggested internationality and racial diversity fit perfectly in JoJo's Bizarre Adventure's case because each main JoJo, there are eight so far, and their settings are diverse, including the antagonists and side characters. When I begin talking about JoJo I will apply these patterns to the specific JoJo Parts I will be talking about: Part 6 and Part 7. But do the suggestions of racial hierarchy hold true beyond anime? According to Michael Prieler it can be seen through Japanese television commercials.

His article, *Race and Reflexivity: The Black Other in Contemporary Japanese Mass Culture*, is about how Japan continues to deal with its identity or 'Japaneseness' but through television commercials. Overall Japan indeed 'others' anyone that isn't Japanese, but the notable thing is to what degree for each group.²⁷ For white people they are associated with luxury followed up with laziness; thus when they are used, they are positioned to show off luxurious

²⁴ Lei, Anne.

²⁵ Lei, Anne. *Constructing Race In Anime*. Oregon State University, 2018.

²⁶ Lei, Anne.

²⁷ Prieler, Michael. *Othring, racial hierarchies and identity construction in Japanese television advertising*. International Journal of Cultural Studies; Hallyum University, South Korea. September 2010. Vol. 13, Issue 5. p.511-529.

products and as a desired thing to be because their luxury comes from their success.²⁸ So the desire to be like the white people resonates with the Japanese, which we will be seeing a lot of in this paper through my other sources.²⁹

The blacks, on the other hand, are still heavily stereotyped. Unlike the whites, the blacks don't have flexibility in the roles they play even amongst the celebrities.³⁰ This is significant because usually celebrities are mostly immune to being stereotyped whereas anonymous actors aren't because they are there to fill a role and nothing more, easily replaceable.³¹ Unlike the later example of a Chinese celebrity, the black celebrity Bob Sapp, a black athlete, is stereotyped to be a pure black athlete with no emotional or psychological maturity to accompany his athletic body.³² He is treated no different than an anonymous black actor on a commercial as well as to show their backwardness as a race. The Chinese celebrity, Zhang Ziyi, and the Korean celebrity Bae Yong Joon are immune to such ways of 'othering' that anonymous Chinese, Koreans, or other East-Asians are dealt with as pure flavor for the scene or in tandem with a product that looks as if it came from their homeland.³³

The worst by far are the 'invisible others' as the article calls them. These are the people from beyond Asia, like Hawaii, the Middle East, Africa, etc. who are virtually nonexistent in the commercials thus they are nonexistent socially in Japan.³⁴ It becomes easy for them to be

²⁸ Prieler, Michael

²⁹ Prieler, Michael

³⁰ Prieler, Michael. *Othering, racial hierarchies and identity construction in Japanese television advertising*. International Journal of Cultural Studies; Hallyum University, South Korea. September 2010. Vol. 13, Issue 5. p.511-529.

³¹ Prieler, Michael

³² Prieler, Michael

³³ Prieler, Michael

³⁴ Prieler, Michael

exoticized and, in the case of the females, sexualized.³⁵ Not even the white women are immune to being sexualized.³⁶ The success of Joon being the talk of Japan, especially women, although positive could also be because he's not the stereotypical Japanese man hence his attraction is more akin to a desire of the 'other's' quality which is still racist because being overly positive of an aspect of a race is ignoring the rest of who they are.³⁷ While the inferiority complex of the Japanese seems to be weakening there is still basis in looking up to the West.³⁸ This is seen when Japan launched a rival commercial campaign against the Chinese lotion product with Zhang Ziyi. While this did establish a renewed sense of pride thanks to this economic success the racial hierarchies of the West still influence them in other areas of advertising that assume the 'natural' state of whiteness.³⁹ The sense of superiority Japan has, through a racial lens, persisted and was renewed with the economic successes they had with the product.⁴⁰ Although limited to the recordings the author set for themselves this was a good reinforcement upon the insight of Japan's racially charged hierarchical views.

The last two articles I'm going to summarize will go beyond mainland Japan and explain the racial history of Japan starting with Atsushi Tajima and Michael Thornton's *Strategic solidarity: Japanese imaginings of Blacks and race in popular media*. The article talks about the history of Japan's use of black solidarity. It begins with an astounding amount of support from the Black community for Japan for leading the charge against racism around the 1920s to 1940s. This was all a misunderstanding that only the Japanese were aware of and will be elaborated on

³⁵ Prieler, Michael

³⁶ Prieler, Michael

³⁷ Prieler, Michael. *Othering, racial hierarchies and identity construction in Japanese television advertising*. International Journal of Cultural Studies; Hallyum University, South Korea. September 2010. Vol. 13, Issue 5. p.511-529.

³⁸ Prieler, Michael

³⁹ Prieler, Michael

⁴⁰ Prieler, Michael

later. The author sets up the premise of the article that will both walk us through the racial history of Japan and serve to show how their line of thinking of race, especially with Black people, came to fruition.

This premise being Takezawa's three dimensions of race: *race*, *Race*, and *Race as Resistance*.⁴¹ Although built in a segmented fashion in the article, it acknowledges that these things aren't separate but simply build upon each other over the years.⁴² *race* is defined as differences observed in societies between socially differentiated groups inherited over generations and can't be changed.⁴³ This segment of the article goes into the racial markers of the Japanese. They deem that the color white means beauty and the color black means ugliness, hairiness indicates someone is a barbarian, and skin tone, labor, and cultural practices are follow up indications of barbarianism.⁴⁴ The Portuguese introduced Japan to Africans multiple times in subservient positions and every time the Japanese thought the Black man was valiantly doing his duty and not forced into it.⁴⁵ In one of the figures in the article the author points out how ugly the black man holding the umbrella is compared to the Portuguese who are colored white.⁴⁶ Something the article didn't mention was how the face of the black man resembles that of the Oni, Japanese demons who have the same facial features depicted: wide noses, furrowed brows, and usually a frowning, open mouth with fangs, even though the mouth wasn't open in this case. Around this same time of taking in Western racial ideology the Japanese were trying to

⁴¹ Atsushi Tajima; Michael Thornton. *Strategic solidarity: Japanese imaginings of Blacks and race in popular media*. *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 2012, 13:3, 345-364

⁴² Atsushi Tajima; Michael Thornton. *Strategic solidarity: Japanese imaginings of Blacks and race in popular media*. *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 2012, 13:3, 345-364.

⁴³ Atsushi Tajima; Michael Thornton.

