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Humanity and Power: A Multimodal Analysis of Norihiro Yagi's *Claymore*

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ABSTRACT
The discourse of humanity and human has been undertaken as a subject of study by numerous thinkers, philosophers, and other researchers belonging to different spheres of life, and yet they have failed to come to a consensus. Nevertheless, humanity discourse is one of the most powerful tools employed by the people in power to exert their control and power over others. This relation between discourse of humanity and power has been presented in many works of fiction and literature as a critique of the system. Norihiro Yagi adopts a similar idea of the power that is created and propagated through the discourse of humanity in the 2001 dark fantasy manga *Claymore* (Yagi, 2001). The aim of this research study is to unpack and analyse the creation and propagation of the discourse of humanity in manga, *Claymore* (Yagi, 2001), and discuss how this discourse results in the creation of power in the context of the selected manga. The study is a qualitative one and uses posthumanism as a theoretical framework and multimodal analysis as the research method. Furthermore, the research relies on Fairclough's 3D model to study the underlying relationship between power and humanity in the field of CDA.

Key Words: Multimodal analysis, CDA, Fairclough, Power, Claymore

Introduction:

Background of the Study:

The words 'human' and 'humanity' have been described in multiple ways depending on the field of study they were described in and have been an area of interest for scholars of various fields, from biologists, sociologists, to philosophers and discourse analysts. 'Human' can be defined as a social being capable of creating and participating in culture (Giddens, 1984); furthermore, a human is a rational and moral agent capable of making free choices (Kant, 1785). 'Humanity,' on the other hand, is a broader concept than 'human' and encompasses social, moral, and cultural dimensions as well. Kant (1785) describes 'humanity' as a universal and inclusive moral principle that recognizes the inherent worth and dignity of all humans. His definition reflects upon and emphasizes the ethical dimension of humanity and the significance of interconnectedness of humans, and treating all human beings with dignity and equality. However, the concept of what or who can be considered a human and what is excluded from this definition has been a topic of debate for scholars (Ferrando, 2014).

The concept of a human throughout history has been very exclusive, with some humans being more human than others (Ferrando, 2014), and because of this, there has always been an imbalance between power dynamics between humans, and the power and

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oppression have always been exercised by the 'humans' over 'nonhumans' through exclusion. Ferrando (2014) adds that the idea of 'human' has historically been used to oppress all those considered less human, i.e., women, slaves, people of color, etc. Braidotti (2013) argues that the concept of what an ideal human is comes from Da Vinci's *Vitruvian Man* (1490), and states that historically women, slaves, natives, non-whites, etc. were excluded from the definition of what is considered a "full human" (Braidotti, 2013), and this had led to them being barred from enjoying equal rights as "full humans" and subjected to oppression and submissive in the overall power dynamics. Furthermore, Aristotle's *The Nicomachean Ethics* to Da Vinci's *Vitruvian Man* (1490) has established the concept of a biological human as the sole ethical agent of the world and should only be treated with dignity and respect. This idea, coupled with the exclusive nature of the concept of humanity and humanism, sidelined all those who were not considered humans, which led to privileged full humans exerting their power on the others.

This concept of "human" and the centrality of human beings as the only subject of the moral world and only creature worth having any honor and dignity was dismantled by posthumanism and posthumanist scholars. Posthumanism argues that the idea that not all humans are wholly and truly humans is a moot construct and includes everyone who was considered non-human into the definition of humans and gives them all equal rights and dignity (Ferrando, 2014), dismantling all previous notions of some humans being superior to others. The idea of the biological human as superior was further contested by Haraway's cyborg, which she introduced in *A Cyborg Manifesto* (1985), and carried out an ethical debate, and states the emergence of a posthuman future where species meet, and the nonhuman entities are brought within the ethical sphere. This meeting of species and inclusive nature of posthuman makes it one of the most suitable critical theories to critique and study the unequal treatment of humans that were till then excluded from the circle of human and humanity, giving them equal prestige, honor, and dignity.

Michel Foucault is one of the most influential scholars who presented extensive ideas regarding discourse and power. Foucault's work on power and its relation to knowledge and discourse is almost a household name in academia. He believed discourse to not only be a tool to sustain and propagate power but also a hindrance and a tool for resistance against it. In Claymore, Miria dismantles the organization's discourse after it fails to account for the humanity of the warriors, despite using humanity as a tool to control them. An interesting point that Foucault raised was that power is not a system, or structure, rather it is everywhere, so deeply embedded in the social phenomenon that often people do not realize that they have been coerced into an action. Arguably, one of his most famous debates is the inseparable relation between power and knowledge. He argues, "…no power can be exercised without the extraction, appropriation, distribution or retention of knowledge…" (Foucault, quoted in Sheridan 1980: 283)

It is imperative to discuss Norman Fairclough's views of Critical Discourse Analysis. Fairclough made extensive contributions to studying Discourse and Power. Fairclough considers discourse as what brings together language and society. He argues that Discourse is constituted of societal norms and situations. It is shaped by the wider context, contained by education, law and other such institutions. On the other hand, he believes Discourse to be the constructive force that constitutes and contains the same societal norms and social relations that shape it in the first place. He outlines three aspects of how discourse constitutes social norms. It maintains the social identity and social subjects of the discourse community. It is discourse that gives a speaker his/ her position in the discourse. Secondly, it constructs the social relationships between people

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and finally, it contributes to systems of knowledge and belief. (Fairclough, 1992).

