



Hero's Journey Analysis of Denji in The First Part of *Chainsaw Man* Manga

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ABSTRACT

Manga has become a widely recognized trend around the world, with Western fans tend to prefer psychological and dark fantasy genres in the manga they read (Lin, 2005). One manga that caught the writer's attention was Tatsuki Fujimoto's *Chainsaw Man*, especially the journey of its protagonist, Denji. This research aims to analyze Denji's journey by utilizing Vogler's (1992) hero's journey framework with a qualitative text analysis method. Through analysis of the first part of *Chainsaw Man*, this research finds typical patterns of Denji's character development in the context of the hero's journey. The results of the analysis show that although there are structural differences with the theoretical framework, Denji's journey in *Chainsaw Man* reflects universal themes of conflict, character development, and sacrifice. This research contributes to the understanding of manga narrative construction and presents a new perspective on character development in Fujimoto's work. In conclusion, *Chainsaw Man* not only enriches the diversity of manga as part of literature works but also becomes a source of ideas for further research on the hero's journey in manga.

Keywords: Chainsaw Man; Denji; hero's journey; manga

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INTRODUCTION

Manga is becoming a widely recognized trend around the world (Koulikov, 2018). Manga has a format similar to Western comic books, but its illustrations and presentation are done differently. One important aspect of the manga's plot, and one in which the researcher is most interested, is its characters. Koulikov (2016) claims that there are more academic articles on manga in English than ever before. From 1993 to 2015, he found that there were more English-language research articles published worldwide. There is a trend among Western manga fans which is the psychological and dark fantasy genres currently preferred by Western readers (Lin, 2005). These genres are known for their in-depth analysis of characters and interaction between characters, which compels readers to pay close attention to even the most minor elements of the characters' interactions since they might indicate something significant later on in the storyline. In the context of modern manga, *Chainsaw Man* (Fujimoto, 2018) appears as a unique piece that has gained attention for its intense narratives, unusual characters, and the storyline that defies norms. One character that has particularly captured the imagination of readers is Denji, the protagonist

whose journey through the gruesome world of *Chainsaw Man* is laden with challenges and transformations.

According to Sicoe's (2013) character arc theory, characters change over a story. Any change, including those to the physical appearance, emotional state, or conduct, could be the cause. However, the majority of character arc assessments tend to focus on how a character's characterization changes. More specifically, Wisheart (2015) develops a diagram of nine character development patterns. He asserts that the enneagram adheres to the idea of a character arc, according to which a character does not stay the same. That way, Vogler's (1992) hero's journey theory can be utilized with the character arc framework. In this context, a character will be examined using the hero's journey framework, which follows them from one event to the next. Joseph Campbell created and popularized the hero's journey theory in 1949; since then, it has been utilized to examine and serve as the fundamental framework for many classic and contemporary literary works. The path a character takes in order to transform is primarily what the hero's journey is about.

There are several studies on the hero's journey in manga and one study on *Chainsaw Man* manga. Kaneki Ken's character analysis in "*Tokyo Ghoul*" by Priyansyah (2018) uses Vogler's hero's journey theory, providing a basis for understanding the development aspects of manga protagonists in this research. The hero's journey of Kamado Tanjirou in *Demon Slayer: Kimetsu no Yaiba* by Ikhtiar (2020) and *The Voyage of A Heroic Pirate: Hero's Journey in Eiichiro Oda's One Piece* by Dwipa (2022) highlights the similarities and differences in how the hero's journey framework is used in different manga narratives. Multimodality and the construction of fear in Tatsuki Fujimoto's *Chainsaw Man* by Satriyo (2023) provide insight into the narrative and visual elements that contribute to the manga's appeal. These studies serve as the theoretical foundation for this analysis of Denji's hero's journey in *Chainsaw Man*. While existing research has explored hero's journeys in various manga, the distinctiveness of Tatsuki Fujimoto's narrative approaches and the conceptual aspects of *Chainsaw Man* demand an in-depth analysis of Denji's journey. By addressing this gap, the research intends to explore the understanding of the hero's journeys further while highlighting the subtle aspects that set Denji's character arc distinctive within the genre.

