

PSYCHOANALYTIC CRITICISM ON MIZOGUCHI'S PERCEPTION OF THE GOLDEN TEMPLE IN THE TEMPLE OF THE GOLDEN PAVILION

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ABSTRACT

This paper is to discuss the psychological aspects in the novel which is written by Yukio Mishima entitled *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion* which was translated into English by Ivan Morris and was published for the first time in 1959. This paper analyzes Mizoguchi's affection and behavior towards Golden Pavilion by using Psychoanalysis. First, it analyzes how Mizoguchi treats the Golden Pavilion. Second, it analyzes the reasons of why Mizoguchi burns the Golden Pavilion that he admires so much. At the end, this paper found that Mizoguchi previously perceives the Golden Pavilion as the true representation of beauty since it has been admired by people, but at the end, he hated the Golden Pavilion because it caught people's attention more than human being can do and this hatred caused him to burn the Golden Pavilion. His action literarily analyzed by psychoanalysis as his oppressed depression because most people's rejection and humiliation to him due to his ugliness and stuttered condition.

Keywords: *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion, Mizoguchi, Psychology, Psychoanalysis*

Sari

*Penelitian ini membahas tentang aspek psikologi dalam novel yang ditulis oleh Yukio Mishima berjudul *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion* yang diterjemahkan dalam Bahasa Inggris oleh Ivan Morris dan dipublikasikan untuk pertama kalinya pada tahun 1959. Penelitian ini menganalisa perhatian dan perlakuan Mizoguchi terhadap Pavilyun Emas dengan menggunakan kajian sastra Psikoanalisis. Pertama, penelitian ini menganalisa tentang bagaimana perlakuan Mizoguchi terhadap Pavilyun Emas. Kedua, penelitian ini menganalisa tentang mengapa Mizoguchi membakar Pavilyun Emas yang sangat dikaguminya. Akhirnya, penelitian ini mendapati bahwa Mizoguchi sebelumnya menganggap Pavilyun Emas sebagai perwakilan dari keindahan karena pavilyun tersebut dikagumi semua orang, tapi pada akhirnya dia membenci Pavilyun Emas tersebut karena pavilyun itu lebih menarik bagi kebanyakan orang dari pada manusia dan kebencian ini menyebabkannya membakar Pavilyun Emas. Secara literal, psikonalisis menganalisa aksi Mizoguchi sebagai depresinya yang terpendam dikarenakan penolakan dan hinaan yang didapatinya dikarenakan kondisinya yang buruk rupa dan gagap.*

Kata Kunci: *Kuil dari Pavilyun Emas, Mizoguchi, Psikologi, Psikoanalisis*

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Introduction

The Temple of the Golden Pavilion tells a story about a stutterer named Mizoguchi. He was really influenced by the image of the Golden Temple and over attached on it (Yu, 2008). At any moment that he experienced, even when he was with a girl, being angry, disappointed, happy, or sad, he might refer all his feelings into the Golden Temple (Atkinson, 1989). This condition led the readers for having speculation or prejudice that Mizoguchi might have psychological disorder.

Research Questions

Based on the introduction, background, and purpose of the study that had been clarified above, the researcher proposed two research questions that will be answered in this research. They are:

1. How did Mizoguchi treat the Golden Temple as an essential aspect in his life based on psychoanalysis criticism?
2. Why did Mizoguchi burn the Golden Temple based on psychoanalysis criticism?

Literary Analysis by Using *Psychoanalytic Theory*

Psychoanalysis theory that I use in this study is psychoanalysis theory that had been proposed by Sigmund Freud. All of Freud's work depends upon the notion of the *unconsciousness*, which is "the part of the mind beyond consciousness which nevertheless has a strong influence upon our actions" (Peter, 1995, p. 96). Sometimes we thought that unconsciousness is not important and it is just a factor that could be left behind. But Freud has different perception about this. He clarified that our true self is actually our unconsciousness. Psychoanalysis, in the broad sense of the term, attempts to better understand human behavior. "The goal of psychoanalysis is to help us resolve our psychological problems...the focus is on patterns of behavior that are destructive in some way" (Lois, 2006, p. 12). Surely each of us at some point or another has been self-destructive or acted in ways that could be considered destructive to others or the situation. Psychology is associated with more "recent developments in the sciences of the mind. Our selves are complex, and they are not what they appear to be. Our conscious awareness is only part of what our "self" is. Our past, our personal history, is crucial in determining what we are, yet it exists for our consciousness only as fragments

