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Multimodality and the construction of fear in Tatsuki Fujimoto's Chainsaw Man

Aria Maulana Satriyo^{1*}

¹Universitas negeri Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to demonstrate the visual aspects featured in the Chainsaw Man manga, as well as how the modes depicted in the manga portray fear in the shape of Devils. The data for this study will come from Tatsuki Fujimoto's Chainsaw Man series and will be analyzed using Multimodality Discourse Analysis and the Visual Grammar Design theory. The findings of this study show that the visual features of the Chainsaw Man manga include representational, compositional, and interactive aspects that assist in establishing the narrative, the reader's sense of involvement, and how the represented participants are portrayed. Other visual and linguistic aspects, such as the story from the manga itself and the physical features and attributes of the Devil, for example, weaponry, aid in depicting the characterization of fear through the Devil portrayed. This study reveals how fear is effectively conveyed in the Chainsaw Man manga and improves the understanding of visual storytelling by examining these linguistic and visual elements.

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1. Introduction

All Devils are born with a name. The more that name is feared, the more powerful the Devil itself. (Makima, 2020). For most individuals, reading text that includes graphics such as Pictures, photos, and photographs is more entertaining than reading plain text. Words are not the only type of communication used to communicate meaning; other so-called modes include visuals, gestures, and behaviours that are always socially relevant for meaning-making (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006). Multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) is a discourse analysis theory that considers how multimodal texts are created, as well as how semiotic methods such as colour, framing, emphasis, and element location and placement contribute to the production of meaning in specific texts (Paltridge, 2012, p. 170).

In this regard, multimodality investigates how graphics are constructed, what they represent, what ideas and attitudes they transmit, and how they can achieve their goals, as well as how relational interactions are built and, ultimately, what the Picture is used to do; to enlighten, illustrate, persuade, or warn. Visual language is also the systematic use of visual display tactics to communicate meaning (Selker & Koved, 1988). It is a visual communication technique, as we all know that language has developed into various forms to allow for stable relationships between individuals from all over the world. Certain viewpoints are accessible to oppose mental processes through language (Asoulin, 2017).

^{1*}Corresponding author:

Email addresses: aria.19059@mhs.unesa.ac.id (Aria Maulana Satriyo)

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From visual graphics to verbal-linguistic components which we acknowledge as a semiotic resource are all contained in one of the well-known types of literature: manga. Manga is a Japanese comic book and graphic novel format targeted at both adults and children (Oxford). The term itself comprises two characters: 漫, which means "whimsical," and 画, which means "pictures." Multimodality itself is a discourse method that concentrates on how various modes create meaning through communication rather than words. By merging the semiotic resources inside the manga, multimodality will be employed to focus on the meaning-making of the topic used in this research. The multimodal social semiotic approach is the theory that will be used to understand manga filled with complex texts and Pictures. This method is founded on Halliday's (1978) metafunctional understanding of texts. Graphical components are equally applied to verbal elements in this method. Similar items are labelled differently: representational instead of ideational, interactive instead of interpersonal, and compositional instead of textual.

The introductory quotes at the beginning of the page are extracted from the shonen manga titled "Chainsaw Man" (2019), authored by the renowned Japanese mangaka Tatsuki Fujimoto. Tatsuki Fujimoto is acclaimed for creating several other well-received manga series like "Fire Punch" and one-shot stories such as "Goodbye, Eri" and "Look Back." In "Chainsaw Man," the quotes portray fear, embodied through the concept of Devils within the imaginative universe of the manga. The narrative takes the reader through a progression of fear, starting from the least intimidating entities like tomatoes and fungi, and escalating to more daunting ones such as guns, eternity, chainsaws, bombs, and numerous others. Each Devil is artistically depicted in accordance with the specific type of fear it represents, aligning with societal perceptions and anxieties associated with the respective object or notion.

The manga's plot revolves around a myriad of peculiar and fantastical creatures known as Devils. Emerging directly from human apprehension, these creatures are intricately interwoven with the thematic fabric of fear, personifying the essence of fear in a tangible visual manifestation. The manga's narrative provides a platform to explore the symbolism and connotations associated with the Devil motif within its narrative context. The manga employs a rich array of verbal and visual modes, allowing readers to delve into the multifaceted meanings of the Devil symbolism. Drawing inspiration from Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen's theoretical framework on multimodality (2006), this research analyzes and interprets the semiotic resources within the manga. This approach aims to generate meaning by utilizing the diverse range of visual and textual elements present in the material.

