

ANTAGONIST'S OBSESSION TO REVENGE IN V. E. SCHWAB'S NOVEL *VICCIOUS*

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Abstract

This paper concerns with Antagonist's Obsession to Revenge in V. E. Swab's novel *Vicciious*. It refers to three points of discussion i.e. his friend's betrayal, his friend's injustice, and his friend's aggressiveness. In analyzing the three points, the descriptive method is chosen as the suitable method to process the data. The analysis indicates that there are two best friends who make a research together and do the experiment on each other. Anyhow, during the experiment, many people around them die as the victims of their research experiment until finally they start to hate each other, and are obsessed to take revenge on each other. The revenge occurs when Elly's girlfriend is found dead due to the wrong experiment conducted by Victor, and the work of injustice with aggressiveness is done to Victor by a gun shot. The results indicate that someone's obsession on things can be a serious matter if it is wrongly conducted. The sensitive problems arises from the antagonist's unfair ways, treating his friend so badly, and being obsessed to take killing action.

Keywords: aggressiveness, injustice, obsession, revenge

1. Introduction

Obsession is part of human behaviour that usually appears when there are some goals or things about to reach. They might crave a successful life journey that usually exists in any drama or film that can become real in their own life. In case to make it become real, they will do things diligently and regularly.

Vicciious is a fantasy novel written by V.E.Schwab that was published by Tor Books in 2018, which became Goodreads Choice Award Nominee for Fantasy on 2018, and has been translated into many languages. *Vicciious* portrays about a friendship between Victor and Elly, a bestfriend, and both of them are also students of Lockland University, who are smart, arrogant, ambitious, and lonely. It is told that they get plan to mix their topic into a research that could bring about a result. Overtly, Victor wants to analyze about adrenaline boost which elaborates adrenaline, and all the booster. Meanwhile, Elly intends to analyze about incredible people pertaining to possibility theories that are taken from laws of biology, chemical, and psychology. They do a research about human adrenaline, deadly trial, and any other accident that look like supranatural, opening up the possibility; in certain condition, human can have ability

more than the normal one. Their obsession had taken all of their humanity. They keep doing the experiment on their own bodies, until suddenly they get their power as extraordinary persons. While during their research, some accidents occur and make peoples they love die. They begin hating each other, and they are obsessed to take revenge on each other.

With the above point in mind, this paper clarifies that obsessions that are not related to someone's goals can distort one's mind and turn it into a desire for revenge. All the revenges that begins from an obsession by Victor and Elly in novel *Vicious*, has created many conflicts that involve many people's life. Kartono (1989: 120-121) explains that obsession is an idea or emotion that always appears in someone's mind and heart regularly; many sufferers find that it really hard to change it. Even the sufferers have done all of possible ways to decrease the symptom. This is demanded because it produces any effects to the protagonist; it is the beginning of the revenge. Following this, it is normal to take into account the antagonist's obsession as the focus of this paper because it becomes the essence of the novel. Moreover, it shows that the antagonist's obsession to revenge is made as the main factor which is defined so far to cope with the analysis. This paper is also useful to enrich the researchers in literature, especially to make a study about obsession to revenge as the antagonist's ways to take over the problem he has.

2. Literature Review

Obsession is a significant problem that could bother someone's mentality. In medical line, it is called as OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder), that is a type of human's personality disorder characterised by anxiety and excessive repetition of behavior experienced by the person himself/herself. Sarwono (1989: 25) claims that obsession is mindset or feeling that spreads too much from someone about a thing. People that have this disorder feel worried about the thing that relates to them. They also think that they can handle anything—no matter what it takes. Even sometimes they seem like to force themselves. By this way, they think that they are better than anyone around them.

Dali (1989: 30) explains that obsession can also be an illustration, mind, and idea that are conured by the emotion who goes directly to something negative and better to go away from it. He also adds that to reach something being their goals, people are accustomed to be obsessed persons. Given this, sometimes people are even so aggressive, and the dark side of people such a psychopath who is used to show up without realizing it. In addition, an obsessed person likes to think out of the imagination. Their way to think is so wide, and sometimes normal people cannot understand what the obsessed person tells about.