of memory” Michael, 2012, p. 45). Thus, analyzing the past of the main character in a story is crucial so that we could know the deepest desire of the main character and we could understand well the story.

Lois (2006) then added that people might not know the specific source of our emotional problems. They might not even know that they possess such problems because they tend to *repress* their most distressing experiences, push those experiences into the unconscious, which is the psychological sore house of painful experiences that they do not want to remember. Put simply, as human beings, we all tend to push out of sight those experiences we feel we cannot handle. Because there is always something that we repress in our mind, there is also what is called *defense*. There are several defenses that had been clarified by Tyson (2011). The first is *Denial*. We are in denial when we believe that an emotionally painful situation does not exist or an emotionally painful event never occurred. The second is *Avoidance*. We are practicing avoidance when we stay away from people, places, or situations that might stir up the memory of repressed experience. The third is *Displacement*. We are displacing at the moment we unleash the negative feeling of ours which might be related to one particular person or someone else so that we can relieve our agony or resentment without being aware of what is the real cause of our oppressed feelings. The last is *Projection*. We are projecting when we believe, without real cause, that someone else feels the same way we feel, specifically that someone else has the problem we want to deny that we, ourselves have.

Unlike most other critical theories, psychoanalytic theory has its own system of symbols that can be of use especially if we are interpreting a literary work as if it were a dream. For psychoanalytic theory, Tyson (2011) explained that certain objects tend to have symbolic meaning for most human beings, whether we are aware of this meaning or not, and these symbols often show up in our dreams as something which is processed in our mind but we perceive it as reality. There are numerous most common symbols of the dream. The first is *Water*. Water can symbolize the unconscious, the emotions, and/or sexuality. The second is *Buildings*. Buildings usually symbolize the self, as if our body were the “building” in which we lived. The third is *Basements*. Basements are often associated with the unconscious as the place where we repress unpleasant memories.

The fourth is *Attics*. Attics are often associated with the intellect or the conscious mind. The fifth is *Male Imagery*. Male imagery consists primarily of “phallic symbols,” for example, towers, guns, swords, or anything that can be associated with the penis. The sixth is *Female Imagery*. Female imagery consists of anything that can be associated with the womb, for examples, caves, walled-in gardens, or containers.

Based on several clarifications about psychoanalysis criticism which have been claimed above, we know that there are several aspects in the novel *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion* which are suitable to be analyzed using psychoanalysis criticism. For instance, Mizoguchi’s repressed feeling about the beauty of the Golden Temple, and also the symbol of the “building” as the self which represented as Golden Temple in the story.

Methodology

In purpose to analyze more about the psychological disorder that might be possessed by Mizoguchi, it is really necessary to analyze *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion* by using psychoanalysis criticism. Psychoanalysis criticism helps us to know more about Mizoguchi’s psychological disorder through his behavior, his past, and also several conversations in the novel. By using psychological criticism in analyzing *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion*, this research aims to make the readers know better the reason of why Mizoguchi decided to burn the Golden Temple that had been the image of the source of beauty that he adored so much.

Findings and Discussion

RQ1: How Mizoguchi perceived the Golden Temple as an essential aspect in his life based on psychoanalysis criticism

Mizoguchi’s past may be categorized as pathetic and unfortunate. Mizoguchi is a boy who has a stuttering problem and who is always being teased and even mocked at school. He could be considered as a loner because he thinks that he cannot connect with the outside world due to his stuttering problem. Like what he said as the narrator in the novel:

“My stuttering, I need hardly say, placed an obstacle between me and the outside world” (Mishima, 1959, p. 5).

