

BOOK REVIEW OF “*THE TIME KEEPER*”

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Abstract

The Time Keeper the fourth novel of Mitch Albom. This novel tells about a boy who grow up and become clever in mathematics. He live in the past before human knows about mathematics or anything about calculating. The purpose of this final project is for give the summary and explain about the strengths and weaknesses of the novel. The writer use to methods, which is library and internet method to get relevance data. The result of this thesis shows that there was two strengths and one weakness of this novel. First strength of the novel is in theme. Theme of this novel is about the meaning of time. Second strength of the novel is in setting of place. This novel has two setting of place that is Babylonia in Nimrod King's era and New York City in the present. While the weakness of this novel is in characterization. The author explain the character just in physical image and visualizations. The author does not explain the background of life or the psychology side of the character.

Keywords: Theme, setting of place, characterization, The Time Keeper, Mitch Albom.

Abstrak

The Time Keeper adalah novel keempat dari Mitch Albom. Novel ini menceritakan seorang anak laki-laki yang tumbuh dewasa menjadi seorang yang pintar menghitung di masa lampau jauh sebelum ilmu perhitungan matematika ditemukan. Tujuan penulisan projek akhir ini adalah untuk memberikan ringkasan cerita dan untuk menjelaskan kelebihan dan kelemahan yang ada di dalam novel ini dengan cara menganalisis unsur intrinsiknya. Untuk mendapatkan data yang relevan, penulis menggunakan dua metode, yaitu kepustakaan dan internet. Hasil dari penulisan projek akhir ini menunjukkan bahwa terdapat beberapa kelebihan dan kekurangan dari novel ini. Kelebihan dari novel ini adalah tema yaitu makna waktu, karakter utama yang bernama Dor mendapat kutukan dari Tuhan karena dia telah berani menentang Tuhan. Dor mendapat kutukan sekaligus kelebihan untuk mengontrol jalannya waktu di dunia, tetapi ia harus menyelesaikan sebuah misi untuk mempertemukan dua orang tak dikenal di masa sekarang (masa depan bagi Dor) untuk menunjukkan tentang makna waktu yang sebenarnya. Kelebihan kedua dari novel ini adalah setting of place yang di ambil di dua tempat, yaitu di Babylonia pada masa kerajaan Nimrod dan New York pada masa sekarang. Sedangkan kelemahannya adalah karakterisasi. Penulis menggambarkan semua karakter dalam novel dalam bentuk gambaran fisik. Penulis sangat sedikit menjelaskan bagaimana latar belakang kehidupan dan keadaan psikologis dari karakter dalam novel.

Kata kunci : Tema, seting tempat, penggambaran tokoh, The Time Keeper, Mitch Albom

1. INTRODUCTION

“Time is money” is one of the most popular phrases in the world. Nowadays, human life depends on time as it is everything. According to history, the time creator was humans. After knowing how to count time, they became afraid about time, out of time, and they became aware about keeping time, saving time.

Humans became selfish about time. Their ego made them want time to be faster or slower. They are afraid about their age, to be old, to be dead. Another wants to die, and some want it to come faster and soon. It is all because of their knowledge about time, after they know how to count it.

One of novels which talks about time is *The Time Keeper*. Dor, as the main character in this novel, receives a gift and also a punishment from God because creates the time and he would try to stop it. Dor who lived in the past, long time Before Christ, has been sent to the present time. He is sent to finish the mission to save two humans who are trapped in the time, Sarah Lemon and Victor Delamonte. Sarah feels that the time is too slow and she wants it to become faster, and Victor feels that the time is too fast and he wants it to become slower. *The Time Keeper* tells how to recognize the time. It is never too late or too soon. Time comes when it is supposed to be.

The Time Keeper is written by Mitch Albom. According to official website of Mitch Albom, he was born on May 23, 1958 in Passaic, New Jersey, he is the middle of three children to Rhoda and Ira Albom. He grew with the dream. He wants to become a great musician. He taught himself to play the piano and play in some bands.

