



THE MAIN CHARACTER'S DEVELOPMENT IN MANGA *HELL'S PARADISE: JIGOKURAKU* BY YUJI KAKU: A FREUDIAN PSYCHOANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze the psychological development of the main character "Gabimaru" in Yūji Kaku's *Hell's Paradise: Jigokuraku*. The focus is on how Gabimaru copes with past trauma and manages his id, ego, and superego in the present. The writer is collecting and determining this study through a qualitative descriptive method that includes both conversation and visuals from the manga *Hell's Paradise: Jigokuraku*.

INTRODUCTION

Character encompasses a wide spectrum of human attributes, including honesty, integrity, kindness, courage, and empathy. Understanding human character is essential not only for distinguishing individual differences, but also for discovering the fundamental principles of ethical decision-making, interpersonal interactions, and societal well-being. Exploring human character and behavior could help us connect individuals and social classes (Lerner, 2018). Character analysis has profound historical and philosophical roots, and it has evolved in response to findings from psychology, ethics, and sociology. Character is an essential topic of research because it defines human behavior, informs moral decisions, and influences how people contribute to their communities and society as a whole.

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Character and psychological well-being interact dynamically and symbiotically, playing an important role in the overall human experience. Character, which encompasses moral values, integrity, and virtues, provides the foundation for an individual's psychological well-being. Character quality, strength, and psychology are all linked; positive psychology promotes a person's behavior, sentiments, and cognition toward activities like optimism, gratitude, and character strength (Tönis et al., 2023). Furthermore, character traits have a significant impact on a person's sense of identity, self-esteem, and mental health since they shape one's self-concept, self-worth, and resilience in the face of adversity. Psychological well-being, such as emotional stability, self-esteem, and positive mental health, all help to shape and express one's personality. It has an impact on how people solve ethical challenges, form relationships, and interact with society.

Yūji Kaku's manga series, *Hell's Paradise: Jigokuraku*, combines action, dark fantasy, and psychological thrillers. The main character drives the story's advancement while also imparting its purpose and moral message (Pangestu, 2019). The protagonist, Gabimaru, undergoes tremendous psychological development throughout the series. Exploring his tragedy and path to redemption, he transforms from a cold, selfless, and deadly assassin to a more sympathetic and kind person.

Our personalities are shaped by our psychological development. As a result, if our psychology evolves in response to negative influences and situations, we may become negative humans in the future. Gabimaru, the main character, goes through a series of horrible incidents as a child, which transforms him into a soulless monster. Faced with the death penalty, he recalls his wife, sparking a spark of hope and desire to live. Gabimaru's psychological development is influenced by both internal and external elements, such as his experiences as an assassin and his connections with his wife, friends, and environment, which are consistent with Freud's theory of the psyche. Gabimaru is initially taught to repress emotions as indicators of weakness, but he gradually acquires feelings and a desire to live via his interactions.

The psychological difficulties and advances are crucial to this study. Assigned to a mission to retrieve an elixir of life on an island populated by monsters and other death row inmates, Gabimaru's experiences cause additional emotional and behavioral changes, eventually altering his personality. Gabimaru, like all people, experiences growth and change throughout his existence. Developmental

psychology investigates changes in behavior, emotions, and cognition throughout time. Despite Gabimaru's early difficulty in developing relationships and his ambition to be an emotionless assassin, his interactions with his wife, new companions, and island adventures help him realize his desires and life objectives.

To learn more about the research issue, the author did a literature review. While no previous research have directly examined the manga *Hell's Paradise: Jigokuraku*, several studies have addressed comparable themes related to character analysis and psychological development in literature. The first study by Zebua (2021), titled *The Analysis of Psychological Problems of the Main Character in Paula Hawkins' Novel The Girl on the Train*, is significant because it examines Rachel's psychological issues, providing insights into the novel's themes of memory, perception, identity, and trauma. The study's goal is to demonstrate how the id, ego, and superego shape the main character's mindset and conduct in Paula Hawkins' 2015 novel. Overall, it tries to investigate how Hawkins' portrayal of psychological disorders relates to the greater discussion of mental health in literature.

The second study by Bagtayan and Lantowa (2022), titled *Psychological Analysis of the Main Character in Febrialdi R's Novel Gitanjali*, goes into the protagonist's life, experiences, and inner problems. Conducting a psychological analysis on this character is essential for understanding human behavior and the psychological aspects that underpin actions, reactions, and decisions. This analysis seeks to shed light on the character's motivations, emotions, cognitive processes, development, and connections, so adding to a larger discussion about the function of psychology in literature.

