Abstract

Manga, also known as Japanese comics, have a rich history in Asian culture dating back to the 12th century. Western influence is prevalent in the genre throughout its history, although its popularity in the West did not spark until recent decades. Now, hundreds of manga are translated into English and an emerging fan community hosts conventions and expos across the world. Through a close analysis of Eiichiro Oda's One Piece novels, with a specific emphasis on the "Impel Down" storyline in volumes 54-56, I argue for the literary value of manga by demonstrating its intertextuality, its borrowings from Classical texts, and its ability to discredit society's negative stereotype of the genre as a whole. Although manga has remixed various famous texts, One Piece references different aspects of Western culture, has depth of character and story, and orchestrates some of the most unique juxtapositions between textual references. The two primary textual references I focus on are Dante Alighieri's "Inferno" from The Divine Comedy and the 1970s cult-classic musical The Rocky Horror Picture Show.

Honors College
Ball State University
Muncie, IN 47306