Furthermore, Kaufman (2013: 95) describes that revenge involves a desire to see the wrongdoer suffer. It is because when they try to avenge the suspect, it does not matter how dangerous and evil their actions are. All they can satisfy is their lust to revenge. Baron, et.al. (2005: 11) state that revenge also refers to the way of a vengeful people to pay back wrong-doings; then, they can fulfil their lust of revenge in their soul, as the purpose of recovering their feeling, more valueable and getting justice for a better feeling. But, it is only for a certain feeling that they sometimes could bring anyone in dangerous situation.

Baron, et.al. (2005: 12) also add that there is no relation that could bother someone's desire to revenge. The mistake has broken their belief, and wounds their

heart. It is possible that the victim will revenge to fulfil their lust. It happens because the first violated people will violate the law; then, the revenge of that mistake could take off the law from its place. It is actually such a way of the victim to recover the pain that had been created by the suspect. To get a better feeling, more value and sense of justice in a person can be achieved, but a better feeling are only temporary, and sometimes create new dangers for people who take revenge.

There are many life struggles that could be the factor or the cause of someone's obsession to revenge—no matter how close a relationship is. When someone needs to repay the wicked things that they receive, all the impossible things can be possible on vengeful people. Even then, they will get used to the things. Following this, they will keep going on until the goals of their obsession to revenge is finally reached. Schumann and Ross (2010: 144-145) explain in their article that in way of revenge, individuals respond to any fault by harming the suspect, to payback all the negative things done by the transgressor. Some factors to support the action of the antagonist to fulfil his desire to revenge are described in the following points:

1. Betrayal is one of moral crimes or social injuries that could break a trust of someone or even a society. Lifton (1983: 11) claims that the relation of moral development to trust betrayal has not been extensively developed in literature, nor has moral stage to be connected to someone's personality, except in a few distances. He also adds that a long term relationship cannot guarantee that there would be no betrayal in it, no matter how small it is; betrayal is still betrayal. It depends on each individual to respond to the betrayal itself. Sometimes, people think that it is acceptable to trust someone that they believe to be the key of their matters, where they can share their secret to their trusted person. But then, they often feel upset when any fight or any misunderstood situation occurs between them. They would feel anxious to the person who will tell anyone about their secret. Finally, when the betrayal grows bigger and worse, someone would do anything that is possible to payback any betrayal that has been done by the suspect.
2. Justice is such a thing that almost disappears in this world. Maybe, we often hear the word "justice" in some heroic movies or maybe in some news. Commonly, the heroic character would scream words "justice" to their rival or to the corrupt person. Eisenberger (2004: 2) explains that someone that feels aggrieved by the other would go against celebration that endangers them. Here are the common things that human always forgets about. Personally, people just care about their own wealth and happiness, without thinking about other people's right. Eisenberger (2004: 3) also adds that there are lot of people who lose their right because they had no power to get their justice in side of law, love, or may be society. Moreover, people cannot face that situation in great way; then, suddenly their action changes into a negative one that can be a chance of revenge.
3. Aggressiveness is kind of communication mode and act, where the sufferer is careless about their rival's feeling. Sometimes, this sufferer talks too loud and too rude, just to express their feelings, their needs, or their rights. When people are aggressive, they will just focus on winning the statement, that is followed by high emotion and low empathy. Taylor (2009: 30) explains that the behavior of aggression and also what is known by anger that always appears on a aggressive person. In some characters, usually the antagonists would be the persons who act in their characteristics. They often talk louder and ruder than those other characters.