Furthermore, Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen's concept of visual grammar design, as expounded in "Reading Pictures" (2006), offers a captivating avenue of exploration. This concept is especially intriguing as the manga's artistic portrayal of Devils is inherently tied to the representation of fear. Employing multimodality in conjunction with the principles of visual grammar design will provide a fitting framework for unraveling the intricate layers of meaning embedded within the manga's visual narrative. In conclusion, "Chainsaw Man" presents a compelling opportunity for in-depth analysis by employing the multimodality theory and visual grammar design concept. By delving into the semiotic resources of the manga, this research aims to unravel the nuanced symbolism and significance of the Devil motif in relation to the thematic exploration of fear.

The author of this article draws upon the inspiration of previous scholarly works that have employed the concept of multimodality within various comics and manga as a foundation and guide for their research. One such article, authored by Chen-Wen Huang and Arlene Archer in 2014 and titled "Fluidity of modes in the translation of manga: the case of Kishimoto's *Naruto* (2003)," serves as a key point of reference in this study. In their article, Huang and Archer delve into the notion of fluidity of modes within manga translation, particularly focusing on the manga "Naruto" by Kishimoto. They explore instances where the written mode seamlessly merges with the visual mode and vice versa. This fluidity is exemplified through instances where written text is treated as a visual element, and visuals are interpreted as textual components. For instance, the article delves into the concept of onomatopoeia, where sound effects are visually represented in manga. The authors highlight how onomatopoeic elements, such as the representation of heavy rain with the term "SSSHHH," serve a dual purpose as both a visual representation and an auditory effect. This blurring of boundaries between written and visual modes underscores the dynamic interplay between different semiotic resources within manga. The reference to Huang and Archer's work provides valuable insights into the intricate relationship between text and Picture within manga, offering a framework for understanding how multimodality operates within the visual narrative.

By incorporating this reference, the current research enriches its analysis of the use of multimodality in "Chainsaw Man," enabling a more comprehensive exploration of how semiotic resources are harnessed to convey meaning, particularly in relation to the depiction of fear and its symbolic representation through Devils.



Picture 1. Example of onomatopoeia as sound and visual effects

The examination focuses on a single work, Masashi Kishimoto's *Naruto* (2003). In the manga, the text is a graphical object frequently guided by space concepts, where values and reading order are influenced by position. The study by Chen-Wen Huang and Arlene Archer (2014) has ramifications for how onomatopoeia, typography, and translation are related. By comparing two English translations of *Naruto*, a fan-translated edition and the official edition, the authors investigate the benefits of text and Picture. Sound effects given through text are left undeciphered in the fan version, and the viewer makes up the audio both from the context of the moment and the font choice. On the other hand, the official translation modifies the tone and arrangement to match the reading habits of a Western audience. This article titled *Fluidity of modes in the translation of manga: the case of Kishimoto's Naruto* (2014) examines what is at stake when publishers modify the layout of a comic page in the translation from Japanese to English, as well as the lettering systems and reading route, layout, and punctuation standards and conventions.

In another study by María-José Valero-Porrás and Daniel Cassanya titled "Multimodality and Language Learning in a Scanlation Community" applying a social-semiotic approach to multimodality and ethnographic and discourse analytical approaches, Maria and Daniel as authors investigate a corpus of semi-structured interview sessions, montages of visual personal computer activity, and examined chapters of manga translated by the informant in addition to the corresponding original chapters in English while participating in manga reading, translation, typesetting, and proofreading procedures. This study by María-José Valero-Porrás and Daniel Cassanya examines the language learning results of an informant linked with a scanlation community.

Also, a study by Kin-wai Chu & Simon Coffey (2015) from King's College London, UK concentrated on two autobiographical visual books about two Asian woman travellers. The basic analytical framework is Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional critical discourse analytical model, which draws on heuristic

methods in visual, social, and textual analysis. Because the graphic book depicts time and geography in multimodal methods using comic, graphical, and linguistic semiotic modes, it is now an immensely popular approach to express journey narratives throughout Southeast Asia.

Based on the previous studies above, research about analysing comics using Multimodal Discourse Analysis has been progressively used. However, no research discusses the use of modes in the meaning-making of fear and Devil in Tatsuki Fujimoto's *Chainsaw Man*. Thus, the major goal of this research is to reveal the visual elements or modes contained in the *Chainsaw Man* manga and how the modes represented in the manga depict fear in the form of Devils. This study adds a new viewpoint to the area by using multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) to analyse the visual components utilized to portray fear within the Devils in Tatsuki Fujimoto's *Chainsaw Man* manga. While an earlier study on MDA in comics analysis has been conducted, there is still a knowledge gap about how modes particularly impact the depiction of fear in this manga. The study provides an original lens through which to examine the relationship between visual components and modes, so improving our knowledge of fear depiction in *Chainsaw Man* by merging MDA and visual grammar design. The study fills a knowledge vacuum and contributes to the larger area of manga analysis by giving insights on the visual methods and modes used convey fear within the Devils inside the *Chainsaw Man* manga.