Fairclough asserts that discourse is a social practice, and CDA studies discourse in relation to the power dynamics, and agencies that govern and benefit from the discourse. CDA questions who the text is from and for whom, where, and what the circumstances and underlying power dynamics and agencies govern the text. It uncovers dominance and marginalization and beneficiaries of the discourse. In other words, it studies the power in the discourse and the power behind the discourse. (Fairclough, 2010).

There is innumerable literature, both fiction and non-fiction, that present the relationship between discourse, power and society. George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) presents a society under surveillance by a totalitarian government led by Big Brother. This totalitarian government creates such a discourse that propagates and sustains its authority and discourages its people from questioning the regime. The people themselves do not realize that they live through a dystopia. His most famous novel, *Animal Farm* (1945), depicts a government run by pigs that also create a discourse that attempts to sustain and maintain the rule. Critical Discourse Analysis studies how language is used to manipulate the people using discourse as a tool to create an ideology that supports the beneficiaries of the ones creating the discourse.

Multimodality has garnered increasing attention because of its inclusive and interdisciplinary (Yang, 2019) and it not only looks at the language and textual elements of the data, but the multimodal analysis looks at the content, color scheme, layout, and typography both at the level of clause and discourse (Bo, 2018). Initially, discourse analysis focused more the mono-mode and only on the written text or spoken discourse, but after 1990s, there was a shift in the stream of discourse analysis and multimodality was introduced, and the field of discourse analysis was changed from static multimodality to dynamic multimodality. The dynamic multimodality included sounds, images and action along with language in its arena of analysis, and it refers to using audio, visual, multi-lingual symbol system to communicate through multiple means and symbol recourses such as character, action, sound, image, etc. (Zhang, 2009). Even before its conception as a separate research method, people have been interested in the multimodality of the discourse, though it took a long time for researchers to name this interest (Dai, 2013). Albeit language being a significant resource in discourse, it needs to coordinate with other resources for comprehension of the discourse and meaning making. Therefore, discourse analysis should take other modalities into consideration, if it wants to get at meaning of the discourse more effectively (Bo, 2018). For this reason, Dai (2017) unpacked and discussed the relationship between language, motion, images, sound and other multimodal modalities, and attempted to look deeper into the discourse features of multimodal analysis. This correlation between different multimodal modalities not only enhanced the understanding of the meaning of the discourse but also a new layer of meaning.

Claymore is a dark fantasy Japanese manga written and illustrated by Norihori Yagi which debuted in June 2001, and was adapted into an anime series consisting of 26 episodes in April 2007. The series is set on a fictional medieval island and revolves around a group of half human half Yoma female warriors, called Claymores or "Silver Eyed Witches," (Yagi, 2001) who serve as humans' shield against humanoid demons Yoma. These claymores work under a mysterious agency which is simply called The Organization. Albeit being the protectors of humans, claymores are kept at a distance and most often despised by humans because of their physiology and anatomy. And this distrust between claymores and humans is used by the Organization to maintain its power over them, and this façade has been going on for 151 generations. *Claymore* through its

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plot and characters touches upon numerous significant topics of what it means to be a human and what is humanity in general, the central theme being the exploration of human nature, justice, and power and how power is exercised and maintained through force. Because of its inquiry into the human condition and nature, *Claymore* provides an interesting dimension in the study of the discourse of humanity, power dynamics and how these dynamics are maintained.

The aim of current study will therefore be to analyze and unpack the discourse of humanity and power and their interrelation in manga and anime series *Claymore* using Fairclough's model of critical discourse analysis, to highlight how reality and truth is socially constructed and the power is always exercised through fear and force.

Research Objectives:

The study will be carried out using Fairclough's Model of CDA (1992, 2010) and will aim:

To study the discourse of humanity in Claymore.

To analyze the social construction of reality and truth in Claymore.

To discuss how the discourse of power is created and propagated in Claymore.

To observe and examine how the created discourse maintains the power structure in Claymore.

