

## RESEARCH

# David Bowie's Influence on *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure*

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This article analyses the influence of David Bowie's work in *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure*, a manga known for its wealth of references to western popular culture. It is argued that David Bowie's cultural reception can be attested via the presence of three narrative themes featuring in this manga series. The first theme is the exploration of diverse genres and an innovative, genre-defying attitude. The second theme is the use of avant-garde, flamboyant and gender-ambiguous aesthetics for its fictional characters. The third theme is a self-reflexive approach to the creation of fictional characters, intended as an awareness of the temporary, transient nature of their role as reluctant heroes in their own stories.

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**Keywords:** Celebrity; David Bowie; Intertextuality; *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure*; Manga

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## Introduction and Theoretical Preliminaries

Hirohiko Araki's *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure* (original *JoJo no Kimyō na Bōken*, henceforth *JoJo*) is an ongoing manga series that mostly features the adventures of the Joestar family and its members. Its serialisation started on the weekly magazine *Weekly Shōnen Jump* in January 1987. The series switched to a monthly, ongoing schedule when transferred to *Ultra Jump* in February 2005. The series has been collected into 117 *tankōbon* as of June 2016 (Wikipedia 2016). *JoJo* started as an action manga featuring super-powered characters, with *Fist of the North Star* as a strong influence (original *Hokuto no Ken*, Thompson 2010) However, since its inception *JoJo* featured homages and references to a wealth of western artworks and themes, blended with Japanese references and concepts.

As the series progressed, this creative blend of heterogeneous themes increased in complexity, eccentricity and popularity (Thompson 2010). Although *JoJo* began as a typical *shōnen* manga (i.e. action manga for boys: Shodt 1996: 26–28; Bryce & Davis 2010: 38–39), the transition to *Ultra Jump* brought the series within a *seinen* (i.e. young men: Bryce & Davis 2010: 39–40) demographic and sensibility. Furthermore, as Araki acknowledged, the artistic methods and practices of his favourite artists, one example being Prince, strongly influenced *JoJo's* artistic evolution (Araki 2016). David Bowie seems also to be another key influence, although an indirect one. Araki has often stated that his goal as a mangaka was to set himself apart from other manga artists by creating a unique style when he began in the late '70s (Araki 2006). David Bowie's artistic trajectory also followed this goal, as his creation of several stage personae testify (e.g. the Thin White Duke; Stevenson 2006). Furthermore, direct references to Bowie's works abound in *JoJo*, one example being the character *Scary Monsters* in its seventh story arc.

The influence of these artists on the series, however, has never been studied in detail. One reason lies in the general dearth of research about the multi-mediatic influence of artistic figures in comics, a situation that this special issue aims to rectify, at least for David Bowie. A second reason is that such forms of intertextuality have begun to be investigated only recently within comics studies (Kukkonen 2013: 10–16). Thus, an analysis of David Bowie's artistic influence on *JoJo* is still outstanding.

The goal of this article is to analyse this influence, as an exemplary but perhaps less known case of the impact that Bowie has had across different artistic media. Therefore, in pursuing this goal we aim to answer a central question: which of the themes composing Bowie's artistic *opus* can be also found in *JoJo*, as Araki's main *opus*. Before we do so, however we introduce and motivate the theoretical notions we adopt in our analysis. Our analysis is centred on three core notions which we define as follows.

First, we follow Groensteen's approach of 'comics as a system' (Groensteen 2007: 90–100; 2013: 130–140). Other approaches are possible (e.g. McCloud 1993 and Cohn 2014), but we do not discuss them here for space reasons. This approach treats

comics as semiotic systems involving a visual and a textual modality. Their systematic nature emerges through the combination of different semiotic units (panels, pages, issues) that can be combined to form (possibly) coherent narratives. Hence, the different parts of a comic story are related to the story as a 'whole' (cf. also Cook 2011: 288–289). Crucially, serialised and complete works can be considered independent systems, in which each issue or volume presents a part of the overarching narrative. Thus, we can talk of a series such as *JoJo* as a single, distinct comic/manga system, with its characteristic themes and narrative structures. Its structure is based on weekly/monthly issues, collected into *tankōbon* that cover several *parts*, or story arcs. The notion of 'part', specific to the *JoJo* system, will be fully discussed in the next section, given its importance for the analysis.