⁴⁴ Atsushi Tajima; Michael Thornton.

⁴⁵ Atsushi Tajima; Michael Thornton.

⁴⁶ Atsushi Tajima; Michael Thornton.

distinguish themselves from their outcasts the *eta* and *burakumin* through phenotype, physical traits deemed by biology, and culture.⁴⁷

This lays the foundation for the next dimension *Race* which is the scientific concept constructed through mapping and classification of people around the world.⁴⁸ More trading with the Portuguese meant more exposure to mostly African and Black slaves, though there are points in which some Japanese sympathize with the Blacks and resent their racist treatment by Whites.⁴⁹ After their introduction to minstrel shows by Commodore Perry the Japanese worshipped and later wanted to be on equal footing to White people.⁵⁰ They at one point made a hierarchy where they, semi-civilized Japan, were above Blacks, savages, but below Whites, civilization.⁵¹ Later a theory circulated about the Japanese being long lost cousins of the European Whites because they modernized more so than their Asian neighbors, yet this was all a ploy to have a reason to dominate said neighbors.⁵² The Meiji Restoration era was when Japan tried to deploy this idea onto the world but it was rejected quickly especially by the West.⁵³ Their language also slightly changed and while they still talked down about Africans, they talked politically and civilly about Black Americans but avoid racial discourse concerning them.⁵⁴

Thus their use of *Race* turned into *Race as Resistance*, which meant racial hierarchies recognized by ‘race’ or ‘Race’ awakened through proactive resistance of races that were

⁴⁷ Atsushi Tajima; Michael Thornton.

⁴⁸ Atsushi Tajima; Michael Thornton.

⁴⁹ Atsushi Tajima; Michael Thornton. *Strategic solidarity: Japanese imaginings of Blacks and race in popular media*. *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 2012, 13:3, 345-364.

⁵⁰ Atsushi Tajima; Michael Thornton.

⁵¹ Atsushi Tajima; Michael Thornton.

⁵² Atsushi Tajima; Michael Thornton.

⁵³ Atsushi Tajima; Michael Thornton.

⁵⁴ Atsushi Tajima; Michael Thornton.

considered inferior in particular societies creates solidarity to resist an inferior status.⁵⁵ This results in the aforementioned praise by the Black community for misunderstanding the treaty that the Japanese proposed during the Paris Peace Conference.⁵⁶ This treaty was to attain equality but only for the Japanese, in fact the title mislead what the treaty was about and this was only the beginning of Japan's resistance against Whites, but they still model after them to be on equal footing.⁵⁷ They even went as far to claim they could identify as White if needed. Japanese media into the 1980s were still influenced by racist ideas of black people, making the Japanese look like their saviors from the White man. Japan clearly indulges in the support of the Black person but still hasn't changed their thinking about them and is only doing so to be superior to Whites who had rejected them equal status yet they still follow their model of hierarchy.⁵⁸

Michael Prieler's *Othering, racial hierarchies and identity construction in Japanese television advertising* is a continuation of what was previously said from the last article but with a focus more on the mass culture of the Japanese rather than the intellectual elites only. Though in lesser detail, most of what was said is repeated: The West being a universal point of reference for racial hierarchy, the Japanese putting down the blacks in order to surpass the whites, the invasion of Western racial ideology into Japanese culture to shape said racial ideology, and new emerging trends such as the sexualizing of blacks and making them childish in certain narratives.⁵⁹ What's a little different, however, is not only the focus on mass culture but also the introduction of narratives that Japanese position themselves as a culture that also can recognize

⁵⁵ Atsushi Tajima; Michael Thornton.

⁵⁶ Atsushi Tajima; Michael Thornton.

⁵⁷ Atsushi Tajima; Michael Thornton.

⁵⁸ Atsushi Tajima; Michael Thornton. *Strategic solidarity: Japanese imaginings of Blacks and race in popular media*. *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 2012, 13:3, 345-364.

⁵⁹ Prieler, Michael. *Othering, racial hierarchies and identity construction in Japanese television advertising*. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*; Hallyum University, South Korea. September 2010. Vol. 13, Issue 5. p.511-529.

itself as a minority.⁶⁰ This is shown through the examples of the photographer Yoshida who positions herself in America while photographing blacks in Harlem as part of the “yellow race.” In this realization of her “yellowness” she criticizes the intellectuals of her country for being so accepting and uncritical of these Western ideas.⁶¹

Another example would be a writer named Shūsaku whose autobiography embraces racist Western ideals yet he also reveals the, for lack of a better term, anxieties of the Japanese and their identity and race being equivalent to the blacks.⁶² There was also a moment of “reactivity,” as the article claims, during World War II with the Japanese being racist towards whites which had no effect in their consumption of Western media and modernity that continued to invade their country.⁶³ Their toys and imagery has even made some claim they wouldn’t be able to identify a black person if they didn’t have the racial features akin to those from minstrel shows or simply the racist white perspective.⁶⁴

As a side note these minstrel appearances would appear in the anime *Dragon Ball* in the form of Mr. Popo and Jynx the Pokémon from the *Pokémon* series. Both are colored black and have big red and round lips and have big eyes with dots for pupils. While I’m not too familiar with Mr. Popo’s narrative purpose exactly, I never made it that far in the series, Jynx is a very notable case considering the whole idea behind Pokémon is to capture these monsters and use them for battle. Thus Jynx’s positioning within that world garnered enough of a backlash for the creators to change her skin color from black to purple.

⁶⁰ Prieler, Michael. *Othering, racial hierarchies and identity construction in Japanese television advertising*. International Journal of Cultural Studies; Hallyum University, South Korea. September 2010. Vol. 13, Issue 5. p.511-529.

⁶¹ Prieler, Michael.

⁶² Prieler, Michael.

⁶³ Prieler, Michael.

⁶⁴ Prieler, Michael.