Departing from the previous studies, this study will focus on a detailed hero's journey analysis of Denji in the first part of *Chainsaw Man*. To achieve this, two theories are integrated. A notion called character arc discusses the type of transformation a character undergoes. It chooses what kind of adjustment will be made to a number of preexisting categories. The hero's journey, on the other hand, is a method of analysis that explains the change a character undergoes in a chronological way. There are four phases of action that build to the conclusion of the story. The character arc theory will be the theory that interprets and gives meaning to the type of change that takes place, while the hero's journey theory will be the theory that explains how the change takes place. In this research context, Denji's character development will be established before his hero's journey is discussed. The assertion will be followed by interpretive arguments to show how the plot is affected by Denji's character growth. Therefore, comprehending Denji's hero's journey is essential not only for *Chainsaw Man* enthusiasts but also for scholars who are interested in the broader world of manga and narrative theory. Manga as a research subject provides a rich environment for researching character arc and narrative approaches because of its distinctive blend of visual and verbal elements. Studying Denji's journey provides insights into the universal themes embedded in the hero's journey

framework and brings light to Tatsuki Fujimoto's creative decisions. This research is significant for literary analysis as a whole as it expands the discussions on manga character development and narrative in general.

METHOD

The design of this research is qualitative, aimed at describing and revealing Denji's character development by applying Vogler's hero travel theory. Cresswell (2007) asserts that qualitative research is most useful when it seeks to investigate the topic or issue at hand. The data were the English version of *Chainsaw Man* manga chapters, written by Tatsuki Fujimoto (2018) and released by Shueisha; in contrast, the English version is based on a translation by Shueisha and Mangaplus.

Chainsaw Man is a series composed of various components and story segments related to one theme. According to a manga discussion forum, the part of the story is known as a saga while a segment of the story is known as an arc. A saga is more like a collection of arcs. An arc is a part of a manga that has a beginning and an end featuring different themes. A manga may have only a few arcs, but in some situations, it can include dozens of arcs with different themes in each arc. For example, *One Piece* by Eiichiro Oda (1997) has 11 sagas and 32 arcs. To understand the current part or story discussed in this study, you should read from the first chapter of the *Chainsaw Man* manga to chapter 97 because it is the first part of the manga, which includes 97 chapters.

The analysis method employed in this research is textual analysis, utilizing Sicoe's character theory (2013) and Vogler's hero's journey (1992) as tools for data analysis. First, chapters one to 90 and then subsequent chapters can be downloaded. Part of the story is then divided and referred to as a single "event.". According to Genette (1980) and Meister (2011), narrative events here refer to changes in the narrative elements of the story, including alterations in characters, setting, conflict, and resolution.

Furthermore, in the analysis, Vogler's hero's journey (1992) is utilized. The phases of the hero's journey are employed to identify each segmented event. The episode titles correspond to the matching phases in the hero's journey theory. Subsequently, the incidents were recounted to determine whether or not the character arc has advanced. According to Sicoe's theory (2013), an event is mentioned and classified into one of the three character arcs if it involves development in the character arc. The types of character arcs and segmented events are then discussed to uncover the reasons and interpretations made from these developments

within the character arcs. The research discussion focuses on the elements of the character Denji and other literary elements that contribute to the transformations in the show, such as setting, other characters, and the timeline. The aim is to understand the types of journey and characterization experienced denji.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter contains the findings and discussions of the research, which answer the research question. The research question of this research is 'How is the hero's journey of Denji portrayed throughout the first part of *Chainsaw Man* story?' The analysis shows that Denji's journey in the story fits well with the structure of the hero's journey. However, some structural differences can be found; because there are some combinations and repetitions of the stages in the evidence. In the first part of *Chainsaw Man* story, according to a discussion forum of *Chainsaw Man* there are eight arcs consisting of different segmented events of the story. The arcs are:

1. Introduction arc
2. Bat Devil arc
3. Eternity Devil arc
4. Katana Man arc
5. Bomb Girl arc
6. International Assassins arc
7. Gun Devil arc
8. Control Devil arc

Through the analysis of the segmented events in the beginning of the story, it becomes apparent that Denji experiences a fall arc at the start of his journey. According to Sicoe (2016), the fall arc is known as a "tragedy", as it happens when the protagonist causes himself or others into unavoidable catastrophes, such as insanity, immorality, or death. The presence of tragedy befalling the hero is one of the main features of the fall arc. The hero's journey of Denji will be explained along with the events that occurred in the arcs above. Due to the space limitations, this paper presents the analysis of the only significant image for each stage of Vogler's Hero's Journey. The first point that is going to be discussed is the segmented events that happen in the Introduction arc for Act I.

Act I: The Introduction of the Two Worlds

Act I was introduced by Vogler (1992) as the beginning of the hero's journey. In order to comprehend the journey that Denji goes through, below is the outlined overview of Denji's hero's journey stages in Act I.

- a. Ordinary World
- b. Call to Adventure
- c. Refusal of the Call
- d. Meeting the Mentor

e. Crossing the Threshold

In Fujimoto's *Chainsaw Man*, Act I shows Denji's life as a Devil Hunter who was hired by the Yakuza to pay off the debts left by his father. Accompanied by his devil chainsaw-like dog, Pochita, Denji lives his ordinary world life as a devil hunter. Then, one day, Denji gets a job from the Yakuza to finish off another Devil. This triggered 'the call to adventure' and 'crossing the threshold' at which time Denji was betrayed and killed by the Yakuza, who made a deal with another Devil. The blood flowing from Denji's body parts was drunk by Pochita, who was in his arms. Then Pochita made Denji, becoming his heart and merging with Denji. Not long after that, Denji woke up with his body reconnected and became Chainsaw Man, slaying the Devil who had killed him. After that, an official Devil hunter named Makima came to the scene and was interested in Denji, and gave him two choices: to kill him as a Devil or become Makima's pet as a human. These events can be interpreted as 'meeting the Mentor or Herald' and Denji's reluctance or 'refusal of the call'. These stages are mostly found in chapter 1 of the introduction arc of the manga.

Figure 1

Meeting the mentor & refusal of the call (Introduction Arc)



Despite the inexplicit manifestation of the stage 'refusal of the call' as there is no instance in which Denji indicates any sign of intention to reject the call to adventure, this stage could be

identified in a very subtle manner. This can be seen from Denji's visual expression in Figure 1 and when he was given two choices by Makima. There was a slight doubt on Denji's face when he was offered food if he chose to be Makima's pet.

Act I serves as an introduction of the two worlds in the story. The ordinary world is presented as the human world that hardly ever experiences significant conflict, with Denji depicted as a hired devil hunter by the Yakuza while living together with Pochita. With the portrayal of the Yakuza's betrayal and Makima's arrival, the concept of an extraordinary world was introduced. It is the official government's Devil hunter's world, where the major conflict that involves Denji is going to take place. The most significant stages in this Act are the 'meeting the mentor' and 'refusal of the call', as Denji feels a slight doubt about the journey and comes across a seasoned traveler of the extraordinary world which is Makima.