The earlier investigations focused on characters from two separate novels, *Gitanjali* and *The Girl on the Train*. However, they are comparable in their use of psychology and Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory of id, ego, and superego to define the main character's personality. This study investigates the psychological growth of characters in the manga "*Hell's Paradise: Jigokuraku*" by Yūji Kaku. It aims to comprehend the main character's psychological state following many problems and painful occurrences in his life. While similar to the other studies, this study focuses on the psychological development of characters in a manga series.

METHOD

This study investigates the psychological growth of the main character in the manga *Hell's Paradise: Jigokuraku*. The author uses Sigmund Freud's theory of the psyche, which comprises the id, ego, and superego, to gain a better knowledge and analysis of how personality development occurs. Individuals' changes throughout their lives, as well as how they respond to significant life events, initiate psychological development, because life is full of unexpected events that can lead to personal growth and change (Chopik, 2023). This study uses qualitative descriptive methods to examine the object of study in the manga *Hell's Paradise: Jigokuraku*, which includes both narrative and non-narrative.

For data sources, the writer uses the manga *Hell's Paradise: Jigokuraku* as the major object, with an emphasis on identifying the main character, Gabimaru. In addition, the writer uses Karin Kukkonen's book "Studying Comics and Graphic Novels" (2013) to gain a better grasp of identifying the main character through visuals and panels. Furthermore, the author uses books, journal papers, and scholarly articles to research the methodologies and provide references for this thesis.

A systematic approach was used in the discovery of data sources for this study to ensure a thorough knowledge of the psychological development of the primary character in *Hell's Paradise: Jigokuraku*. The primary focus is on the manga itself, specifically *Hell's Paradise: Jigokuraku*. Within this literary domain, special emphasis is placed on the main character, Gabimaru, diving into the complexities of his psyche and the nuances of his developmental path.

In addition to the comics, the researcher drew on Karin Kukkonen's analytical work, including her book *Studying Comics and Graphic Novels* (2013). This material has been extremely useful in developing a better knowledge of character recognition through image and panel analysis. Kukkonen's expertise strengthens the theoretical framework, strengthening the scientific approach used to understand the nuances of Gabimaru's psychological evolution.

The manga *Hell's Paradise: Jigokuraku* covers a wide range of topics. However, the writer is focusing on identifying the main character's behavioral elements and growth using Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, which is being used in both the manga panels and the narrative text. Nonetheless, the writer intends to limit the scope to people immediately associated with the main narrative and to restrict the psychological analysis to those who are closely related, ensuring relevance to the research's major argument.

The study employs both narrative and non-narrative elements to extract topic-relevant content. Close reading is used to collect data from the manga, which allows for the extraction of narrative and graphic elements required for studying the main character's growth and using Freudian psychoanalytic theory. To convey specific content, formal narrative components such as characters, setting, point of view, conflict, plot, and conclusion are analyzed in light of the primary character's psychological state.

To facilitate the research of non-narrative features, the author uses Karin Kukkonen's method presented in *Studying Comics and Graphic Novels* (2013). This strategy focuses on facial expressions, speech bubbles, gutters, and deictic gaze. The analysis is divided into two parts: first, it examines the main character's growth through internal and external variables, and second, it investigates the conscious, unconscious, id, ego, and superego, as well as how the main character navigates and governs each.

The writer is collecting and determining this study through a qualitative descriptive method that includes both conversation and visuals from the manga *Hell's Paradise: Jigokuraku*. The writer will analyze this research using Freud's psychoanalytic theory of psyche, which investigates the id, ego, and superego through the main character's conscious and unconscious mind. The writer also used Karin Kukkonen's method from *Studying Comics and Graphic Novels* (2013) to identify images in graphic novels using panels and frames. The writer will employ two steps to assess the focus of this study, which is the evolution of the main character's psychological conditions and personality.

The first phase is to investigate the main character's growth through internal and external causes, using narrative and non-narrative components to discover his prior pain, redemption, morality, and worth of life, and how these influenced his psychological state of mind and behavior. Using the Karin Kukkonen approach, examine the manga and the main character's facial expressions, speech bubbles, gutters, and deictic gaze, as well as the setting, point of view, conflict, storyline, and resolve, to expand and deepen the study.