Back to the article when counterculture came about during the Vietnam War the Japanese didn't like how the blacks went about their protests because their values opposed the Japanese thus blacks fell out of the mainstream.⁶⁵ Yet the Japanese still reproduced racist ideology- from TV shows, comparing their modernity to the native Africans by bringing them over to Japan to sensationalize them and the idea of interracial sex with vulgar, racial language, all while failing to see how racist their imagery is while still deploying it as a means to counter the black Other for the sake of modernity as well as their insecurity about their own culture in relation to the idealized West.⁶⁶

With all this background information what does this have to do with JoJo's Bizarre Adventure, specifically Part 6 and 7? Generally speaking the creator, Hirohiko Araki, by simply looking at his work, has a bigger interest in places outside of Japan. As an interviewer with the graphic design artist of the video game series *Persona*, Araki admits he never read any Japanese books and was fed books like "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" and "Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea," as well as his attraction to foreign countries, food, and music and not liking Japanese food.⁶⁷ He also admits, the already well known fact, that he enjoys foreign music like AC/DC and Yes, and while he doesn't understand what they're saying it's the rhythm and sound of the music that he enjoys.⁶⁸ This is widely known through the names of all except one Stand that use the names from non-Japanese bands, songs, and albums such as Metallica, D4C, Tusk, Born this Way, and many others. This all means that Araki is constantly being influenced by foreign products and settings which inform his decisions in character designs and

⁶⁵ Prieler, Michael.

⁶⁶ Prieler, Michael. *Othering, racial hierarchies and identity construction in Japanese television advertising*. International Journal of Cultural Studies; Hallyum University, South Korea. September 2010. Vol. 13, Issue 5. p.511-529.

⁶⁷ Jojo's Bizarre Encyclopedia. *THRILL (September 2001)*. Vol.22.

⁶⁸ Jojo's Bizarre Encyclopedia

personalities. These influences, we will see, can either benefit how the creator writes black characters or hinder.

Starting with a minor antagonist in Part 7, which takes place in America in the year 1890 during a fictional race across the continent from California to New York, we are introduced to the President's personal body guard Mike O. Although a short lived character, Mike O. is one of the henchmen for the fictional President Funny Valentine. He is one of two henchmen that were directly appointed by the President and not paid off like the others. His dedication to the President is very strong which can only be inference through context clues, but it is never explicitly stated. The best thing we could go off of is the assumption that President Valentine, a Union soldier war hero during the Civil War, gave Mike this high ranking position as his personal guard despite him being black.⁶⁹ While this does make him still subordinate to a white man, the trust the President has in Mike shows how he thinks of the man as an equal. However this could also be influenced by the real life misunderstanding by the Japanese: when the Portuguese visited Japan with black slaves the Japanese assumed that the Blacks were happy in their subservient positions unaware of the reality of the situation.

Mike O. talks to people in an odd way. He talks about himself and others being in different worlds. When he approaches one of the morally neutral antagonists named Diego, a white man, whom he needs information from; he complains about being cold on the bridge waiting for Diego describing it like his body is freezing up in "this world." Within this same scene he describes the importance of the information he's trying to get from Diego saying it's in "a world" of importance. This is his odd way of speaking, talking about people in their individual worlds or, in some cases, sharing a world. Another example, in another scene, would be when

⁶⁹ Meti Not the Bad Guy. *The Beauty of Mike. O.* YouTube, Jan 19, 2018.

Mike O. asks the President if an intruder, from a previous chapter, was part of the world of Stand Users. This is his way of asking if the intruder was a Stand User, thus being part of that “world.” This form of speaking is never explained, merely a quirk of his that grammatically and metaphorically make sense.

Back on the bridge, after giving him the information Mike needs Diego leaves and refers to Mike O. as “trash” under his breath while also mocking the way he speaks. Before this, Diego interacted with a Native American henchman of the President and was only surprised that he was working under him, but he never made a mean comment about the Native American being a Native American. Could Diego’s comment about Mike O. be racist? Yes, but it wouldn’t be much of a surprise considering his bad childhood taught him to be more selfish and to put his own success above others as well as looking down on everyone. Diego will only cooperate when he needs to; he views the world as a dog-eat-dog one.

Mike O.’s deep devotion to the President makes him a very thorough worker: after the bridge he returns to the President in the Presidential building and presents every possibility of the intruder’s identity based on the information Diego gave him; soon after, he sets up his Stand to be around the President at all times for his protection, but also to recognize the intruder. Later on Mike’s Stand alerts him to an intruder in the Presidential building. He hurries back to the building and looks through a window to find the intruder one room away from the President’s bedroom, the intruder’s name is Hot Pants. Upon this discovery he explains that her invasion of the Presidential building has put him in a world where as the President’s guard his name will be ruined. At this point he desires to capture and torture her to send a message to the country she’s from. He is calm throughout this interaction.

His Stand, a supernatural ability he acquired, is called Tubular Bells. It allows him to blow on metal like a balloon to create various structures or mold them into something like a balloon dog that can track a desired target, invade their body, and destroy them from the inside out. Its versatility to blow on any metal and make any form is what makes him a deadly foe. Throughout his fight with Hot Pants he is calm; he doesn't panic and makes very strategic moves like any other JoJo character. Even when Hot Pants goes in for a possibly fatal attack on him he doesn't lose his cool. The only time he is no longer calm is when he sees that the President's wife is dead. This hurts his pride more and enrages him to now execute her. His rage is expressed through getting closer to her through the window and blowing up three more metal nails to finish her. However Hot Pants had already set up a counter against him at the beginning of the battle which is revealed at that moment. He's given a choice: die slowly from her Stand having blocked his airways, or continue to try and blow up the metal which will only kill him in the process. Mike chooses to blow the metal, thus ending his own life. This can be interpreted as Mike still proving his loyalty despite the clear danger he's in, his preference to undo the ruin upon his reputation through fighting to the death.

His anger came from how Hot Pants had made him look like a fool by both getting past his defenses and killing the President's wife. As the personal guard of the President Mike has a big responsibility and shows that he can turn stressful situations in his favor. His failure to protect the wife of the President was one of the worst things that could happen. This meant that if he failed to protect the wife he may fail at protecting the president. Hence his rage could be both directed at the intruder and himself. His move to jump onto the window to finish off Hot Pants was still calculated, having injured her badly in the fight. If he had finished what he was doing

with the metal nails he had he would've won. However the small oversight of what seemed like a futile move at the beginning led to his demise.

Hirohiko Araki in his book *JOJOVELLAR* comments on his thought process of creating the Stand Tubular Bells: "A Stand without a physical form. The Stand ability makes objects into something like balloons. Just as it seems, the idea for this came from balloon art. Its host is a black man with sweet tattoos!" (*JOJOVELLAR Stand Guide*, p.286). The only tattoos visible on Mike O. are the pink ones on his face. It definitely seems like the stereotype of black people with tattoos comes into play here, but these tattoos, to say the least, don't indicate toughness or streetness like we would see in some American movies. The tattoos seem to more fit in with Araki's style of making characters look unique alongside their personalities and outfits.

