CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1.   Background

Manga is a growing trend in the world. According to Koulikov (2016), English-language research articles about manga is increasing all around the world. In his research, he shows an increasing amount of English-language-research articles in the world from 1993 to 2015. This trend is accompanied by another growing trend in the genre of mangas. In 2005, Maria Lin, a content-writer for a manga magazine, wrote that there is now a trend among western readers of manga. Western manga-readers now prefer to read psychological and dark fantasy genres, which are arguably the minority genres among manga genres. These kinds of genres are popular for their deep thinking and character interaction, where they entice readers to pay attention to the smallest instances of the character interactions, as they may signify something important in the story. One of the most famous manga characters of the psychological genre who displays a fascinating character development is Kaneki Ken from the manga *Tokyo Ghoul*.

Kaneki Ken is the protagonist of the 4th best-selling manga – also known as Japanese comic book – in Japan in 2014, *Tokyo Ghoul*, written by Ishida Sui and published by Shueisha. The manga itself has gained worldwide fame and acknowledgement. It has been adopted into numerous other media, such as a stage play, animation, and live action. Furthermore, it gained its sequel, *Tokyo Ghoul:re*, and, together with its sequel, it has sold over 22 million copies as of its debut in 2011 until march 2017. Kaneki himself has gained a large amount of presence among the manga's fandom. He ranked the 1st in the manga's first character popularity poll. This may seem ordinary as he is the protagonist, but among the fandom of mangas where protagonists are often neglected, Kaneki has a considerably large amount of fandom with him. Since Kaneki is the main protagonist, the popularity of this manga has intrigued the researcher to analyze his journey to find out his characterization and the reasons for him to have a large amount of fandom.

Character arc (Sicoe, 2013) is a theory that talks about the change of a character in a story. It could be any change, such as personality change, physical change, emotional change, and behavioral change. However, most character arc analyses tend to study the change of characterization of a character. For example, Wisehart (2015) proposed a character development pattern in the form of an enneagram, a diagram consisting of nine different patterns for a character development. He claims that the enneagram follows the theory of a character arc, where a character does not remain stagnant. Further into his study, Wisehart (2015) analyzed the character arc of Maleficent from the famous movie and screenplay *Maleficent* by using this enneagram as a method. The result shows that Maleficent undergoes a Growth character arc, where she does not necessarily change, but improves her values, such as her morality, empathy, and ethic. This could be seen in the start of the story, where she was portrayed as very apathetic towards her own children, then becomes significantly more compassionate and cares deeply for them.

The character arc framework can be used in collaboration with the hero's journey (Vogler, 1992) theory. The hero's journey is a character analysis method that studies a character from event to event. The hero's journey theory was proposed and popularized by Joseph Campbell (1949) and has been used to analyze and become a basic structure for much old and popular literary works thereafter. Several examples would include *Oedipus, Star Wars,* and *Jane Eyre.*

The hero's journey mainly concerns itself with the journey a character experiences in order to change. Therefore, the hero's journey is a method that can fit studies related to character arcs, because the character arc theory determines the kind of change a character experiences after a journey they have experienced. The researcher also considers this theory to be able to fit the story of *Tokyo Ghoul*, as the story brings the notion of two worlds, which is a famous notion of the hero's journey theory, consisting of the ordinary human world and the extraordinary ghoul world. Therefore, this study analyzes the character arc of Kaneki Ken during his journey between the two worlds by using the hero's journey theory.

Pertaining to other studies of characters, numerous other character analyses using the hero's journey and character arc theory has been conducted on various genres of literature. Several of said analyses are Bray (2017), Black (2003), and Lewis (2013). The characters being analyzed are Hamlet from the play *Hamlet*, Harry Potter from the *Harry Potter* series, and Walter White from the television show *Breaking Bad*, respectively. Bray (2017) used the hero's journey and character arc theory by combining them with one another to determine how Hamlet undergoes the events portrayed in the hero's journey, and experiences the fall character arc, despite having been through a successful hero's journey. Black (2003) and Lewis (2013) used the two theories to analyze their respective characterizations. Where Black (2003) proves the point on how the hero's journey theory used in *Harry Potter* is a compelling story structure to follow, Lewis (2013) determines that Walter experiences the Fall arc. From these studies, it can then be concluded that the hero's journey and character arc theory has been used by combining them with one another as an analysis method, and that there is no study that has been conducted by using these theories on a comic series character. This research is expected to be able to fill the gap and provide more insight on the two theories.

