

BOOK REVIEW OF RUTH ANN NORDIN'S *THE COLD WIFE*

M. Yusron Thowaf, Christina Resnitriwati

**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
DIPONEGORO UNIVERSITY**

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The Cold Wife story has succeeded to provide interpersonal love stories between the major characters. *The Cold Wife* story is about a young woman named Carrie Allen who forced to marry with one of her twin brother friend's, Justin Monroe because her father business goes bankrupt. The conflict arises after Carrie's confession to her husband that their marriage is a mistake. Fortunately, her husband does not give up and keep trying to allure her heart by struggling to prove his love.

It is interesting for the writer to review *The Cold Wife* Novel because it raises the issue of marriage in the late nineteenth century where marriage was not only interpersonal relationship but also economical activity. Moreover, *The Cold Wife* giving the detail life of a young woman who live in the past time of the United States.

2. SUMMARY of THE COLD WIFE

The story of the novel happens in a late nineteenth century where the main character is Carrie Allen, an attractive young woman with dark brown hair in soften curl, brown eyes

and who is deal with the issue of marriage. The story begins when Carrie's father suddenly goes bankrupt. This situation makes Carrie's father primarily concern with finding a suitable man for his daughter. He insists to arrange a marriage so that Carrie still has comfortable life with a good prosperity from her future husband. Her father enforces her to marry a young rich man named Justin Monroe, who actually one of her twin brother's friends, Brad. Truthfully, Carrie gets incredibly upset with her father's decision because she does not has any interest in marrying Justin, also she does not want to marry a man just because he has much money and a big house with several maids and chefs.

In other case, Justin Monroe is a lively, good natured and a wealthy young man. He is a well-off bachelor who has the best house in the town. Actually, he has been falling in love with Carrie for a long time, so when there is a prospect of marrying her, he is very happy and immediately accepts the offering.

Right before the wedding day, Carrie attends the party held by Justin on his house, using a black dress that she used on her mother's funeral. Carrie has planned to explain everything to Justin before the party so that she can cancel the marriage. Unfortunately, she does not make it, but still she comes with the other plan, she will answer no when the pastor asks her at the altar on the wedding day.

On the wedding day, Carrie tries to escape. However, her plan does not going well because of her brother interferes. Moreover on the altar she unable to say no when the pastor asks her. Eventually, she become Justin wife. Even after she become his wife, she still tries to explain the truth that not only she marry him without love, but also she believes that Justin marry her just because her appearance. Justin is surprised after he hears everything but he choose to refuse and does not give up so easily. Justin tries to convince her that he has already fall in love with her since she was 14 years old but Carrie refuses to understand.

Feeling despair, he immediately comes to see his uncle for advice. Justin's uncle, Jonathan said that Justin shall not give up to allure Carrie heart by proving his love continually.

Soon after that, Justin come offering a deal to Carrie. Justin asks her to give him a month to prove his love to her. He says that he will never stop loving her until he die and he will always struggle to allure Carrie's cold heart. However, if after one month Carrie still unable to love him, she can leaves. Fortunately, Carrie approves the arrangement and begins her married life together with Justin. Day after day, she tries to prove that their marriage is a mistake, but in other hand Justin tries hard to get her love. Finally after one month, Justin succeed to get his wife love by turning her heart into a warm and caring wife.

3. REVIEW of THE COLD WIFE

3.1. The Strengths of The Cold Wife

The first strength of the novel *The Cold Wife* is plot of the story which can arouse emotion of the reader. It narrates detail story about a young woman life in the late nineteenth century. The content of story is quite good for giving the reader good explanation about the issue of the marriage. The story is about Carrie Allen, a young woman who forced to marry a wealthy man she does not love, her struggle to oppose her marriage, the development of the romantic relationship between the two major characters successfully draw the feeling of excitement from the readers.

The interesting idea of this novel is about arranged marriage. The story contains the issue of marriage where a young woman must be married a wealthy man with direct parental intervention. From *chicago Journal* Vol.34. No.3, 2009, Meena Khandelwal cites Stephanie Coontz's statement that parents free to enforce their children using violence and control their economical resources also the dowry for the daughters. Besides, young people from all classes mostly followed their parents'

marital agenda (2009:587). At the moment, manipulated marriage is a tradition where the woman does not have any personal choice.