Next up is a more prominent side character, named Pocoloco. Pocoloco is a black man in California who has gambled away his money but is still at ease thanks to a fortune teller saying that his luck will turn around for the next two months. He is care free and usually takes most situations with a care free attitude. He participates in a race across America on horseback called the Steel Ball Run race.

Although care-free, and later confident in his luck, Pocoloco doesn't just enter the Steel Ball Run horse race to test this but to get the grand prize money so that he and his father can live better lives. His father says nothing much has changed 25 years after the American Civil War. He says this as he plows a field so we can assume that he is an indentured servant. In this same scene we see Pocoloco trying to count clouds and believing the fortune teller about her prediction about his luck. Almost immediately after his father talks about their position in society Pocoloco sees the ad for the Steel Ball Run Race and enters it. If his motivation wasn't clear

enough in that scene, it would be much clearer when later during his attempt to jump a gap in the race itself he says aloud that he wants this money so that he and his father can live better lives.

While he is a side character and doesn't get a lot of time beyond his introduction, he is still taken as a serious racer in the eyes of characters like Johnny and Gyro, our main protagonists of Part 7, even when Gyro deduces that the coincidences surrounding Pocoloco that are purely benefit him during the race are because of some external power. Gyro's attempt to sabotage Pocoloco is thwarted by the luck that protects him, and worse, puts Gyro down twenty places from his first place win of the first stage. This pushes Pocoloco in the third place spot. This is important because the first five places have the highest points you can accumulate throughout the race as well as time bonuses which serve to add to the prize money.

In the JOJOVELLAR Araki states that Pocoloco's Stand, Hey-Ya!, doesn't do anything but help you be more optimistic. While the Stand's exact abilities are still debated amongst fans Pocoloco does become more optimistic and even confident as a horse racer even if an someone like Johnny analyzes him and deems him 3rd rate. This comment comes from Johnny seeing him as an equal rather than someone below him as Johnny is a very experienced jokey. Gyro later says Pocoloco is a good contender to win the race. Our protagonists, who are both white males, treat Pocoloco like an equal and occasionally see him persevere through the similar obstacles they go through, whether through the luck he was blessed with thanks to his Stand or his determination to win the race.

Beyond his introduction, and especially after gaining confidence thanks to his Stand Hey Ya!, Pocoloco's attitude becomes a bit more serious as he realizes his dreams may come true and that luck is on his side. Even when he and his Stand get into a small argument about it's

prediction being wrong Pocoloco continues to persevere through the race. I point this out because in the beginning of the race every time something negative happened to Pocoloco the negative thing would have a positive outcome, almost as if lady luck was watching over him. An example would be him waking up late to the race but because everyone already started the ground was flat, making it easier for his horse to catch up and not use too much of its energy. Another example would be when a horse in front of him while racing flung manure in his face but three things happened: he found a gold coin, a woman's cleavage was revealed when wiping off the manure, and he found a wanted man that he could turn in for extra cash. While these are small instances they contribute to Pocoloco's developing confidence. This is especially true when he follows a Native American racer and jumps a gap after him. The Native American is named Sandman and he joined the race running on foot. Pocoloco barley makes it to the cliff's edge and is about to fall but Sandman tells him to use the rope he brought with him to pull himself up.

These small to extreme moments of luck contribute to Hey Ya's! prediction being wrong for two reasons. First is that the Stand works by turning a bad luck moment into a good luck moment. Thus it would follow that if the bad luck moment was the prediction being wrong then something of equal or greater good luck would follow, such as winning the Steel Ball Run race. Secondly Pocoloco could've just given up after that, this was the one time the Stand steered him wrong in thinking luck was going to benefit him. Yet he kept racing and stuck with it until the end, his determination never waning after that incident. He was obviously upset about it but it never got to him beyond that moment.

The most substantial pattern one of these characters could fall into would be Pattern 1: being drawn stereotypically. However even this is debatable since this pattern specifically

mentions that the black characters are drawn *more* stereotypically than other non-black characters. Within this same part, however is a pair of short, Asian characters, who I assume are Chinese considering that during this time they were the earliest Asians to have entered America and have been reported to have worked on the cross continental railroad as well as the Irish, who are drawn to almost have dots for eyes. Patterns 2, 3, and 4 have a hard time being applicable considering there is acknowledgement of other races through these characters, Mike. O. is the only antagonist who is black while Pocoloco is the only neutral character who is black, and both don't exactly fill in any stereotypes, save for Mike's unique positioning directly under the President but never treated like a guard dog to order around similar to Nash and Jason from *Kuroko's Basketball*. There couldn't be an argument could be made about there being ulterior motives, because not only do these characters not talk to each other, thus inviting a moment for them to lie about what they do and why they do it, but there is nothing to hide from each one's motives. Pocoloco, as a racer, clearly wants to win the prize money and it's his business whether he wants to tell people or not his reason or intended use of it. Mike O. is clearly set up as a minor antagonist that one of the many characters introduced in JoJo Part 7 will have to confront and inevitably defeat. The JoJo formula of having minor antagonists challenging the protagonists before they get to the main antagonist all while progressing the story is very normal in the world of JoJo. Most minor antagonists are also diverse in background and appearances as well.

The black characters in JoJo's Bizarre Adventure Part 7 weren't all too complex to look at and understand, however Part 6 will be a different story simply because the character we'll be looking at, the main antagonist named Enrico Pucci, is an Italian American. Enrico Pucci is a character whose life would be interweaved with the cruel mistress known as fate. From the day of his birth to the moment of his defeat fate has worked both in and out of his favor. He was born

with a fraternal brother, Domenico Pucci. This healthy brother was swapped out for a completely different newborn baby who died mere moments after birth. The mother was desperate for a child and had done so without hesitation and no one would know until much later. Pucci's parents told him, when he was old enough, about his dead brother. This story was what more than likely pushed Enrico into serving under God and pursued becoming a priest. This posed questions in his mind: why he was left to live but his brother to die and what was true happiness?