3. Research Method

As this paper discusses antagonist's obsession to revenge in *Vicious* novel by V. E. Schwab, it, therefore, uses the theory of obsession by Sarwono (1989), and Dali (1989), to describe certain points of obsession related to the subject matter. It is then verified in Namawi (1993: 3) descriptive method is required as a procedure of matter solving by generating the subject of the study pertaining to matters taken from the novel. Gall (2007: 57) also states that descriptive research is a method that explains the phenomenon and its characteristics that require in one variable and only concern with rather than any other question word. Therefore, this descriptive method is suitably adopted in this paper is to give description to the data that have been defined in this study.

Collecting the data related to the points of analysis is necessarily done by making some notes based on the words, phrases, and sentences from the novel which are related to the identified points of discussion i.e. his friend's betrayal, his friend's injustice, and his friends's aggressiveness as organized in a pattern, category, and analysis. The pointed pattern and category of the data are then analyzed without making some simplified changes to its context and points of view to give evidence to the readers that all the data are originally taken from the novel.

4. Discussion

As identified in the previous section, there are three points to be analyzed i.e. his friend's betrayal, his friend injustice, and his friend's aggressiveness. All of them are the reasons for the revenge after doing research experiment with his university friend.

4.1 His Friend's Betrayal

Betrayal always breaks trust upon someone, and it often gives unfair effect to the persons involved in it. And it goes more mournful when the betrayal does not come from the enemy, but from a friend. It certainly brings us disappointment and frustration to what our friend has already done to us. Sometimes, people decide to take someone as his trusted person as a friend, a soulmate, or even a member of a family, that he thinks he can always be loyal to him; however, it is still possible that the person he trusts can betray him, as portrayed in the following:

You weren't supposed to be here. You come to a party, people notice.
Ellis texted me when you showed up.
And then Max texts and tells me you're buying out the coke. I'm not an idiot. What were you thinking? I'm only trying to protect you. Now fuck off. (Schwab, 2018: 113)

Beforehand, Elly and Victor have made an agreement to hide their real identities. Elly asks Victor not to join any party or school gathering, because of Victor's power that can make everyone who sees it badly agape and startled; they will be amazed and curious about his excellent power that Elly does not have, so he often does something insecure about it. In other words, Elly does not like all the attention goes to Victor's ability. He worries about being ignored. Anyhow, Victor knows Elly's real motive, and decides to betray him by joining the party. Certainly, it will endanger Victor's real condition. Victor ignores the fact that it could make their problem more complicated because another student is supposed to talk extremely about them. As Victor's roommate, Elly is the one who could handle all the issues about Victor that

develops among the students. To save his roommate, actually Elly also wants everyone at the university to pay attention to him as a good person that is really responsible and loyal to his friend. Elly is a person who craves praise and good comment about himself from everyone. He is a person who is accustomed to take profit over some problems. He does not care how much lies that he has done as long as it brings many profits to him; he will keep going on it.

“You called the cops and you accused me of being an EO. I didn’t rat you out, you know. I could have. It was an accident. (Schwab, 2018: 154)

As quoted, Victor tries to explain the way he is betrayed by Elly’s action which is contrary to the fact as if Elly makes his name clearer from the fault that is actually related to him. He even does not care about the victim, his close friend, who always helps him in any condition. Then, he gives report to the police officer who is also the stranger that could endanger their identity as extraordinary persons, by revealing the identity of one of them. Nevertheless, it is possible for the others to reveal his own identity. Moreover, to avoid being blamed, he always creates a faking story to build other people’s trust on him, and takes him as the right one to get involved in the problem.

I felt confused, he just killed my girlfriend, then he run toward me, it makes me affraid of him then I do not know what to do. I just tried to calming my mind to not kill him (Schwab. 2018: 238).

Elly shows that becoming a close friend, it does not mean no betrayal in it. He keeps building any untrue story to clear his name and betrays his friend. It proves that there is no guarantee for person whom you trust to be always your saver; it can also be your source of trouble. No matter how big the fudge is, Elly will always be a selfish person, who will keep going on other’s dirty way. For Elly, there is nothing important than people’s good opinion about him. He even talks so wise to his victim before he kills them. Such a matter is depicted in the following quotation:

So Sidney, do you want to show me your power? I want you to know that it is my grim task to do this. I have no choice. Your power is wrong, and it makes you a danger other, your weapon is worse. Your power is unnatural. Do you understand, Sydney? It goes against nature. Against God. And this, this is for the greater good. (Schwab, 2018: 262).