Second, we enrich this notion of system with Bateman's approach to *multimodality* and *intertextuality*, and its application to comics (i.e. the so-called 'GeM model': Bateman 2008; Bateman & Wildfeuer 2014). Via this choice, we can make precise the notions that the Groensteen's approach sketches only in an indirect manner. The GeM model introduces *documents* as units used to convey information amongst individuals (or 'agents'). Documents that involve at least two distinct modalities are defined as *multi-modal* documents. The model uses the *page* as a basic unit realising a document. A multi-modal document can include a single page (e.g. a flyer), several pages (e.g. comic issues) and collections of connected pages (e.g. trade paperbacks). Furthermore, comics include panels as semiotic units, which can be conceived as the basic building blocks (Bateman 2008: 100–138; 170–176). Documents can convey *coherent* information when the different elements making up a document (e.g. text and illustrations within and across panels) establish thematically related semiotic relations.

Intertextuality is then defined as a semiotic relation between two different documents, whether this relation involves single panels, pages, chapters, or whole documents (Bateman 2008: 200–210). When this relation holds, one or more documents act as the 'source' documents (or 'sources'), providing information that a reader can access, to fully interpret a 'target' document (or 'target'). We thus say that the target document *refers to* its source documents for its interpretation.

Intertextuality can also apply when the overarching narrative structure of a target document refers to a source document (e.g. Joyce's *Ulysses* and Homer's *Odyssey*: Allen 2011: 130–155). In the '*JoJo* system', one can find both types of intertextual relations. One example of the first case involves characters resembling other manga characters, actors and so on. One example of the second case involves story arcs/parts drawing inspiration from other literary works (e.g. part 3 and its plot resembling Stoker's *Dracula*, but also the classic folktale *Journey to the West*: Thompson 2010).

Third, we explain how David Bowie and his artistic *opus* have influenced *JoJo*, among other sources, by introducing the notion of *celebrity*. A celebrity is defined as a complex social and semiotic construct that an individual can act out, to cement and cultivate his popularity (Turner 2013: 62–75). Setting aside the dynamics of production and consumption processes for celebrities, celebrities can be considered as 'polysemic social signs'. This because their polysemy, or multiplicity of possible meanings, lies in a celebrity's ability to represent different themes and social roles for different social groups. Since these themes are not necessarily expressions of an artist's 'real' personality (Turner 2013: 76–90), celebrities represent inherently fictional (or 'fictionalised', viz. David Bowie) characters that authors perform for public audiences.

Within a theory of multi-modality and intertextuality then, different celebrity meanings/aspects provide intertextual sources for other targets. In the case of 'David Bowie', the celebrity that the artist David Bowie (born David Robert Jones) has nurtured over the decades, we can reason about 'personae' or identities that have punctuated Bowie's artistic trajectory (e.g. Aladdin Sane, the Thin White Duke: Bowie 1972, 1976, Dixon 2013: 399; Toija & Redmon 2013: 379–380). Bowie has used these personae to introduce different aesthetic choices, musical works and elements of reflection, during his artistic career (Usher & Fremaux 2013: 394). Thus, it should not be surprising that each persona has acted as an intertextual source for a wealth of multi-medial targets, including *JoJo*.

