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Date

Ice Man: Lost in the Cold

The story of “Ice Man” by Haruki Murakami emotionally illustrates the fundamental moment in the life of the young woman who also plays the role of a narrator. Being in the ski resort, she notices the Ice Man – a strange character who sits in the hall’s corner and reads the book. Despite the internal uncertainty, she comes closer to know him and the Ice Man’s response is mutual. In fact, their uncommon friendships results into the deep love, since the Ice Man captivates the girl by own extraordinary nature, ability to read the past and non-trivial calm character. They both decide to get married, although all family members of a narrator refuse to approve such long-term relationships. They still become a wife and a husband, but over the time their relationships get complicated. Having tired of a routine life, she offers to travel to the South Pole, but in the end of the story her intention to find the happiness turns into a tragic moment full of loving impressions and sacrifices. By telling this magic and fantasy story, Murakami successfully reveals the essence of the difficult love-based destiny of an individual by involving important and story-driving contextual elements such as social conflicts and appropriate setting.

The ideas of a sincere love and related sacrifices demonstrated in the story critically reflect on the complexity of choices made in terms of the emotional attachment. For instance, the narrator underlines that “my mother and my sister were strongly opposed to me marrying the Ice Man” (Murakami 4). Nevertheless, the power of her first love outweighs the rationalism and warnings of the people with experience. Murakami does not conceal the issue of choice-by-love complexity, and he masterfully puts the significant elements of human



conflicts and social setting to make the fantastic story as realistic as possible. As a result, the risky decision to tie a personal life with the Ice Man breeds the inevitable consequences for her.

Evidently, the conflicting background is arranged by Murakami to show whether the protagonist succeeds or fails in the end (Lostracco 23). The climax emerges when the narrator proposes to travel to the South Pole, but “before the words 'South Pole' came out of my mouth, I had this feeling that something had changed in him” (Murakami 7). It stems from two conflicts which formally expand the story to the next level. The secondary external conflict is associated with a fact that their family was incomplete, despite the physical, emotional and spiritual attachment of the girl and the Ice Man. They could not have a child for some unknown reason, while life became routine and too ordinary. She was lacking of friends, and family members were still in the isolation from her. In other words, the distance from external social values leads to the emergence of primary internal conflict. Indeed, the sense of a routine made her really exhausted, and the inner conflicts and confusions over own choice prevail in her thinking: “It wasn't the boredom that got to me. The thing I couldn't bear was the repetition” (Murakami 6). In fact, these conflicts in the complex caused the formulation of the story turning point, i.e. climax that changed everything.

The main events take place in the recent Tokyo, while the culminating acts of the story are described in the snowy environment of the South Pole. Since the author is Japanese by origins, it is unsurprisingly he puts the central ideas of social relationships in the capital of Japan. Tokyo is realistically depicted as the epicenter of civilization and living activities, where people build their careers and promote their family values. Indeed, this atmosphere of stability stumbles over the image of the Ice Man who is introduced as the creature from other reality. Perhaps, the birth of a child could have changed the life and attitude of a girl, but she had to struggle with what she had at the moment. A confrontation with the setting of the



prosperous Tokyo leads to the transition of the setting towards the native environment of the Iceman – in this sense, he comes back to the stability and calmness, while she has to sacrifice herself to adapt to the unknown setting to be close to the loving man: “Direction vanished, time vanished, even my awareness of my own existence vanished” (Murakami 9).

In this sense, Murakami succeeds in reflecting the social problem of the young Asian girls. According to the research findings, a lot of urban young women in Japan tend to go beyond the established norms of collectivism which impacts their sense of individualism (Okano 14). Tokyo’s lifestyle culturally implies some progress at the individual level, while Japanese women have to feel themselves relevant in terms of the socialization. Eventually, the socialization within the South Pole was impossible; however, the distancing from the Japanese lifestyle and changing of the social aura led to the fundamental achievement – the birth of the Ice Child. With a regard to the story, it means that social environment and irrational ambitions may affect the people’s motivation to sacrifice their body and soul for the purpose of achieving the desired life.



Works Cited

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