

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Webtoons as one of the digital comic formats that attracts young adults due to their unique artstyle and diverse stories is interesting to analyze. The artstyle uniqueness lies in the forms of semi-realistic styles and manga artstyle; while the uniqueness of diverse stories is through their philosophical-related and spiritual-related stories. Furthermore, some webtoons portray real-life philosophical and spiritual aspects.

The popularity of Webtoons started in Korea called Naver Webtoon in 2014 led to its global launch in 2014 (Jang, W & Song, J. E, 2017, p. 180). It is popular in Indonesia as LINE Webtoon (Jang, W & Song, J. E, 2017, p. 182). Some famous webtoons by Indonesian authors are *Aegis Orta*, *Deadly 7 Inside Me*, and *Nusantara Droid War*. Its popularity is also due to the webtoons' genres with the most popular genres being Fantasy, Comedy, Action, Slice of Life, and Romance (Putri, S & Wenny, L. S, 2024, p. 72). This study focuses on the fantasy genre depicting symbolic things through its fantasy aspects such as supernatural, magic, and imaginary worlds and creatures.

One of the popular fantasy webtoons in Indonesia is *Deadly 7 Inside Me*. It has both Indonesian and English versions. The Indonesian version was created by Deruu Riota, while the English version is the translation version. Some of Deruu Riota's works are *Shio Cafe*, *One Bite Per Month*, and *Deadly 7 Inside Me*. The Indonesian version was published from 13 August 2016 to 7 November 2020, and has 107.3 million views; while the English version was published from 9 March 2021 to 17 August 2023 (Riota, D, 2016). The English version has a more proper grammar and less unfamiliar terms than its Indonesian version. Deruu Riota in *Deadly 7 Inside Me*, portrays some characters as the spirit of sins, and spirit of virtues.

Deadly 7 Inside Me is interesting because of the unique ways of portraying both virtues and vices within the characters and its theme on the existence of the spirits of sins and spirits of virtues. The characters' names are derived from both the seven deadly sins and the seven heavenly virtues. For example, Envy, the spirit of sin, is the main character. Rion or Pride, the spirit of sin, is the main character. Kindness, the spirit of virtue, is the main character.

Deadly 7 Inside Me showing the conflict between the spirits of sins and the spirits of virtues is interesting to analyze due to the fact that some sin spirits have good sides while some

virtue spirits have bad sides. The main problem is that the sin spirits and virtue spirits are fighting each other for human hearts for a very long time. For example, some virtue spirits hate sin spirits, thinking that sin spirits are purely evil. Some sin spirits also hate virtue spirits, thinking that virtue spirits are too oppressive. It creates a conflict between spirits of sins and spirits of virtues, the conflict between “the light” as the origin of virtues and “the darkness” as the origin of sins. The long conflict is initiated by the two main antagonists, Witchcraft the atramentous spirit and Despair the legendary sin spirit. The ending of the conflict is that both spirits stop fighting each other and they defeat the culprits. Finally, they realize that sins and virtues need each other and are also complementary things.

The representation of virtues and vices in *Deadly 7 Inside Me* is presented in each character. It shows that people cannot live with either virtues or vices because humans’ virtues and vices are driven by their own will and condition. This is aligned with Jung’s statement quoted by Winther (2020, p. 1), that there is no white without black, no warm without cold, no light without darkness, and if Evil is an illusion, Good is necessarily illusory too. In addition, according to Jung's statement quoted by Winther (2020, p. 10), the source of our evil-doing resides in our own free will.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In this study, I want to analyze how the virtues and vices of the main characters are represented in the webtoon *Deadly 7 Inside Me*, and why the main characters exercise virtues and vices.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the ways virtues and vices of the main characters are portrayed through some characters and to find out the reasons why they practice virtues and vices.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Having a religious theme and a fantasy genre, the webtoon *Deadly 7 Inside Me* depicts virtues and vices through the overall lore or world-building in the story of the webtoon; specifically, it portrays the characters’ virtues and vices in several ways implying the overall characteristics of those opposing things. It means that the virtues and vices exist within the main characters. These virtues and vices are in line with the six types of moral foundations. In addition,

each of these virtues and vices is driven by their own will, since the text also heavily amplifies the concepts of good and evil.

The findings also show more understanding of the concepts of good and evil in the characters and the reasons why good and evil are complementary things. This understanding can allow people to know the fact that each human being has his or her own virtues and vices so that people realize that each person cannot entirely be virtuous or vicious.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

The webtoon is taken from Line Webtoon's official translated website published from 2021 until 2023. The study focuses on the main characters' acts of virtues and vices and the reasons for practicing virtues or vices. The objects of analysis are 15 episodes out of 193, that is, episodes 8, 13, 14, 19, 52, 53, 78, 79, 82, 98, 99, 100, 110, 135 and 148. Those episodes clearly show both the virtues and vices being represented.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

In this analysis, there are two theories consisting of a main theory and a supporting theory that will be used. The main theory is Moral Foundation and the supporting theory is Moral Dualism.

