



BOOK REVIEW OF THE RING
WRITTEN BY KOJI SUZUKI

FINAL PROJECT

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement
For S-1 Degree in Literature
In English Department, Faculty of Humanities
Diponegoro University

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SEMARANG

2014

PRONOUNCEMENT

The writer states truthfully that this project is compiled by his without taking the result from other research in any university, in S-1, S-2, and S-3 degree and in diploma. In addition, the writer ascertains that he does not take the material from other publications or someone's work except for the references mentioned in bibliography.

Semarang, 4 December 2013

Gaetano Ardhanto

MOTTO AND DEDICATION

First, you must decide. Then you must follow through. That's the only way you can get anything accomplished. (Lacus Clyne)

This final project dedicated to my beloved family

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Praise is to God Almighty, who has given strength and true spirit so this final project on “Book review of The Ring written by Koji Suzuki” came to a completion. On this occasion, the writer would like to thank all those people who have contributed to the completion of this research report.

The deepest gratitude and appreciation is extended to Dr. Suharno, M.Ed. – the writer’s advisor- who has given his continuous guidance, helpful correction, moral support, advice and suggestion. The writer’s deepest thank also goes to the following:

1. Dr. Agus Maladi Irianto, M.A., the Dean of Faculty of Humanities, Diponegoro University, Semarang.
2. Sukarni Suryaningsih, S.S, M.Hum., the Head of English Department and the writer’s academic advisor in Faculty of Humanities, Diponegoro University, Semarang.
3. Drs. Siswo Harsono, M.Hum., the Head of Literature Section, Faculty of Humanities, Diponegoro University, Semarang.
4. All lecturers at Faculty of Humanities, especially in the English Department, all staff in Academic Section, Administration staff, and the Librarian in this faculty.
5. The writer’s parents and brother who always give love, pray, support, spirit, and patience every day, every time, and everywhere.
6. His big family who always motivated him to get his dream come true, especially his grandmother who always give advice for his life.
7. Special thanks to all of his friends in class A, B, and C and literature class of Regular I program 2009 who cannot be mentioned here one by one, thanks for our togetherness.
8. Special thanks to Selia Meita Wulan and Taofiq for their help.
9. Special thanks to his beloved friend for her support and love.

The writer realizes that this project is still far from perfect. He, therefore, will be glad to accept any constructive criticism and recommendation to make this final project better.

Finally, the writer expects that this final project will be useful to the reader for learning about the meaning of life and friendship.

Semarang, 4 December 2013

Gaetano Ardhanto

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ABSTRAK

Novel *Ring* yang ditulis oleh Koji Suzuki ini merupakan novel pertama dari rangkaian trilogi novel selain *Spiral* dan *Loop*. Pada novel ini, penulis menyajikan cerita tentang usaha seorang reporter yang bernama Kazuyuki Asakawa dalam mengungkap misteri kematian empat orang anak muda. Novel yang dimulai dengan suasana misterius kematian seorang gadis, Tomoko Oishi, kemudian berlanjut dengan usaha Kazuyuki Asakawa untuk mengungkap apa yang sebenarnya mengakibatkan Tomoko Oishi dan ketiga anak muda lainnya tewas. Sampai akhirnya ia menemukan bahwa penyebab kematian mereka dikarenakan sebuah kaset video. Sesuai dengan judulnya *Ring*, maka cerita dalam novel ini diibaratkan seperti sebuah ring atau lingkaran tak berujung dikarenakan kaset video yang ditemukan oleh Kazuyuki Asakawa di penginapan Hakone Pacific, mengandung kutukan arwah Sadako Yamamura yang terus meminta orang-orang untuk menontonnya. Kaset video tersebut didominasi oleh adegan-adegan yang dilihat oleh Sadako Yamamura, seorang gadis berkekuatan supranatural yang tewas karena dibunuh. Melalui novel ini kita dapat belajar banyak hal mengenai perjuangan hidup Kazuyuki Asakawa untuk mencapai suatu keberhasilan. Kegigihan, kesabaran, keberanian, serta persahabatan dalam novel ini patut dicontoh oleh generasi muda saat ini untuk menemukan jati diri dan membentuk pribadi yang tangguh dan tidak mudah menyerah.