2. Method

This research will primarily draw its data from the renowned "*Chainsaw Man*" manga series created by the native Japanese mangaka Tatsuki Fujimoto. The manga itself will serve as the principal source of data, encompassing both linguistic and visual components essential for thorough analysis. The researcher's approach involves an extensive study of the manga to extract relevant information regarding the utilization of different modes in shaping the portrayal of fear and the depiction of Devils within the "*Chainsaw Man*" narrative. Given the research's focus on modes of meaning-making related to fear and Devils, the chosen methodological approach is Multimodality Discourse Analysis (MDA) with the integration of Visual Grammar Design theory. It's important to acknowledge that the data utilized in this research is derived from a work of fiction and doesn't directly represent real-world events. However, the data is sourced from the official release and translation of the "*Chainsaw Man*" manga, ensuring its relevance and reliability within the context of the study. This investigation into the meaning-making of fear within the realm of Devils in the manga holds the potential to yield valuable insights, particularly in the analysis of manga characters through the lenses of MDA and Visual Grammar Theory.

The process of data collection will involve several steps. Initially, a thorough reading of the manga will be conducted to extract the necessary data for the research. This data will encompass both linguistic and visual elements, forming the basis for subsequent analysis. The next step involves curating and selecting appropriate graphic and linguistic resources essential for the meaning-making analysis. Finally, the collected material will be organized and subjected to analysis based on chosen theoretical principles. With the data comprising visuals, words, phrases, narratives, and dialogues, the researcher will employ both textual and visual analysis, utilizing the framework of Multimodal Discourse Analysis theory. The chosen approach will integrate the Visual Grammar Design theory, with a specific focus on representative, interactive, and compositional meaning. Through this lens, the researcher will scrutinize and interpret the elements present within the manga panels, elucidating how fear is constructed based on the human perception of fear, as revealed through the data analysis. In essence, this research leverages a comprehensive approach, anchored in Multimodality Discourse Analysis and Visual Grammar Design theory, to unveil the nuanced interplay between linguistic and visual elements in the portrayal of fear and Devils within the "*Chainsaw Man*" manga series.

3. Findings

Indeed, many works of literature, including manga, employ a multimodal approach to convey meaning through the utilization of multiple modalities. Modes such as text, verbal language, graphics, salience, and framing are employed in manga to create a rich and complex narrative. In the context of the "*Chainsaw Man*" manga series, various modes are employed to convey the meaning of specific Devils and their association with fear as perceived by society. The manga incorporates a range of modes to depict and symbolize fear and the concept of Devils. Textual elements, such as dialogue and narration, provide verbal

cues that contribute to the reader's understanding of the narrative. Graphical elements, including illustrations and visual representations, play a crucial role in shaping the appearance and attributes of the Devils, enhancing the reader's engagement with the story.

Salience, which refers to the prominence or emphasis of certain elements within a composition, is another mode employed in manga. The visual prominence of certain characters or objects can communicate their significance and evoke specific emotional responses, such as fear, in the reader. Framing, in terms of panel composition and narrative structure, is another mode that contributes to the manga's meaning-making process. The arrangement of panels, the sequencing of events, and the pacing of the narrative all influence the reader's perception of fear and the portrayal of Devils. By analyzing the interplay of these modes within the "Chainsaw Man" manga series, researchers and readers can gain insights into the portrayal of fear and the symbolism of Devils. The use of various modes allows for a multidimensional exploration of how societal perceptions and mental Pictures of certain objects or concepts are translated into the visual and linguistic elements of the manga. This multimodal approach enriches the reading experience and facilitates a deeper understanding of the narrative's themes and messages.

Datum 1.



Picture 2. Denji facing a Tomato Devil

The picture above is presented as the first datum; we can see from how it is framed and several speech bubbles represent the linguistic element. From this, we can see that it is taken from a manga that has been stated above. There are two participants in the picture in which Denji as the main character holding his pet Devil as a weapon and a Devil as the second participant. To analyse the picture above, the author will first analyse the representational meaning. There are two types of representational meaning processes: narrative and conceptual. Vectors are ubiquitous in narrative processes. "The presence of a vector is the standard of a narrative visual proposition," (Kress & Leeuwen, 2006). In the datum above we can see that the main character, Denji, is gazing from behind the broken wall towards the Devil strolling near him and his body is also leaning towards it. We can conclude that Denji is the actor and the Devil is the goal in this vector. Inside the narrative process, there are also several types of action processes. According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996/2006), "various sorts of narrative processes may be classified based on the types of vector and the number and kind of participants involved" (p. 63). Those types are Transactional process, non-transactional process, event, and conversion.