Research Questions:

The current study will aim to answer the following questions by employing Norman Fairclough's model of CDA and carrying out a multimodal analysis of Norihiro Yagi's dark fantasy manga *Claymore:*

How is the discourse of human and humanity created in *Claymore?*

What is the relationship between the discourse of humanity and power in *Claymore?*

How did the Organization use the idea of human and humanity to assert control over the claymore warriors in the manga *Claymore?*

Significance of the Study:

The world of the *Claymore* is an experimental ground both literally and figuratively. The residents of this world, despite their weaknesses and strengths, never dare question its constitution. It exists and persists based on the knowledge passed down by the powerful in myths that became legend and history. This experimental island showcases how easily discourse can be created and how effective it is in controlling a large population, in order to benefit the creators of such discourse. This study will examine how a discourse around the very concept of humanity is able to dissolve human freedom and enslave them without their knowledge. It highlights the power of discourse in creating an unquestionable social reality and political power, hence imploring humans to understand and explore the social reality they live in, its constituents and what lays behind the apparent discourse.

Delimitation of the Study:

The current study focuses on the generation of discourse, and the relationship between power and discourse. It will also touch upon the posthuman aspects of the Claymore warriors in light of Posthumanism and may discuss some aspects using feminist theories as well.

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Methodology:

The aim of this study is focused on the use of discourse to gain and maintain power and construct a reality that may or may not be close to the truth but is beneficial to the influential members of a society using the Japanese manga series *Claymore*. This relationship between discourse and power will be studied under Fairclough's principles of CDA using his three-dimensional model of text, interpretation and social reality. In order to fully explore the concept of humanity which was one of the main tools of the organization, the humanity of the claymore warriors will also be discussed using some posthuman theories. The created discourse will also be studied under the light of posthumanism in order to comprehend the emotional bases for the success of the discourse community. Multimodal research method is employed to analyze and assess the various modes of semiotics in discourse. Multimodal discourse analysis can be carried out in many ways like content analysis, conversation analysis, and social semiotic analysis. For the current study, multimodal analysis is carried out on different manga panels and the conversations that are carried out between different characters. The data will be sourced from the Japanese manga series *Claymore* by Norihiro Yagi, and some of the pictures are taken from the anime adaptation of *Claymore* in 2017.

The study will be qualitative research using CDA to explore not only the relationship between power and discourse but also the factors and methods used to enforce and perpetuate the discourse. Moreover, posthumanism is used as the theoretical framework and multimodal analysis is used as the research method for the current study.

Analysis and Discussion:

What is a Human:

The question that what does being a human means has garnered immense debate from scientists and philosophers alike, but they have failed to reach a consensus for the answer to this question. However, this does not mean that definitions for a human do not exist. Humans are generally defined as conscious beings who are capable of self-reflection, decision making and live in a society to cooperate with others of the same kind creating a sense of community and companionship. But this raises a question that what about those people who are suffering from some mental illness or syndrome and are not able to make conscious decisions, are they excluded from the circle of what a human is. The answer is obviously no, this is because consciousness is not the only criterion to determine the humanity of an individual.

Throughout the history, the concept of human has always been exclusive and has been specifically attributed to a white able-bodied male, with everyone who did not fall into this categorization has been excluded from the definition and concept of human. From Aristotle, according to whom females are lesser humans because he believed that females are deformed males, to Da Vinci, whose Vitruvian man is considered the epitome of what a human being looks like, majority of the thinkers stood steadfast with this categorization of human with some humans more "human" than others. This idea of categorization of humanity of humans was challenged by Posthumanism, a critical theory that aims to dismantle these exclusive categories of humans and encompasses every human in the category of "humans."

Claymores: Human or not:

In a world divided into humans and monsters that eat their guts, Claymores are half human half Yoma hybrid warriors who are created by the Organization to hunt and kill yomas. Claymores serve as humankind's last shield against the gut eating yomas, even

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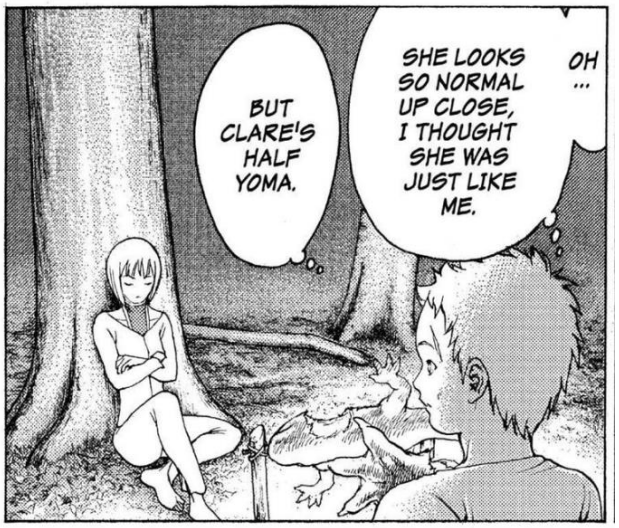
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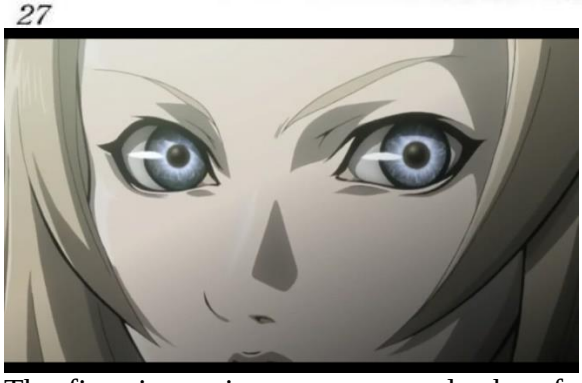
though they are not themselves completely humans. Described as “loathsome monsters” by the very humans that they are trying to protect, they appear mostly like humans with some slight differences in their physical attributes. And these claymores are then discriminated against based on these differences. One question that is the most significant in concern with the claymores is their humanity, most significantly, whether they can be considered humans or not. This question can be approached from two perspectives, biological or ethical and social perspectives.