Days before Enrico meets the aforementioned baby swapping mother in a confessional, he is met by the man turned vampire who fueled the flames of this whole bizarre adventure for the Joestar family: DIO Brando. Upon meeting him, DIO casually talks to Pucci about what brings people together. DIO says it is because of a gravitational force, which is interpreted more conveniently as fate. Although startled by the blonde vampire being in a church that isn't open beyond Sundays, Pucci allows DIO to stay until the sun sets since he says he's 'allergic' to the sun. DIO gives Pucci the first of two tokens of appreciation to him: a stone arrow. DIO also inquires on their meeting being the work of 'gravity.' He offers to Pucci to also be able to meet him whenever he wants. This lays the foundation for what happens after the baby swapping mother comes to confess her sins to Pucci.

Upon hearing the confession he was in mental turmoil, it further stirred the questions brewing in his mind. Even worse was Enrico's younger sister, Pearla, was dating Domenico but under the name Wes and unaware that he was her brother. Enrico couldn't say anything because confessions are private and Enrico himself would fail as a man of God. Thus he hired a private investigator to just threaten Domenico to never date Pearla again. The worst that could happen was Pearla having a broken heart. Sadly the detective snooped around about Domenico and, assuming the baby swapping mother was his real one, found out the mom dated a black man and

he assumed that Domenico was a mixed white man. This led to the private detective calling his KKK friends to beat Domenico and hang him from a tree. Pearla was witness to all this and when they were both left alone she finally took him down from the tree, but assumed he was dead. She kills herself by jumping from the cliff they were on and into a river below. Domenico was barely alive however.

Once the news reached Enrico he laments about why things turned out the way they did, why were his loved ones subjected to these sorts of fates. The words of DIO echoed in his head, as he held his dead sister he heard the vampire's voice repeat the offer to meet with him if he so desires. The stone arrow pierces Enrico's body, making him able to pull a disc from his sister's head. That disc contains her memories and soul. His desire to trade lives with her so that she could live made him acquire the ability to manifest and preserve the soul and memories of anyone he desires. This was his Stand White Snake.

Domenico went on a rampage with his newly acquired Stand too. Since him and Enrico were brothers whatever happens to one body, in terms of supernatural capabilities, happened to the other. After taking the enraged Domenico's memories to keep him for outright killing him, Pucci met with DIO and became his most trusted friend.

Although DIO is a very over-the-top villain within the JoJo series his scenes with Pucci are the most humane he's ever been: calming conversations about what Stands are considered the weakest, as well as sharing his anxieties with Pucci about him betraying the vampire. DIO even makes himself vulnerable to Pucci by having Pucci's hand on his head and primed to just pull his disc out. He doesn't though; his friendship with DIO would never bring him to do such a thing.

This relieves DIO and prompts him to apologize by giving Pucci the second aforementioned token of appreciation: a bone from his body.

From here on, after DIO dies, Pucci carries out the plan DIO had which was to achieve 'Heaven.' By sacrificing 36 souls who have sinned, saying 14 phrases, creating a green baby born from the bone of the aforementioned vampire, and finally getting to a specific spot on the Earth, Pucci's Stand could evolve into 'Made Over Heaven.' The reason Pucci wants to achieve this is so that he can create a universe where everyone at every moment knows what the future has in store for them, whether it's as simple as tripping over something or knowing you will die tomorrow. Pucci explains that this won't bring despair but resolution to the fact that you know what your fate is even if you can't escape it. The resolution of knowing your fate is what he believes is true happiness. Pucci's investment in fate makes him want to seek the truth about the world, the idea of gravity pulling people together, as well as his experiences with such moments, are what fuel the priest to properly meet DIO and even after his death try to achieve 'Heaven.'

However, he is the main villain. While he does come very close to succeeding, fate pulls its last ace up its sleeve and thwarts his plans just before they are complete. Even if it was all for naught, Pucci proved to the audience that his intentions were true and pure, but the method was akin to the 'for the greater good' concept. Although he did kill off almost all of the main protagonists, one of the other requirements to achieve 'Heaven' is to have no Earthly desires. Power, money, fame, sex, and more are considered Earthly desires to which Pucci rejected early in life and even more so near the end as it becomes clear that his purpose for achieving 'Heaven' is so that humanity can have a better future: a universe where although your fate is decided, you know what that fate is thus true happiness can be attained through this kind of resolution.

In my opinion Pucci is tied for first place as the best JoJo villain for his motives being pure but his means to get there obviously evil. Revisiting his character it's no wonder why some people would prefer him to be black instead of Italian American. He would be the most important black character to have been featured in this bizarre series and as a possible golden standard for what writers and artists should strive for when making any sort of minority character: full of depth and strong characterization. It's also worth noting the colorized scans done for JoJo so far. The JoJo community have rallied together to make scan translations of the JoJo manga series so that English readers can enjoy the parts of the series that have yet to make it to America officially. With these scan translations, or scanlations for short, came the extra step to color them. Coloring the black and white manga wasn't needed but it goes to show the love that this series is given by the fans. While in the original black and white manga Pucci is visibly darker than most other characters, in the fan colored manga the choice of skin color makes him appear black upon first impressions. Obviously from the backstory he isn't technically black but more so a tanned Italian American, yet the perception from fans about his race and ethnicity seem to suggest otherwise. This is possibly due to being a side effect from Part 6 taking place in Florida but also the whole part itself being the black sheep of the JoJo series because it's of slightly lower quality than the part that came before, thus many details often get glossed over. It is still a curious case whose debate will be reignited thanks to the recent announcement of Part 6 finally getting its anime adaptation in 2021.

Hypothetically speaking, if Pucci was black and we were to apply the patterns provided by Anne to Part 6, it would fit under Pattern 2 and 3. Pucci being a hypothetical black priest would be indicative of the very religious black person stereotype, thus Pattern 2. Pattern 3 would fit as well because technically he would be the only black antagonist of that part. Even though

there are background characters that are black they don't affect the story in anyway. Overall it seems that Araki's handling of black characters, compared to *Kuroko's Basketball* and *ACCA: 13-Territory Inspection Dept.*, mostly avoids stereotypical appearances, completely avoids stereotypical roles, avoids having every black character being an antagonist or having ulterior motives, and doesn't ignore the existence of black characters in settings that clearly exist in the real world.