I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

Novel is a form of literary work. Novel is a fiction or non-fiction story in writing that has the intrinsic and extrinsic elements. A novel usually tells about a story of human life in interacting with the environment and others.

Ring is the first novel from a successful thriller trilogy. The second novel is *Spiral* and the third novel is *Loop*. *Ring* tells about an urban legend and modernism that are combined in a package of thriller in Japan style. This novel was already filmed in Japan and in America making a trend of new supernatural movie around the world.

The novel written by Koji Suzuki presents the story with interesting language style. The novel also contains sharp intrigues and a complex feeling problem of Kazuyuki Asakawa, the main character. This novel is dominated by videotape that was obtained by Kazuyuki Asakawa from his searching about four human who were killed mysteriously, includes his nephew, Tomoko Oishi.

In this novel the author tried to give moral values to the reader, not giving up when facing a difficult problem. It also taught us to think calmly and look at the problem from the other side when we want to get a solution. It also tells about the friendship which helps the main character to solve the mysterious case.

1.2 Purposes of The Writing

The purposes of this study are:

2.1 to give a summary of *Ring* by Koji Suzuki

2.2 to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of *Ring* by Koji Suzuki

1.3 Author's Biography

Koji Suzuki is a Japanese author and essayist. He is widely known in English through the cinemas made in English and the English actors, which are adopted from his several books. Koji Suzuki was born in Hamamatsu, Japan, 13 May 1957. He is a Japanese writer and he currently lives in Tokyo. Suzuki is the author of "Ring cycle", which has been adapted into a *manga* or comic series. He wrote several books on the topic of fatherhood.

His first novel, *Paradise* (1990), is a "genetic" romance in which two star-crossed prehistoric lovers are separated by the Bering Strait. The novel tells about the same gent lovers but in different countries because their reincarnations, so it is called as genetic romance. After that, Suzuki created *Ring* (1991), a supernatural detective drama, that he first found true success. It posits a haunted scrap of film that will strike its viewer dead unless it is shown to another, hence passing on the curse. It was adapted as the highly successful horror movie *Ring* (1998). The background of the story only gradually encountered in the later linked works *Spiral* (1995) and *Birthday* (1999), the curse is revealed as a form of psychic virus, recalling the troubled life and violent death of a murdered Telepath, now

imparted with pandemic potential through its migration to video, and hence to television.

Edge (2008) tells about replaying familiar scenarios from ghost stories by the rationalism of pseudo-scientific. The novel begins with simple disappearances, later revealed as harbingers of disaster and apocalypse, inspired in equal parts by Mayan prophecy, the works of Erich von Däniken and the physicist Richard Feynman (1918-1988). As one might expect from an author with such an interest in the replication and effect of texts, Suzuki is also famous for experiments in giving moral values to the reader; his novel *Drop* (2009) was literally printed on toilet paper, with estimated sales of 200,000, while another story, *Crossroad* (2006), was delivered free to applicants' mobile phones as a promotional campaign for the Nestlé "Crispy" candy bar.

His hobbies include traveling and motorcycling (hobbies found on the back of *The Ring*, 2002, Koji Suzuki). He is currently on the selection committee for the Japan Fantasy Novel Award. He was also the translator of Simon Brett's *How to Be a Little Sod* (1991), released in Japanese as *A Bad Child's Diary: My Dangerous First Year* (2000).