It is well known Bowie explored dozens of concepts and themes throughout his career, even if three themes act as red threads connecting most of his artistic

*opus*. The first theme pertains to Bowie's drive to push the boundaries of innovation within each medium that he has explored. Bowie's musical and cinematographic endeavours cover various shades of rock, pop, avant-garde and other music genres, and SF, horror, and biographic movies (Stevenson 2006). The second theme pertains to his choice of highly distinctive aesthetic creations. Bowie created flamboyant, unique, and perhaps eccentric characters such as Aladdin Sane and Ziggy Stardust (Bowie 1972, 1973; Stevenson 2006: 26–50). The third theme, which emerged from the 'Berlin trilogy' period onwards (1977–1980), is that of a self-reflexive approach to the creation of identities (Brooker 2013: 390). Overall, Bowie has been an innovator of popular culture by building a complex 'David Bowie' celebrity sign over the decades. Thus, our research question focuses on how, and to what extent, these themes can be said to also be *JoJo*-esque themes.

We conclude this section by succinctly discussing previous research on *JoJo*, before moving to the analysis. Although an ever-popular series (or, perhaps, because of its popularity), few works have investigated *JoJo* in depth. Brief synopses of its overarching plot and themes have discussed *JoJo* as a complex, ever-evolving series (Thompson 2007; Thompson 2010). A recent essay has investigated Araki's use of splash pages as a narrative tool in parts 1–3, suggesting that it is instrumental in creating a dynamic, epic presentation of key events (Pigeat 2011). Other works have investigated how the special issues featuring Rohan Kishibe, a popular co-protagonist from part 4, have used horror and fantasy themes (e.g. ghosts, zombies and museums: Flinn 2013: 72–74; Howell 2015: 420–424). However, none of these previous works have investigated *JoJo*'s intertextual relation to other cultural works, and certainly not its relation to Bowie's. Thus, our analysis can be considered the first that addresses *JoJo*'s themes and influences.

## The Analysis

*JoJo* is divided into parts, complete story arcs featuring each a distinct member of the Joestar family as the protagonist, and other family members and friends as possible co-protagonists. As of July 2016, seven parts have been completed, and an eighth

part has reached its 55<sup>th</sup> monthly issue. Although each part can be read in relative isolation, the series forms an overarching narrative focused on the Joestars, their allies and enemies, and their bizarre adventures. The Joestars can be interpreted as heroes usually involved in journeys and fighting against villains/antagonists. However, their 'tales' cannot be easily reduced to a Campbellian model (Campbell 2008). For instance, each protagonist (usually nicknamed 'JoJo') seeks to defeat the current antagonist to save his/her community, rather than to bring back a treasure. Parts 4 and 8 do not involve journeys, as the stories are set in a single city. Each antagonist is related to the JoJo protagonists, rather than an external threat to the communities that the JoJos wish to protect. The re-iteration of a protagonist type across parts, each with his/her unique personality and story, continues a method used in Osamu Tezuka's mangas and Michael Moorcock's fantasy/sci-fi works, to name a few (i.e. the 'star system' and 'eternal champion' cycles, respectively; McCarthy 2009: 20–33; Greenland 2013: 35–43). Although relevant, this theme does not play a crucial part in our discussion, hence we will not explore it in any further detail.

The division of the series in distinct parts plays a key role in how Bowie's first theme, the exploration of different genres and themes, plays a role in *JoJo*. First, Araki uses mainstream horror and actions themes in an innovative manner, by setting each part in a different historical setting. For instance, Part 1 is set in the Victorian England of 1890, and presents a Victorian-esque family feud between Lord Jonathan Joestar and his antagonist and step-brother, Diego 'Dio' Brando, who turns into a powerful vampire. Part 2 can be conceived as a dark pulp adventure set in the 1930s, and part 3 as an action/journey adventure set in the 1980s. Part 4 marks a first departure from these themes, as its suburban, 'slice-of-life' setting (i.e. the Japanese 'Moriho town') also marks a shift towards subtler psychological characterisation and a different approach to action sequences. Parts 5 and 6 are crime fiction stories respectively set in Naples and its organized crime, and in a maximum-security prison in Florida. Part 7 is a re-interpretation of Jonathan Joestar's part, couched in a Western setting, and part 8 a mystery/thriller re-interpretation of part 4.