These patterns I tried to keep in mind as I wrote my comic for this project as well as trying to write similar to Hirohiko Araki. Although I couldn't be as lengthy as Araki with each chapter I feel I at least was able to partially emulate the focus on characterization while not denying the race of my black characters, or in the case of my one androgynous character, their identity. It wasn't easy to write considering I hadn't fully planned everything out and had to balance school and work but I am very happy with what I wrote and, although flawed and at times dicey, it was a learning experience I value. Despite Japan's unique history with race Araki seems to be more open and nuanced to the inclusion of all and pushing the boundaries of his work. I too pushed my work and myself for the comic mostly but also this project in better understanding the racial situation in Japan. It must be stated that even with substantial historical research and no lived experience in Japan at all; my work should be taken with a grain of salt. I am still an American fan of a Japanese series with a lot of passion for the medium and its reservoir of creativity. This isn't to say my work is useless but to not take it as gospel simply because it is from academia because anime is a medium originating from a country with values, ways of thinking, and systems vastly different from their neighboring countries and countries overseas. This doesn't mean we should defend the supposed racial hierarchies or should not talk about them, but we shouldn't demonize a people for having a different history from which their

values and beliefs were shaped. This is especially important considering how intertwined our histories are without even realizing it, such as those Dutch and Portuguese who travelled to Japan, or when the Japanese travelled to American during the minstrel era. I focus on JoJo's Bizarre Adventure mostly out of curiosity since I enjoy the series and wanted to take a deeper look into it from this specific perspective since we are living in a very divisive time. JoJo's Bizarre Adventure is my favorite series and it is a series that, as Araki puts it, has a positive outlook on life and is a celebration of humanity.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ JoJo's Bizarre Encyclopedia. *Hirohiko Araki*. Last edit May 1st 2021.

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JoJo Lalo: Context for JoJo's Bizarre Adventure Part 7 Steel Ball Run

For those unfamiliar with the series JoJo's Bizarre Adventure by Hirohiko Araki it is about the crazy adventure of a family lineage known as the Joestars, the main character's first and last names having the name "Jo" present, hence the nick name JoJo. Part 7 Steel Ball Run is a canonical reboot of the series, allowing room for alternate universes for the author Araki to start fresh with his newfound knowledge and skills as both an artist and story teller through his successes and failures within the series thus far. Steel Ball Run takes place during 1890 in the United States of America. This is an explanation of the world of JoJo...

The paraplegic lost his best friend. His friend's honor refused to take advantage of the beaming light and send the wound on his heart to an undeserving bystander somewhere else in the world to save himself. The paraplegic cries his name: GYRO! As the President of the United States approaches the paraplegic after shooting Gyro multiple times to make sure he was dead. The President calls the paraplegic by his name, Johnny Joestar, and tells him that he will surpass the trial Johnny presented; he will make America prosper with the Holy Corpse of Jesus Christ! Johnny remembers Gyro telling him Lesson Five: "The shortest route is a detour." Johnny's horse was injured, it couldn't move, he couldn't use it to create the infinite rotation on horseback. He still had Gyro's steel ball, however. Holding it up, making it spin, he threw it at the horse's leg. The muscles activated and the horse kicked Johnny into the air. With one nail bullet left, with nowhere else to go, with no way to harm the President as he's protected by the gap in space created by Jesus, Johnny takes aim as he forms his body into the golden rectangle midair. A pink, wide shouldered figure, with big tassels covering everything except his arms and legs appears. The shot is fired; it hits the wall of light that protects the President. But the pink figure rips the wall open with a "Chumimin!" as Johnny thinks to himself:

“Gyro...this truly, truly was a detour. Thank you Gyro. That is the best way I can say it.
Thank you.”

The pink figure named Tusk, in its final form, utters a battle cry as it brings to an end this confrontation: “ORA ORA ORA ORA ORA ORA ORA ORA ORA ORA ORA ORA ORA
ORA ORA ORA ORA ORA ORA ORA ORA ORA!!”

...

A man outfitted as a cow boy goes up to a clerk to pay him money to enter a race across America, the man signs the paper with the name “Gyro Zeppeli.” His gun belt doesn’t have a gun but two green steel balls. The cowboy smiles, saying “Nyo ho!” showing his golden teeth with the words “Go! Go!” on the top row and “Zeppeli” on the bottom row. This man is the latest offspring of the Zeppeli lineage, a wealthy Italian family whose job is to give prisoners on death row a swift and painless execution as well as being well versed in medicine. The Zeppeli’s are one of the most prominent families because they have the education and access to an old technique that only they know of: the Spin. The Spin is a secret technique passed down through the Zeppeli family; it’s not just about making an object spin but also harnessing an otherworldly power through said spinning. They use an object known as the Steel Ball, a green ball of steel, and use the Spin technique on it. The Spin is an otherworldly power that be harnessed to manipulate the muscles of a person, transfer energy, or even relax a prisoner on death row moments before they are beheaded. It comes from the golden rectangle, a real life concept where no matter the size of the rectangle so long as that size is halved and drawn within the bigger rectangle that came before you create an infinite spiral. This golden rectangle, or ratio, is said to occur in nature, meaning all forms of life have a reference to this geometry concept. Gyro

Zeppeli's father taught him this technique at an early age as it is the duty of the Zeppeli's to continue being perfect executioners and doctors. Under such a strict and dutiful father, however, Gyro is a bit rebellious against him. Sneaking in a girl to have sex with in an empty infirmary is but a minor offense he was able to get away with, but thanks to his inability to devoid himself of all emotion as an executioner, like his father, the biggest rebellion against his father had come in the form of a young shoe shining boy. Another wealthy Italian family was arrested for having plotted a conspiracy against their own country. Just before then the young boy was hired to shine shoes for said family. Although a lowly shoe shiner he too was arrested by association with the family and they were all planned to be executed. Gyro was still training to being an executioner and knowing that boy was simply roped in only by association made him rebel against his father more as he was indifferent to the shoe shiner's fate. Gyro refused to let this slide and proposes bail for the shoe shiner to the court, much to his father's disapproval. The court would accept approximately 50 million dollars. The father wasn't going to help Gyro so he turned to America where they had just recently announced a horse race across the continent for prize money worth the same as the proposed bail.