In 1979, Mitch Albom earned a bachelor's degree at Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts, majoring in sociology, but his dream to become a great musician did not fade. Mitch worked as a performer in America and Europe for several years. In his early 20's, while living in New York, he took an interest in journalism and worked part time for a local weekly newspaper, the Queens Tribune. He eventually returned to graduate school, Master's degree from Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism, followed by an MBA from Columbia University's Graduate School of Business.

Mitch Albom's first full time job for newspaper was as a feature writer and eventual sports columnist for The Fort Lauderdale News and Sun Sentinel in Florida. In 1985, he became a nationally-acclaimed sports journalist at the Detroit Free Press and one of the best-known media figures in that city's history. He also became a host in daily talk show on WJR radio and appeared regularly on ESPN Sports Reporters and SportsCenter.

In March 1995, according to his book *Tuesday with Morrie*, he said that he re-encountered Morrie Schwartz, a former college professor who was dying of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's disease. His visit to Morrie Schwartz would lead to the book *Tuesdays with Morrie*, the first novel he wrote.

Mitch Albom has written 13 books, of which 7 are sports books and 6 are novels. His Novels include *Tuesday with Morrie* (1997), *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* (2003), *For One More Day* (2006), *Have a Little Faith: A True Story* (2009), *The Time Keeper* (2012), *The First Phone Call from Heaven* (2013).

2. SUMMARY OF *THE TIME KEEPER*

The Time Keeper is a novel that tells about time. In this novel, Dor as the main character, is obsessed with time. He is a young man living in a time before the written word, before math, before calendars and clocks. However, Dor has found ways to measure time and he spends a great deal of his time pursuing this interest.

Dor has a close friend, whose name is Alli. Dor and Alli are married and has three children. One day, a childhood friend, Nim, who has become a rich king, comes to Dor and tells him of his plan to build a tower to reach the heavens. Nim wants to destroy the gods and become the ultimate ruler. Nim wants Dor to help him with his inventions. Dor refuses, and Nim tells him that he should leave the city because he refuses the King's order.

Dor and Alli leave their children with Dor's parents and move away. A visit from another couple who are clearly suffering some strange disease causes Dor's wife to become sick. As she lies dying, Dor struggles with the loss and begins to wish he has more time. To gain more time, Dor runs back to the city and climbs the Nim's tower to demand time from God. Suddenly, Dor finds himself trapped in a cave where he is destined to listen to the wishes of the people on earth as time becomes more and more of an obsession among modern men.

In New York, in modern times, there is a wealthy man named Victor Delamonte, who is dying of cancer and kidney failure. Victor does not want to die. In fact, he wants to live forever. For this reason, Victor arranges behind his wife's back to

have his body frozen before death in hopes that he will be revived in some future time and cured.

In a suburb of New York lives Sarah Lemon. Sarah is very smart, but she has no friends. When a boy begins paying attention to Sarah, she believes he is in love. However, the boy turns out to be using Sarah for his own pleasures. Sarah is so devastated by this boy's cruel treatment of her that she decides to commit suicide.

Dor is sent back to earth and says that he can finish his mission by helping two people understand the things he himself failed to understand. Dor is given the power to control time. Dor uses this power to learn all he can about the world in a short period of time. Dor then goes to New York where he meets both Victor and Sarah. On New Year's Eve when both Victor and Sarah have chosen to end their lives, Dor stops time and introduces them to one another in hopes that this meeting will help them. Dor then takes both Sarah and Victor on a tour of their pasts and the future. Sarah and Victor come to the realization that their choices will only hurt those they love the most. For this reason, when time begins again, they both make the decision to continue living. They meet in the emergency room and Victor gives Sarah the money she needs to go to an Ivy League school to give her the education she will use to one day cure the same cancer from which Victor suffers. At the same time, Dor returns to his own time where he is able to hold his wife as she lies dying.