Act II: The Conflict and the Tragedy

After Act I introduces the concept of the two worlds and thrusts the hero into the extraordinary world or special world, the hero's preparation for the ordeal and the way he responded to it were both shown in Act II stages:

- a. Tests, Allies, Enemies
- b. Approaching the Inmost Cave
- c. The Supreme Ordeal
- d. Seizing the Reward

Act II features multiple repetitions and several combinations of Denji's stages. There were five repetitions of 'test, allies, enemies'. Every repetition of the stage portrays each arc of the story which Denji has gone through. The first 'test, allies, enemies' occurs in the Bat Devil arc, as it is the second arc of the story. In this arc, Denji was introduced to his first two partners by Makima, Aki and Power. During this arc, Denji's alliance with Power deepens, as they face off against the formidable Bat Devil. They were brought together by the devil as a common enemy with the same objective—rescuing Power's cat that has been kidnapped. The bond between the two develops through the intensity of the battle with the Bat Devil, showing their ability to cooperate and overcome challenges. Power in her own unique manner, becomes Denji's ally, helping him develop his abilities.

Within this arc, Denji also meets Aki Hayakawa, an experienced devil hunter. This can be interpreted as Aki provides a new layer to Denji's development. Beyond being an ally, Aki also takes on the mentor role, teaching Denji about the intricacies of devil hunting and the risks involved. As can be seen in Figure 2, the trio are seen to be living together, then forges relationships and draws more precise distinctions

between allies and enemies as they battle the Bat Devil and other supernatural threats.

Figure 2
Test, Allies, Enemies (Bat Devil Arc)



Figure 3
Test, Allies, Enemies (Eternity Devil Arc)



In the next arc of the story—the Eternity Devil arc, the second 'test, allies, enemies' happens. In

this arc, Denji and his five companions confront and overcome a number of challenges as they investigate the mysterious Morin Hotel. The mystery of being continually trapped on the 8th floor of the hotel creates an alarming layer to their situation. While exploring the hotel, the group encounters a head devil, which they quickly defeat with teamwork, exemplifying their growing fellowship. However, the real challenge comes as the defeated devil starts to grow bigger, illustrating the escalating fear within the group. When the Eternity Devil introduced itself to the group, it also can be interpreted as the introduction of the second major Enemy.

The Eternity Devil offers an escape from the hotel for sacrificing Denji, causing internal conflict and a temporary alliance between Aki and Kobeni. As can be seen in Figure 3, the situation was unintentionally made worse by Himeno's intervention, which creates a pivotal moment in which Denji voluntarily gives his life to save the others. It was not only a crucial moment in Denji's character development, but it also shows his compassion. The group composition drastically changes with this sacrifice, and the stage was set for the following conclusion of the battle. Denji resurrects and emerges as a powerful force against the supernatural threats that they confront by changing into Chainsaw Man and defeating the Eternity Devil head-on.

Figure 4
Test, Allies, Enemies (Katana Man Arc)



The third 'tests, allies, enemies' happens in the third arc of the story, which is the Katana Man arc. Denji's test in this arc was focused on his

ability to confront and defeat formidable enemies. In this arc, there were two main enemies and one new ally/mentor introduced. The enemies were Katana Man and Sawatari. As for the ally/mentor was Kishibe, an official senior devil hunter that trained Denji and Power after their defeat in the first encounter with Katana Man and Sawatari. The Katana man somehow has connections with Denji, as he explains that he was the Yakuza's grandson that was introduced in the first Act.

In this first encounter with the Katana man, Denji and his companions were struggling to defeat the enemies. As a result, Denji was defeated by getting sliced in half and loses one of his allies, Himeno, after she sacrifices herself to the Ghost Devil to support the group in the battle. However, the group is still defeated by the Katana man and Sawatari who uses her Snake Devil to kill Himeno. After their first defeat, as can be seen in Figure 4, Makima introduced Kishibe to Denji and Power to train them and make them stronger. Then, after they finished their training, they prepared to attack the Katana man and his companions. In the second encounter with the Katana man, Denji was able to defeat the Katana man. To get their revenge on Himeno's death, Denji and Aki were seen beating the Katana man to pulp and torture him.