From Biological Perspective:



From the biological perspective, claymores look, for the most part, like normal human beings, a fact that is observed by many humans as well. Take for example the given picture in which Raki, an orphan who was accompanying Clare, observes a sleeping Clare, a claymore, and notices that she looks just like a normal human being despite being half Yoma (Volume 1, Chapter 2). Claymores is an all-female organization, with all the warriors extremely lean, tall and slender than an average human, with double the strength and resilience. Because of this, they can easily blend in with humans if not for their more distinctive features. They have extremely fair almost translucent skin, light golden or silver hair, and some of the claymores have elfish features as well. However, their most striking feature is their eyes that don’t let them easily blend in with humans.







The fist picture is a manga panel taken from chapter 2, volume 1 of the manga and

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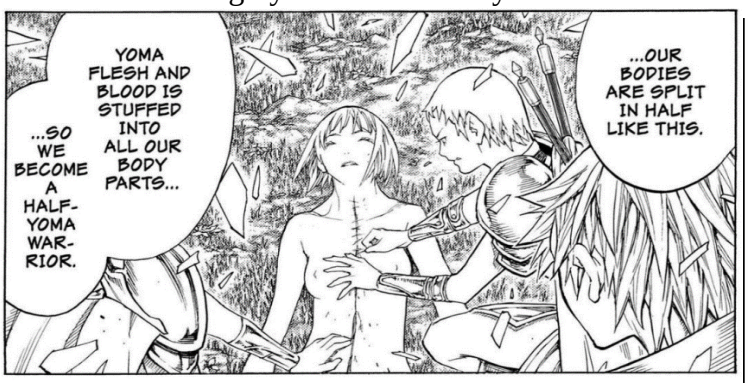
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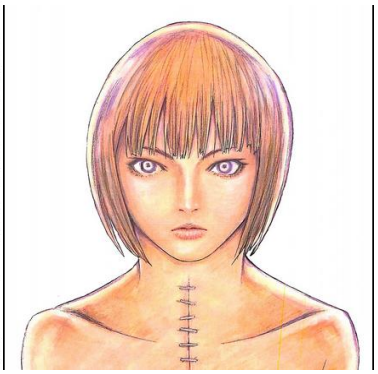
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clearly shows the change claymore eyes undergo. In their normal state they have human like eyes, but it is the color of the eyes that throws people off, they have silver eyes. These eyes change color and style when they are actively hunting and killing yomas. During this time, their eyes become serpentine and turn into a gold color. This change in color and design is shown in the two pictures taken from the 2017 anime adaptation of the manga.



Because of the foreign Yoma flesh and blood in their bodies, claymores continuously produce an unnatural Yoma-like body odor. This smell can also be because of the never healing incision in their front torso, called Stigma, that marks the place they underwent the surgery to make them hybrids.





These physical differences that claymores have as opposed to humans make it harder to call them completely humans, but they do fulfill the criteria of Katherine Haraway's cyborg, and under the umbrella of Posthumanism that makes them a part of humans. Hence, it can be established that despite their distinctive features, claymores are primarily humans. And their humanity comes into play when they are looked at from the perspective of ethical and social aspects of humanity.

From Ethical and Social Perspective:

Claymores are mostly feared and shunned because of their powers and physical appearance. They live a solitary and lonely life, and tend to be cold, emotionless and unexpressive. Their lifestyle and lack of any relations is a tool that the Organization uses to control them. Not only do they live a lonely life, but they are forbidden by the Organization to interact with humans, and they are even chastised because of their friendships with each other. However, during manga and anime, we observe that many claymores like Teresa, Miria, Clare, etc. do develop bonds of friendship and companionship with other claymores and even humans, challenging the writ of the organization. The Organization despised the interaction between the claymores, and it can be seen during the course of manga and anime that, when the warriors got together as friends or as companions, they not only became less compliant but also challenged the core motives of the Organization. For example, Teresa defected from the organization