II

SUMMARY OF THE NOVEL

After four teenagers mysteriously died simultaneously in Tokyo, Kazuyuki Asakawa, a reporter and one of deceased's uncle, decided to launch his own personal investigation. His search led him to "Hakone Pacific Land", a holiday resort where the youths were last seen together exactly one week before their death. Over there, he found a mysterious unmarked videotape. Watching the tape, he witnessed a strange sequence of both abstract and realistic footage, including an image of an injured man that ended with a warning revealing the viewer had a week to live. Giving a single meant of avoiding death, the tape's explanation ended suddenly and it had been overwritten by an advertisement. The tape had a horrible mental effect on Asakawa, and he didn't doubt for a second that its warning was true.

Returning to Tokyo with no idea how to avert his fate, Asakawa enlisted the help of his curious friend Ryuji Takayama, an apparent psychopath. As soon as Asakawa explained the story, Takayama believed him and insisted on seeing the tape. Asakawa showed it to him and although Takayama remained cool and nonchalant, he agreed there was a powerful aura around it and asked Asakawa to make him a copy to study at home, which Asakawa did.

Racing against the deadline, both men began investigating the tape. By following the imagery from the tape, Asakawa deduced that the rapid cutting of image seen during certain sequences showed the recording device was "blinking." The duo then connected this, as well as the significance of certain tape images, and learning of Sadako Yamamura, a deceased young woman and self-proclaimed psychic capable of technopathic feats (such as projecting mental images onto televisions). Believing Sadako was connected to the tape, Asakawa also soon learned that, after carelessly leaving the tape at his home, his wife and infant daughter viewed the tape and now had seven days to live.

Learning an isolated sanatorium Sadako frequented when her father contracted tuberculosis, Asakawa arranged a meeting with Nagao Jotaro, a doctor at the now-closed hospital. Recognizing him as the injured man from the tape sequences, Ryuji aggressively pressed Dr. Jotaro for answers; the doctor, buckling under the pressure, explained he was infatuated with Sadako, and raped her in the woods near the hospital. Infecting her with smallpox he unknowingly contracted, Jotaro was injured during a struggle (during which he learned Sadako was intersexed), resulting in the doctor throwing Sadako into a nearby well before throwing with rocks that crushing her body.

Believing Sadako's rage and psychic powers resulted in the imaged projected onto the tape, Asakawa and Ryuji headed for the well where she was killed. Figuring the well was located beneath the lodge where the tape was located, the duo located the well and Asakawa lowers himself inside, finding Sadako's remains. Recovering and giving her remains a burial, Asakawa passed

his deadline, confirming his curse had ended. When Ryuji then suddenly died of a heart attack, however, the true nature of the tapes was revealed; Sadako's rage caused her psychic powers to combine with her smallpox virus, creating a paranormal phenomenon. Demanding the viewer replicated the tape, the curse was propagated like a virus through tape copies, sparing anyone who copied it; since Asakawa duplicated the tape at Ryuji's request, he had to make his wife and daughter do the same lest they died.

III

REVIEW OF THE NOVEL

3.1 Strengths of The Novel

3.1.1 Theme

Theme is an idea or main issue of novel. An interesting theme will attract the readers to read the novel, because the more interesting the theme, the more readers will be attracted. Additionally, according to Abrams, “Theme is a salient abstract idea that emerges from a literary work’s treatment of its subject matter; or a topic recurring in a number of literary works.” (1999: 258) In this novel, the reader can conclude that the theme of this novel is about the life lesson.

From the character of Kazuyuki Asakawa, the author gives the lesson to the reader about how to face the struggle of life for the future. In this novel, the reader gets the lesson from the story of Asakawa where he attempted to solve the problems facing though according to his chances of success is very small. He found difficulty in answering the problem, but with the help of his friends he managed to get it even though it was contrary to his idealism. Without the help of his friends he probably would not able to resolve the problem on its own and will give up. This novel tells the reader about the positive nature of relying on others in times of trouble is not always a bad thing. In addition, this novel is also gives a meaning of a friendship between Asakawa and Ryuji.