To determine the action process contained in the datum above, we need to see the presence of the actor, the goal and the relationship between them. In the picture of datum 1, 2 participants are contributing to the narrative process. The type of this action process is a transactional process. It is classified as a transactional process considering the condition needed of two participants: the actor and the goal. As previously mentioned, Denji is the actor in which the vector departs and the Devil is the goal as where the vector points in this particular picture. In the picture, we can also see the presence of an eyeline or glance given by Denji which makes him the reactor and the Devil which Denji is looking at as the phenomenon. The gaze given by Denji is a very important piece in the narrative process as it describes the intention of the reactor. From the statement above we surmise the reactional process is also present in the narrative process. Several more vectors can be seen in the picture specifically from the bubbles that connect to Denji. We can conclude that in this case Denji is the sayer and the bubble is the utterances given by Denji. This can also be a piece of more substantial evidence that Denji is readying himself to attack the Devil with the motivation of financial sake such as from the bubble uttering "I guess Devil Hunter's the best for making money." The arrow protruding from the bubble and the visualisation of the action support the cohesiveness of the visual and linguistic elements.

The second is the interactive analysis of datum 1. Going back to the picture presented as the first datum, we can analyse more about the gaze given by the reactor, which in this case is Denji, towards the Devil shown in the background. From the picture, we can see that the gaze given by Denji does not come in contact with the viewer making the viewer an invisible observer which fulfils the criteria of offer. Here we can also see from the gaze given Denji slightly looking up towards the Devil. We can see that from a vertical standpoint, it is taken at a low angle from the reader's position, resulting in a low power position for the power relation. However, from the horizontal point of view, the represented participants in the third panel are parallel to the angle of the reader thus the panel is taken from a frontal angle as it fulfils the condition. Going on to the social distance, in the picture we can see that both participants are drawn from head to toe or we can call a full body drawing and not only that, there is also some space between the participants showing the wreckage caused by the Devil. From the situation previously stated the panel is taken from a long-shot perspective.

Next is the compositional analysis of datum 1. Comics and manga do not only include visual but also linguistic elements. The written text is presented in a dialogue balloon filled with one sentence at a time. The organisation of the text is also very linear in that the reader must read from the top right to left from start to finish to understand the plot chronologically. It is very typical for Japanese manga to be read from right to left although the sentence inside the dialogue balloon must be read from left to right. The starting point is likely to be from the top right corner, the common starting place for Japanese-language comics. In chronological order, The top right corner is Denji holding the starter rope of his Devil pet, the second is the bottom right picture showing Denji pulling the starter rope and finally, the last shot is on the left side of the whole page showing a long shot of Denji and the Devil he's about to fight.

Although the story is starting from the least salient Picture, we can recognize that the third panel has the most salient Picture in this case. This panel is showing the main character first, going to the middle we can see the broken wall, and finally to the far left, is the Devil in a long shot with a variety of colour spectrum mainly red making it the most salient figure in the panel. Since the material of the analysis is from a manga, the framing is pretty strong. It is necessary to have strong framing in this case in order to differentiate between the actions of the participants and the chronological sequence of said actions. The dialogue balloon is drawn to have a white and round shaped background to separate the visual and linguistic elements. The manga we are discussing has several references from one semiotic resource to another. For instance, the word "Devil" repetitiously being mentioned in the text. This could be read as referring to the Devil in front of Denji, the main character. The manga panel shown in picture 1 has a low modality since it is clear from the Picture that the characterization of the fear of tomatoes in the shape of the Devil and owning a pet Devil is entirely fictitious. The datum is also rendered with full-colour saturation, as shown in the photo, and the snapshot has a diverse colour spectrum.

Datum 2



Picture 3. Zombie Devil appearance

Picture 3 above is another apparition of a Devil Denji encounter in the manga. The linguistic element in the picture above is represented by multiple speech bubbles, which are shown as the second datum. There are two key participants in the Picture above. The first participant is the Zombie Devil, while the second is the man dressed in a grey trench coat. Because the Picture presented as the second datum is again from the same manga source, the author will use the same methods to examine the datum. The representational meaning will be examined first to understand the narrative process further. Although there are two main participants here present, there is no vector connecting the two participants. However, there are vectors connecting the linguistic and visual elements in the picture. The speech bubbles in the panel have protruding arrows pointing toward both participants in the panel. This could be determined as a vector since it departs from the speech bubble and points toward the speaker, the Zombie Devil and the man in grey clothing. From this, we can see that the speech bubble is not represented directly to the reader but expressed through the panel participants. Thus we conclude that the type of narrative process here is the transactional speech process.