3. REVIEW OF *THE TIME KEEPER*

In this chapter, the writer presents strengths and weaknesses of *The Time Keeper*. The strengths of *The Time Keeper* include theme and the setting of place. *The Time Keeper* also has a weakness, that is characterization.

3.1. The Strengths of *The Time Keeper*

3.1.1 Theme

Theme, as a main idea, is an important element in a story. The theme of *The Time Keeper* is the meaning of time. The word “time” is introduced in the title of this novel, written in the prologue, and even repeated until the last chapter of the novel. According to Rene Wellek and Austin Warren in *Teori Kesusastraan (Theory of Literature)* (2014:204) “*Sentence pattern recur, behavioristic like declension and conjugations but they are still expressive forms*”. Repeated words will help the readers to understand the main idea of the novel. It is Mitch Albom’s style how to explain the readers about the theme and meaning of his novel. This is the quotation of the prologue part:

A man sits alone in a cave. His hair is long. His beard reaches his knees. He holds his chin in the cup of his hands. He close his eyes. He is listening to something. Voices. Endless voices. The raise from a pool in the corner of the cave. They are voices of people on Earth. They want one thing only. Time. (Albom, 2012:1)

In the last chapter, Mitch Albom explains that this novel is about meaning of time. He explains in the quotation below:

This is a story about meaning of time. (Albom, 2012:221)

That quotation is located in the last chapter of the novel. Even though the author has tell the theme by repetition of word, he also concludes and directly tells that the story of the novel is about the meaning of time. It makes the novel easy to understand for any readers. The author wants the novel can be read by all people from any backgrounds.

According to Robert Stanton in *Teori Fiksi* (2012:37) "*Tema adalah gagasan pokok yang berarti penting dalam sebuah cerita. Sama seperti makna pengalaman manusia, tema menonjol dan mengacu pada aspek-aspek kehidupan sehingga nantinya akan ada nilai-nilai tertentu yang melingkupi cerita.*" The author chooses this theme because it consider as popular issue in the present time. Everyone talks about time, but they do not know how to appreciate it. People are too busy to save time and other people just waste time. They do not know about the meaning of time. The author wants to deliver the message to the readers about the meaning of time. It makes theme become the strength of the novel.

3.1.2 Setting of Place

Mitch Albom uses two settings of place in *The Time Keeper*. The first is Babylonia where Dor live near the Tower of Babel built by Nim. The second is New York City where the other characters in the novel, Sarah Lemon and Victor Delamonte,

live in and the main character run in to by time traveling to his future and meet them.

It shows in quotation below:

What happened next is a matter of debate. The way history tells the story, Tower of Babel was either destroyed or abandoned. But the man who could become Father Time could testify to something else, because his was sealed on that very same day (Albom, 2012:39)

New York City loomed as an unimaginable metropolis, even after all Dor had seen in his one hundred years of study in Europe. The buildings were taller, with barely a breathing space between them. (Albom, 2012:103)

According to Nyoman Kutha Ratna in *Antropologi Sastra* (2011:100)

“Pengarang tidak semata-mata dibekali dengan kekuatan imajinasi seperti pendapat masyarakat pada umumnya, melainkan juga keterampilan dalam mengumpulkan data, bahkan dengan melakukan semacam penelitian terhadap wilayah tertentu, sehingga penyajian data disamping estetikanya dapat dilakukan secara detail.” Babylonia was well-known as a place where the Tower of Babel built by King Nimrod, he is a king who is known to have high intelligence. Babylonia is the first civilization in the world, and Dor live there. He is the first human who could count and the inventor of counting time. The author knows the main character must live in great place, because he will be a great man. The author wants the readers to understand the main character’s social life by the setting of place.