A more radical innovation lies in the introduction of *stands*, powers that characters develop from part 3 onwards. Stands are manifestations of an individual's spirit, aspirations and goals. Only few individuals (and some animals) of extraordinary determination develop stands. Some examples are the Joestars, their allies and their antagonists. From part 4, stands are usually named after rock bands, albums and songs, e.g. *King Crimson* for Diavolo, part 5's main antagonist, and *Scary monsters* for part 7's antagonist Dio. Their powers become increasingly reality-defying. For instance, part 7's main antagonist, U.S. president Funny Valentine, pursues a bright future for his country at all costs. Thus, he uses his stand *Dirty deeds done cheap* (from an AC/DC song) to move objects from parallel worlds to his own world, thereby manipulating the flow of events by any means possible.

Given the complexity of stand powers and goals that *JoJo* characters usually carry, 'fights' have become increasingly creative and unique. For instance, part 8's protagonist, the amnesiac Josuke Higashikata, uses the stand *Soft and Wet* (a homage to a Prince song) to remove one attribute to any object or individual that the stand's 'bubbles' touch. He confronts Jobin Higashikata, one of the members of his adoptive family, in order to access more information regarding his own identity and past (vol. 110, vol. 8 of part 8). Jobin is only willing to give this information if he is beaten in a fight between trained beetles, a popular past-time for Japanese kids. Josuke uses his stand power to make the fighting arena unstable so that his beetle can win, and Jobin is forced to reveal this crucial information.

Overall, Araki's constant exploration of new themes across various genres echoes Bowie's constant pursuit for musical and artistic innovation. In blending different genres while narrating the Joestars' adventures, Araki has always aimed at pushing the boundaries of the *shōnen* meta-genre beyond its traditional, fight-oriented model. In doing so, he parallels Bowie's attempt to push the boundaries across media (e.g. music, cinema) and genres (e.g. rock, horror). Hence, we can say that both artists have acted as innovators within their respective artistic fields, during their careers.

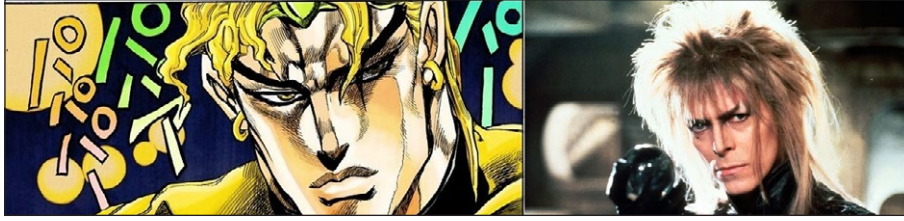
The second theme of Bowie's *opus*, which focuses on the creation of highly distinctive visual identities for characters, can be found in *JoJo* as well, under

two distinct but related aspects. The first aspect involves the wealth of direct intertextual references to the various David Bowie personae, including some of the cinematographic characters he played. The second aspect involves a strong penchant for designing characters wearing flamboyant and exotic dresses, a feature that has evolved over the years, as the series has developed in complexity and artistic freedom. As Araki continually evolves his drawing style, so his characters have evolved in design complexity. Given the temporal dimension of this theme's evolution and importance, we discuss each aspect and how it is realized in each part.

In Part 1, Jonathan Joestar ('JoJo') and Dio Brando are introduced. Dio, the antagonist, appears as the earliest character acting as a clear reference to Bowie's personae. While JoJo is the son of a wealthy baron, Dio grows up in poverty, victim of an alcoholic father whom he kills by poisoning him with a 'fake' medicament. The Joestars adopt Dio but he decides to usurp Jonathan's position as the family's heir, thus developing a lust for power and control. Once he becomes in possession of the 'stone mask', a mysterious Mayan artefact, he becomes a powerful vampire and starts his century-long fight against the Joestars, ultimately resolved in part 6.