1.6.1 Moral Foundation Theory

The analysis applies Moral Foundation theory by Jonathan Haidt (Graham et al., 2009, p. 1030) as the main theory. The meaning of "Moral Foundation" must be rooted from the meanings of moral and foundation. "Moral" is the intuitive sense about right and wrong guiding the overall human behavior (Merriam-Webster, 2025). It is not just about good or evil but it also includes multiple factors shaping people's judgements towards actions done by other individuals and societies. The word "foundation" refers to the base or principle that supports something. Therefore, the meaning of Moral Foundation refers to the basic principles in people's judgements towards others' actions.

Moral Foundation theory is developed by a social psychologist, Jonathan Haidt. It is applied to analyze because its concept explains the characters' acts of virtues or vices. It identifies the representation of the characters' virtues and vices through its six types of foundations. According to Graham, Brian, and Haidt (2009, p. 1030), the intuitive sense about right and wrong guides both human judgement, behavior, and decision-making derived from

innate psychological mechanisms that co-evolved with cultural institutions and practices. It means that morality is not only about rational thinking but also based on evolutionary adaptations and cultural learning that help human groups survive. Morality itself is the result of the six types of moral foundations, that is: care/harm, fairness/cheating, loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, sanctity/degradation, and liberty/oppression (Haidt, 2012, p. 3; Simpson, 2017, p. 5). In this study, these six foundations are applied to analyze the main characters.

The Care/Harm foundation represents the act of protecting others from suffering and harm; and it is triggered by a desire to ensure the survival of vulnerable beings. Care is an act of preventing harm and abuse, for example, protecting children from violence and abuse and preventing harming attempts (Haidt, 2012, p. 5). Harm is an act of harming somebody else, for example, verbal or physical abuse and killing. According to Haidt (2012, p. 5; Simpson, 2017, p. 5), it triggers the care aspect when one perceives violence, abuse, or suffering.

The Fairness/Cheating foundation is an act of ensuring justice, supporting fairness, treatment, and equality. Fairness as an act of implementing fair treatment and rules that prevents cheating. The examples for fairness are creating fair rules, supporting equality, and treating everyone fairly. Cheating is an act of fraudulence, and unfair treatment, for example, making unfair rules.

The Loyalty/Betrayal foundation as an act of maintaining group solidarity is triggered by strengthened and valued group cohesion for survival through unity and devotion. Loyalty is an act of staying together with their group to maintain solidarity, for example, staying devoted towards the family and the company, and defending a mistreated friend. Betrayal as an act of leaving their own group breaks the trust in the process, for example, abandoning children for selfish reasons, and backstabbing in social circles. This is because according to Haidt (2012, p. 11), the love of loyal teammates is matched by a hatred of traitors, who are considered worse than enemies.

The Authority/Subversion foundation as an act of respect for social hierarchies is triggered by the desire to maintain social structures. Authority is an act of respecting and obeying the values of society's hierarchical structures, for example, avoiding breaking laws and obeying both family and society's laws. This is because according to Haidt (2012, p. 12), the urge to respect hierarchical relationships is so deep that many languages encode it directly. Subversion is an act of resistance and disrespect towards society's hierarchical structures such as refusing to follow rules, and rejecting societal norms. According to Haidt (2012, p. 14), current triggers also include acts that subvert the institutions or values that provide stability.

The Sanctity/Degradation foundation is related to maintaining a sense of purity or sacredness and avoiding both moral, spiritual, and physical contamination. Sanctity is an act that upholds moral purity, and respecting sacred things, for example, following religious purity laws, avoiding uncontrollable sexual desires and appetite, avoiding heavy drug use, keeping sacred places clean. This is because the Sanctity foundation allows us to regard some things as “untouchable,” both in a bad way (because something is so dirty) and in a good way (because something is so sacred). Degradation is an act that corrupts sacred things (Haidt, 2012, p. 17), for example, defiling sacred places, having an uncontrollable appetite, heavy drug use, and sexual defiance. It triggers the act of sanctity since according to Haidt (2012, p. 17), if people had no sense of disgust, people would have no sense of the sacred.

The Liberty/Oppression foundation is valuing personal freedom triggered by the desire to prevent oppression done by more powerful individuals or groups. Liberty is an act promoting freedom and resistance against oppressions, for example, opposing slavery and supporting freedom of speech. Oppression is an act restricting freedom through domination and power abuse, for example, slavery and controlling personal lives. This triggers the act of liberty as according to Haidt (as cited in Dalziel, 2015, p. 5), the hatred of dominators motivates people to come together to oppose oppressors.