The next part to be analysed is the interactive meaning. In the picture presented as the second datum, we can see that both of the main participants are not gazing toward each other but instead toward the reader. Since the requirement of gazing at the viewer is made, both participants have high contact gaze symbolising the demanding picture. The vertical angle of the drawing itself is taken from a high-power position since the zombies in the background are visible to the reader although if we shift the focus to the Zombie Devil, we are represented in a low-power position. The horizontal angle however is taken from a frontal angle since from the drawing itself, the angle of the represented participant and the reader runs parallel. We can deduce there is a high level of involvement regarding the represented participant and the reader. Another aspect we can see from the panel is the distance of the shot between the represented participants and the reader in this case. The body of the man in the grey trench coat is fully visible from head to toe and still has some space including the Zombie Devil and other zombies in the background. We can deduce from this information that the drawing is taken from a long-shot perspective.

The analysis of compositional meaning is next. Since the source of the manga is taken from the same source as datum 1, we can deduce that the written text is also shown in a dialogue bubble. The panel is also quite linear in that the reader must read from top to bottom, right to left, and from beginning to end, to grasp the represented participants' meaning. Saliency is an important piece that could support the narrative.

In the panel, we can see from the huge size of the entity and the colour saturation itself, the Zombie Devil is the most prominent entity in the shot. This helps in guiding the reader to highlight the Zombie Devil as the most influential character in the panel. The framing is also pretty strong from how the visual and linguistic elements are presented in picture 3. The white background in the bubble along with the black-coloured font in contrast with the bubble background helps the reader in understanding the represented participants' dialogue. The fact that the linguistic elements are portrayed with a speech bubble helps support the panel's strong framing. The modality of the drawing is low from what we can see in the manga panel. The characterization of fear towards zombies as the Zombie Devil is purely fiction and the mass hoard of zombies depicted in the manga panel does not exist in real life. The colouring is not very intense in the panel itself compared to the first datum. This is a way to match the gloomy situation where the main character, Denji, is betrayed and ambushed by his former Yakuza boss, who is the man in the grey trench coat and the Zombie Devil.

Datum 3



Picture 4. Punishment Devil and the Gun Devil

The picture shown as the third datum is another encounter with Devils inside the Chainsaw Man manga. In the panel, we can see that 2 representing participants are present. From top to bottom, the first participant is the Punishment Devil and the second participant is the Gun Devil. To understand more about the panel shown as the third datum, the author will also try to analyse the manga panel's representative, interactive and compositional meaning. To understand the representational meaning, the narrative meaning will be first discussed including the action processes behind it. The represented participants in the panel are connected. We can say this because an imaginary arrow departs from the Punishment Devil and settles on the Gun Devil. The Punishment Devil is the actor in this panel meanwhile the Gun Devil is the goal. While these conditions are met, we can deduce that this type of narrative process is transactional.

The Punishment Devil here is seen to be appearing through some sort of portal made from flesh and blood holding different kinds of sharp weapons meanwhile the Gun Devil did not realise the Punishment Devil is attacking it from above. Continuing the analysis from the interactive meaning perspective, the gaze between the represented participants is a key aspect to consider. In the depicted panel, the Punishment Devil's gaze is directed towards the Gun Devil as it prepares to attack from above. Notably, there is no direct gaze towards the viewer, indicating that the Punishment Devil's gaze can be categorized as an "offer gaze." This dynamic of gaze establishes a sense of interaction and impending action between the two Devils.

Considering the vertical point of view, the positioning of the represented participants within the panel conveys distinct power dynamics. The Gun Devil occupies a higher position within the panel, while the Punishment Devil is positioned lower. From the reader's perspective, this positioning creates a power hierarchy, where the Gun Devil holds the higher power position and the Punishment Devil occupies the lower one.

In terms of the horizontal point of view, the panel employs a frontal perspective. This perspective aligns the portrayed participants with the reader's point of view, creating a sense of direct engagement. This alignment contributes to a heightened sense of involvement for both the reader and the portrayed participants. Another element of significance is the gap between the portrayed participants and the reader. The panel provides a comprehensive view of both Devils' entire bodies, including the portal and the space behind them. This visual composition suggests a "long-shot viewpoint," indicating a broader perspective that encompasses more of the scene and surroundings. This choice of viewpoint enhances the reader's understanding of the spatial context and positions within the narrative.