Dio is presented as charismatic, twisted villain, hence its intertextual relation with David Bowie may not appear obvious at first glance. Furthermore, since parts 1–3 feature a drawing style heavily reminiscent of *Hokuto no Ken*, all characters are extremely buff and with stereotypically masculine jaws. It is in part 3, set 100 years after part 1, that Dio begins to develop a more androgynous persona and appearance that better outline his similarity to two personae that Bowie created as an actor. First, as a vampire, Dio hides in the shadows of his base in Cairo and partly uses the suave mannerisms of 'John', the vampire from *The Hunger*, when he interacts with his minions. Second, when Dio engages in the final battle against the Joestars, his appearance bears more than a passing resemblance to Jareth, the dark Goblin king that Bowie impersonates in *Labyrinth* (1986, **Fig. 1**).





**Figure 1:** Dio is revealed (vol. 27, p.9, 1992, vol. 16 of part 3). The key elements of resemblance are the haircut and dress design, as the juxtaposed picture from *Labyrinth* (1986) shows. © Araki, Hirohiko & Lucky Land Communications/Lucasfilm Ltd.

Other elements bear more general connections to Bowie's personae. For instance, his disturbingly magnetic charm and homoerotic *innuendos* with his male underlings suggest that their loyalty is in part love for Dio, who also appears to have vague bisexual appetites. His intense emotive displays with enemies and subordinates alike hide an extremely cold and collected personality, vaguely reminiscent of the Thin White Duke persona. Dio, from part 1 to part 3, seems to capture a dark interpretation of some of Bowie's personae up to the '80s, coupled with the intense charisma and ambiguity that pervades each of these personae.

Other characters become the main antagonists in parts 4–6, even though Dio's influence on the overarching narrative remains relevant. In part 5, the main protagonist is Giorno Giovanna, one of Dio's illegitimate and estranged sons, who aims to become a stern but less morally compromised leader of Naples' organized crime. Giorno does not bear a direct connection to Bowie, but his allies and enemies' fashion senses bear more than a resemblance to the eclectic outfits of earlier Bowie and Prince. Part 6 follows a similar tack, since flashbacks show that Dio acted as a companion and inspiration to father Pucci, the main antagonist opposing the protagonist Jolyne Kujo. Nevertheless, it is by part 4 that the central characters of each part, *qua* stand users, begin to display the emergence of a distinct Bowie-esque fashion sense permeating the series. Stand users have unique looks, mannerisms (e.g. poses) and stand powers that identify them as full-fledged characters.

The theme of aesthetic uniqueness permeates part 7, which presents a different of Jonathan Joestar's story, now a U.S. jockey in a trans-continental horse race, the 'Steel Ball run'. This part features Dio as a secondary antagonist, and the U.S. president Funny Valentine as the main antagonist. Both sport flamboyant looks, long blond hair and, in the case of Valentine, a disturbingly charming personality. This part's version of Dio has a stand called *Scary Monsters*, an obvious homage to Bowie's classic work (Bowie 1980), which allows Dio to transform into a velociraptor-like creature. The two protagonists Jonathan and Gyro (Zeppeli) join Valentine and Dio in being indirect but explicit references to Bowie's 'classic' looks and aesthetic style of the '70s-'80s (Fig. 2).

Furthermore, part 7 crystallizes two changes in Araki's drawing style that finds inspiration in a Bowie-esque aesthetics. First, by part 7 most characters are relatively



**Figure 2:** Left side: Dio (left) and Valentine (right) (vol. 95, p.1, 2008, vol. 15 of part 7). Notice Valentine's pose mirroring a classic Bowie pose, as the figure on the right shows (Bowie n.d.). © Araki, Hirohiko & Lucky Land Communications/Getty Images.

slender and with androgynous body features. Second, stand users wear flamboyant dresses that stand out, given the historically-oriented setting of the story (U.S., 1890). Thus, by part 7 *JoJo* seems to truly represent a comic counterpoint to Bowie's aesthetic style and unicity.