In this arc, Denji's ability to adapt, strategize, and overcome the challenges serves as the evidence of his training with Kishibe. Aki and Himeno came as essential allies, providing fellowship, with Himeno's sacrifices demonstrating the depth of their relationship. At the same time, formidable enemies like Katana man and Sawatari represent significant challenges, putting Denji's physical abilities, resolve, and determination to the test. The interaction of 'tests, allies, enemies' drives Denji's character growth in the "Katana Man Arc."

Figure 5
Test, Allies, Enemies (Bomb Girl Arc)



The fourth ‘tests, allies, enemies’ happens in the “Bomb Girl Arc”. In this arc, the story began when Denji encountered a mysterious girl named Reze during a rainstorm and was somehow attracted to her. After Denji was invited by Reze to visit the cafe where she worked, and spending time together, for some reason Denji expressed his desire to go to school. Denji who at that time falls in love with Reze, looking tormented because of his inner conflict to choose between Reze and Makima. Denji’s encounter with Reze takes an unexpected turn, when Reze reveals that she was the Bomb devil hybrid who was the partner of Gun devil (the major enemy/the supreme ordeal of the story) as can be seen in Figure 5. After revealing this, Reze attacks Denji and blows herself up, causing chaos and destruction to their surroundings. At that time Denji is saved by Beam (a shark devil hybrid who is Makima’s subordinate), then together, they face Reze, who has merged with the Typhoon devil. After a fierce battle, Denji manages to defeat Reze by tricking her into the sea. The next morning, Reze lies next to Denji on the beach, and they had a brief conversation before Reze was ultimately killed by Makima. Then, as Reze talked with Denji for a brief time and then not long after that, she was killed by Makima.

The revelation of Reze’s true identity as the Bomb devil who works for Gun devil serves as the emotional test that Denji experiences in this arc. This revelation forces Denji to question his emotions and face the true realities of his extraordinary world. Denji’s cooperation with Beam in his battle with Reze, emphasizes the importance of allies in overcoming adversity. As for the Gun devil, who was mentioned in the background, represents a strong and persistent enemy, foreshadowing future conflict.

Figure 6
Test, Allies, Enemies (International Assassins Arc)



In the next arc, which is the “International Assassins Arc”, the fifth ‘tests, allies, enemies’ occurred simultaneously with ‘approaching the inmost cave’. The arc started when the existence of the Chainsaw Man was exposed to the world after the fierce battle that occurred in the “Bomb Girl Arc”. Makima then explains that Denji and the group will be put under protection to avoid assassination by foreign threats. There are two main threats in this arc, Santa Claus that came from Russia and Quanxi that came from China. The first attack is started by Santa Claus by making the civilians into puppets that attack the public devil hunter. The second attack is started by Quanxi by quickly beheading the puppets and struck down public devil hunters around Denji. This can be seen in Figure 6 as Quanxi dropped down Aki and Angel devil who were near Denji. After the group’s confrontation with Santa Claus’s puppets and Quanxi, Denji was somehow attacked by Santa Claus using the Curse devil. Not long after that, Santa Claus sacrificed one of her puppets to contract the Devil of hell and sent Denji and people around him to hell. It was all Santa Claus’s plan to sacrifice Denji to the Darkness devil in exchange for the Darkness devil power. Then, somehow Makima was able to enter Hell and save the group from the Darkness devil and get them out of Hell. After getting out of hell, Makima and Denji encounter Santa Claus who has gained the power of the Darkness devil, and the final battle of this arc starts. Denji then starts fighting with Santa Claus, followed by Quanxi in her hybrid form who proposes to work together to defeat Santa Claus. By lighting himself with fire, Denji was finally able to defeat Santa Claus that had been strengthened by the Darkness devil power.

And the end of this arc is marked by the killing of Quanxi by Makima. The ‘tests, allies, enemies’ in this arc starts when Denji and his companions are confronted with various threats from different parts of the world. The unveiling of Chainsaw Man’s existence sets off a chain of events that forces them to go through an unknown environment of the international assassins and the threats that came from Hell.