In analyzing Picture 5, the author delves into its compositional meaning, which differs from the previously examined data. Unlike other panels, this Picture lacks a dialogue bubble, typically conveying characters' mental processes or speech. Instead, the linguistic feature in this panel indicates the passage of time within the depicted scenario. This is achieved by manipulating remaining space and using contrasting colors to highlight the linguistic element. The framing in this panel is comparatively weak, as it lacks distinct borders to separate the linguistic feature from the visual content. Unlike other panels that guide the reader's eye through sequential reading, this panel is non-linear. It doesn't require a specific reading order, allowing readers to interpret the elements more open-ended. A notable feature of this panel is the salience, with the Punishment Devil standing out prominently compared to the Gun Devil. The Punishment Devil's vibrant and contrasting color draws immediate attention, acting as a visual focal point. This high saliency likely influences the reader's starting point when engaging with the panel, shaping their initial focus. Overall, this analysis of compositional meaning in Picture 5 underscores the intricate interplay of linguistic and visual elements in conveying temporal information. The absence of a traditional dialogue bubble shifts the focus to alternative means of communication within the panel, and the strategic use of color and space guides the reader's interpretation. This exploration of compositional meaning adds depth to understanding how the manga employs multimodal elements to convey nuanced aspects of the narrative.

Datum 4



Picture 5. The appearance of Darkness Devil

The fourth datum depicts another meeting with Devils within the Chainsaw Man comic. From the panel shown above, although faint, only one represented participant is present. The Devil which appears as

the represented participant in the panel is the Darkness Devil. Because the picture supplied as the second datum is from the same manga source, the author will investigate the datum using the representative, interactive and compositional meaning. The representational meaning will be investigated first to comprehend the narrative process further. To see the narrative process behind the panel we must first analyse if there is a vector present in the panel. Since the only represented participant here is the Darkness Devil we can conclude there is no vector present in the Picture thus the narrative process would be non-transactional. Although non-transactional, The dismembered astronauts contribute to the narrative process by forming a line toward the Darkness Devil. The panel can be transcoded to the Darkness Devil as some revered or feared entity deserving of respect.

The interactive meaning of this panel is what the author will discuss next. In this part of the analysis, the gaze of the represented participant will be further elaborated. The represented participant could be seen faintly through the darkness shrouding it. Since the represented participant is seen to be somehow gazing at the reader, we can surmise that type of gaze is the demand gaze. Moreover, the horizontal angle of the panel is taken using the frontal angle. We can deduce this type of angle because the represented participant and the reader's horizontal angle run parallel with each other and are not taken from an oblique angle. The shot is taken from a high-level angle from the vertical angle since the represented participant is put on the higher part of the panel. The social distance between the represented participant and the reader could be seen taken from a long-shot perspective

Finally, the compositional meaning of this datum will be examined. The composition of this panel does not include a thought or dialogue balloon or linguistic features; only the visual elements are represented in the panel. Therefore, the reader can read the panel from whichever direction desires. Either starting from the nearest figure or the farthest figure to the reader. However, the reader might start from the bottom of the panel up to the top panel. This would like to happen because the most salient figures in the panel are the bisected astronauts forming a line towards the represented participant, Darkness Devil. From the lighting, the absurd pose and the gory Picture represented by the blood and scattered intestines of the astronauts, the reader's attention would more likely go to the said astronauts. The framing shown in the panel indicates a weak framing.

5. Discussion

Analysis of datum 1

In this particular panel, Denji is depicted holding his Devil companion, Pochita, as a weapon while taking cover behind a broken wall, his gaze directed towards the Devil present in the scene. The Devil's visual representation in this Picture resembles a tomato fruit but with certain abnormalities, such as multiple human hands serving as legs and a mouth, teeth, and eyes protruding from its main body, resembling human features. Despite these human-like attributes, the Devil appears relatively frail compared to other Devils in the manga, who possess humanoid forms or human-like intelligence.



Picture 6. The relation between Devils and fear

Building upon previous multimodal studies, let's further analyze this panel to deepen our understanding. This approach enhances the credibility of the arguments presented and establishes a robust framework for interpreting the panel in question, thereby enriching the overall multimodal analysis of the Chainsaw Man manga. Chainsaw Man's narrative intricately weaves fear and the strength of Devils. The manga establishes that the power of a Devil is directly linked to the fear it instills in humans. However, considering that mundane objects like tomatoes are hardly a source of fear, we can deduce that the Devil depicted in this specific panel holds minimal power. Referencing Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) framing concept, the importance of framing in visual analysis becomes evident. The chosen framing strategies effectively convey Denji's goals and the power dynamics between him and the Devil. Denji's posture and gaze in the panel could be decoded to signify a sense of security and a lack of immediate concern, despite his lower position of power. This suggests that while the Devil may possess some potential threat, Denji's capability to overcome it is apparent, underscoring the Devil's overall weakness.