Parts 4 and 8 deserve to be singled out, since they present the closest renditions of Bowie characters in the series. Their protagonist and antagonist are respectively Josuke Higashikata and Yoshikage Kira. Josuke is based on the Prince persona during his period with the New Power Generation (Prince and The New Power Generation, 1991), while also blending elements of popular youth culture of the time (e.g. the *yanki* or 'delinquent' look, based on a pompadour and oversized school uniforms: Shodt 1996: 45–48). Part 4 also inaugurates the trend of characters dressing in flamboyant and androgynous styles. Josuke and his friends wear school uniforms with complex and unique designs, and Jotaro Kujo, the protagonist from part 3 returning as a secondary character, wears all-white suits with ankle-length jackets. Stand users, as distinctive characters in the story, always wear unique, highly creative dresses and always have stand powers named after rock bands (e.g. *Red Hot Chili Peppers*: vol. 29).

Crucially, Yoshikage is the closest homage to David Bowie in the series, specifically to the 'Thomas Jerome Newton' persona from the Berlin and *The Man who fell on Earth* period ('76 to '80: *The man who fell on Earth*, 1976). Yoshikage is blond with blue eyes, always dresses elegant formal suits, and is obsessed with being an average individual who never stands out. This desire clashes with his ruthless killing habits: Yoshikage is a dangerous serial killer. His stand, *Killer Queen*, bears the name of a Queen's song, and vaporizes any object it touches. Yoshikage uses it to kill women and take their left hands as 'girlfriends', preserving them in jars when they begin to rot. Yoshikage's looks are not the only visual reference to the two Bowie's personae, since the stand *Killer Queen* has the same feline eyes and glacial expression of Thomas (**Fig. 3**).

As in the case of Dio, Yoshikage represents a re-interpretation of a Bowie persona. Unlike Dio, however, he represents a much darker and more original re-interpretation.



**Figure 3:** Yoshikage and his stand (vol. 33, p. 150, 1993, vol. 5 of part 4), juxtaposed with Bowie's Newton character (Newton n.d.). Note that Yoshikage dresses in a formal style that Bowie often adopted during the '80s-'90s. © Araki, Hirohiko & Lucky Land Communications/British Lion films.

Bowie's Newton persona acts as a tragic anti-hero of his story, whereas Yoshikage is a ruthless serial killer and the lethal antagonist to the JoJos.

Part 8, known as *JoJolion*, is a re-interpretation of part 4, borrowing elements from parts 2 and 3. The now amnesiac Josuke attempts to discover his past, while at the same time trying to discover the secrets behind Morioh and its post-Earthquake bizarre architecture. Even if ongoing, part 8 has featured a further elaboration of a Bowie-esque aesthetics, and an interesting twist on the use of Bowie personae. 'Josuke' is actually the result of a mysterious process that merges individuals and objects. Yoshikage and Josefumi Kujo, his friend, have been merged into his current persona and body, as testified by his half-blue, half-brown irises, split along the vertical axis. In investigating his past, Josuke discovers that actions from his two personalities set in motion the events described in the story and connect him to the main antagonists of the story, the so-called 'rock men'. One interpretation of a Bowie persona (Yoshikage) is merged with an interpretation of a Prince persona (Josefumi), co-existing in the same character.

Part 8 also continues the aesthetic approach inaugurated in part 7, with the Yagashikata family members playing a crucial role. Josuke always wears a sailor

uniform with baggy trousers. The youngest Higashikata member, Tsurugi, is a boy cross-dressing as a girl, thus hoping to avert the curse afflicting his family's male members. His father Jobin wears hairpins to block his hair, and his grandfather Norisuke IV wears dreadlocks with big-sized pearls as accessories. The other family members similarly display exotic dresses and elaborate make-ups and hairstyles, irrespective of their gender. The antagonist 'rock men' also display elaborate, androgynous fashion senses. Thus, parts 7 and 8 can be said to continue the trend of a Bowie-esque aesthetics, which in turn is the quintessentially JoJo-esque visual identity. More in general, though, Bowie's aesthetical choices have played a clear influence on *JoJo* as a series with a unique, fashion-conscious style.

