

Book Review of *Driving My Father* Written by Susan Wicks

Vininda Putri A, Eta Farmacelia Nurulhady

Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Ilmu Budaya, Universitas Diponegoro Semarang

1. Introduction

Love is an essential thing in human life. Everybody needs to love and be loved. However, people have a different way of interpreting and have an own definition about love. Most people assume that when they love someone, the loving one also must repay what they have been given to them. Some others believe when they love someone, the loving one does not have to return their favor to them. They consider that it is not what they gain, but what they give in a relationship. This kind of love is called unconditional love.

The reason why this paper reviews Susan Wicks' *Driving My Father* because it has a very touching story and many moral values when they read this. This memoir was written by Susan Wicks' herself based on her true story and published in 1995. This paper will review about the strength and weakness in Susan Wicks' *Driving My Father*.

2. Summary of the Book

Susan was shocked when her father called and told her that her mother passed away. She could not imagine how her father could survive without her mother in his side. He felt that he lost half of his soul.

Susan realized that her father needed more treatment. She decided to take Eric in a nursing home called Green house. At the first, Eric refused it because he knew that treatment spent much money. Susan persuaded him if it was not a big thing and finally he agreed. After they came to that nursing home, she realized if Eric tried to be happy even his heart was not. Susan kept believing her father would enjoy this place and began to forget about his sadness.

At the end of the story, it was not clearly described the continuity of the story, but from the narrative that Susan told it seemed that Eric's health was getting better. Susan and her father were getting used to live without her mother's presence and their new lives went well and it was a happy ending.

3. Review of Susan Wicks *Driving My Father*

Susan Wicks' *Driving My Father* clearly describes about unconditional love between parents and their daughter. This memoir has a number of strengths and weaknesses. The review will be divided into four strengths and three weaknesses.

3.1 The Strengths of the Memoir

Strength in this memoir lies on four things which are theme, moral value, point of view and the end of the story.

3.1.1 Theme

Family is the main theme of this memoir. Family values in this memoir are not shown with words, but are reflected in the actions that Susan does to her father.

One day I shall come and bath him. I shall fill the bath with warm water and lean over it to test it with my elbow, as if it were for a baby. I shall help him undress. (Wicks, 1995: 47)

From the quotation above people can see family value through what Susan has done to her father. Cooking her father meal, taking him to the bath and tidying his bedroom are examples of what children are supposed to do for their parents. Actually, there are just little things and nothing special about that. However, Susan's sincerity in caring for his father makes readers realize that affection and attention from children are the most things that parents are needed especially when they are in an old age.

3.1.2 Moral Value of the Story

Moral values in this memoir become a reason why this memoir could be a reflection to readers. There are many moral values that people can get after reading this memoir. One of them is how strong the main character in maintaining her problems.

My mother was always slicing beans. That is how I remember our summers. Sitting on a child's wooden in the back garden, or on the caravan step with her little knife, the paper-thin blade stained almost black, the chipped bone handle streaking. (Wicks, 1995:5)

From the quotation above people can see how strong of main character in the way Susan's struggle to rise and shine her father after her mother's death. She also tries to only remember beautiful thing about what happen in the past between her mother and herself. It indicates that she has been genuine to let her mother go in a better place.

3.1.3 Point of View

This memoir uses first person 'I' as point of view to tell readers how this story occurs. As this story based on a true story, 'I' that the author means is herself, Susan Wicks. Readers may feel interested in the story because it raises the same theme with their daily life. On the other hand, Susan also has much information and understands the story so that she can describe the setting or memory that she experiences in the past with very detail.

3.1.4 The End of the Story

The end of the story holds the important things to decide whether the story is interesting or not. A happy ending that occurs in this memoir makes readers feel amused and give motivation that how heavy their load or burden which happen to them, if they can manage it well it will end up with a good thing.