The analysis also underscores the panel's focal point—the Devil itself. By accentuating this central element, visual salience bolsters the narrative progression. Additionally, the framing of the panel assists in communicating Denji's intent and purpose. The third panel, captured from a long-shot perspective, offers a clear view of Denji's attention directed at the Devil, potentially elucidating his motivation for engaging in the impending battle. Furthermore, the spatial arrangement within the panel holds significance. Placing the Devil on the far-left side while situating Denji closer to the viewer on the right suggests a lack of substantial power or authority on the Devil's part, thereby reinforcing its portrayal as weak. In essence, the multimodal analysis of this panel from Chainsaw Man aligns with the established thematic link between fear and Devil strength and underscores the nuanced visual elements that contribute to the manga's storytelling. This in-depth analysis showcases the intricacies of framing, salience, and spatial arrangement, enriching our comprehension of the panel's meaning within the broader narrative context.

Analysis of datum 2

The second datum panel offers a striking visual representation within the Chainsaw Man manga. The scene depicts a swarm of zombies encircling a decaying and fragile body, whose head is oddly positioned within its chest. This peculiar figure lacks arms and legs, adding to its eerie appearance. Adjacent to this unsettling entity stands an older individual wearing a grey trench coat, seemingly influenced by the presence of the Zombie Devil located beside him. The characterization of the Zombie Devil draws upon the collective mental image associated with gruesome actions and the macabre appearance commonly attributed to zombies. This choice of representation taps into societal perceptions and fears related to the undead, creating a sense of dread and unease. The panel masterfully captures the essence of horror and invokes a feeling of visceral discomfort. Through the juxtaposition of the distorted body, the swarm of zombies, and the influence exerted by the Zombie Devil, the Chainsaw Man manga effectively creates a visual scene that embodies the concept of fear through its grotesque and unsettling imagery.

Building on previous studies in multimodality, we may go further into this panel's analysis to determine its meanings. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) carried out relevant research in their book "Reading Pictures: The Grammar of Visual Design" which addresses the topic of power relations within visual compositions. They contend that character and visual element placement can express hierarchical power dynamics and impact the viewer's understanding. Examining the power dynamics within the panel, it becomes evident that the reader holds a higher position than the zombie horde but is depicted as subordinate to the Zombie Devil. This position implies that the Zombie Devil commands a position of superiority, assuming control over the surrounding swarm of zombies and the two primary characters. Moreover, the compositional arrangement accentuates the significance of the Zombie Devil. It occupies the central position, making it the panel's most visually prominent and influential entity.

Indeed, the color palette employed within this panel of the Chainsaw Man manga serves as a critical component in establishing the desired atmosphere and eliciting emotional responses from the audience. The dominant use of darker hues effectively creates an aura of somberness, gloominess, and eeriness that aligns with the theme of fear and horror. Color symbolism, as explored by Parikh and Kashyap (2011), plays a significant role in conveying emotional values and meaning. In this context, the color black, which serves as the background for the Zombie Devil, is often associated with concepts such as evil, death, and disaster.

The manga taps into these symbolic associations by utilizing this color as the backdrop for the Zombie Devil, further intensifying the sense of malevolence and dread associated with this entity.

The deliberate choice of dark and melancholic tones enhances the perception of the Zombie Devil's formidable power and its malevolent nature. This strategic use of color works in tandem with the visual composition to establish a stark contrast between the Zombie Devil and the Tomato Devil, reinforcing the idea of varying levels of strength and threat among the depicted entities. In essence, the analysis of color symbolism, in conjunction with visual elements and power dynamics, provides a deeper understanding of the narrative and thematic elements at play within the Chainsaw Man manga. This multimodal analysis sheds light on how the interplay of colors, visuals, and symbolism contributes to the manga's overarching message and portrayal of fear.

Analysis of datum 3

Within the narrative, Chainsaw Man presents a fascinating connection between fear and the strength of Devils. It suggests that a Devil's power is directly proportional to the level of fear it instills in humans. The panel displayed as the second datum illustrates two Devils, one ambushing the other trying to stop the rampage of the Gun Devil. The main Devil that the author discusses is the Punishment Devil which shown has the highest saliency in the panel by having a brighter colour than the Gun Devil. The Punishment Devil here is shown to be a horde of entities armed with various weapons to attack the Gun Devil. This appearance shows how strong this Devil is compared to other Devils we have analysed. This visual representation effectively conveys the Devil's strength and power. The Punishment Devil's significance in the manga panel is further emphasized by the use of colors that contrast, with the Punishment Devil positioned in more vibrant tones against the darker background. This chosen color choice reinforces the Punishment Devil's power and strength, which further shows the Punishment Devil dominance over Gun Devil.