After going through 5 repetitions of ‘tests, allies, enemies’ in 5 arcs of the story, Denji started his ‘approaching the inmost cave’, ‘the supreme ordeal’ and ‘seizing the reward’ stage in the next arc—The Gun Devil Arc. The arc starts when the group has some discussion with Makima regarding the mission to confront the Gun devil. Then, Makima informs the group that actually the Gun Devil has already been defeated and confined by another country. Knowing this, Aki asks the Future devil about his future, the Future devil then says that Aki and Power will be killed by Denji and the most feared devil will appear. As can be seen in Figure 7 and Figure 8, it provides a foreshadow

of the bleak future and new challenges that Denji will go through. Learning about his future vision, Aki goes to meet Makima and explains his vision. After one thing leads to another, Makima is revealed as the Control devil who represents the fear of control or conquest. Not long after her revelation, the Gun devil is shown for the first time and fights against Makima.

Figure 7
Approaching The Inmost Cave (The Gun Devil Arc)

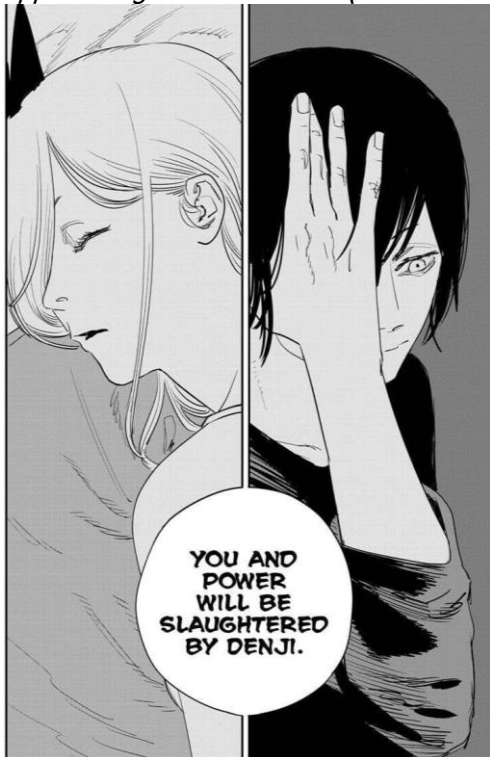


Figure 8
Approaching The Inmost Cave (The Gun Devil Arc)



Figure 9
The Supreme Ordeal (The Gun Devil Arc)



As can be seen in Figure 9, Makima's revelation and the emergence of the Gun Devil serve as the introduction of 'the supreme ordeal'. Makima explained to Denji that the Gun Devil took one body that fought with Makima and got away from the battle. As Makima explains the situation to Denji, it comes to a revelation that the body taken by Gun Devil is Aki's body and transforms him into the Gun fiend (the hybrid form of the Gun devil). Then, the Gun fiend tries to attack the civilians, as Denji realizes that the Gun fiend is Aki. Then, Denji tried to stop him by calling Aki's name.

Figure 10
Seizing the Reward (The Gun Devil Arc)



Figure 11
Seizing the Reward (The Gun Devil Arc)



After the fierce battle, a heartbreaking scene in Figure 10, it can be seen that Aki has been killed by Denji and that the Future devil's prediction regarding Aki's death came true. Denji and Power receive an inheritance of savings left by Aki shortly after his death. And the two of them used the savings to rent a small apartment and for daily needs. This event can be seen in Figure 11, as it serves as the 'seizing the reward' stage of the story, however, the reward was tainted by Aki's death. The event was also marked as the end of the Gun devil arc. Denji's journey in this arc was stained with sorrow and loss, setting the stage for the following stages of resolution.