The main problem that rises in this novel practically able to give enough explanation about the social conditions and the marriage traditions of the society at the times. In the novel, Carrie's father forces her to marry Justin Monroe, a wealthy bachelor in order to save his daughter from his bankruptcy. Khandelwal has cited Stephenie Coontz's statement on her journal titled *Arranging Love: Interrogating the Vantage Point in Cross – Border Feminism*, that since the eighteenth century, the tradition of marriage for political and economical advantage remained well into the society (2009:587).

At the moment, man is responsible for a woman financial security. George Bernard Shaw said in his book entitled *Getting Married*; that marriage has not only become a sexual issue, but also economic needs. A man only think about their sexual desires but in other case woman must consider their socioeconomic status, because for women who do not have any socioeconomic advantages, the wealth and status of the husband becomes the controller for the wife social status (2004:18).

In Carrie's situations, her father goes bankrupt so that he enforces his daughter to marry a reliable man, Justin Monroe."Carrie, I have to make sure your future is going to secure so I have arranged a marriage between you and Justin Monroe. He is wealthy and will provide a good future for you" (Nordin, 2009:2).

At the same time, Justin as a well off bachelor who has a possession of status symbol immediately accepts Carrie's father offering. However, in Justin case, a marriage for him is one way to prove his love for Carrie and a personal fulfillment because he does not care about Carrie's economical situations.

Justin supposed that most men in his economic class would be dismayed to marry a woman who came into the marriage without a cent to her name, but he

had secretly entertained romantic notions for Carrie since her family moved to town when he was fourteen(Nordin, 2009:19).

In Carrie case, marriage is not an interpersonal relationship between man and woman who fall in love with each other but just an economic activity. At the moment, lower class using marriage to get advantages in economic and social. In addition, it is common for unmarried young woman to search a wealthy bachelor and a man marry a woman because of she has possession of money.

Moreover, society using a marriage to regain status symbol and economic security. In addition, there is a strong belief in the society where the possession of money is the most important thing in marriage life.

The second strength of the novel *The Cold Wife* is the ability of the story to give the feeling of pleasurable to the reader like they are the part of the love journey. The compelling love story between Carrie and Justin also successfully stimulate the reader emotions. In addition, *The Cold Wife* is able to represent a great love story through the interaction between Carrie and Justin.

He couldn't stop his slight trembling but was determined not to let her discover it. There's no point in it. Though she protested, she took his hand and stood up. I need to find out something before I tell you what's on my mind. And you can find it out by a kiss? He nodded. At least, he hoped he could. Are you going to grant the annulment? she asked. I'll tell you after the kiss (Nordin, 2009:53).

Based on the quotation above, The readers naturally get to feel the love between Carrie and Justin. Moreover, the readers also get the illusion of what it feels like to be fall in love. The unpredictable, simple and romantic dialogue between Carrie and Justin make the readers have high demand for more great story line. As a result, the story successfully capture the readers attention and heart.

The third strength of *The Cold Wife* novel is the ability of the author to create a good fictional character such as Carrie who is extraordinary and memorable. Through the interaction between Carrie and another characters, Carrie is described as twenty four years old young woman who living with her twin brother and her widowed father in Virginia, United states. Carrie has curly dark brown hair with average height.

Carrie is a kind, independent and charming young woman. She has good reputation in the town and well known as the woman who likes to help other.

She volunteers in variety service places such as church and nursing house. In her spare time, Carrie likes to distribute meals like chocolate chips and pizza to those in need especially for orphanage child. She does care about the children and likes to play with them. Since the other adults were too busy to watch Ryan. Carrie volunteered to sit and play with him. Mrs.Tobias was relieved and went to talk to the other woman (Nordin, 2009:146).

Carrie is a fashionable woman who likes to wearing nice dresses since her father was rich before, she has many fancies and elegant dresses with several expensive jewelry. She used to live comfortably in huge house and easily to purchase everything she wants.