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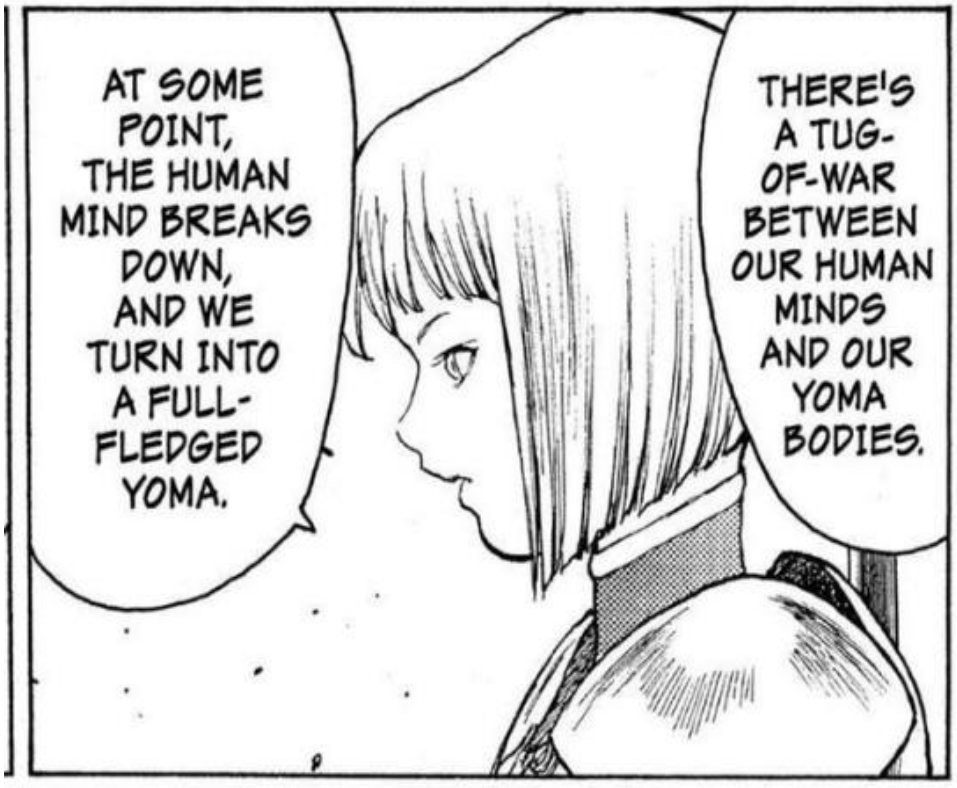
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after adopting Clare, similarly, the seven survivors of the decisive Battle of the North under the leadership of Phantom Miria rebelled against the Organization, etc.

Because they were humans before they were scientifically modified into claymores, there is a constant tug of war between their human heart and Yoma mind, a fact that is employed as a weapon by the organization to control them. Claymores desperately want to keep their human side and not turn into a complete Yoma, a creature called awakened beings, they try to abide by the rules set up by the organization. For example, look at the following dialogue by Rubel who reminds Clare of her origins when she tries to help Raki, and reminds her that she is not human anymore and it's all a mirage of the past.



Similarly, in the following manga panel, Clare while discussing the issue of Elena's black card situation tells Raki about the constant war between mind and heart, and states that all of the warriors desperately cling to their human side and prefer death over the awakening, and this is noticeable in the case Priscilla who begs Teresa to kill her becomes she crosses the boundary to the awakened beings.



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This struggle to remain an ethical human despite not completely being a biological human is what makes claymores liable to the Organization's manipulation and control.

Why are claymores subjugated despite being strong?

The warriors, as Clare puts it, are frail humans who have gained speed faster than Yoma, and strength equal to a monster. They are far superior to regular humans, yet they appear to be the most abused creatures in the story. They are being used by the human run organization, as pawns and dispensable soldiers. They are loathed and despised by the regular humans who would be at the mercy of the Yoma without the warriors. However, they remain loyal to the organization and risk their lives to protect humans. Clare often tells the townspeople that they will not have to pay, if she dies at the hands of the Yoma. Some of the warriors have unwavering loyalty towards the organization, such as Priscilla, Raphaela and Dietritch. Priscilla protects the organization and scorns Teresa for endangering the 'trust' that the organization worked so hard to build, while others such as Teresa, Miria, Clare and Galatea are more doubtful regarding the Organization. These warriors do not trust the Organization fully, and are some of the strongest warriors, so why are they unable to defy or rebel against the Organization? How is the Organization able to subdue warriors with their strength? Surprisingly, this is prominent in the case of Priscilla. She is a novice warrior whose family was riddled by Yoma, so she considers the Organization as her savior and the epitome of humanity. She detests Yoma and is loyal to humans, which includes the Organization. She is adamant at following the orders and executing Teresa as she has betrayed Organization and humans. However, once she awakens and loses her humanity, she abandons the organization and never mentions it again. In other words, once she loses her humanity, she is no longer controlled by the Organization.