3.1.2 Plot

Plot provides the sequel actions of the characters which form an issue of the story that occurs during the scenes and the climax of the story that ends the closing. According to Abrams, “Plot is constituted by its events and actions, as these are rendered and ordered toward achieving particular artistic and emotional effects.” (1999: 224) In this novel, the reader can see that the author of this novel uses a combination of two storylines in this novel: flash back (regressive) and progressive. It makes this novel story line not monotonous and does not make the readers feel bored.

This novel is started by the situation after the death of the main character’s nephew. Then the main character, Asakawa, tries to find similar cases of death with his nephew until he reaches the causes of the deaths. In his research, he gets the infected curse that is similar to that experienced by his nephew and to release “the curse”, Asakawa traced the cause of early curse. Here, the readers will be given the information about the background of that “curse” and why his nephew can get “the curse”.

3.1.3 Setting

According to Taylor, “A setting can be a specific place. The setting may also be an unspecified region.” (1981: 69) When reading this novel the reader feels that the author presents the reader with the imagination of every setting of place clearly in this novel. Information about the setting in every scene in this novel is explained in detail. By the simple sentences, the author explains every

part of the settings that build the imagination of the reader. This novel makes the reader enjoy in following the story with the imagination of every setting in the reader mind. The author also exposes the condition of geography in some places in this novel at that time. The author describes Tomoko Oishi's home in some sentences below.

Beberapa ratus meter di dekatnya, di kawasan hunian, sebuah rumah baru bertingkat dua berdiri tepat di tengah petak-petak kosong yang tersedia. Pintu depannya terbuka langsung ke jalan raya, yang membentang dari utara ke selatan, dan di sampingnya terdapat sebuah garasi yang bisa memuat satu mobil. Rumah itu tidak istimewa, seperti yang biasa ditemukan di kawasan hunian baru mana pun, hanya tak ada rumah lain di belakang ataupun di sampingnya. (Koji Suzuki, 2005:12)

3.1.4 Character

The characters in a novel will raise the emotional desire of the readers and make the story more dramatic. Characters determine the plot and the story of a novel, because every character will usually leave a strong impression that builds the flow of a story. It is supported by Abrams in his book as in following.

“Characters are the persons represented in a dramatic or narrative work, who are interpreted by the reader as being endowed with particular moral, intellectual, and emotional qualities by inferences from what the persons say and their distinctive ways of saying it-the dialogue”
(Abrams, 1999: 32).

In this novel, the author draws the imagination of the reader about every character in this novel so clearly. It makes the reader understand and imagine those characters easily. The author uses the detailed sentences how those characters are like. The author describes the character of Sadako in some sentences below.

Yoshino bertanya-tanya mengapa dia mengatakannya dengan cara seperti itu—mengapa dia mengatakan “wajah cantik” dan bukan “gadis cantik”. Sudah pasti raut wajah Sadako benar-benar cantik. Tetapi, dia tidak memiliki garis kewanitaan yang wajar. Saat melihat foto seluruh badannya, Yoshino terpaksa mengakui bahwa pinggang dan pergelangan kakinya yang ramping sangat feminin. (Koji Suzuki, 2005:286)

3.1.5 Moral Value

The author of this novel tries to give moral value to the reader that a success and happiness will come to us if we have spirit and desire to make effort for ourselves in the future and do not be hopeless if we meet obstacles in our effort. The author also gives the meaning of a true friendship that will not be forgotten, it is represented on the scene shortly after the death of Ryuji:

Jadi, yang dia katakan hanya, “Ryuji sahabatku juga.” Kata-kata itu pasti sudah membuat Mai senang. Wajahnya yang ayu merekah dalam ekspresi yang mungkin bisa berarti senyum atau tangis lagi, dan wanita itu membungkuk makin dalam. Asakawa menutup pintu dan bergegas menuruni tangga. Saat tiba di jalanan dan meninggalkan apartemen Ryuji, dia tiba-tiba dikuasai bayangan tentang temannya yang menyerahkan segalanya dalam permainan berbahaya ini, bahkan mengorbankan nyawa. Asakawa tidak mau repot-repot menghapus air matanya. (Koji Suzuki, 2005:421)