The second step involved investigating and analyzing the main character's id, ego, and superego throughout the novel. Analyzing his conscious and unconscious mental states that contribute to his current behavioral and psychological state. To further analyze the data, the author observed the main character's development, applying Karin Kukkonen's method outlined in *Studying Comics and Graphic Novels* (2013) to the main character's facial expressions, speech bubbles, conflict, plot, and narrative text from the manga *Hell's Paradise: Jigokuraku*.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

Childhood trauma has been related to a wide range of mental health issues in both children and adults, including attention deficit disorder, depression, anxiety, and personality disorders, all of which have significant effects on cognitive, social, and emotional abilities. (Dye. 2018). Gabimaru's first traumatic occurrences occurred when both of his parents died, and he began assassin training with the village leader (Figures 1, 1.1, 1.2).

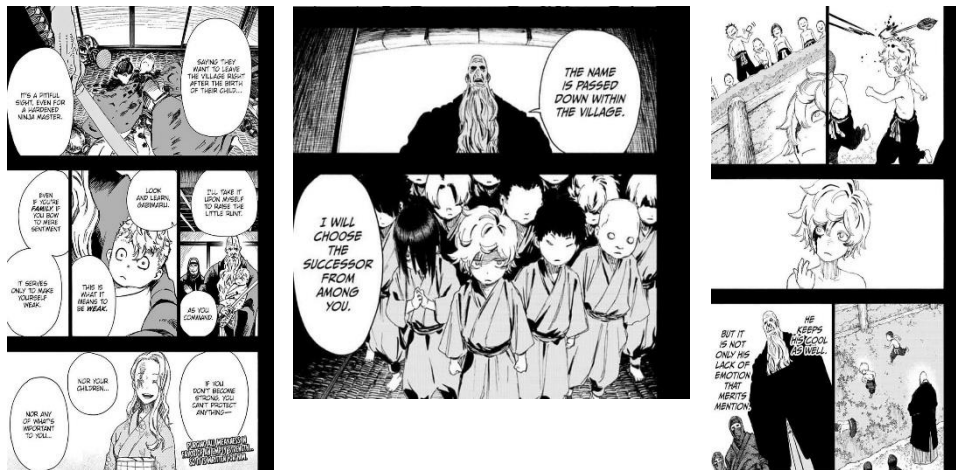


Figure 1, 1.1, 1.2. Gabimaru loses both of his parents and begin the ninja training (Kaku 2020, 5, 88)

Thick black panel depicting his childhood anguish. The chief village abducted Gabimaru and brainwashed him with the term "weak" (as depicted in the speech bubbles in panel 3 of Figure 1). Gabimaru's lack of feeling was influenced by the deaths of their parents and the severe training required to become a ninja/assassin. As depicted in the panels, being bullied has no effect on Gabimaru's feelings; instead, he is at a loss for words and simply looks away.

Throughout his journey to the divine paradise island as a death row criminal, Gabimaru deals with his traumas and inner demons, grappling with his true nature as a

former assassin searching for redemption. His interactions with other strong-willed people, such as the eclectic assortment of criminals and warriors who accompany him, influence his thoughts and values.



Figure 2 and 2.1. Gabimaru is questioning his true self and why he did not want to die (Kaku 2020, 1)

Gabimaru, the main character, believes he has no will to live because of his duty as an assassin/ninja, and he has already seen many people around him die at a young age, as shown in the narrative speech from Figure 2 Panel 1 as Gabimaru's inner mind thought about "I have no attachment to living. Up to this point, I've killed a truly catastrophic number of individuals. I don't intend to outlive them for very long." And in panel 3: "From the minute they are born, every shinobi concealed within stone is trained in nothing but how to murder. Many people lose their lives while training.

From the facial expression and larger speech narrative text in the **figure 2.1**, it is indicated that Gabimaru is shocked and confused. This was because Gabimaru was for the first time on the brink of death when sentenced to death, Gabimaru felt that he, who had been empty all this time, actually had a desire to stay alive.

Gabimaru had felt a lot of time on the brink of death. In the divine paradise island, Gabimaru's traumatic events start when he is encountered with numerous encounters with monsters and a lot more powerful opponents than him, starting to doubt his reality and

strong willed motivation to live and even triggering his nature self as a ruthless assassin as seen in the **figure 3 and 3.1**.