The name "Punishment Devil" carries a significant psychological weight due to society's pre-existing associations with the concept of punishment. The term "punishment" conjures mental images of pain, suffering, and discomfort, which automatically triggers a fear response in many individuals. By naming the Devil as the "Punishment Devil," the author leverages these existing associations to create a sense of fear and unease in the readers. The panel's visual representation of the Punishment Devil aligns perfectly with this concept. The horde of hands holding various weapons, combined with the eerie portal made of what appears to be intestines and blood, taps into the grotesque and unsettling imagery that is often associated with punishment. This visceral and disturbing portrayal adds to the overall feeling of dread and fear that the Punishment Devil elicits. The choice of graphic elements, including the formation of a rib cage with hands, further amplifies the terrifying aura of the Punishment Devil. This representation is not only visually striking but also deeply symbolic. The rib cage is a protective structure for vital organs, and its distortion by numerous hands adds an uncanny and surreal quality, intensifying the unsettling nature of the Devil's presence. The combined effect of the chosen name, the visual elements, and the symbolic representations creates a powerful and multidimensional depiction of fear within the panel.

Analysis of datum 4

The first appearance of the Darkness Devil in the Chainsaw Man manga has a strong visual impact and metaphorical importance. This is the first time the term "primal fear" is introduced in the manga. The examination of this panel, which incorporates multimodal concepts, sheds further light on the various levels of meaning hidden within its composition. The manga panel shown Picture 5 depicts a fence constructed of bisected astronauts, only showing their upper bodies separated from their lower bodies while their hands united in prayer, specifically awaiting the Darkness Devil's appearance. This setup is both horrifying and intriguing, effectively transcoding the Darkness Devil's power and its relationship with terror.

The visual portrayal of the Darkness Devil as a horrifying entity shrouded in darkness effectively taps into this fear. The use of bisected astronauts adds a compelling layer of symbolism. Astronauts represent humanity's exploration of the unknown and their presence in space, a realm beyond our understanding, intensifying fear and mystery. The astronauts' praying gesture signifies submission to a more powerful and enigmatic entity, heightening the feeling of vulnerability and helplessness in the face of the unknown. The graphic elements, such as the bleeding intestines and twisted bisected corpse, create a gruesome and

horrifying atmosphere, further enhancing the feeling of dread. The hidden figure of the Darkness Devil within the black background adds an element of surprise and unpredictability, reflecting the inherent fear of the unknown. This, coupled with the metaphorical representation of darkness as a source of fear, creates a multi-dimensional depiction of fear that resonates with readers on a visceral level.

6. Conclusion

Based on the analysis above, the visual elements contained in the Chainsaw Man manga consist of Representational, compositional and interactive meanings. The representative meaning taken from the data above mainly focuses on the represented participants inside the shot such as their goal, vector and the narrative behind the panel. The sense of involvement towards the reader can be seen through the interactive meaning, for example, the horizontal angle of the shot and the gaze of the represented participants can determine the high or low involvement of the character. Meanwhile, the vertical angle can determine the reader's power or the represented participant's power.

Other visual and linguistic elements help depict the characterization of fear of the Devil itself. Such as the lore from the manga itself which at first stated that the more the object or concept is feared the stronger the Devil. For example, the Tomato Devil represents the fear of tomato but since tomatoes do not have a scary Picture the Devil characterised by the fear of tomato is weak. Furthermore, the represented participants' physical characteristics, attributes and weapons manifest those mental fears in society into a solid object and power. Taking the Punishment Devil as proof, the many weapons utilised by the Devil could represent the fear of hurt through punishment from the mental Picture of society. A potential limitation of this research is its absence of references, which makes this a notable concern. References are utilized to establish the credibility of a study. From said references, researchers will be able to strengthen their arguments and provide support for the claims. In the study of meaning making of fear in Chainsaw Man, the researcher cannot find relevant references that analyse a character incorporating Multimodality or Visual Grammar Theory. This poses a challenge for the researcher about analyzing the characters inside the manga without any previous study. To overcome this limitation, I discussed my topic of study with my lecturers, also experts in multimodality. For future researchers interested in analyzing characters of a manga or comic book, I recommend consulting with knowledgeable individuals, they can gain insights into relevant references and receive recommendations for further reading. This collaboration can strengthen the research and provide valuable perspectives.

Declaration of Conflicting Interest

The author, Aria Maulana Satriyo, stated that there is no conflict of interest concerning the publication of this paper.

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About the author

Aria Maulana Satriyo is a student at Universitas Negeri Surabaya. He is currently pursuing a Bachelor's degree in the English Department at the Faculty of Language and Arts. Email: aria.19059@mhs.unesa.ac.id