

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

Vicious, written by V.E. Schwab, is a novel which implicitly addresses a moral and psychological theme. The story centers on the conflict between the Victor Vale as the protagonist and Eli Cardale as the antagonist, both of whom hold contrasting moral beliefs. It explores themes of ambition, betrayal, and the intricacies of morality. This research centers on analyzing the intrinsic and extrinsic elements of the story. The intrinsic elements involve character and characterization, and conflict analysis. Related to character and characterization analysis, this research focuses on the analysis of Eli Cardale as the main antagonist of the story, and other characters who plays significant roles in exposing and influencing Eli's narcissistic behaviour; namely Victor Vale and Serena Clarke. Moreover, this thesis undertakes internal conflict and external conflict. For the internal conflict, the writer finds that Eli faces a moral dilemma and identity crisis. Meanwhile, the external conflict involves Eli's enmity with Victor regarding their contrast beliefs and moral compass.

Furthermore, for the external elements, the focus in this research is the analysis of the symptoms, the causes, and the effects of pathological narcissism shown by Eli Cardale. In analyzing the pathological narcissism, the writer applied Kernberg's theory by using psychological approach.

The writer analyzes the symptoms of pathological of Eli Cardale by dividing the symptoms into four aspects, namely insatiable ambition and greed, grandiosity,

life dissatisfaction, and emotional deficit. First, the overarching aspect of “insatiable ambition and greed” shows that Eli’s intense ambition, drives his dedication to eliminating EOs (people with superhuman ability) and justifying immoral actions as necessary to protect normal people. Also, Eli’s relentless pursuit of knowledge about EOs demonstrates his strive for brilliance and power. Second, the overarching aspect of “grandiosity” shows that Eli character embodies grandiose fantasies driven by a deep need for external validation. Despite being an EO himself, he distances himself from others of his kind, asserting his superiority. He exhibits an inability to accept criticism or acknowledge the need for compromise. Moreover, Eli’s desperate attempts to garner admiration and recognition, even in the face of rejection and condemnation, highlight his profound insecurities and fragile sense of self-worth. Third, the overarching aspect of “life dissatisfaction” shows that Eli’s chronic feelings of boredom, emptiness, uncertainty, and dissatisfaction manifest as he navigates his mission. He feels lost and purposeless, struggling to meet his expectations despite having a strategy in place. The slow progress of his mission intensifies his boredom and uneasiness, prompting him to seek more effective strategies. His reliance on Serena underscores his dissatisfaction with dependency and uncertainty about his abilities. Fourth, the overarching aspect of “emotional deficit” shows that Eli struggles with emotional complexity, finding it hard to form genuine connections while acknowledging his feelings for Serena. Moreover, Eli shows a lack of empathy when he relentlessly pursues his mission to eliminate EOs. Although he does not enjoy violence, he feels satisfaction afterward, revealing his willingness to harm without remorse. In

addition, he also shows traits of exploitation when he manipulates others for personal gain, disregarding their autonomy.

Furthermore, the second main point analysis is the causes of pathological narcissism. The causes of Eli's pathological narcissistic behavior arise from his abusive childhood. Eli mentioned that he has a scar which is caused by his father. This traumatic childhood experience triggers the development of pathological narcissism as a defense mechanism.

The third main points discuss the effects of pathological narcissism on Eli. The story concludes with Eli dealing with the consequences of his action, emphasizing the harmful consequences of his narcissistic tendencies, resulting in his emotional isolation. In detail, emotionally, Eli has become numb and detaches his feelings by seeking comfort and affirmation on something he rationally believes, such as supernatural blessing rather than other people. In addition, the pathological narcissism behavior of Eli results in a false self-image, exposing the superficiality of his achievements. Ultimately, he is not perceived as a hero but as a killer.