Figure 3 and 3.1. Gabimaru encounter with mysterious little girl (Kaku 2020, 17)

Gabimaru appears perplexed after receiving a powerful strike from a little girl, as shown in figure 3 panel 4. He asks "what happened?" to understand why the little girl has such power and begins to doubt whether she is an ordinary human or a monster from the island, as shown in the speech bubble from figure 3.1 panel 2 "Dunno if you're human or not, but you sure look like a little girl".

This triggers Gabimaru's fearful behavior towards her as he starts to do something bad to the girl as shown in the **figure 3.1** panel 3 as Gabimaru feels desperate to complete the mission in the divine paradise island and says that "i was starting to forget **what that felt like**" the bolded narrative text in the speech bubble refer to the feels of desperation and how Gabimaru development is starting to forget about it feels. Gabimaru later on will encounter a lot of this *Tensen* (A race of immortal, human-like, monstrous plants). There are a lot of powerful *Tensen* who later play a part as Gabimaru's factors to his psychological and behavior as well as his character development.



Figure 4 and 4.1. Gabimaru second encounter with another *Tensen* race (Kaku 2020, 23)

Gabimaru's second meeting with a Tensen named Zhu jin (A member of the Tensen Race). The face expression in figure 4 shows how astonished he is when he discovers that the thing behind him is not a normal creature. As seen in Figure 4.1, panels 1 and 2 in the bolded narrative text from the telepathic speech bubble depict Gabimaru's thoughts about his enemy "something different" and "It's not a human," emphasizing Gabimaru's amazement and wonder at how strong and what the opponent could be.



Figure 5 and 5.1. Gabimaru is triggered by the opponent (Kaku 2020, 23)

After some conversation with the enemy, Gabimaru believes that the elixir of life is made from humans, triggering his anger and threatening behavior as shown in his facial expression from the **figure 5** panel 3. Those conversations in **figure 5** are triggering his instinctual mind to attack the enemy without thinking much about the consequences as

shown in the **figure 5.1**.



Figure 6 and 5.1. Gabimaru chooses to ignore the team regulations (Kaku 2020, 23)

In **figure 6** Gabimaru consciously remembers his teammates warning about the danger to act in that time but his ego consciously chooses to ignore it because he needs to learn more about the elixir of life. In **figure 5.1** Gabimaru's Id unconsciously allowing his instinctual mind to take over and attack the enemy reflects an impulsive and primal response to a perceived threat.

Gabimaru gets overpowered by the enemy and saved by another *Tansen* named Mei who turns out to be a kind *Tansen* who is willing to save the criminals from the island as



seen in the **figure 6 and 5.1**. Successfully retreated from the battle and in his weaker state, Gabimaru is yet encountered with another criminal team that didn't hesitate to kill him.

Figure 7, 7.1, and 7.2. Gabimaru encounters another group of criminal and executioner in his weaker state (Kaku 2020, 27)

Gabimaru encounters another group of criminal and executioner who were sent to the island, in his weakened state after fighting with Zhu jin in the **figure 4** till **figure 6**. Gabimaru tried to imagine how he could fight and win against the opponents and ended up dying in all of his imagination as we can see from the panels in **figure 7, 7.1, and 7.2**. Can't even think about how to win against the opponent, frustrates him in the process. the enemy.



Figure 8. Gabimaru shows respect to his opponents (Kaku 2020, 27)

In **figure 8** Gabimaru is using his strategic thinking (ego) in knowing the enemy's capability, balancing his desire to survive and achieve his goals. Gabimaru's use of strategic thinking to analyze the skills of his foes, balance his desire to survive, and achieve his aims



is consistent with the concept of the ego in Freudian psychology. In Gabimaru's instance, his ego enables him to make rational decisions based on a thorough comprehension of the circumstance, assessing the risks and advantages of achieving his goals while considering the potential consequences.

Figure 9 and 9.1. Gabimaru third encounter with member of the *Tensen* race (Kaku 2020, 67)

During this battle, there are no speech bubbles in the panels indicating how intense and one-sided this battle is, with every panel showing how Gabimaru is vulnerable and got brutally attacked by the monster. Even with how powerful Gabimaru is he can't handle the battle by himself.