A scene in the novel which depicted an event when Mizoguchi met a savage soldier who ever mocked him in the schoolyard was actually a moment when Mizoguchi perceived that soldier as someone who possessed power. Deep down in his heart, Mizoguchi had a strong desire to have that kind of power. A type of power which can control the life of people who had ever tortured him or even a kind of power which is able to control the world. As addition, the scene in the novel where he tried to approach Uiko in the early morning was eventually Mizoguchi's effort to communicate with someone who fascinated him. The novel tells that Mizoguchi failed to communicate with Uiko and this moment really made him completely disappointed and perceived himself as a fool. Mizoguchi even did not show any emotion when Uiko and the deserter were found dead. Even before Mizoguchi had seen the Golden Pavilion, he already had an image in his head of how fascinating and beautiful it is, just because of the stories that he heard from his father. When he was able to see that pavilion that he was really eager to see since his childhood for the first time, he was not that impressed actually. Specifically, Mizoguchi perhaps saw the beauty of the Golden Pavilion in materialistic way such as physical beauty or building construction but he rather failed to see the beauty of its historical aspects. After Mizoguchi visited the temple and entered in the Golden Pavilion, he seemed began to recognize the beauty of it because he was consumed with its image that he has previously kept in his mind at the moment his father told him about the beauty of Golden Pavilion.

Since Mizoguchi was perceived by the people surround him as the foolish and ugly stutter boy, he cannot enjoy the beauty of life and just focus on the image of the Golden Temple that has been told by his father as the beautiful object in the world. Even after his father's death, he became an acolyte at the Golden Temple and this decision might make him closer to the Golden Temple. The image of the beauty of the Golden Temple always comes into Mizoguchi's mind even when he almost did an intimacy with a lady:

"I could vaguely make out the woman's white breast and held it out to me. It would be untrue to say that I did not feel dizzy. I looked at her breast. I looked at it with minute care. Yet I remained in the role of witness. That mysterious white point which I had seen in the distance from above the temple gate had not been a material globe of flesh like this. The impression had been fermenting so long within me that the breast which I now saw seemed to be nothing but flesh, nothing but a material object. This flesh did not in itself have the power to appeal or to tempt" (Mishima, 1959, p. 151).

Usually a man might be easily seduced by a woman, especially when a woman seduced that man by showing her sensitive parts of the body. In the novel, the woman particularly showed her breasts to Mizoguchi, but Mizoguchi seemed to be slow in realizing the breasts' beauty. For a while, he intended to pay attention the woman's breasts, but the image of the golden pavilion came appeared in his mind:

“Beauty arrives late for me. Other people perceive beauty quickly and discover beauty and sensual desire at the same moment; for me it always comes far later. Now an instant the woman's breast regained its connection with the whole, it surmounted the state of being mere flesh and became an unfeeling, immortal substance related to eternity. I hope that I am making myself understood. The Golden Temple once more appeared before me. Or rather, I should say that the breast was transformed into the Golden Temple” (Mishima, 1959, p. 152).

Mizoguchi seemed to perceive the Golden Temple as a precious object which cannot be compare to anything even with a woman's breasts. Stanus (2001) claims that “for him (Mizoguchi), the Temple represents beauty in all its splendor, everything that he lacks” (p. 95). Atkinson (1989) also added that “only one thing in Mizoguchi's world has any substance, the beauty of Kinkakuji, about which he first learns from his father, a former temple priest. When he finally goes as a novice to the temple, it seems the great emptiness in his life is filled, as his dream becomes a reality” (Atkinson, 1989, p. 57). Based on those statements and the dialogues in the novel, the researcher declared that Mizoguchi really perceived the Golden Temple as the crucial aspect in his life which completed his life. Like what Tyson said that “Buildings usually symbolize the self”, it also happened to Mizoguchi. Since he cannot fulfill his emptiness regarding his self which is perceived by other people as a foolish stutterer who cannot do anything, he perceived the Golden Temple as the most beautiful object the precious object that complement him.