Sydney is one of Elly’s victims. She is a young girl who is really sincere and fragile. She is really easy to trust someone and is still really easy to get touched. Her mentality is still weak. She loses her parent since she is baby. She has only a sister in this world. That is why she will do anything to make her sister happy. Even when her sister betrays her, being deep in her heart, she still loves her sister. Her sister’s betrayal still means nothing than her love. It can be seen when she is about to get killed over her sister’s agreement; Sidney is not angry to her at the time. As long as it makes her sister happy, she can take it despite being killed.

4.2 His Friend's Injustice

Injustice commonly appears among poor society, or maybe it presents in the middle of fairness environment. When someone has no power to defend the truth, and he or she becomes the victim of their deprived rights. In the novel, the injustice situation exists in many chapters, most of them occurs to Victor and some of his friends. The following is one of the injustice conducted to Sydney.

He called me unnatural, Said my power went against nature. Against God. After he shot me, I swore I'd never use my power again. Not in front of anyone (Schwab, 2018: 196).

The quotation shows the injustice experienced by Victor's friend, Sydney, who is framed by Elly and her own sister, Serena. Both, Elly and Serena are a work partner. Serena starts being interested in Elly's character since she has done an analysis on how fast he heals wounds, and when he gets hit or shot in his body. There will not be any stitches or cuts; everything looks normal without any flaws. Moreover, everyone calls Elly as the 'hero' that kills every criminal. She always thinks right to Elly, especially when she knows that he enthusiastically kills the criminal.

Every life creature has right to stay alive, and gets a second chance to be a great person. For example, their bad habits may change, and the government gives them punishment to lead them into right condition based on the rules and regulation. Given this, Serena is interested and curious to Elly's good deeds. Nevertheless, when she finds out that Elly is about to kill her, to show her loyalty, she keeps joining him by taking his action to kill.

do not you know, maybe I need to let you kill me, because you are right, even if we're re-alive, there must be something death in us, we forgot ourselves before and it is so scare, awesome, and complicate. All of us are monsters, include you. But still, I will follow you and your strange power. Poorly, you cannot kill me today, because I need to take the bus to school (Schwab, 2018: 278).

The quotation describes how disappointed Serena is. She does not realize that Elly could do this to her. She even gives all of his time to be loyal to Elly. However, Elly does not even care about it; he even thinks of the way to kill Serena. Elly is obsessed to kill all of the extraordinary human – no matter how is the family of those extraordinary human will be after that. He just cares about his own needs that can help him increase social trust to him.

He said it was a tryout! Like, for a Hero League or some shit. He wanted me to rob a bank to prove he was a hero? And then what the fuck does it look like, ass hat? He killed me! The bastard walks right up in the middle of a demonstration he told me to do, and he shoots me (Schwab, 2018: 202)

As pointed out, it explains Barry's death chronology. He was killed by Elly in spite of his dedication to him. He feels so mad at Elly; he thinks that he does not deserve to die. His power as an extraordinary human cannot be claimed as a sin or a reason for his death. Barry never blames or becomes angry with him before. Whatever Elly does creates confusion in Barry's mind. His heart still hurts even though his wound has disappeared.

Media wanted to know, the reason of an unnormal person who supposed to be death come in the bank with no weapon, and didnot try to steall or hostage anyone. All he did is just screaming out Elly's name, chased away everyone, then shot the air with his air power (Schwab, 2018: 233).

Barry's aggressive action is clearly indicated in the above quotation. He does anything as he can to get the thing he wants, no matter how the condition is or where the location is. He is very angry, and cannot control his emotion well. He wants to take avenge on Elly, and makes him to get the justice. Although his identity has been known by everyone, he does not care about it. However, a stranger is prepared for showing his power to people in the society before.