As a character, Kaneki has experienced some arguably interesting and variable changes. The story is set in a dark fantasy world, where creatures who survive by eating human flesh, known as ghouls, take the shape of ordinary humans and live among human society. A countermeasure organization was then made by government funds in order to eradicate this threat, named CCG. In the beginning of the story, Kaneki is depicted as an innocent and average college student who is in love with a girl he often saw drinking coffee in his favorite café. After asking her out on a date, which she gracefully accepts with a smile, he came under attack by her, who turns out to be a ghoul and is looking to make him her meal. Surviving the attempt, Kaneki wakes up in a hospital room, returns home, and is then shocked as he is no longer able to taste human food, such as bread or hamburger. Much to his dismay, he has been turned into a half-ghoul by an unknown party, resulting in him being unable to eat human food and being in need of eating humans.

Noticeably, Kaneki experiences a physical change, from a human to a ghoul. Further into the story, Kaneki will need to cope with his new nature as a ghoul. He will also need to find shelter from the government organization and other ghouls. These aspects that become the driving point for Kaneki are shown in a narratological manner, according to the theory of narrative events proposed. In other words, there will be events in the story portraying how he come to terms with his new nature, how he will learn to live as a ghoul, how he will communicate with his human friends, and many more. These events are categorized by the hero's journey theory into several specific parts, before being analyzed in order to determine the change and the cause of the change in Kaneki's character arc.

1.2. Statements of Problems

As mentioned above, the purpose of this research is to describe the character arc of Kaneki Ken. In detail, this paper uncovers what kinds of changes Kaneki experienced, what events caused these changes in character arc, how these events change him, and what implication can be derived from the change. Thus, the following research questions are formulated:

1. How is the hero's journey of Kaneki Ken portrayed throughout the story?
2. What implication can be derived from the journey?

1.3. Purposes of Research

This research aims to uncover the character arc of Kaneki Ken, the protagonist of *Tokyo Ghoul*. The kind of character arc is determined, and the events are portrayed by the hero's journey theory. Afterwards, this research examines in greater detail the events that cause the changes, how these events change Kaneki Ken, and what prominent meaning can be interpreted from the changes.

1.4. Significance of the Study

For a very long time, character has become an inseparable element of a story. With this research, it is expected that knowledge regarding characters and character development in a story is expanded. Not only the field of making a plot, but the field of character

development analysis is also expected to gain a new insight from this usage of the hero's journey theory in popular literary works, especially mangas.

1.5. Scope of the Study

This research focuses primarily on the narrative elements of the monologues, dialogues, and narration presented in the story. As a comic series, however, there are visual properties and images used as supporting arguments for the description of the events and characters from the research. This is in coherence with Gravett's (2005) statement regarding visual images as supporting aspects of a comic book that can be used to clarify or amplify the words used, presenting more depth in a comic book story. As these events are primarily focused on the narrative elements of the series instead of its visual properties, the series' visuals and images are not the main concern of the research, but the supporting data of the research.

1.6. Clarification of Terms

Character arc is a widely-known and very popular theory among scholars and authors alike. Therefore, many scholars and authors would come up with their own definition of character arc. The term itself was brought to fame by Jeff Gerke (2010) in his book entitled *Plot Versus Character: A Balanced Approach to Writing Great Fiction*. After, or even before Gerke (2010) popularized it, the term character arc has been used as a general reference for a change in characterization. Several examples of this occurrence would be Abbott (2005) and Ryan & Costello (2012) who used structuralist approaches to analyze the character arc of both Spike, from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* series, and Scarlet, from *The Path* game. The terms they used, however, refer to a general change in characterization that has not been categorized into any certain type of change, where they portray the change in a descriptive manner, making it difficult to truly determine a kind of change for a character.