Carrie is also a young woman who does not like to be bounded by the rules. At the moment, the independence of woman is restricted. In Carrie case, she refuses to marry a man who has been decided by her father and she decides to work. However, the social rules that accepted by the society at nineteenth century is a woman shall not work.

Let me work, she insisted. I'll pull my own weight. I've had sufficient schooling to do a decent job. Surely, just because I'm a woman, it shouldn't mean I can't find suitable employment. I don't care if people find out what

happened. It certainly beat marriage to a man she hardly knew (Nordin, 2009:3).

However, she also has described as a stubborn young woman who likes to complain. She always refuses to understand the reason why all people say that Justin is a good husband for her. She decides to hate all the people who persuade her to marry him. Moreover, she does not care whether Justin is nice person or not because she already hates the idea of arranging marriage.

Carrie more looks like she is teenage woman who likes complain than a young adult woman. However, generally Carrie is likeable and realistic character who can draws the reader mood by stimulate their emotions. In addition, Carrie character successfully captures the reader affection.

3.2. The Weakness of The Cold Wife

The first weakness of *The Cold Wife* novel is the unsatisfying ending where the main character, Carrie gets poor again because of her husband bankruptcy. Usually the most significant aspect of romance novel is the completely happy ending story which fulfils the reader desire. However, even though Carrie finally falls in love with Justin, she experiences bankruptcy twice. It makes the story not completely perfect and satisfying for mostly readers.

“Just wait until my father and Brad hear about this” she said between fits of giggles, “ they made me marry you because my father went bankrupt and you were rich and now that i decided to stay married to you, you went bankrupt”

The second weakness of the novel *The Cold Wife* is there are several storylines that not fully overtakes the necessity of the story for example, the conflict that raises after Carrie and her adopted children, Ryan is kidnapped by Harrison.

This conflict is not fully evoke the reader attention. Importantly, not giving enough the element of suspense and adrenaline rush to the reader which make the

climax of this part feel boring. The author has failed to create rousing events which make the readers feel tense.

Based on the quotation above, In the middle of their escape, the abductors is fight to each other instead of make their plan going succeed and then Harrison junior chase his father who ran off and give Carrie a chance to escape so easily. The abductors busy with their own business even have forgotten their original purpose to kidnap Carrie and Ryan. The readers unable to get the feeling of fear, terror and importance of this event even the readers feel that this event is ridiculous. Moreover, this conflict feels really plain without any single violence and there is no life being threatened. The climax of this event is really easy to predicted.

4. CONCLUSION

The novel *Cold Wife* has succeeded to provide the interpersonal love stories between a young woman name Carrie Allen, who forced to marry with a wealthy man named Justin Monroe. The *Cold Wife* novel is interesting story which has both strength and weakness. The strength of this novel is plot of the story which rises the issue of marriage. The main idea of this novel is manipulated marriage in historical time where marriage is not only personal fulfillment but also economical activity. The second strength of the novel *The Cold Wife* is the ability of the story to give the feeling of pleasurable to the reader like they are the part of the love journey. The third strength of *The Cold Wife* novel is the ability of the author to create a good fictional character such as Carrie who is extraordinary and memorable. The last is the moral value that the writer can get from reading this book that is love cannot be bought by money. The weakness of this novel is the unsatisfying ending where it makes the story not completely perfect and satisfying for

mostly readers. The second weakness of *The Cold Wife* novel is there are several story line that not fully overtakes the necessity of the story. In the end of the story the writer can summarize that the novel *The Cold Wife* is about the detail story of a young woman in late nineteenth century who deals with the issue of marriage where at the time manipulated marriage is quite common in the society.

REFERENCES

- Eagleton, T. (1996). *Literary Theory an Introduction*. Minneapolis: Blackwell Publisher Ltd.
- Eagleton, T. (2005). *The English Novel an Introduction*. Minneapolis: Blackwell Publisher Ltd.
- Khandelwal, M. (2009). Arraging Love: Interrogating The Vantage Point in Cross-Border Feminism. *Chicago Journals* , 587.
- Nordin, R. A. (2009). *The Cold Wife*. Springfield: Ruth Ann Nordin's Books.
- Shaw, G. B. (2004). *Getting Married*. Indiana: Eve Sobol.