These six foundations are universal foundations. However, Haidt (2012, p. 3) categorized them differently by individuals, cultures, and political groups. In this analysis, the individual context based on moral judgement is used since the webtoon only shows the individual contexts within the theme. The individual context on moral judgement refers to what is perceived as good and evil done by individuals. This context creates an individual perspective and becomes elements that shape morality itself.

Furthermore, these six types of moral foundations based on an individual perspective also comprise the overall building blocks of someone’s morality, and they shape people’s judgements about certain individuals based on their virtues and vices. According to Graham, Brian, and Haidt (2009, p. 1030), these innate but modifiable psychological mechanisms provide parents and other socializing agents the moral “foundations” to build on as they teach children their local virtues, vices, and moral practices. This excerpt shows that Moral Foundation theory also implies that each of these six foundations allows people to be able to recognize things considered as right and wrong or good and evil within other people or groups, giving rise to specific virtues and vices as two opposite things in the concept. That is why, this theory can be

used to analyze how both the virtues and vices are represented in the webtoon *Deadly 7 Inside Me*.

1.6.2 Moral Dualism Theory

To support the analysis, Moral Dualism theory is applied. The meaning of Moral Dualism must be rooted from the meanings of moral and dualism. The meaning of moral is the intuitive sense about right and wrong guiding the overall human behavior and including multiple factors that shape people's judgements towards actions done by other individuals and societies. In addition, the word "dualism" refers to the idea that reality or existence is divided into two opposing components, usually seen distinctively, and often in conflict or balance with each other. Therefore, the meaning of Moral Dualism refers to the concept of the existence of both the good side and the evil side.

The term "Moral Dualism" itself, originally being put forward by Zoroaster in Zoroastrianism (BBC, 2009), is reinterpreted by Carl Jung as said by Domenici, "Liber Novus contributes to shed new light on Jung's unusual interpretation of Zarathustra" (Domenici, 2019, p. 22). Jung's interpretation implies that each person has both light and dark elements; and it can help to identify the reasons why the characters in the webtoon choose to do virtues or vices. His theory suggests that the psyche contains both the light or positive side and dark or negative side, and individuals must confront and integrate their darker impulses rather than just suppressing them. According to Jung's statement quoted by Stein (1995, p. 10), good and evil must be united, both derived from a single source and reconciled with that source. The dark side's existence, according Jung's statement quoted by Winther (2020, p. 4), must exist so the wholeness can work.

Furthermore, Moral dualism theory is also the belief of the existence of a conflict between the benevolent and the malevolent, which also implies that good and evil coexist as two opposing forces. This is aligned with Jung's idea (as cited in Winther, 2020, p. 1), that "there is no white without black, no warm without cold, no light without darkness; and if Evil is an illusion, Good is necessarily illusory too". Additionally, people can choose to do good or evil, since, according to Jung (as cited in Winther, 2020, p. 10), "the source of our evil-doing resides in our own free will." Jung also believed (as cited in Winther, 2020, p. 10) that "the unconscious complex can disturb and counteract the conscious will, sometimes to good or bad effect, and both evil and good can grow in the unconscious in the form of a complex." Besides, according to Jung (1981, p. 120), "people are conditioned not only by the past, but by the future, which is

sketched out in us long beforehand and gradually evolves out of us". Because of that, this theory can be used to analyze the reasons of the main characters' practice virtues and vices through their actions.

1.7 Organization of the Study

This study is divided into three main chapters. The first chapter entitled Introduction, the second chapter entitled The Representation of virtues and vices of the main characters in *Deadly 7 Inside Me*, and the third chapter entitled Conclusion.

The first chapter consists of seven subchapters. The first is the background of the study, which explains the definition of webtoon, the fantasy genre, the author of the webtoon *Deadly 7 Inside Me*, about the webtoon itself, the academic reason why *Deadly 7 Inside Me* is interesting, and also about the topic. The second and third subchapters are the statement of the problem and the purpose of the study, containing problems that are going to be analyzed through this study. The fourth, fifth, sixth subchapters are the significance of the study, the scope and limitation, and the theoretical framework explaining about the theories that are used in analyzing the problem. The seventh subchapter of Chapter 1 is organization of the study.

The second chapter entitled The Representation of Virtues and Vices of The Main Characters in *Deadly 7 Inside Me*, is the analysis of how the virtues and vices of the main characters are represented in the webtoon *Deadly 7 Inside Me*, and why the main characters exercise virtues and vices. This chapter has two subchapters providing the analysis of The Representation of Virtues and Vices and the analysis of The Reasons of the Main Characters' Acts of Virtues and Vices.

The third chapter is the conclusion describing the main points and the findings in the analysis of how the virtues and vices of the main characters are represented in the webtoon *Deadly 7 Inside Me*, and why the main characters exercise virtues and vices.