For this paper, the definition given by Veronica Sicoe (2013) in her article entitled *The 3 Types of Character Arc – Change, Growth and Fall* is the definition utilized. According to Sicoe (2013), character arc means a change in the characterization of a character. There are three kinds of change: Change, Growth, and Fall. This

definition is taken due to the fact that this is the only feasible explanation that includes detailed information regarding the kinds of changes and purposes of a character arc. Other scholars simply define character arc in its dictionary, or lexical meaning, without any form of elaboration to its purposes and categories. Hence, other scholars use a descriptive manner to explain a change in characterization without any label beforehand.

The hero's journey is a story structure that can be used either as a basis of a story, or as a method of analysis of a story. A lot of scholars have criticized and revised this theory ever since its debut on the hands of Joseph Campbell (1949) in his work entitled *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. This narratological monomyth structure analysis has then been revised into several versions by several other scholars. In this paper, the version proposed by Christopher Vogler (1992) is the one used. Many scholars, including Vogler (1992) in his book entitled *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Storytellers and Screenwriters*, claims that Campbell's version is much too general in its association of events. As a result, it lacks flexibility to modern literary works, and tend to group stories with varying plots into a single category, despite its unique line of events. Other scholars supporting Vogler's (1992) argument are Flowers & Couto (2010) and Ip (2011), who also claim that Vogler's (1992) version is the acceptable version, while Campbell's (1949) version serves as the foundational version that requires the revision Vogler (1992) has given. Thus, Vogler's version, which shows more detail and clarity compared to Campbell's version, is the version of the hero's journey theory utilized in this research.

Tokyo Ghoul is a famous manga series included in the dark fantasy and psychological genre, which has gained its sequel. The "Kaneki Ken" mentioned in this paper does not include the "Kaneki Ken" from *Tokyo Ghoul:re*. As a matter of fact, this paper only gives analyses on certain chapters of *Tokyo Ghoul*, which includes the fiftieth, until the eightieth chapter. This is because the introduction and the change of the character arc occur below the eightieth chapter, and that these chapters portray a single story arc from the series. After the eightieth chapter, it is a whole new arc and version of the story, as there are arguably role and characterization changes after said chapter.

However, several excerpts of the chapters before the fiftieth and after the eightieth chapter are taken in order to show what kind and how much of a change in character arc takes place. All of this is done with the primary focus on events concerning Kaneki.

1.7. Research Methodology

The research was conducted by analyzing events concerning Kaneki in detail, where the story is segmented into parts based on one event to another's change of narrative elements. Referring to Genette's (1980) and Meister's (2011) theory on narrative events, visual and textual items are made into a single "event". The definition of an event here means a change in the story's narrative elements, such as character, setting, conflict, and resolution if there are any. After being segmented, these events are then fit to each of the phases of the hero's journey (Vogler, 1992) theory.

1.8. Organization of the Paper

This research paper is organized in the following structure:

1. CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION. This is the chapter that introduces the basic concept of the research. It explains the background and importance of the research. It consists of the background of the research, the research questions, the purposes of the research, the significance of the research, the scope of the research, the clarification of specific terms, the research methodology, and the organization of the research paper.

2. CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK. This chapter contains the discussion of the theories used in this research. It consists of the hero's journey theory, the character arc theory, and other related literature used in this research.

3. CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY. This chapter explains the method of the research. It consists of the research design, the data collection method, the data analysis method, and the presentation of the research data.

4. CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS. This chapter contains the findings and discussions of the research. It provides the answers for the research questions of the research. It discusses Kaneki's hero's journey, and the

implication of idolization and serialization in popular literary works, especially mangas.

5. CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION. This is the chapter that concludes the research. It gives conclusions based on the findings and discussions of the research, and it also gives suggestions for future researches.