A man in a wheel chair looks out onto the California coast to see the beginning of a race across America called the Steel Ball Run Race, planned and endorsed by the President of the United States of America himself in 1890. The paraplegic's name is Johnny Joestar and he believes fate is always out to get him. This idea began when his father ordered Johnny to drown the white mouse he found and wanted to keep as a pet. His older brother Nick, looking out for Johnny, decided to tell him to just let the mouse loose into the forest and lie to his dad that he drowned it. Johnny does so and the next day Nick is practicing on a horse track when all of a sudden his horse gets scared by a white mouse that came from the forest and throws Nick off,

ultimately killing him. From then on Johnny feels so much guilt for not drowning the mouse, and the father drastically changed. Years after Nick's death, following in the family tradition of being a horse jockey, when Johnny needs a pair of boots to enter a horse race he turns to the only pair that could fit him: his brother's. The father refused to let Johnny have them, grieving still over the death of Nick. They get into a fight and when the father crashes into the furniture he utters the words, "God you took the wrong son." Johnny realized the support from his father was never there when he said that. From then on he went alone to make a name for himself, becoming famous and loved by many as a talented jockey. One day, with a girl, Johnny begrudgingly agrees to take her to see a movie that they were walking by. Using his status and money he paid the guard to let them cut the long line and get in. A guy at the front of the line nervously tells them that they're cutting and that they should wait in line like everyone else. Johnny becomes intimidating as he's trying to tell the guy to not tell him what to do. This scares the guy into shooting the jockey with his gun. The shot hit Johnny's spin and his legs would no longer work. When news of this got out everyone who admired him as a jockey left him, he was all alone to deal with his handicap. This was but another moment to cement the idea for Johnny that at the highest points in life fate will come around and knock him down.

Back on the beaches of California, days before the Steel Ball Run Race begins, an altercation occurs. Gyro Zeppeli challenges an overconfident pick pocket to a duel. The pickpocket almost interfered with Gyro's chances of entering the race by stealing some of his money for the entry fee. Gyro caught him and as he was being apprehended by police the pickpocket starts to mouth off to Gyro. To put him in his place the Italian allows the pickpocket to have his gun for a duel. Gyro has a pair of steel balls. The pickpocket tried to play a trick to get him to lower his guard, but seeing through the trick Gyro threw his steel ball into the man's

shoulder, and as he was pulling the trigger the steel ball manipulated his muscles to force his hand to turn the gun towards his face. The pickpocket shoots himself in the face and the Italian walks away unscathed. Johnny lays witness to all this and pursues the stranger, wondering about those steel balls of his. He reaches out to touch one of them, Gyro warns the persistent paraplegic that it's still spinning and not to touch them, and for a moment Johnny was able to stand. From that moment it was clear: Johnny had to follow this man into the race in order to understand the spin so he may walk again.

With enough pestering, persistence, and showmanship of skill as a jockey, Gyro gives Johnny the first of five lessons at the starting line to help him get on his horse. From then on the two stay together and become friends as they race each other across the continent. While learning the spin from Gyro, Johnny comes across a piece of a corpse, an arm, which gives him something known as Stand. A Stand is a spiritual manifestation of someone's personality and mentality, each one having individual and unique abilities with limitations. They can only be seen by other Stand Users and whatever damage sustained by the Stand is reflected back onto the User. With Johnny already learning about the supernatural capabilities of the Spin and the founding of a mysterious, decrepit arm that absorbed itself into Johnny, a Stand manifested based around the power of the Spin. Its name is Tusk Act 1.

Tusk first appears as a cute, almost plushie-looking, pink creature floating without any legs. This form doesn't show up a lot since it can't do much beyond let him shoot spinning nail bullets, but it is a symbol of Johnny's infancy on his journey as he learns the Spin and must confront past traumas and grow from them. Johnny's Stand is one of the few that can grow both visually and in capabilities. These are known as "Acts" or simply forms. Each form Johnny gains adds to his ability of shooting his spinning nail bullets and the Stand itself looks different.

Most of the Stand fights in Part 7 don't just show off what the characters and their powers can do. They also reveal things about our protagonists, challenge their character, or are forced to relive past traumas that haunt them still. When Johnny and Gyro are stuck in a forest that seems to loop them infinitely back to the same spot every time, they come across a man named Ringo Roadagain who is causing the loop by using his Stand Mandom to rewind six seconds into the past to make it look like the forest was infinitely looping. Ringo tells them that if they want to leave they must kill him and become a part of the "True Man's World." Gyro refuses to attempt to do so since there is no point, Johnny, on the other hand, expresses openly that Ringo is an obstacle and that he has no problem killing him, revealing his killer instincts. He fails in killing Ringo and is presumed dead until Gyro realizes the gun Ringo shot Johnny with is only effective at a certain range and Johnny was outside of said range so he was only unconscious. At this point in the series Gyro and Johnny are friends and now Gyro is forced to confront Ringo to save Johnny and, like Johnny, accept the "True Man's World," a doctrine Ringo created where he seeks a fair duel with the deepest and darkest intentions to kill one another as it will make him feel complete as a human being. Gyro, being a more self-defense oriented person, has to learn to accept the killer instinct within him in order to defeat Ringo and save Johnny. This is how our protagonists are challenged via their existing characteristics and their Stand abilities as Gyro must think creatively around Ringo's rewind time ability.

On the run from an ability that can physically manifest sounds, the sound of burning creating fire, the sounds of slashing cutting whatever touches its form, the Italian and the paraplegic run for their lives towards a river. Living on borrowed time Gyro decides to teach Johnny Lesson Four of the Five he's been giving him: Pay Your Respects. Giving Johnny a quick explanation of where the Spin came from, followed by an explanation of the golden

rectangle, Gyro also makes Johnny only allowed to say “I can’t do it” four times. With Gyro buying as much time as he can before being gravely injured by the sounds within water to which he hadn’t accounted for, Johnny screams that he can’t do it for the fourth and final time before looking around him and realizing: the golden rectangle is in nature. This was how Gyro was able to be so effective in his Spin technique, using the world to reference the golden rectangle to create a more powerful spin! With a renewed sense of determination that fate has now smiled upon him, Johnny raises his finger to fire a nail bullet. Behind him is a mechanical, almost helicopter-like pink robot, floating as Johnny uses his nail bullets. Tusk Act 2 had been achieved. Before Act 2 Johnny could shoot off as many nails as he wanted, now he can only shoot five nails per hand but if they hit anything that isn’t the target they form a worm hole that begins to track them down for a few seconds because the shots don’t stop spinning. Turning the tide, Johnny is down to his last nail bullet; his assailant still able to physically manifest sounds, with one last shot Johnny appears to miss his opponent. The opponent thinks so too until her feels his heart burst. A butterfly landed on him. The insect was hit in the wing by Johnny’s shot which forced the butterfly to land on the assailant’s back as the spinning hole pursued its target’s heart, ending the fight.