Figure 10, 10.1 and 10.2. Gabimaru is saved by his teammates (Kaku 2020, 67)

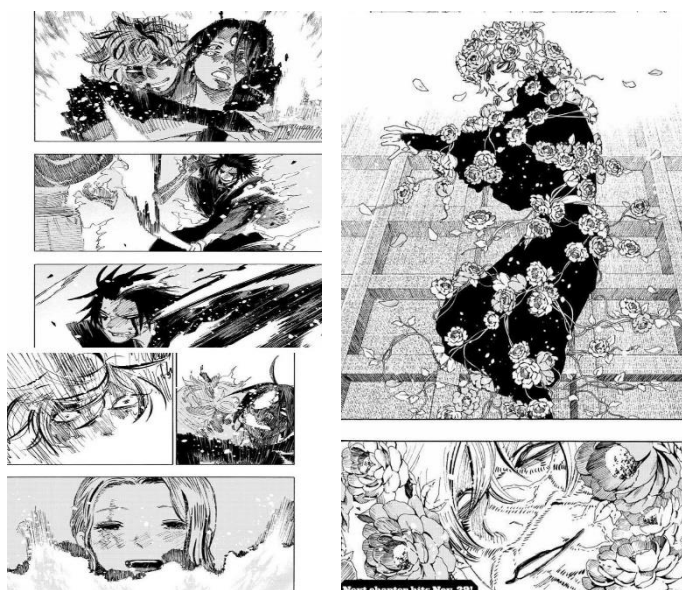
Gabimaru, teams up with Yuzuriha (another criminal sent to the island), ready to escape from the monstrous creature. Remembering his goals to survive and come back home to his wife, Gabimaru declines to give up. The speech bubble in the **figure 10.2** has a deeper meaning in the narrative text of “**whatever it takes**”, meaning that Gabimaru is determined to survive and return home to his wife, and he is willing to make significant sacrifices or endure hardships to make that happen. This could include sacrificing personal comforts, taking risks, facing challenges, or making difficult decisions all with the ultimate goal of achieving his primary objective, which is survival and reuniting with his loved one.



Figure 11, 11.1, 11.1, and 11.2. Gabimaru team working with his teammate (Kaku 2020, 67, 70)

In **figure 11 and 11.1** Gabimaru shows less ego by not working alone and teams up with Yuzuriha (his teammate). **Figure 11.1 and 11.2** Gabimaru is showing sympathy and cares more about Yuzuriha's condition than his own as shown in the narrative text from figure 34.1 “You good?”. Recalling memories of his wife, he learns the feeling of gratitude by saying thank you with his whole heart.

Figure 12 and 12.1. The second time Gabimaru is in the brink of death (Kaku 2020,



119)

Gabimaru battles against Rien (The leader of the Tensen race) is the battle that nearly kills Gabimaru and causes him to start losing his memory of his wife as depicted in the **figure 12** panel 7 as he starts to lose his memory of his wife, the image shows the eroded part from the bottom of the panel.



Figure 13, 13.1, and 13.2. Gabimaru recalling his past memories with his wife (Kaku 2020, 121)

Start to lose his memory of his wife, Gabimaru once again recalling his past memories with his wife as shown in the black frame of the panels in all the figure, remembering that he wants to be more open with her as depicted in the narrative speech bubbles from **figure 13.1** panel 1 “i’ve wished...I could be more open with you” and that he should accept himself indicates a behavioral shift towards introspection, self-acceptance, and potentially seeking emotional support.

Gabimaru's reflection, recognition of the need to be more open with his wife, and acceptance of himself are all signs of ego-driven behavior. The ego is in charge of rational thought, decision-making, and reality checking. Gabimaru's mental processes, self-reflection, and behavioral shift are consistent with ego-related functions.

Gabimaru's learning of the value of being open and accepting of himself is likewise related to the superego. The superego represents internal moral norms, beliefs, and ideals.

Gabimaru's desire to enhance his connection with his wife, as well as his self-esteem, mabe influenced by his internalized moral and ethical convictions.



Figure 14, 14.1, 14.2. Gabimaru laughing for the first time

In **figure 14, 14.1, 14.2** For the first time, Gabimaru shows a genuine expression by laughing out loud. In **figure 14.2** the image in the panels shows how they are enjoying the time together and the gutters shows the time they spent since the sky already changed to a darker color.

Discussion

Gabimaru's id is shaped by his previous assassination trauma, survival instincts honed via violent encounters, and primitive desires for self-preservation and goal achievement. These characteristics can lead to aggressiveness, ruthlessness, and a focus on immediate

enjoyment or survival without regard for repercussions or ethical considerations.