Fairclough's 3D Model – Application:

Fairclough's 3- dimensional model of CDA helps analyze how a discourse is created, maintained and used to maintain power. This model will allow an extensive analysis of the discourse of humanity created by the Organization and how it not only controlled the warriors, but also the regular humans and created a social reality that maintained their control and rule.

Descriptivist:

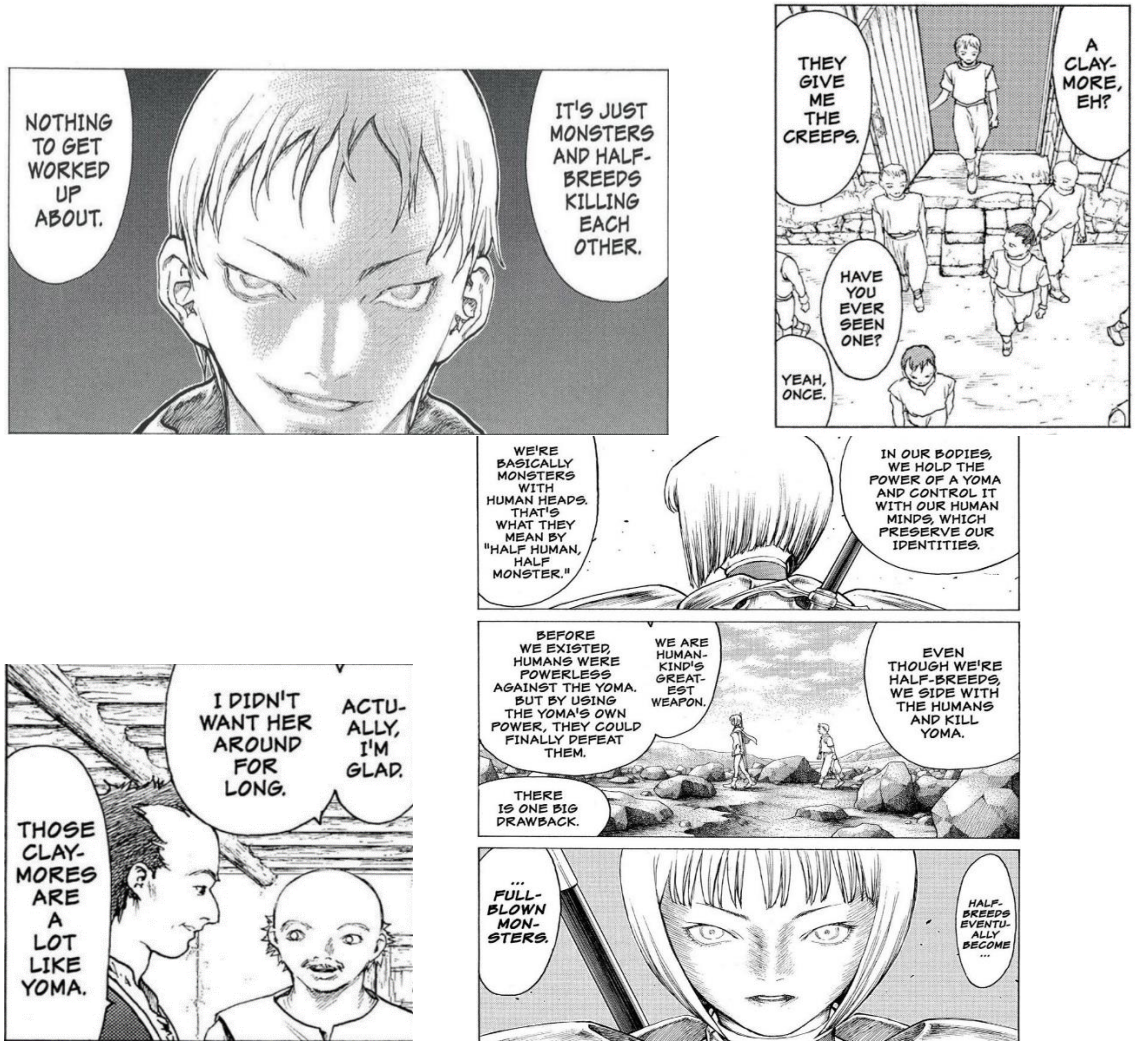
The first step to Fairclough's model analyzes the text on the lexical and grammatical level. The Organization creates a reality where the regular humans have a level of trust on the Organization but mistrust and detest the warriors. They are often afraid of the warriors and appear convinced that they will be killed by them.

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Humans often use words such as ‘the loathsome slayer’, ‘murderer’, ‘blood- thirsty killers’ and ‘monsters’ for the warriors. However, no such word has ever been used for the Organization, because despite it being mysterious, it is still run by humans. The Organization uses and propagates this phenomenon to alienate the warriors from the people and maintain their authority on both the common folk and the warriors. The warriors themselves also use derogatory terms such as ‘half monster’ ‘half-breeds’ for themselves. This is to remind themselves that they are not humans and must expect to be detested by humans. They do, however, maintain that they are human at heart and mind.