Johnny slightly changes his goal around this point in the story to collect the Holy Corpse in order to walk again. The Holy Corpse is what the Steel Ball Run Race is really about; the path is outlined by President Funny Valentine and his cabinet members for the race, point for point on each stage. The idea is for racers to come across these parts and keep them until Valentine’s henchmen take the parts by force. The Holy Corpse is the corpse of Jesus Christ. Gyro follows Johnny’s lead as he wants to prevent the corpse from falling into the wrong hands since the Zeppeli family is very close with the Vatican. The reason the corpse is so sought after by the

President is because if he buries the corpse under the capital of America, the country will be blessed with prosperity forever. This blessing of prosperity is reflected in the Stand ability of the corpse known as Love Train. It can create a gap where nothing can get in it except things of good fortune, like nature or people deemed as good fortune. Everything else that's considered bad fortune is deflected to those who have sinned or are deserving of karma. The President wants to make sure no "Low-life" will abuse the corpse for their own selfish desires and potentially ruin their country as well as others around them.

Surrounded by junk months after the close encounter at the river, Johnny is once again forced to relive the trauma and guilt of causing his brother's death. The manifestations of the mouse and his father, telling him God took the wrong son, gnaw at his psyche. Only one nail bullet left, cornered by the enemy and his guilt to which he offloaded onto Johnny to kill him, fate seems to have caught up to Johnny once more. A spiritual figure tells him to not shoot if his heart wavers, or else the new path won't be opened to him. What else but to shoot but himself. With most of his body being taken into the worm hole Johnny moves the half of his body that is outside of the hole into safety, and fights with killer instincts. Tusk Act 3 has been achieved. Tusk looks more mechanical and is a full fledged robot with legs and arms. Johnny can now go into the small worm holes his previous ability made and gain advantageous positions by moving them wherever he pleases. Overcoming the guilt he feels of getting his brother killed Johnny defeats the enemy Stand User, but loses the nearly completed Holy Corpse to the President.

His patriotism knew no bounds, but why? As a child Funny Valentine was given the cold truth of his father's whereabouts. A soldier came by his home with a napkin, a napkin Valentine's father had on him with his son's birthday embroidered onto it. The father was captured, stripped of everything he had on and tortured to death for information, possibly during the

revolutionary war. Before he was stripped the father knew his napkin would be stolen, his one last connection to his family, to his young son. He had no good place to hide it beyond his already blinded eye. The father gouged his eye out and hid the napkin in there. It was never found by the enemy. When his body was recovered so was the napkin by the soldier who is telling the story to young Valentine. His father protected the information that would lead his men and country to sunders and, in turn, his family with his life. The soldier that brought this napkin was the father's friend, he spoke highly of Valentine's father as well as the virtue of patriotism and how it is a very noble thing to carry in one's heart, especially if thought of as an extension of protecting one's family while carrying the pride for their country. Fast forward to the American Civil War and Funny Valentine is travelling in the desert with his company. They all slowly die of thirst and hunger, Valentine too is on the brink of death until, by chance, the heart of the holy corpse sinks into his chest. It reinvigorates him long enough to make it back alive and grants him a Stand ability. From then on he becomes the President of the United States of America and, once he discovers what and who the Holy Corpse belongs to, creates the Steel Ball Run Race in order to collect the parts.

Returning to Tusk Act 4 after rushing the president with a barrage of punches, Funny Valentine is now inflicted by Tusk's most powerful ability: the infinite rotation. Tusk, now a full body Stand, can be directed with the nail bullets Johnny shoots and can take advantage of all the previous abilities he has as well as the most deadly one in its arsenal. When coming in contact with this Stand a rotational energy will be inflicted onto the target. This energy will make the target infinitely spin out of existence, and no matter what they do they can't stop the spinning, unless Johnny shoots them again because the rotational energy spins in one direction and he can shoot a bullet that goes in the other direction. The President is helpless. No matter what he does,

even with his Stand ability to travel to parallel universes, he will always infinitely spin until he no longer exists. A side effect of said spinning is if he tries moving away from the original spot where he was hit he will be forced back into that spot no matter what. The President cannot win and begs for Johnny to stop the rotation in exchange for bringing back an alternate universe Gyro Zeppeli. Johnny doesn't believe him and tests the President until at the last test Valentine attempts to back stab Johnny by shooting him. It doesn't work, and with all five nail bullets from one hand, Johnny puts an end to the conflict. As the rotational energy buries the President into the spot in which Tusk hit him, Johnny hears the voice of Gyro above. Getting a glimpse at his soul as it ascends into the heavens Johnny is told by the ascending Italian to keep his promise about never telling anyone his real name. Johnny affirms before crying his heart out to the best friend he ever had.

At the end of it all Johnny could finally use his legs again after achieving Tusk Act 4. The race was never that important to him. After securing the corpse and tying up loose ends Johnny begins a simple journey to transport Gyro's corpse back to Italy. The boy who Gyro sought to free sadly died of illness. On the boat ride there he meets the daughter of a Japanese jockey whom he takes a liking to. It's very likely he will be with her and continue the Joestar bloodline. Thus ends JoJo's Bizarre Adventure Part 7 Steel Ball Run.

My story takes place away from the main narrative and simply uses the setting and rules of the world of JoJo to my advantage to tell the story of my own JoJo, or more specifically my own LaLo: Placidus Longshot. I already had the idea to make a character and story that mimics JoJo in name but they would be their own person, not directly linked to the Joestar bloodline. This would make the character of LaLo stand out and more creative freedom would be allowed for me to do what I want with the characters. All of the JoJo's are descendants of European,

Japanese, and American individuals. While it wouldn't be improbable for a Joestar to have a child with a black woman it would unnecessarily change the canon to which I'd like to respect. I picked the name Placidus because, according to a baby naming website, it meant silent, peaceful, or mild person. The last name Longshot has the same meaning as its normal usage in the English language when something seems impossible or too hard to be accomplished. This story I made is about Placidus Longshot, an aspiring jockey who, thanks to his experience as a black person, does his best to avoid connecting with anyone until he meets a woman, Whina Amenah, whom he spends a few days with as he discovers the world of Stands and Stand Users and gets roped into an adventure he didn't ask for, but possibly needed. With Whina on the run from Billie, a man desperate to learn the secrets of evolving his Stand through his Tarot Card reading, and his reluctant partner Humble, stuck being an ally to both of his friends Whina and Billie, she and Placidus must navigate the spaces they're forced into and stay alive!