3.1.6 Other Strengths

Besides the aspect of literary above, this novel also has other strengths that make the reader feels the turbulent feelings and emotions experienced by the characters through the author's writing style in this novel. It shows when the main character's feeling to his daughter and his wife, for example:

Untuk pertama kali dalam kehidupan pernikahannya, Asakawa merasakan keinginan untuk memukul istrinya. "Kau ... bodoh!" Tetapi, entah bagaimana dia berhasil menahan dorongan itu dan hanya berdiri di sana dengan tangan terkepal. Tenang dan pikirkan ini. Ini salahmu sendiri. Seharusnya, kau tidak meninggalkan kaset itu di tempat yang bisa dia lihat.

(Koji Suzuki, 2005:216)

Asakawa tidak sanggup menjawab. Dia hanya menggeleng. Lalu, tiba-tiba merasa diliputi perasaan sayang pada orang-orang yang sekarang bernasib sama dengannya. (Koji Suzuki, 2005:218)

From some of the sentences above, the author can describe the feeling the main character clearly. On the one hand, Asakawa want to scold wife's action, but on the other hand Asakawa regrets because of he has involved his family he loves. This leads to conflict inside Asakawa, and as if the reader can feel Asakawa's experience.

The author can also make the reader feels the fear of death experienced by some of the characters in the novel, one of them being experienced by the main character's nephew. Through Tomoko's death, the author manages to make a thrilling prologue novel and also arouses the curiosity of the readers about the rest of the story.

3.2 Weaknesses of the Novel

In general, this novel not only has strengths but also has weaknesses. One of them is the inappropriate words separation. For example:

*Tetapi, ada sesuatu yang berbahaya da-
lam sorot matanya. Mata binatang liar yang menga-
mati mangsanya. (Koji Suzuki, 2005:127)
Pria itu hanya bertemu Tomoko
beberapa kali, dan mungkin tidak pernah mengobrol
lama dengan gadis itu. Sudah pasti dia tidak me-
nyimpan kenangan tentang almarhumah. (Koji Suzuki, 2005:127)*

The word “da-lam” and “menga-mati” has inappropriate separation. This brings into the distasteful impression it read by the readers. Besides, there is the word “almarhumah”, for those readers who don’t know the meaning of those words will be difficult to understand it.

In addition, there are several fragments of the story that are not exposed and it makes the reader get a big question mark and feels confused about some part of the story. For example, when a scene where Asakawa know Ryuji for the first time during periods of high school. At that time the morning at school, there is a scene Ryuji asks Asakawa to call his residence and pretend to look for him. That the readers are not given the information to whether Asakawa calling to Ryuji’s residence, if Asakawa uses a mobile phone then it is not accordance with the development of the technology at the time on the scene.

IV CONCLUSION

Ring novel is the first novel from a successful thriller trilogy. The second novel is *Spiral* and the third novel is *Loop*. *Ring* novel tells about an urban legend and modernism that are combined in a package of thriller in Japan style. This novel was already filmed in Japan and America making a trend of new supernatural in all of world.

The novel written by Koji Suzuki presents the story with interesting language style. The novel also contains sharp intrigues and a complex feeling problem of Kazuyuki Asakawa. This novel is dominated with videotape that was obtained by Kazuyuki Asakawa from his searching about four human who were killed mysteriously, includes his nephew, Tomoko Oishi.

This novel was written in simple sentences that are easy to understand but has a deep meaning and message for the reader. In addition, this novel also has strength in a theme about the life lesson, flashback and progressive plot, and a detail explanation of settings and character. Besides the aspect of literary, this novel also has other strengths that make the reader feel the turbulent feelings and emotions experienced by the characters through the author's writing style in this novel.

But everything that has strengths also has weakness. The weakness of this novel is about the inappropriate words separation and some fragments of the story that is not exposed.

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