You do not need to tell me about your power if you do not want. But you need to understand something, I will do anything to defeat Elly, even he is not that easy. His power ever about to kill himself, he might be crazy but also tricky. Many things can earn profit for him then make me more difficult to win. He has known your power, while I hasnot yet. It is really unfear on me, do you get it? (Schwab, 2018: 197)

Victor asks Elly's victims to cooperate with him, and to payback Elly's sins on them. Gently, he talks about what are the things he needs and how big his desire to take his revenge is. As one of his victims, Sydney gets some traumatic condition in her mind because she is still too young to understand such a case. That is why Victor tries to explain the things calmly to Sydney. He is so worried if one day Sydney thinks that she is just going to be left, or get murdered, just like her experience before. The injustice over her sincere feeling occurs while helping her sister and her sister's friend.

4.3 His Friend's Aggressiveness

Aggressiveness is a feeling of hostile action characterized by aggressive behaviour. In the novel, aggressiveness is showed by the victim of Elly's selfishness which most of them are Victor's friends who are also extraordinary human. Aggressiveness is one of the ways for them to show that they are not afraid of anything including the death.

It is so funny, I'm not getting suprise of your power, and look at you now, did you try to make every one honoring you with being an important person? No, is that 'hero'? yea, you write it in your article, and it is also state in news papper, ' The Hero of the darkest day' woahh sound so awesome right?. But actually you are the suspect itself, your ability do not fluent every one, so you think it will not endanger any one. While us, the extraordinary human who get excellent ability, you always create some stupid story about us, then killed us just because you take us as a menace. Look how sad you were? Just tell me that you are just affraid of us haha. (2018, 2013: 278)

This describes how aggressive Serena is and she does not care of how dangerous her rival is, or how rude her words are. Since she feels satisfied for her interest, she will

continue all the efforts she has done. Moreover, Elly is not a kind of person that can be criticized by good words because sometime some satires can help him to wake him up. Selena thinks that by revealing Elly's intentions as well as his secret, he will feel more careful about Serena. It is because Selena always gets unfair and rude command such as killing her own sister resulting in the fact that her sister is one of the extraordinary persons. At first, she feels so hard to receive that instruction, but then she admits it after she knows her sister's power to relive from the death body including her own body. Serena feels there would be no matter if she follows Elly's command because her sister will never die.

This is crazy!, I'm not a murderer and i am not an extraordinary human!! (Schwab, 2018: 146).

The above quotation indicates that it is one of Victor's statements, where he tells lies prepared to cover his real identity to save his clan existence that begins to be hunt by civilizer. It is because issues that spreads among the society about extraordinary human's criminals list are aware of among the society. Victor tries to express his feelings, he gets suspect to the things which he did not make. The most painful point is that he is accused of and is reported by his friend whom he trusts the most. Beginning from this betrayal, both Victor and Elly get personal revenge to each other. Elly does his revenge by killing all the extraordinary human as he is scared of their power and their popularity pertaining to moving his acknowledged existence among the society. While Victor does his revenge by reliving all Elly's murdered victims, by re-uniting them, and asking them to payback Elly's sins to them.

See!!? Your stupid little sister has broken it, has not she? I did not feel anything, you can not hurt me! Haha! (Schwab, 2018: 204).

Barry is one of Elly's victims. He is betrayed by Elly who promises him some wealth by following the agreement that they made before. But then he is trapped, and is killed by Elly. Victor rescues Barry by asking Sidney to use her power to relive Barry. Victor also offers some agreement and explains some tasks needed to be done by Barry. Though Barry's respond is too rude, Victor keeps on his faith in case to get some agreement to do revenge and to do his lust to get obsessed for revenge on all murderers and all the fake news that he creates. The sentences in the following shows this.

Fuck off, does it look like I want a job? I want to get out of this fucking coffin. Yeah, think you're high and mighty, causing pain and shit? Well I'm not afraid of you. Got that? Let me out and I'll show you pain (Schwab, 2018: 203).