RQ2: Why did Mizoguchi burn the Golden Temple based on psychoanalysis criticism?

The hatred of Mizoguchi towards the Golden Temple is the main problem in Yukio Mishima's *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion*. Mishima seemed to emphasize Mizoguchi's attachment on the Golden Pavilion (Winston, 2013). Yet, Mizoguchi has his own thoughts and reasons in why he must burn the Golden Temple, although the Golden Temple is beautiful. Its beauty leads Mizoguchi to burn it because he hates beauty. He hates it because when he compares it to himself, he finds that he is not

beautiful or he is ugly. The Golden Temple, which is only a dead object, receives many admiration and adoration because it is a historical artifact for Japanese national treasure. Furthermore, the Golden Temple is beautiful because of its scenery. As a contradictory, Mizoguchi receives no admiration and adoration. People start to laugh every time he tries to speak because he is a stutter. Ironically, even some of his friends make a joke of it. People also underestimate him when they know about his aspiration to become a priest. Those insults really annoy him because he is defeated by a “dead object” (which somehow means something which does not live and has no feeling), the Golden Temple. Then, he feels unsatisfied and hates the Golden Temple. Furthermore, his father’s words, that “there is nothing in this world as beautiful as the Golden Temple” also affects him. Because he has an opinion that beauty is his deadly enemy then he has a plan to destroy beauty, which is represented by the Golden Temple. As a consequence, he actualizes his hatred to beauty by burning the Golden Temple (Susanto, 2004). So, based on the statement that had been clarified by Susanto, Mizoguchi burnt the Golden Temple because he wanted to destroy the thing that jailed him during his life. Mizoguchi thought the Golden Temple as the symbol of beauty, and he believed that by destroying it he can be free from the concept of a beauty that desperate him. It is also true that Mizoguchi might be envy towards the Golden Temple as the object of the beauty which was admired by the people. By burning the Golden Temple, he seemed begin a new life like what he said: “I felt like a man who settles down for a smoke after finishing a job of work. I wanted to live” (Mishima, 1959, p. 262).

Mizoguchi repressed his feeling about the beauty of the Golden Temple at that repressed feeling led him into the action of burning the temple. Like what Tyson proposed by using Freud’s statements, Mizoguchi tried to deny the fact that he was ugly and a stutterer and just tried to find a concept of beauty in the Golden Temple (*Denial*). Mizoguchi also tried to avoid people since he was also mocked by the others especially when he was rejected by Uiko (*Avoidance*). Mizoguchi also seemed to displace his anger to people or objects around him. This behavior might be caused by his inability to express himself properly and directly to others (Erdemir, 2014). For instance, he even wanted to step down the American soldier’s girlfriend’s stomach cruelly. Although it was an order from the American soldier and he was paid by the two boxes of cigarettes,

but he also enjoyed the moment when he stepped down the woman's stomach and displace his anger (*Displacement*). Mizoguchi even projected his plan to burn the temple as the reaction of his rejection toward the beauty (*Projection*). It means that Mizoguchi's actions complete the psychological aspects of his repressed feelings and like what have been clarified above at the first place, Mizoguchi burnt the Golden Temple because of he wanted to be free from the concept of beauty and live a new life. This might be mean that he tried to receive himself just the way he is without leaning on the concept of beauty that his father created on his mind.

Conclusion

Mizoguchi at the first time perceived the Golden Temple as the precious thing that he admired, but at the end he seemed to hate the Golden Temple that he perceived as the focus of the beauty at the first place. Mizoguchi intended to burn the Golden Temple because he had desire to destroy the image of the beauty which was admired by others. His action of burning of the temple was also kind of protest for the people who admired the temple more than the life of human beings since he perceived and argued that he was rejected by the society and even the world because of his stuttering problem, ugliness, and foolishness. His action of burning the temple revealed his repressed feelings of his protest toward the concept of the beauty and people's perception of the beauty itself. At the end, it was revealed that psychoanalysis criticism helps us to understand better how Mizoguchi perceived the temple and why he chose to burn the temple.

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