The day of my mother dies the honeysuckle on the fence is bristling with massed trumpets. The glare of the sun on the pages of my book is almost unsustainable. I only have to hear my father's voice on the telephone to know I have always dreamed exactly like this. (Wicks, 1995:137)

From the quotation above readers can see at the end of the story Susan feels happy after all things that she has been through her family life. Everything goes right and her father can survive from his loss and disease.

3.2 The Weakness of the Memoir

Weakness in this memoir lies on three things which are complicated plot, unnecessary sub-plot and unexplained character.

3.2.1 Unnecessary Sub-Plot

When readers read this memoir titled *Driving My Father*, they would immediately think that the story in this memoir focuses on the struggle of a child taking care of his father. Unfortunately, there are some sub-plot of the story that is told excessively and does not relate from the main story. This thing can be one of the weaknesses of this memoir.

Complicated Plot

Complicated plot is another weakness in the memoir *Driving My Father*.

Events in this memoir are told randomly.

I dream of the perfect, the moment of recognition you have only in dreams. I meet someone and i look at them, and they look back at me. And they know. Sometimes i think i would do anything, drive anywhere, to preserve that simple know-ledge. (Wicks, 1995:72)

My parents would joke sometimes about death. Every few years my father would change his car for new one 'to see me out'. (Wicks, 1995:72)

From the quotation above people can see the complicated plot in the paragraph above. In the first paragraph Susan tells about her perfect dream that she met someone and that someone know her. Then she concludes that it is a sign if this is all just a matter of time and in the end everything will be alright. However, in the next paragraph suddenly she tells about her parents who joke about death. This is certainly making readers difficult in interpreting what the story means.

3.2.3 Unexplained Minor Characters

Instead of giving a direct explanation or giving little information about who and what characters' role in that memoir, this memoir only mentions the name of it. It can be done with the purpose to make readers curious and read the memoir continuously, but it makes readers confuse when read it and will not enjoy it.

When John and I get to my parents' house, my mother's body has already been taken away. Julia and Anne are still here, waiting for us to come. The first thing they see as they drive up to the front door is the bunch of pinks they brought, in a vase on the front window-sill. It is my mother's last gift. (Wicks, 1995:3)

Based on the quotation above, unexplained character can be seen from the first page. On this page when Susan's mother was dead, she comes to her parents' house with a man named John. Unfortunately, this memoir does not give a detail about who is john either oral or written.

4. Conclusion

From the review above, it can be concluded that memoir *Driving My Father* by Susan Wicks is an unconditional love story between parents and daughter which is told beautifully. Unconditional love in this memoir is not shown clearly, but it is reflected by the way her parents show their affection to her and her struggle to live up her father's spirit to live again and fight for his disease.

REFERENCES

Annenberg Learner. (2014). Retrieved June 21, 2015, from Types of Point of View: <http://www.learner.org/>

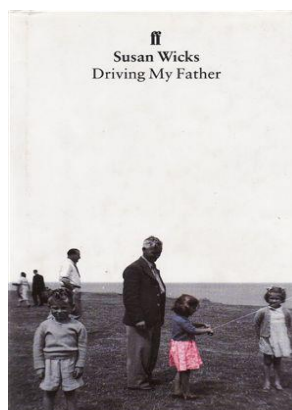
Bender, R. G. (1978). *American English Retic*. New York: The Dryden Press.

Chi-Fen Emily Chen, P. (2009). *Children's Literature*. Retrieved June 21, 2015, from The Elements of Literature: http://www2.nkfust.edu.tw/~emchen/CLit/study_elements.htm

Exploring Point of View. (2014). Retrieved June 21, 2015, from Types of Point of View: <http://www.learner.org/interactives/literature/read/pov2.html>

Appendix 1

COVER



Appendix 2

Product Details

Author : Wicks, Susan

Original Title : A Daughter's Story Driving My Father

Country : United States of America

Language : English

Genre : Fiction

Publisher : Faber & Faber

Publication Date : Great Britain 1995

Pages : 137

ISBN : 0-465-01699-5

Copyright © 1995 by Susan Wicks