Gabimaru's id is initially dominant, indicating his primordial survival and accomplishment instincts. As an assassin, he exploits these characteristics, displaying ruthlessness, aggression, and a drive for immediate gratification. However, as the novel progresses, Gabimaru's id is softened by his experiences, particularly his memories of his wife, Yui, and his desire for redemption. He begins to question his actions and seek a higher purpose than just survival, indicating a shift in his id's control.

Gabimaru's ego is influenced by his strategic thinking, problem-solving ability, and rational decision-making abilities, all of which have been developed via experience and training. These characteristics can result in behaviors such as calculating goal-achieving activities, planned maneuvers to overcome obstacles or dangers, and the ability to adapt to changing circumstances while keeping long-term consequences in mind. Gabimaru's ego (rational decision-making) grows stronger as he confronts the hurdles of Divine Paradise Island. As he encounters several opponents and situations, he exhibits strategic thinking, problem-solving talents, and rational decision-making. Gabimaru's ego plays a vital role in his character development, allowing him to adapt, learn, and progress as he meets difficult situations and seeks to achieve his goals while balancing his desires with realistic realities. Gabimaru's superego is shaped by his experiences with morally upright persons, his desire for redemption or atonement for past actions, and the moral values that guide his behavior. Gabimaru may demonstrate traits such as empathy, compassion, or self-sacrifice as he struggles with ethical quandaries, works to reconcile his past crimes, and strives to match his actions with his internalized moral compass.

Gabimaru's superego develops dramatically throughout the novel. Initially lacking a strong moral compass as an assassin, Gabimaru's interactions with morally upright people, his relationship with his wife, and his desire for forgiveness gradually reform his superego. He begins to struggle with ethical quandaries, displaying periods of empathy and compassion, and attempting to reconcile his actions with his internalized moral standards. This growth reflects the rise of his superego and contributes to his overall character journey.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Gabimaru, sometimes known as "Gabimaru the Hollow," is the protagonist in Yuji Kaku's manga *Hell's Paradise: Jigokuraku*. He is a powerful ninja with outstanding combat abilities, particularly in the art of assassination. His reputation as one of the most skilled

ninjas precedes him, making him both desirable and dangerous.

The plot of *Hell's Paradise: Jigokuraku* travels to Gabimaru in pursuit of redemption. Sentenced to death for his crimes, he is given the opportunity to redeem himself by participating in a quest to locate the elixir of immortality on a bizarre island known as divine paradise island. Gabimaru, along with the other sentenced criminals and their executioners, must face significant physical and psychological challenges in order to survive and complete their purpose.

Gabimaru's character evolves greatly during the series, as he confronts his inner demons and establishes unexpected alliances. His journey is laden with dramatic confrontations, moral quandaries, and revelations about the island's true nature and inhabitants. Gabimaru's complex nature, paired with his exceptional combat abilities, make him a compelling main character. Throughout his trip in search of redemption, Gabimaru discovers various terrible incidents during meetings with the island's hideous creature, as well as traumatic memories from his youth, which reinforce his nature as a merciless and soulless assassin. Gabimaru's horrific history has an impact on his id, ego, and superego throughout the plot of *Hell's Paradise: Jigokuraku*.

Gabimaru's encounters with horrible monsters and near-death experiences on the divine paradise island had a profound impact on his mind, affecting his id, ego, and superego in a variety of ways. Traumatic events have a tremendous impact on Gabimaru's identity, which represents his primal impulses and desires. They arouse his survival instincts, leading in greater aggression, fear, and a strong need to self-preserve. Gabimaru's id, ego, and superego are all major aspects of his character development, impacting his actions, decisions, and internal fights in significant ways. Gabimaru's id is mirrored in his excellent shinobi skills, unwavering determination to survive, and burning aggressiveness in battle.

The goal of this study is to determine the main character's qualities and growth using Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory and manga panels. However, the author aims to minimize the number of related and identifiable characters in the manga, as well as the psychological evaluations that are linked to one another, in order to make the research's main thesis more relevant. The writer suggests that future studies using the manga *Hell's Paradise: Jigokuraku* investigate the manga's cultural and historical influences, which include connections to Japanese folklore, mythology, and historical events. Discuss how these elements enhance the story's depth.

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