Finally, some of the men of the organization also use ‘monsters’ to refer to warriors on the verge of awakening. The Organization also hides the true nature of the awakened beings from humans and creates a new term for them to be used for the common folk, so they do not mistrust the Organization. They hide the fact that these creatures are half-breeds who have succumbed to their Yoma powers, calling them ‘voracious eaters’ instead. Therefore, the common people not only stay ignorant of the Organization’s ‘failures’ but also feel intimidated and more inclined to use the Organization’s services and hence further their cause.

Interpretive:

The interpretive level analyzes the process of the discourse, how and under what circumstances the discourse takes place, and what circumstances the discourse propagates. In Claymore, this is apparent in the interaction between the entities of the

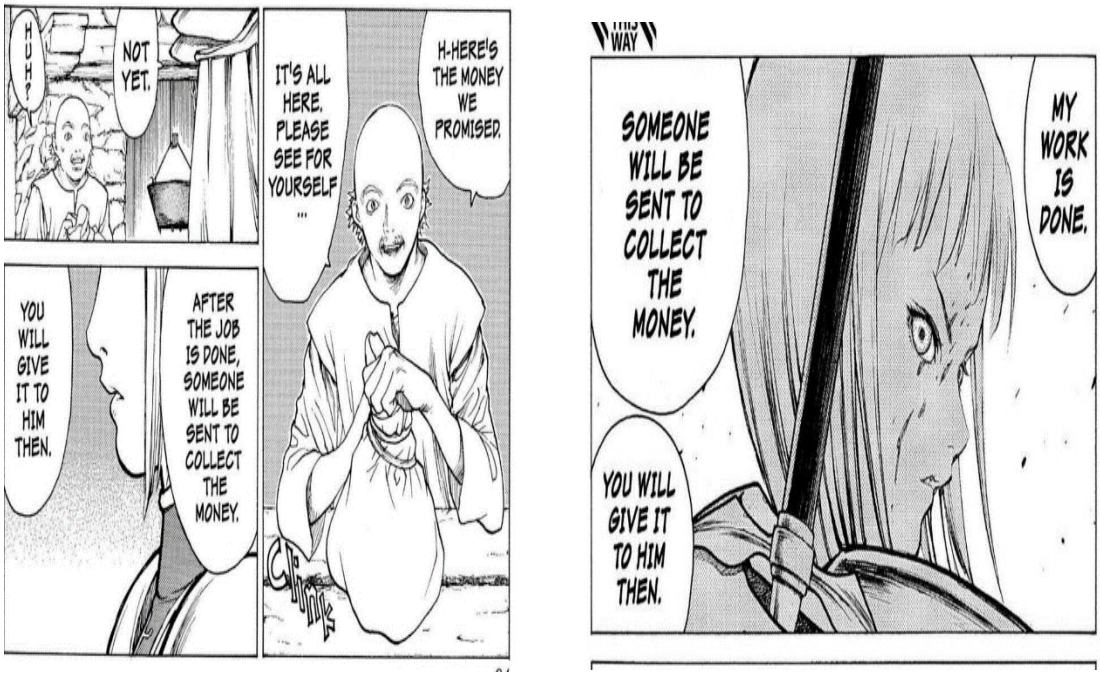
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world. The interactions between the warriors and humans, the interaction between warriors and the interaction between humans themselves. The interaction between humans and warriors is heavily surveilled by the Organization.



The warriors are the ones who fight the Yoma, but they are not the ones to make the deal or handle negotiations. The warriors only appear after the Organization has completed the deal, the warriors are informed by certain agents who assign them the tasks, they then travel to the site, kill and leave. The agents then visit the village and collect the payments.

Agent: Now, about your next job, a two day walk west of here is Teo village.
Teresa: Any other details?
A: You need more?
T" uh? Not really.
A: The number of Yoma, what they're like... it's all the same. Find them and kill them. That's all.