Act III: The Hero's Resolution

The segmented events that influenced the hero's journey in Act II will most likely affect the resolutions that occur. Denji completes his hero's journey in the first part of *Chainsaw Man* manga with Act III, which follows Vogler's (1992) hero's journey framework.

- a. The Road Back
- b. The Resurrection
- c. Return with the Elixir

The final arc of the first part of *Chainsaw Man* manga, which is the "Control Devil Arc", matches with the stages in Act III. After seizing the reward in Act II with sorrow, Denji starts to live with Power in a new small apartment by using the savings that Aki left, which serves as the start of 'the road back' stage. After Aki's death, Makima

finds Denji in a poor state in a park. After Makima invites Denji to her apartment, Makima comforts him. Not long after that, Makima also invites Power to her apartment, but with different intentions, Makima kills Power in front of Denji. Makima's true intention is explained afterwards while Denji is still in shock. This can be seen in Figure 12 as Makima explains that it is all her plan from the start to break Denji's contract with Pochita.

Figure 12
The Road Back (Control Devil Arc)



Figure 13
The Road Back (Control Devil Arc)



The next day, Kishibe leads an anti-Makima squad to attack Makima, which triggers Denji to transform into a fully formed Chainsaw Man. Then, the anti-Makima squad uses the Hell devil to cast Makima to Hell. However, Denji slices up the Hell Devil in his full form. In her conversation with Kishibe, Makima explains that the Chainsaw Man was the hero of hell. Moreover, the names of any devil eaten by Chainsaw Man will be erased from existence. Continuously, Makima also explains her ability as the Control devil and her intention to Chainsaw Man. Not long after that, the Chainsaw Man starts to battle with Makima and all the devil hybrids under Makima's control. In his first battle with Makima, the Chainsaw Man was somehow defeated because the fear towards him decreased as his popularity rose, as seen in Figure 13.

Figure 14
The Resurrection (Control Devil Arc)



Figure 15
The Resurrection (Control Devil Arc)



Then, Pochita asks Power remnants inside Denji's body to save him. After being given Power's blood, Denji is revived again. As can be seen in Figure 14 and Figure 15, the events that occurred are marked as '*the resurrection*' that Denji passed through. As the hero was purified by another moment of rebirth, but on a higher and more complete level. By the hero's action, the polarities in conflict at the beginning are finally resolved.

Figure 16
The Resurrection (Control Devil Arc)

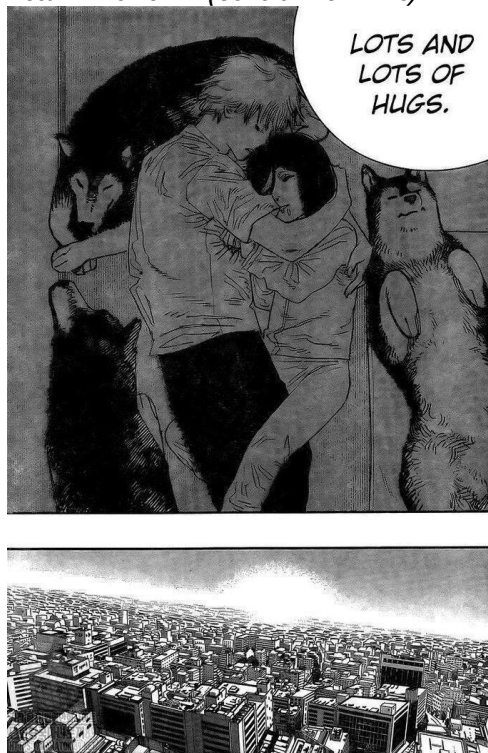


After hiding for some time with Kishibe's help, Denji is determined to defeat Makima. In the second battle, Denji was able to defeat Makima after waiting for Makima to let her guard down. As can be seen in Figure 16, Denji takes back Pochita from Makima after defeating her. After the fight, in his apartment, Denji was seen eating meat which turned out to be Makima's meat.