The author chose the New York City as the second place because the character of the place is related to the theme of the novel and the author can explain the physical condition in depth. It shows in quotation below:

Victor’s limo eased through lower Manhattan. It turned down a cobblestones street, where, tucked into a curve, was a narrow storefront. A strawberry-colored awning carried the street address, but there was no name on the place,

only a sun and a moon carved into the front door. ‘One Forty-Three Orchard,’ the driver announced. (Albom, 2012:109)

Additionally, the social condition of New York City also supports the theme of the novel. New York is one of the busiest city in the world. Everybody is always in a hurry, they does not want to waste time and wants more time every day. Another are frustrated people, they want the time comes faster and their death come sooner.

Setting of place of the novel shows that the author not only uses his imagination, but he has the knowledge about the history and the social structure of these places from other source, and he uses his knowledge to find the right place for the novel. According to Nyoman Kutha Ratna in *Antropologi Sastra* (2011:195) “*Penulis mungkin mengambil lokasi yang luas tetapi dibicarakan secara agak umum, atau lokasi yang sempit tetapi dijelaskan mendalam.*” In the first setting, the author takes the place of the history of civilization which is oftenly mentioned in many literature, which is Babylonia. While the author took a place that he knows very well for the second setting of place so it can be explained in depth. Setting of place makes the readers easier to imagine the social life in the novel.

Babylonia and New York City are the right places to be the setting of this novel. Both of that make the readers easier to understand the novel. That is why the writer chooses the setting of place to be the strength of the novel.

3.2. The Weakness of *The Time Keeper*

This novel also has a weakness, which is characterization. Dor, Alli and Nim are only described in physical depiction. According to Albertine Minderop in *Psikologi*

Sastra (2013:81) “*Character is known figure, also on the psychology action.*” In the novel, the author talks less about psychological condition. This makes readers confuse and still ask about mental and psychological condition of Dor. It is described in the following quotation:

His hair is long. His beard reaches his knees. He holds his chin in the cup of his hands. (Albom, 2012:1)

The boy name is Dor. The girls is Alli. At the ae, they are nearly the same size, with high-pitched voices and thick, dark hair, their faces splashed with mud. (Albom, 2012:7)

Dor had not seen himself in six thousand years. He moved closer to the mirror, alongside a businessman in a high, spinning chair and female stylist with her hands in a drawer. Dor observed he man’s reflection-blue suit, maroon tie, hair short, dark, and wet-and then he look at his own unruly image. Despite his massive beard and flowing hair, he appeared to be younger than businessman next to him. (Albom, 2012:97)

He is tackled from behind by a third child, Nim, a boy much larger and stronger. Nim crows as he puts a knee in Dor’s back. “I am King!” All three children laugh. They resume their running. (Albom, 2012: 8)

In the explanations of each character in the novel, the most dominant weakness is the explanation of the background of Nim. Since Nim appeared in the novel, there are only a few of his physical depiction and all of a sudden he becomes a king in his next appearance. It makes the readers confuse, how Nim could became a king and why all the people in the land are afraid to him.

In the novel, Nim is the King and the owner of the Tower of Babel. According to history, the person who owns the Tower of Babel is King Nimrod. It shows that the author put some history to make the character of the novel by taking the name of King Nimrod to become Nim. The author just explains that Nim is a hard worker.

Nim became tall and broad-shouldered. He carried mud bricks for his father, a builder. He liked that was stronger than other boys. Power became Nim's fascination. (Albom, 2012:11)

Physical depiction is important thing to describe the characters in the novel, but describing their psychological act, or background is also important because the readers wants to understand the detail of the character and how the character can be the part of the story.

4. CONCLUSION

The Time Keeper is one of the greatest novel of which written by Mitch Albom. *The Time Keeper* is a novel that tells about the meaning of time. The man named Dor realized that he must appreciate time. With his story, the author wants to teach the readers about the meaning of time.

The Time Keeper has some strengths that make it as a good reading. The strengths of the novel are its theme and setting of place. While the weakness of this novel is in characterization.

Aside of its weakness, this novel is still a good reading. *The Time Keeper* is recommended to be read for readers who wants to know about the value of time. *The Time Keeper* tells how to appreciate time, and what happen if people does not appreciate time.