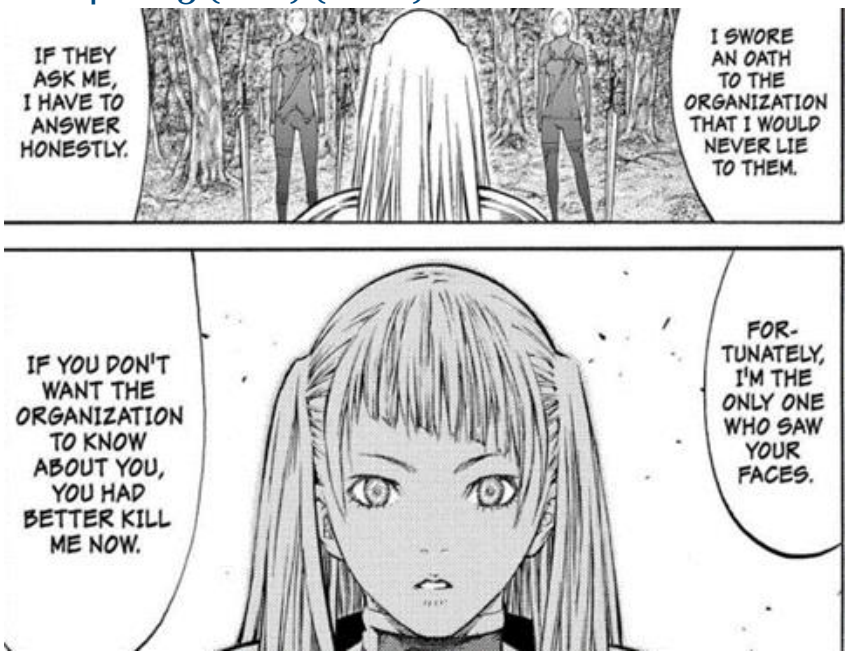
The only proper interaction the warriors have with humans are with the men of the Organization who assign them tasks. There is a misunderstanding among the common folk regarding the survivors of families killed by Yoma. These survivors, often children, are ostracized by the village or town as the people believe that they too may turn into Yoma. The Organization could have easily dispersed these rumors, but they did not. There is also the possibility that the Organization has either created or encouraged these rumors, since they used the young boys and girls. Hence, the Organization was also in control of the interaction between the common folk. The interaction between the warriors is also controlled by the Organization, many of the warriors are made to believe in the Organization as their and all of humanity's savior, hence they are extremely loyal. Examples are Priscilla and Dietritch. The warriors are also discouraged from making friends and are incited to lead solitary lives through many psychological tricks using language. For instance, they are made to rival each other for rank and power, or dislike each other due to their pride and arrogance.

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Explanation:

Through the use of linguistic choices and manipulation of situations, the Organization is able to create a social reality that benefits itself. A social reality where humans are the prey, Yoma are predators, warriors are pawns, and the Organization is the savior. Therefore, despite it being mysterious and dubious, humans and warriors are convinced that it is an imperative necessity. Even a warrior as strong as Teresa who arguably could have single handedly destroyed the Organization, doubts them but never attempts to rebel against the Organization. She only rebels when she protects Clare. The Organization is able to create and maintain a discourse that becomes history for hundreds of years. This discourse maintains their power and authority and their ulterior motives in conducting their experiment on the warriors and their powers. In the moment of epiphany, Miria reveals that not only are yomas created within the organization, but their 'world' is not the entire world but rather a small island where the Organization conducts experiments on humans, trying to create war weapons able to use monster- like powers.



In other words, through the power of discourse, the Organization was able to create a

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world within an island and fool thousands of people for hundreds of years enough that they believed their land to be the entire world and yomas to be natural predators of humans. They accepted this reality and lived with it. The Organization, after succeeding in turning its discourse into history, strived to alienate itself and the Organization from the common folk so much that no one would be able to doubt the significance of the Organization.

Claymore as a Metaphor of the World We Live in:

Despite being a work of fiction, *Claymore* presents the picture of the capitalist society that we live in. Literature in any form is the reflection of the social, political, cultural, etc. aspects of society and tries to highlight major issues concerning these topics. Sometimes, it can shed light on such topics that otherwise go unnoticed. We live in a world where might is right and the capitalist system has inflicted society like a plague. To satiate their thirst and hunger for more capital, they don't concern themselves with the consequences of their actions and just try to squeeze out the maximum nectar out of others. It is commonly believed that most of the major problems the world undergoes are the product of these capital giants. The problems are made and then the solution is made for that problem at a cost beneficial for them. Same is the case in *Claymore.* The Organization stands as the capitalist company who first created the problem, the gut eating yomas, and then to combat that they created the solution, the half breed warriors to kill these Yoma for a cost. Humans are bound to rely on the Organization for their well being just like we as a society are dependent on the mega corporates. And failure to abide by their set rules, anarchy is the result. For example, in the manga, the villages that are unable to pay the Organization are attacked and ultimately destroyed by them. They try to milk out the maximum benefits not only from poor humans but also the claymore warriors under their command regardless of the harm they are causing them. Therefore, we can say that manga serves as a metaphor for the capitalist world we are living in.

Conclusion:

To conclude, it can be inferred that through the course of Norihiro Yagi's dark fantasy manga *Claymore*, the discourse of humanity is used as a powerful tool in the creation of the discourse of power and social realities. In the manga, the capitalist institute named as Organization controls the narrative of what is a human and why is it so important to remain a human to control the much more powerful claymore warriors. The control they exhibit over these warriors is all thanks to the power that they hold because of the discourse that they have generated, which enables them not only control and manipulate claymores but also humans. This capitalist approach towards controlling narratives for their benefit is something that is reminiscent of the world we live in, and therefore, *Claymore* can be considered a metaphor for the real-life world.

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