Figure 17
Return with elixir (Control Devil Arc)



Figure 18
Return with elixir (Control Devil Arc)



In Figure 17, can be seen when Denji said "So this is how you taste, Ms.Makima", this indicates that the meat Denji ate was Makima's meat. In his conversation with Kishibe, Denji explained that eating Makima was an act of love not for the purpose of defeating her. In this conversation, Kishibe also introduced Denji to the Control devil that he found in China, and explained that the Control devil was no longer Makima and asked Denji to live with the Control devil. Afterwards, Denji was seen to be living with Nayuta (the name of the Control devil) and several of Makima's pet dogs as can be seen in Figure 18. The image of the city taken from a high angle in the last panel of the Figure also serves as a marker for the end of the first part of the Chainsaw Man manga. It portrays the new life that Denji will live together with Nayuta. The events from when Denji eats Makima until he lives together with Nayuta, serves as the 'return with the elixir' stage. The end of the journey was marked as the hero returns home and continues to live, carrying some elements of the rewards that made the hero transformed.

Act III serves as the conclusion of Denji's journey in the first part of *Chainsaw Man* Manga. The conclusion represents how the journey is supposed to end. 'Return with the elixir' indicates the hero will return to the Ordinary World to live a tranquil life with their newfound knowledge. Denji's journey concludes with his return to his apartment and living together with Nayuta in the Ordinary World.

Although there are almost no cases where the relationship between Vogler's hero's journey and *Chainsaw Man* is completely perfect down to the smallest detail, it has been proven that there is a clear connection between the stages described by Vogler and *Chainsaw Man* storyline. These structural differences are caused by several combinations and repetitions of the stages, such as 'meeting the mentor' and 'refusal of the call', as well as the five-time repetitions of 'test, allies, enemies' stage. These differences, however, are regarded as slightly significant, but do not indicate the development of a new analytical method. In both Priyansyah's (2018) "*Kaneki Ken's Character Arc: A Hero's Journey Analysis*" and Ikhtiari (2020) "*The Hero's Journey of Kamado Tanjirou in Demon Slayer: Kimetsu no Yaiba*" it was also discovered that repetition mostly occurred in 'test, allies, enemies' as this stage allows the manga a lot more opportunity to elaborate on the story's issues. In Dwipa (2022) "*The Voyage of A Heroic Pirate: Hero's Journey in Eiichiro Oda's One Piece*" it was also found that the hero's journey is in accordance with the storyline of *One Piece* manga. As has been mentioned from the previous research, the segmented events occurred owing to the manga's qualities, notably that a manga may contain many story arcs that depict various themes from the primary story. On the other hand, this research suggests that mangas also adopt the structure of the hero's journey.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the analysis of Denji's hero's journey in the first part of the *Chainsaw Man* manga reveals an in-depth narrative that follows the stages outlined in Vogler's hero's journey framework. In the first part of the *Chainsaw Man* manga, Denji undergoes a significant character's development, tragedy, and resolutions through his journey across the ordinary and extraordinary world, confronting tests, allies, enemies and returning with the elixir.

This research contributes to the broader academic discourse on manga analysis, character development, and narrative structure. By applying Vogler's (1992) hero's journey framework, this research offers a comprehensive framework for understanding Denji's character growth. The seamless integration of tragedy, development and resolution makes Denji's character growth particularly significant in comparison to the previous studies. The use of tragedy, such as Aki's death, and the following character growth, not only adds depth to Denji's journey but also sets the stage for a more complex and emotional narrative.

Overall, the hero's journey of Denji in the first part of the *Chainsaw Man* manga reflects universal themes of conflict, development, and sacrifice. Tatsuki Fujimoto's narrative prowess and Denji's profound character development enhance the manga's appeal, making it a significant addition to the expanding variety of manga literature. This research lays the groundwork for further investigations of the hero's journey in manga and allows scholars to delve deeper into the medium's narrative intricacies.

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