

## One Piece



“I want to be King of the Pirates”, declared Monkey D. Luffy as he set out on his ambitious adventure across the Grand Line. With over 1100 episodes and manga chapters, I have journeyed alongside him and his pirate crew, becoming deeply invested in their quest. So far, One Piece is a 32 arcs story, and as it continues building, so does my love for it. This series moves me because it takes me through a rollercoaster of emotions. I laugh at the crew’s mischievous antics, root for their victory in battle, and feel deeply saddened by their tragic backstories.

The characters in One Piece have a distinctly whimsical design, yet each design features specific traits that make them visually unique. Refer to the following image<sup>1</sup>:



When I first encountered these designs, some even struck me as odd. However, over time, I have grown to love and appreciate characters whose appearances I once found off-putting. For a high school student, there is no better lesson a series could impart than “not to judge a book by its cover.”

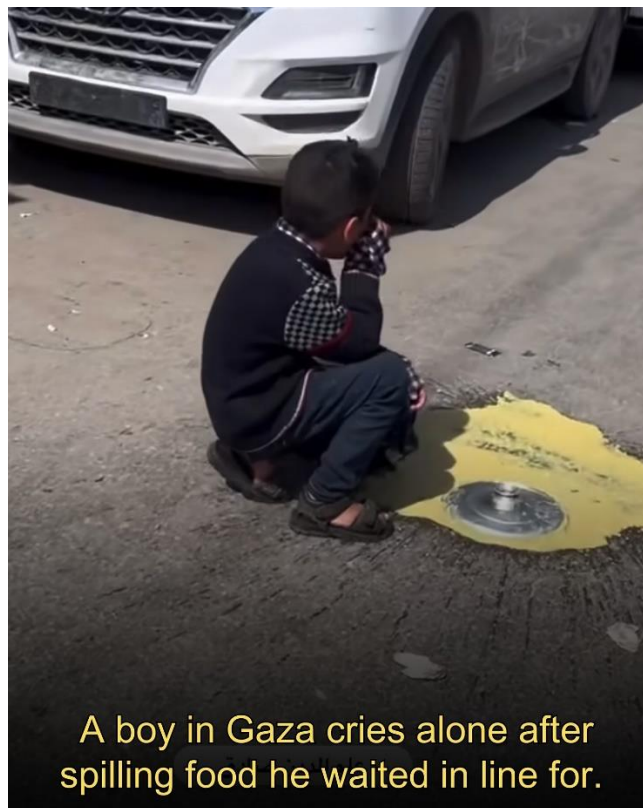
Contrary to the character designs, the world building in One Piece is methodical and meticulously crafted. One of my favorite aspects is the dichotomy between Luffy’s pirate crew and the World Government. Typically, pirates are viewed as ruthless savages and the World Government as protectors of justice. However, we see through many instances of the story that these roles are not always as explicit as they seem. During the Marineford war, where one of my favorite speeches is told:

"Pirates are evil? The Marines are righteous? These terms have always changed throughout the course of history! Kids who have never seen peace and kids who have never seen war have different values! Those who stand at the top determine what's wrong and what's right! This very place is neutral ground! Justice will prevail, you say? But of course it will! Whoever wins this war becomes justice!"

we witness the Marines employing ruthless tactics and causing significant collateral damage. Furthermore, the disparity between the powerful and the weak that is a recurring theme in the story, complicates the simplistic polarity of good versus evil.

Perhaps this is why I am moved by One Piece. In its simple, comedic fashion it entertains you while at the same time, by showcasing the real-life problem in its absolute worst: slavery, human trafficking, segregation, discrimination and more, it makes you aware about the complexities and injustices of the world. As I re-read Doflamingo's speech, it reminded of the following video: <https://www.instagram.com/p/C7IIHW8ozX0/>

Then I compared the two images<sup>2</sup> of two different realities, Gaza and D2:



A boy in Gaza cries alone after spilling food he waited in line for.





From a position of privilege, we often fail to recognize the extent of our advantages—which led to the food wastage in D2. I felt sorrowful and anger at the disparity between the two images and I reflected on how correct Doflamingo was. We take for granted the opportunities and resources readily available to us and thus remain oblivious to the challenges that others must overcome, often for far fewer resources.

One Piece evokes a sense of melancholy in me, yet above all else, it instills hope. As I watch Luffy struggle in each fight, I fervently hope for his victory. Observing Zoro's willingness to sacrifice his life for his captain, prioritizing loyalty over his own ambition of becoming the greatest swordsman, deepens my respect for loyalty. Witnessing once-despised villainous characters perform selfless deeds, I believe that redemption is possible. Seeing characters sacrifice their lives for others teaches me about unwavering belief and selflessness. At the conclusion of each arc, one thing is certain: the inhabitants of the region, filled with gratitude and joy for having their adversities resolved, gather to bid Luffy's pirate crew a heartfelt farewell. ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PSpc6JBzCtc&ab\\_channel=AnimeMoments](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PSpc6JBzCtc&ab_channel=AnimeMoments)) One Piece

moves me because it makes me believe I can be just like the Strawhat Pirates—I can leave a place better than I found it.

### **References**

1. [https://www.reddit.com/r/OnePiece/comments/9hv0vj/height\\_difference\\_of\\_some\\_one\\_piece\\_monsters/](https://www.reddit.com/r/OnePiece/comments/9hv0vj/height_difference_of_some_one_piece_monsters/)
2. [https://www.instagram.com/p/C7j5SKnO9d0/?img\\_index=9](https://www.instagram.com/p/C7j5SKnO9d0/?img_index=9)