Barry puts much hatred on Elly and all the people that relate to him, after Elly betrays, kills, and becomes a hero over his death. He is going to ignore anyone that seems useless, and to put his care for money. Nevertheless, when he meets Elly, he becomes very humble and kind. He even listens to Elly's story, while it is his first time being a listener. He is surprised to himself. He is usually just like a bad guy; contrarily, he does not like peace, and will do anything for his wants. Following this, he has done many criminal actions, but never gets caught by the police. Until Elly gives order with a big offer, it arises his interest to do it. He never expects he will get the second change of life, and so he takes his revenge on Elly.

Extraordinary human must be erased from the world, they never get the second change, they just get the weapon without instruction book, with no rules, their existence is one of criminal action. They are not the real creature. (Schwab. 2018: 278)

The point above indicates that Elly uses his aggressiveness to judge the existence of an extraordinary human that cannot be received by the society just because of his traumatic experience for the death of his girlfriend. In fact, his girlfriend's death is just a reason for him to kill all the extraordinary human that have great power than him, and he thinks that all the extraordinary human can kill anyone when their power and emotion become out of control; just like his own experience, Victor kills Angie, his girlfriend, that makes him feel sorry for her death because he cannot help her. He becomes an OCD with obsessional type who puts all of the troubles as his sins and his responsibility. Moreover, he is afraid that someday his old friend, Victor, finds him and asks other extraordinary human to take revenge on him. That is because Victor has power to do that. He is afraid that anyone will suspect him for all the extraordinary people have passed away on his hand. He is scared of the fearness who he will face one day if everyone in this world knows who is he actually. This matter is depicted in the following:

All that charm outside, all that evil inside. There was a monster under there, long before you died. You aren't some avenging angel, Eli. You're not blessed, or divine, or burdened. You're a science experiment. (Schwab, 2018: 414)

The quotation above is Victor's words to Elly, when he finally catches Elly on his hands. They are involved in a fight. It begins from Elly who has shot Dol to die. Dol is Victor's first pet a long his life. At first, he is just about to visit the crime scene. But then, a shot sounds so louder heard by everyone. While everyone is busy to find out the sound's source, Victor sees his dog getting died on the floor, and covered with blood. Then, one of them sees Elly with his gun standing on a stone. Victor runs to him, and then a fight occurs between them.

You'll never kill me, Eli, You hear the cops coming? They're all on my side here. No one's coming to save you (Schwab, 2018: 313).

Elly clearly hears the police arriving and wants to make sure that Elly is the one who kills Victor. The corps storms the room where Elly and Victor is fighting. Then, he realizes no one on his side. As Elly is arrested, he begs the corps to burn Victor's body, because for him, Victor had already died. On the other hand, nobody listens to him. The fact that Victor comes back alive is after his funeral took place. Moreover, Sidney and Mitch help him quite much by pouring their powers to revive Victor.

5. Conclusion

The analysis verifies that the antagonist's obsession to revenge is divided into three categories i.e. his friend's betrayal, his friend's injustice, and his friend's aggressiveness. It is acknowledged that there is a strong indication to suspect Victor to kill Elly's girlfriend in the experiment although it is unintentionally done, and it becomes the main reason for Elly to take revenge due to the fact that Victor is deeply untrusted. Meanwhile, Elly also makes some killing cases that are prominently known by Victor

and the people around. Certainly, Victor is made as a target to kill, and he needs to manage of how to take revenge for Elly because he is able to reveal all the injustice situation addressed to him and all his friends. Victor also knows that Elly wants to kill all the extraordinary humans. Therefore, Elly creates some faking stories to show people about what he does is to save the world. However, he does it to decieve people. With his aggressiveness, Elly begins to kill Victor and all extraordinary humans with a gun, and tries to enjoy their death reactions. Likewise, he feels like a hero while seeing the victims' reaction when facing their death. Finally, Elly and Victor involves in a big fight, and before it takes a death victim, some police come for an auspicious help, and Elly is caught up for his unforgettable sin.

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