The third theme, which pertains to Bowie's creations as involving a degree of self-reflexivity, requires a qualification before being discussed in its possible influence on Araki's work. It is perhaps obvious that *JoJo* and its protagonists and antagonists alike are *not* conceived as (stage) personae that Araki created and impersonated over the decades, unlike Bowie's personae. This difference should not be surprising, since the media in which Araki and Bowie's characters exist (i.e. manga vs. music and cinema) have obvious structural and semiotic differences. Nevertheless, there are some clear parallels between how the different incarnations of 'JoJo' and David Bowie license this degree of self-reflexivity.

The overarching story underpinning *JoJo* can be also seen as an exploration on the themes of 'hero', 'will' and 'legacy' (cf. Araki 2006). In part 1, Jonathan strives to become an ideal gentleman, and only becomes a hero because of his ties to Dio, who follows a downward spiral of villainous behaviour. Various events set in motion Jonathan's short quest to defeat Dio, an act that is heroic as far as it prevents Dio from expanding his influence. In part 2, Joseph is aware of his grandfather's destiny and the 'curse' that Joestars have to carry. However, Joseph is not willing to engage his destined battle against his antagonists until this decision becomes necessary. His being 'the present JoJo' brings him to question what fate lies for him (vol. 7, pp. 12–13). In part 3, Jotaro Kujo becomes the third family member to carry the 'JoJo' role. However, when discussing the Dio threat with his grandfather Joseph, his grandson Jotaro is in disbelief of the 'alleged fate' he must accomplish

(vol. 12, pp. 14–20). The Joestars are generally sceptic of their own future as heroes and only focus on their current role as a necessary test to overcome.

This theme develops in importance as the story unfolds, for parts 4 to 6 involve a new generation of JoJo protagonists who develop an increasing scepticism towards their role. Josuke's indirect affiliation to the Joestars is also reflected in the fact that he confronts Yoshikage only to save his hometown. Giorno, instead, aims and succeeds to become a (benevolent) villain, as befits to the son of Dio, the quintessential villain. Jolyne, in part 6, is estranged from his father Jotaro Kujo, and explicitly rejects her family role ('don't call me JoJo. Only my mother calls me JoJo': vol. 64, p. 89). However, she finds himself fighting against the most powerful antagonist, Pucci, for two reasons. The first is a desperate attempt to save his father and reconcile with him, and the second is to avoid father Pucci's ultimately successful attempt to re-write reality and the future, according to his idea of fate.

Thus, the JoJos develop an understanding of their role as heroes and, at the same time, a sceptic attitude towards this role. If the future and fate of the JoJos is one in which they must fight against dangerous enemies such as Dio, Yoshikage, Diavolo, Pucci and Valentine, then the JoJos would rather avoid such a future. This echoes Bowie's take on his role as a celebrity, and his approach to this role as one that anticipates the *zeitgeist* of the time. Identities and roles, in *JoJo* as in Bowie's *opus*, are inherently temporary and inter-related, but nevertheless function as roles that individuals perform on a fictional stage. Grander philosophical themes are, for the most part, taken with a sceptical attitude (Brooker 2013: 391). With this point in mind, we move to the conclusions.

## Conclusions

The objective of this article has been to analyse Bowie's influence on the manga *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure*. As this discussion suggests, the intertextual relation between *JoJo's* and Bowie artistic works with respect to the third theme is indirect. Nevertheless, Bowie and Araki's characters display a central awareness of their transient role as characters, and temporary realisations of a more abstract prototype (e.g. 'the artist' and 'the hero'). Their scepticism towards a pre-designed future can

be thus seen as the core of the self-reflexivity theme that emerges in both works, thereby creating an intertextual relation as a parallel between the two works. We can therefore answer our central question as follows. The three Bowian themes of pushing genre boundaries, creating unique and flamboyant aesthetic identities for characters and personae, and pursuing a degree of self-reflexivity can be found in *JoJo*, as themes at least indirectly inspired by Bowie's artistic endeavours. By offering this answer, we have reached our goal of analysing Bowie's intertextual influence on *JoJo*.

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### Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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